

Chapter Twenty-five

Whom The Lord Loves

Some would argue that the Bible teaching of grace can lead to carelessness and license to sin. What about Christians who have been truly born-again and then fall into a life of sin and die without giving evidence of repentance? Some seem to believe that because, at salvation all our sins of the past, present, and future are put under the blood, that it doesn't matter how we live. Questions along this line of thinking are constantly asked and are of grave importance. Various ones have sought to answer the question, *"What is God going to do with believers who fall into sin, and then die before they have an opportunity of repenting?"* It is important to be able to give intelligent answers.

The Roman Catholic Church has its own answer in the doctrine of purgatory, that seeks to answer this puzzling question of unforgiven sin. There are others among the protestant groups that if they sin, and there is no repentance, they fall from grace. Others even teach that it is only those who are living *"sanctified"* lives will be raptured when Jesus returns to catch His bride, the Church, away - those who are not living sanctified lives will have to go through part - or all - of the Tribulation period.

These are, no doubt, sincere attempts to answer the questions concerning, *"What happens to believers who die in unconfessed sin?"* After careful study of all of the Scriptures that deal with this subject that none of these answers mentioned above is the correct one answer. Does God's Word throw light on the total teaching of this matter? Is there a better answer that can be backed up by Scripture?

It isn't enough just to reject these ideas, unless we can come up with a better, thoroughly Scriptural, answer. What is the Scriptural solution to this vexing problem?

It should be clear to any Bible student that we cannot accept a doctrine that teaches that God will do nothing about unconfessed sin. Even common sense would tell a person - as well as Bible teaching - that we cannot be a Christian and continue to live in sin and have the Lord do nothing about it. We should be able to give an intelligent answer to the question. So let's re-examine this problem in the light of Scripture, for certainly the Bible definitely teaches that *"payday is coming,"* and that no one will be able to escape it. The one-sided teaching of grace, without the balancing truth of Christian responsibility, will give rise to a distorted and unscriptural view of salvation. There are many who talk of grace, saved by grace, kept by grace, but who leave the impression that *"grace"* means that it makes no difference how the Christian lives and behaves after he is saved, and that everything is going to come out all right. They tell us that eternal life is *"eternal"* - and, of course, it is, however, that very fact requires that we live as if becoming of those who have received Christ's eternal life. The impression that if you are saved, you can therefore live any way you please and it will make no difference in the end, is the Devil's own lie. It is this thinking that is at the root of much of the worldliness and carnality of the church today with the result of hatred, malice, misunderstanding, and splitting up of the body of believers. God is still a holy God, and there is a payday coming! God says that He will judge His people. Those who talk as

though they can live as they please just because they are saved, are either not saved at all or else they sorely need the truth concerning the Judgment Seat of Christ and the fact that God does judge His people.

The faith of the believer in accepting the finished work of Christ is only one aspect of salvation – there are in actuality three judgments of the believer. The first is the judgment of the believer's sins, that was taken care of at Calvary, and is accomplished by Jesus Christ Himself. This settles our salvation. But there is also a present judgment when God chastens His people and deals with them because of their walk and their conduct, and this has to do with their sanctification, and their enjoyment of salvation. Then there is a third judgment of the believer, that still is future; it is call in Scripture, the Judgment Seat of Christ, at which time all the works of the believer will be weighed, rewards will be given to those who have laid up spiritual treasures in Heaven, and there will be loss of rewards for those who have neglected the great gift of salvation and have come before the Judgment Seat of Christ unprepared. It is this second – of the three judgments – I want to look at now . . .

Present Judgment

The judgment for our sin is *past*, and the judgment of our works is still in the *future*, however, the Lord does judge our walk daily, moment by moment, in this *present* life. Christ wants us to walk as though we are truly redeemed people – and for that reason He has made provision for our daily cleansing. Provision for this cleansing is in the Word of God, through the Holy Spirit, and is by the means of our intercessory High Priest, Christ Jesus, at the right hand of God. He is there for the express purpose of receiving our confession daily as we come to Him.

“If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us” (1 John 1:8-10).

Our hope lies, not in *denying* our sinfulness as Christians, but rather in *confessing* our sins honestly before Him. When we do this. Christ is ever faithful and just to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. God wants His children clean, and He will have them clean. He will not for one moment tolerate their continuing in sin. To refuse to confess and abandon our sins after we are saved calls for the intervention of the Lord in chastening, to the end that we may be cleansed. There are two ways of cleansing that the Lord utilizes. One is the gentle way, by the washing of the Word as we confess our sins and claim His forgiveness. If we refuse to do this and continue in unconfessed sin, then the Lord says, *“I will take a hand in it Myself, because I want you to be clean. I may have to lay My hand upon you and lay you low.”*

As an illustration of this great truth, Paul tells us in Ephesians 5:25,

“Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word” (Ephesians 5:25-26).

Notice that the Lord says that He has loved the church and saved her; that He might *sanctify* and *cleanse* her. There is more to salvation than just escaping Hell or going to Heaven. God also wants us to be like the Lord Jesus Christ. The two words used in our Scripture, Ephesians 5:26, and “*sanctify*” and “*cleanse*” and these are by no means the same words in the Greek in their original meaning. The word “*sanctify*” refers to the cleansing of the believer by faith and by confession of sin. This is the gentle, easy, way available for all believers. But the word that is translated “*cleanse*” in this same verse is “*katharesis*” in the Greek. From this word comes our English word “*cathartic*.” It really means a violent purging. If we refuse to be sanctified by humble confession for sin, the Lord does not let us go on, and just forget it and overlook it. The Lord may bear with us for a while, but sooner or later He is going to take a hand in the matter, for He will have His people clean. This chastening and cleansing may take various forms. Sometimes He may place us on a bed of sickness until we learn to confess our sin. Sometimes it may be by bereavement, sometimes by an affliction, and in extreme cases He may even take the believer home by death rather than permit him to go on living in unconfessed sin. A passage of Scripture that bears directly on this little-known, but all important truth, is found in 1 Corinthians 11,

“Wherefore whosoever shall eat this bread, and drink this cup of the Lord, unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord. But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup. For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's body. For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep. For if we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged. But when we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world”

(1 Corinthians 11:27-32).

In this passage we must remember that God is speaking to believers, to men and woman who have been born again and belong to the Lord Jesus Christ. And concerning these He says,

“For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep” (1 Corinthians 11:30).

Paul is speaking about the consequence of unconfessed sin in the life of the believer, and he says that because of this unconfessed sin many of the Corinthians were sick and weak, and many of them he died prematurely. How can anyone help but be impressed with the fact that being a Christian places upon one a great responsibility, and we either allow the Word of God to cleanse us, or the Lord will use more drastic means: sanctify and cleanse, or washing and purging. The Christian may take his choice. He may either be washed by the Word of God and by honest confession, or allow God to administer His *cathartic* of chastening in the purging of evil out of his life.

It would probably be wise to add a word of explanation at this point – let someone get the impression that Scripture teaches that *all* sickness and weakness and chastening of the Lord is because of unconfessed. This is certainly not the case – and, by no means, is it true. There are other reasons why God allows sickness’ and various kinds of weakness other than to make them what He wants them to be. Therefore it would be unscriptural and wrong to make the statement that all sickness, weakness and death are because of sin in the life of the believer. However, with that in mind, we must remember that Paul says in 1 Corinthians 11:30 that in “*many*” cases this is the reason. To those believers who harbor known sin in their lives, it must be emphasized the warning of the Apostle Paul by the love of Christ that the time will come sooner or later when the Lord will lay His chastening hand upon such, and place them across His disciplinary knee and put them through the cleansing and purging of His chastening hand. When the Lord gets through with this process – it may have been a painful and very trying experience – but the result will be a cleansing and a tenderness toward Him that had been lost because of sin. Those who have gone through God’s fire of chastening know the painfulness of the experience, but also they know the glory of the cleansing.

To the question, “Shall we sin that grace may abound?” we have Paul’s answer,
“How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?”
(Romans 6:2).

God will judge His people! There is a payday coming. Oh, Christian, do not tempt the Lord to chasten you, but now bow before Him, confess your sins, and be clean. Paul adds in this one remarkable passage in Ephesians 5:27,

“ That he might present it – (the Church) – to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish” (Ephesians 5:27).

“Spots and wrinkles.” Spots are taken out by washing in water, but wrinkles are only taken out by a hot iron. Spots are made by contact with the world, and the Word of God will cleanse them. *“If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us.”* and He will wash out all the spots. However, wrinkles are cause by sitting in one position and refusing to move and exercise our self. It is the result of not being busy in the things of the Lord, and not occupying ourselves with those things that edify and sanctify. Continuance in this sort of a fruitless life will bring the chastening of the Lord, and I repeat again the warning of Paul:

“For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep” (1 Corinthians 11:30).

Yes, God will judge His people, and there is a payday coming.

However, there is a word I would leave with those who are still unsaved. If the Lord will not allow sin in the life of the believer, but will deal with it in His grace for the purpose of cleansing, then what will He do to those who do not belong to Him, and who

have rejected His Son the Lord Jesus Christ, and who continue in their unrepentant condition until it is too late? Peter says in 1 Peter 4:17-18:

“For the time is come that judgment must begin at the house of God: and if it first begin at us, what shall the end be of them that obey not the gospel of God? And if the righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear?” (1 Peter 4:17-18).

Payday is coming!