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Jesus Provides the Better Eternity

To reject the sacrifice of Christ is to reject any hope of rescue from judgment and forgiveness of sin. No other sacrifice can suffice, and neglect of Christ's salvation only leaves one in the place of unavoidable judgment. Continuing in Jesus, and Jesus alone by faith is the sole path to eternal salvation.

Hebrews 10:26-39

INTRO

Today's several verses encompass some of the most debated and important doctrines of the Christian faith:

- The doctrine of eternal security
- The doctrine of the eternal judgment of God
- The doctrine of the perseverance of the saints

So, no big deals or anything.

Honestly, I don't know how far we are going to get today. This might turn into a 2-3 parter. I also want to state from the onset of today's sermon, that my notes are 75% scripture. The reason being is that if these sets of verses are interpreted in isolation from their greater context, their audience, and the umbrella of Paul's teachings throughout the scriptures, they could be devastating to the faith of some.

BIBLE VERSE

[Heb 10:26-39 NKJV] 26 For if we sin willfully after we have received the knowledge of

the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins, 27 but a certain fearful expectation of judgment, and fiery indignation which will devour the adversaries. 28 Anyone who has rejected Moses' law dies without mercy on [the testimony of] two or three witnesses. 29 Of how much worse punishment, do you suppose, will he be thought worthy who has trampled the Son of God underfoot, counted the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified a common thing, and insulted the Spirit of grace? 30 For we know Him who said, "Vengeance is Mine, I will repay," says the Lord. And again, "The LORD will judge His people." 31 It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God. 32 But recall the former days in which, after you were illuminated, you endured a great struggle with sufferings: 33 partly while you were made a spectacle both by reproaches and tribulations, and partly while you became companions of those who were so treated; 34 for you had compassion on me in my chains, and joyfully accepted the plundering of your goods, knowing that you have a better and an enduring possession for yourselves in heaven. 35 Therefore do not cast away your confidence, which has great reward. 36 For you have need of endurance, so that after you have done the will of God, you may receive the promise: 37 "For yet a little while, [And] He who is coming will come and will not tarry. 38 Now the just shall live by faith; But if [anyone] draws back, My soul has no pleasure in him." 39 But we are not of those who draw back to perdition, but of those who believe to the saving of the soul.

INTRO

Verses 26-39 – the most important factor is defining what it means to “sin wilfully.” Whatever “sinning wilfully” is, it carries with it a two-fold consequence: A.) the blood of Jesus will no longer be applied to you for forgiveness B.) You are destined to God’s fiery and eternal wrath. So, I think it’s kinda important to know what it means. Agreed? So let’s just tackle them one at a time. In doing so, we will discover what this passage DOESN’T mean, and what it DOES.

A Make a mistake and you're toast

CONTEXT

the premise of this idea is that if you take advantage of God's grace by sinning after you know about what that sin cost Jesus, then you're mocking His sacrifice and God will judge you for it.

- Certainly, when you read the verse by itself, it sounds like just that. However, I believe this is a poor interpretation of the context.

NOW BEFORE I GO FURTHER, I will say that the Bible does teach us in another context altogether, that if a person claims Christ but continues to live in a pattern of unrepentant sin, defying the character and standards of God, it is questionable that they have truly been regenerated.

Before a person is born again, their life is driven by their own lusts and pleasures; even people who would consider themselves moral or good people. Before we came to know Christ, our fleshly passions and human understanding drove our decisions.

- We never thought, "What does God think about this?" We just did what was right in our own site. When you are truly born again and filled with the Spirit, it is impossible to maintain this kind of attitude toward sin. The Spirit begins to convict you. The lustful eyes, greedy self-centeredness, the uncontrolled anger, the bitter tongue... we begin to battle against all of these now that God is living and working in us. This means that we go through a process of sanctification in which we become holier with each passing day.

The person who has no evidence of those changes in their heart of life, even if they profess Christ, show by the fruit of their life that they don't belong to Him. To continue in a blatant lifestyle of sin against God and go on as though you haven't done any wrong is not the pattern of the true Christian who is being sanctified. This is what John was referring to when he said:

BIBLE VERSE

[1Jo 3:8-9 NLT] 8 But when people keep on sinning, it shows that they belong to the devil, who has been sinning since the beginning. But the Son of God came to destroy the works of the devil. 9 Those who have been born into God's family do not make a practice of sinning, because God's life is in them. So they can't keep on sinning, because they are

children of God.

CUSTOM

The context in John was imposters coming in the name of Jesus but were really ravenous wolves. They were not people who were born again, but only Christian in name and appearance. John wanted the Christian to delineate and identify these people so he says, “look at their lifestyles.” If they are practicing things that are contrary to God’s character without repentance, remorse, or any true holiness, they aren’t the real deal.

This is a true, important biblical principle, *but it’s not what the author is talking about here in Hebrews 10*. The language and context are a bit different. In John, the phrase is *“Poi-e-o hamartia” Literally, “To bear the fruit of a sinful lifestyle.”* It’s a condition of the heart. It’s a bad tree consistently bearing bad fruit.

- **These people claim a heavenly identity but continue in a devilish lifestyle.**

See, you can continue in sin because you’re heart has never really changed, you’ve not been born again, and Jesus is just a religious name tag. But, you can also choose to willfully sin, and even sin for a prolonged season as a true Christian either in backsliding or in the battle against your flesh. Through this process, you are coming to repentance and bringing things into the light. John also indicates the difference:

BIBLE VERSE

[1Jo 1:8-9 NKJV] 8 If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. 9 If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us [our] sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

[1Jo 2:1 NKJV] 1 My little children, these things I write to you, so that you may not sin. And if anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.

APPLICATION

APPLICATION

When we now come to Hebrews 10 and see this language, “If we willfully sin after coming to the knowledge of the truth, we lose all hope of Christ’s forgiveness? this is frightening at first, because who amongst us doesn’t willfully sin at times? What is a willing sin? Any knowing and willful act of disobedience toward God. In fact, I have never met a true Christian who has not willfully sinned in some way as they are in the process of sanctification.

- ***Present, active tense – if we find ourselves in the process of committing a willful act of disobedience to God.***
- This doesn’t simply include things we would consider gross acts of moral turpitude.
- Let me give you some examples of what it might look like to wilfully sin in the broadest sense to bring it home a little bit.
 - Someone’s name was brought up, and you actively thought, “I hate that person” and continued to think, “I wish that person would disappear from the face of the earth.”
 - You got into an argument with your spouse and before you knew it, you belittled them and said something unkind and untrue in order to hurt them.
 - You’re taking a test for your online course, and even though the course description says, DO NOT USE GOOGLE, you’re stumped so you find your answer on Google anyway.
 - You’re doing research online for a work presentation and an inappropriate image pops up, and you decide you’re just going to check out what it is, so you click on it.
 - You’re in a group of friends and all of a sudden someone starts to talk about another person behind their back and even though you know you should leave or stop the conversation, you decide to add your two cents to the conversation.
 - Some guys at work tell an off-color joke and you blurt out a laugh when you just invited them to church the day before.
- Those are just a FEW of many examples of what it looks like to willfully sin against the Lord in some everyday circumstances.

So, based on some of those examples and others of the same nature, who here has willingly sinned against the Lord in the last month? Who here has willingly sinned against the Lord in the last month multiple times?

- Now, of course, there are sins that are done out of our ignorance, but even then they are still wilful. Certainly, any time we sense the conviction of the Holy Spirit or the voice of our conscience clearly warning us against a thought or an action and we

choose to do it anyway, those sins are in the category described in this verse. And God holds humanity accountable for every willful sin done against Him.

APPLICATION

So according to that survey, if the author of Hebrews means that any willing sin, done more than once, removes the efficacy of Christ's blood, and destines us for judgment, there is about 99% of the people in this room are toast. The other 1% are liars, so they are toast. AND, if that's what it means, then we need to accept it regardless of whether or not it applies to us.

But I don't believe we could accurately interpret this verse that way, even if we wanted to. I mean, first of all, consider the context of the past 10 chapters. You say, ***“Josh, this verse sure sounds like if you blow it, or have a season as a Christian of making mistakes, that you're out.”***

Ok, but why don't you tell me what these verses sound like:

- **Heb 4:3 NKJV – 3 For we who have believed do enter that rest...**
- **Heb 4:16 – Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.** (my greater times of need are when I fail)
- **Heb 6:19 NKJV – 19 This hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast...**
- **Heb 7:25 NKJV – 25 Therefore He is also able to save to the uttermost those who come to God through Him, since He always lives to make intercession for them.**
- **Heb 8:12 NKJV – 12 “For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their lawless deeds I will remember no more.”**
- **Heb 10:10, 14 NKJV – 10 By (His) will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all. ...**
- **14 For by one offering He has perfected forever those who are being sanctified.**

APPLICATION

The entire book of Hebrews is written to instill unshakable confidence and security in the

one-time, perfect blood sacrifice of Jesus for all sin and all sinners! Are you telling me that he is going to spend 10 chapters building confidence that Jesus' sacrifice alone is capable to forgiving all sin and bringing one forever close to God, only to make the very next statement, ***"But if you sin after you're forgiven, you will be unforgiven"?***

I mean think about the precedent Jesus set for human forgiveness in Matthew 18. Peter asked him, "Jesus how many time shall I forgive a brother who has sinned against me? Seven times?" To which Jesus responded, "No. Seventy times seven!"

- *I don't know about you, but if someone sins against you 490 times, I would call that willful, deliberate, and ongoing!*
- *Do you think Jesus sets a human precedent for forgiveness that He himself is not modeling?*

I think that context alone is worth trying to understand the passage in a clearer way.

THE CONSEQUENCES OF REJECTING THE OLD COVENANT

In Numbers 15 there's an interesting story of a man who was caught collecting sticks on the Sabbath day. Before this, the terms of God's covenant were clearly established. Part of that covenant that the people agreed to keep was honoring the Sabbath and keeping it holy.

- The man was ultimately put to death. Why? Did God have him killed because of gathering sticks? No. In doing so on the sabbath, he was directly neglecting the terms of the covenant. His willful sin was that having understood God's covenant, he directly put himself outside of its terms.
- The consequence of neglecting God's covenant was death. We'll see in a couple of weeks that the punishment for neglecting the New Covenant is worse than death.

But this leads me to the second interpretation of the passage, which I believe is the only logical interpretation.

B

If you willfully reject the New Covenant, you're toast.

CONTEXT

Remember the context here: Paul is convincing the Hebrew believer, who is being tempted to revert back to Judaism, that Jesus' sacrifice is not only better than animal sacrifices but voids them out completely. He plainly says it earlier in chapter 10:

Heb 10:4 NKJV – 4 For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and goats could take away sins.

It would also help to set the statement in the context of the previous "Let us" commands. The word "for" connects the penalty to the following statements. Those set the precedent for what the willful sin is:

- ***Let us draw near with full assurance*** – it's the willful sin of distancing one's self from God and His atoning work.
- ***Let us hold fast the confession of our faith without wavering*** – The opposite of holding fast is letting go. It's the willful sin of abandoning the New covenant faith in order to return to the Old covenant faith.
- ***Let us consider one another and not forsake the gathering together*** – it's the willful sin of not identifying one's self with the body of Christ because of outside pressure, love of the world, or avoidance of persecution.

Let me ask you, If you no longer trust Christ's sacrifice to cleanse you and bring you near to God, if you no longer hold to your confession of Christ, and you no longer identify yourself with the body of Christ, why even call yourself a Christian? You have wilfully abandoned everything you need to be made right before God.

It could be that the willful sin is the practice of participating in the Jewish sacrificial system after having the knowledge that Jesus' sacrifice is enough. ***"If we, after knowing Jesus was the better sacrifice, wilfully continue to sin by trusting in our religious sacrifices, and reverting to the Old Covenant, then that tramples on the cross and declares that one believes Jesus' blood wasn't enough. that is an insult to the Spirit of grace."***

Remember – Sacrifices were still taking place when this letter was written. How easy and tempting it would have been for a Jew, who has built their entire life and relationship with God on the sacrificial need, to think, "Just to be safe, I better offer an animal sacrifice on top of what Jesus did." What a slap in the face to the power of Christ's sacrifice. That is to suggest that Jesus' blood IS NOT ENOUGH.

I believe that this correlates to what Jesus says is the unpardonable sin of blasphemy of the Holy Spirit.

The word here for SIN is HAMARTANO - to wander from the right path.

BIBLE VERSE

[Mat 12:31 NKJV] 31 "Therefore I say to you, every sin and blasphemy will be forgiven men, but the blasphemy against the Spirit will not be forgiven men."

APPLICATION

I believe the Bible is clear that the blasphemy of the Holy Spirit is to ignore what the Spirit testifies about Christ. With that in mind, I want you to re-listen to all of the sections in Hebrews that refers to the Holy Spirit:

- **Heb 3:7-8 NKJV – 7 Therefore, as the Holy Spirit says: “Today, if you will hear His voice, do not harden your hearts...” (when he tells you about Jesus)**
- **Heb 9:8 NKJV – 8 the Holy Spirit indicating this, that the way into the Holiest of All was not yet made manifest while the first tabernacle was still standing.**
- **Heb 9:14 NKJV – 14 how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God, cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?**
- **Back in 10:29, whatever this wilful sinning is, it is insulting, “The Spirit of grace.”**

I believe this is what the author is declaring! The Holy Spirit has witnessed and testified to us that Jesus is the better lamb, the only needed sacrifice, the only needed high priest, the only needed temple. He is the sole and full communication of God to us, He is better than the angels, better than Moses, better than the Levites. He has the better blood and the better body and is all anyone needs to be made eternally right before God.

And you say, “Well, I better offer some sacrifices just in case? I better keep to the Old Covenant.” Wow, that would be the greatest insult and highest form of high-handed rebellion against the New Covenant. In fact, it equates to three things according to verse 29:

- ***Trample the Son of God underfoot*** – You only trample and walk on things that you don't consider valuable. No one takes their pearl and diamond collections and uses them to pave their dirt sidewalk.
- ***Consider the blood of the New Covenant a common thing*** – Common was the opposite of holy or set apart. Nothing too unique or special about it, in fact, it's not really all that more special than the blood of a common lamb.
- ***Insult the Spirit of grace*** – There has never been an act of greater undeserved kindness from God to man than what happened on the cross. It is an insult to God's grace to declare that it wasn't enough.

APPLICATION

Sadly many still do this today, and it's frightening. They have to find something else to trust in order to truly feel forgiven. They need to add to Jesus some other religious sacrifice.

- Yes, Jesus died for your sin, but you need to be baptized into OUR church, follow all our man-made religious rules, do what our leaders tell you, try to live a better life to make up for all the bad you've done, and that will be enough.
- Yes, Jesus died for that sin, but go confess to your priest who has the power to forgive you before God, have the saints pray for you, do penance and 4 hail marys and three "our fathers", and that will make you good as though you never sinned.
- **I have a better idea: When you sin, go straight to your mediator Jesus, confess your sin to Him in humble repentance, and believe by faith that His sacrificial work on the cross was enough before God to cleanse you of all unrighteousness, restore to you a clean conscience, and make you forever perfect before God.**

And I don't merely tell you that because it's biblically accurate, I'm pleading with you because if you're deciding to trust in some other form of religious "sacrifice", you are declaring that Jesus' blood isn't enough and you are in danger of the blood of that sacrifice not applying to you.

It's either Jesus and only Jesus, or there is no other sacrifice for sin and only the hope of fearful the judgment of God.

ILLUSTRATION

Supplemental Faith

Research by experts at Johns Hopkins University has found that half of all American adults take a multivitamin every day, spending a total of more than \$12 billion a year. Yet these medical experts conclude that supplementing a healthy diet is not necessary. If the average person eats a healthy diet, a supplemental vitamin has no benefits long-term or short-term, with the only exception being pregnant women who need extra folic acid and iron (“Is There Really Any Benefit to Multivitamins?” Johns Hopkins Medicine, accessed December 15, 2017, https://www.hopkinsmedicine.org/health/healthy_aging/healthy_body/is-there-really-any-benefit-to-multivitamins).

Now, I'm not a nutritional expert. Whether supplements are beneficial are not is not my department. But I KNOW that we don't need a supplement to the work of Jesus, We don't need to supplement Jesus's work with our own work, striving to earn favor or right standing with God. What Jesus did is enough. There are not extra vitamin S (salvation) to take.

Because of Jesus's finished work in his death and resurrection, believers can rest in the security of God's grace. Our debt is paid in full. We don't need “faith and”: faith and performance, faith and keeping the Law, faith, and perfection. We can rest in the finished work of Jesus for ourselves by believing in what he did for us.

We can rest from performance-based acceptance because God accepts us completely through his Son.

SUPPORT

I believe that this interpretation is completely supported by how the chapter ends.

Heb 10:35, 39 NKJV – 35 Therefore do not cast away your confidence, which has great reward. – The willful sin would be to cast away your confidence, to throw out the cross and your hope in the sacrifice of Jesus.

39 But we are not of those who draw back to perdition, but of those who believe to the saving of the soul. – Draw back to what? To the Old Covenant, to the old sacrifices, to the old priesthood, to the old system of worship. But what leads us to the saving of the soul? Believing, or FAITH, which just so happens to be the sole subject of the entire next chapter.

CONCLUSION

Today we end here. But before we move on to chapter 11, we will spend one more week finishing this chapter. Next week we will dive into what it means to fall into the hands of a living God without the hope of Christ. Next week is not a sermon that will be incredibly popular, but it is one that is absolutely necessary.

- There are those today who have shaped their theology by their worldview rather than by shaping their worldview by the truth. They have come to the conclusion that God had some sort of bipolar, multiple personality disorder between the OT and the NT. Somehow Jesus has completely pacified God the Father toward all sin from all people regardless of what they choose to do with Christ in this lifetime.
- They don't believe that Jesus would ever judge someone for their sin by eternally separating them from God. They believe that Jesus will accept someone into His kingdom after they die, even if they rejected Christ their entire life.
- I read a story of a pastor that was invited to speak at a church on the attributes of God. He replied, "I'm not sure that you want me to do that." The other pastor replied, "Why, who wouldn't want to study the nature of God?" To which he responded, "Oh, your people will love me when I talk about the love, compassion, mercy, patience, and kindness of God. But once I start talking about His justice, wrath, righteous anger, and judgment, they will raise their hands in objection and declare, 'that's not the God I worship!'"
- In order to come to this conclusion, they have to ignore or allegorize Jesus' plain statements, they have to ignore Paul, Peter, Jude, and John, and they have to reinvent how we should interpret and view the inerrancy of scripture... all to support the theology that sits well with their feelings.

This is dangerous namely because it gives people a false sense of security and it misrepresents the true nature of God. Yet right here we are told what awaits those who willfully sin against the New Covenant... **A CERTAIN, FEARFUL EXPECTATION OF JUDGEMENT**. No mincing of words there!

So next week, we are going to dig deep into scripture to examine the biblical (not cultural, not emotional) concept of God's judgment, God's mercy, and why the sacrifice of Jesus is at the center of it all. If you know someone dealing with questions about this, please bring them next week.

