

25—Hebrews 10:26-31—Woe to Those Who Go On Sinning

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I. Introduction

- A. It's Palm Sunday which is the beginning of Holy Week. This was the most important week in history. It was the day that Jesus fulfills the promise of the long awaited King of Israel to come riding into Jerusalem not to bring vengeance but peace. The crowd gets caught up in the frenzy of the moment and began laying down palm branches on the road as the Messiah straddled not a warhorse but donkey colt. The people shouted, "Hosanna" which means, God save us and Jesus came to do just that. This Priestly King makes his way to the Temple where he drives out the moneychangers because his house is to be a house of prayer for the nations. The climatic moment ends very in a very anti-climatic way. He is not crowned King as he deserved but Jesus came for a different crown—a crown of thorns and this was the week in which the world would be changed forever.
- B. The peace he came to bring was peace between God the Judge and sinful humanity. The way to reconciliation rested on the work of Jesus and primarily what happened on Good Friday and Resurrection Sunday. The cross is the most obvious picture of love that could ever be expressed and the resurrection is the hope that frees us to live for God's glory even now.
- C. So, what does a warning from Hebrews 10 have to do with Palm Sunday?
 1. I don't want what Jesus did during the Holy Week to be trampled by those who claim to be his and go on deliberately sinning. To treat the blood of Jesus as common and spit in the face of the Holy Spirit of grace is unthinkable to me and it should be to you as well.
 2. Therefore, may we heed the warning to not go on sinning willfully but to persevere in faith together until he returns.

II. Main Point

- A. Coming off of three exhortations and a clear explanation of the superiority of the priesthood and sacrifice of Jesus, the preacher warns the congregation that going on sinning after receiving the truth ends in judgment.

III. Outline

- A. The Truth Already Received
- B. The Warning for Going On Sinning deliberately
- C. The More Severe Punishment Deserved
- D. Confession of Enduring Faith

IV. Exposition

- A. We left off last week with two amazing possessions—authorization to enter the holy places by the blood of Jesus and the ongoing priestly ministry of Christ presiding over his house—the church. He then exhorted us to do three things in light of those possessions—draw near to God, hold fast the confession of hope, and consider one another. The reason the book of Hebrews was written was to exhort the church to persevere in faith to the end together. Some had likely already walked away and others were drifting away. There are some who need to repent and the rest need to persevere in faith together to the end. So, let's first be reminded of the truth already received.
 1. The preacher has clearly explained the truth.
 - a) The truths that Jesus is superior to angels, Moses, Abraham, the Levitical priesthood, and animal sacrifices.
 - (1) The way back to fellowship with God could never have been achieved through any of these. However, they clearly pointed to Jesus who did accomplish that which is necessary for us to be forgiven and made perfect so that we could draw near to God.
 - (2) That's the larger picture of the knowledge of the truth they had already received.
 2. However, I believe the immediate context is mostly in view here—the two possessions and the three exhortations.
 - a) I think we can hear this warning and begin to fill in the blank for which sins we think should be there. We likely insert those we do not struggle with or those really heinous sins.

- (1) However, to have confidence to enter the holy places by the blood of Jesus and to have Jesus reigning over you as the merciful and faithful high priest who understands our weaknesses—and not to act upon them doesn't make sense.
 - (a) As I've said before, the greatest sin is unbelief. Unbelief rests at the bottom of all other evils.
 - (b) How do we explain a Christian who does not pray? Is it not unbelief?
 - (c) Who thinks that believing in the gospel is not something that we continue to do? Why would you not see the need to hold it fast to the end?
 - (d) When there are many voices speaking into your mind, who will win that battle of unbelief if you remain alone and cut off from the assembly? How will you consider one another? Who will you love? Who will you serve?
 - i) We are hardwired to love and serve ourselves and if we are not stirred up to these good things then we will drift away from the gospel and into thinking we don't need anyone else but ourselves.
 - (2) Do you see these as amazing gifts from the Lord?
 - (a) The truth we have already heard that Christ has made perfect those who are being sanctified.
 - (b) If you have repented and are believing that, you have received the truth. Faith is receiving the gift of the gospel.
 - (c) However, it's very possible that you have merely tasted the truth and have never swallowed the truth.
 - (d) It very possible to mimic Christian behavior and remain in good standing among a people who do not know how or do not care that there is no visible fruit in your life.
- B. That's the context from which this warning is set—now the warning if we go on deliberately sinning.
1. He sets up a condition for us. If we going on deliberately sinning after receiving the knowledge of the truth then a sacrifice can no longer be made for sins.
 - a) The issue raised here is the continuing of sin AFTER receiving the truth.
 - (1) Note the word after—Have any of you ever seen those crazy looking scissor-like things that people used to cut grass with? The blades were flat against the ground so that you could snip off grass around a sidewalk. I guess weed-eaters were not that common when I was a kid because that's what my mom used. I recall her telling me not to play with them while I stood there on the sidewalk with them in my hand. I was around three or four at the time. The repeated receiving of the truth from my mom didn't do me any good because I didn't obey. You have to obey to learn but at three years old I somehow thought I knew better than my mom. Well, I dropped the grass shears and the point of them went into the top of my foot. The scar is still there even now. All of you knew that I was going to get hurt, right? That's what we are supposed to expect.
 - b) This going on sinning deliberately after receiving the truth is what the “for” points us back to there in verse 26.
 - (1) But if we go on disobeying them deliberately after receiving them, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins.
 - (a) Yet, it normal these days for church members to disobey them.
 - i) I was reading an article urging parents to require obedience from their children.
 - (1) It reminded me of times when I've watched parents bribe their kids into obedience. I feel the temptation. Parenting is hard work.
 - (a) I'm not here to beg you or bribe you into praying or holding fast to the gospel or considering one another. That's your decision and responsibility. But at some point I hope we are a church that cares deeply about each other and wants the very best for each other and that very best is what God has already instructed us to do. We do not get to decide the track on which we are to travel.

- (2) The Bible says in Ephesians 6:1 Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right.
 - (a) These days, Christian parents do not even require their kids to obey.
 - (b) Does our church require obedience to God's word?
 - (c) What is the church saying to kids and neighbors who know full well what members are doing but we have remained silent?
 - (d) My guess is that it bothers you but you do not know what to do about it.
 - (e) It's likely you have watched people go on sinning deliberately and their kids and grandkids follow in their footsteps because we haven't done anything about it.
 - (f) The Lord wants us to call them to repentance and help them out of that pattern of sin but if they refuse we must say together that we can no longer affirm that you are a believer.
- ii) Do you think obedience to God is necessary? Did you think saving faith was merely to purchase a get out of hell free card and go on doing whatever you please? That's not saving faith.
 - (1) Am I saying we are saved by our obedience? No. We are saved by Jesus's obedience. But I am saying that if you have saving faith you were saved for good works not by them.
 - (a) Instead of being a slave of sin you are now a slave of righteousness.
 - (b) And of course we do not do this perfectly but we are growing in our obedience and we do it in the power of the Holy Spirit.
- c) A key word here is deliberately.
 - (1) The bible distinguishes between unintentional and intentional sins.
 - (a) For example, I was reading in Deuteronomy this week and the person who was cutting wood with his neighbor and the axe flew off and struck him accidentally and killed him is very different than the person who lies in wait to murder him.
 - (2) To be deliberate is to be intentionally willing. It's premeditated.
- 2. So, there in verse 26 and 27, if someone who claims to be a Christian goes on sinning willingly there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins, but a fearful expectation of judgment, and a fury of fire that will consume the adversaries.
 - a) In other words, do not expect a sacrifice for sins but expect judgment. Expect God's wrath because he is jealous for his glory.
 - b) Those who go on sinning deliberately are objects of God's wrath.
 - (1) And he is about to devour them in his zeal of fire.
 - (a) As an example of the Lord's zeal for his glory, the preacher offered an example there in verse 28.
 - i) This is a quote from Deuteronomy 17:2-6.
 - (1) It tells the story of those found among the people of God who are going on deliberately sinning by worshiping other gods or worshiping the creation instead the Creator which he has forbidden are to be stoned to death on the evidence of two or three witnesses.
 - (2) This is stating the act of physical death by which they were purging the evil among them.
 - (a) We are called to purge the evil among us too by way of removing them from the church not stoning them. We do that so that they will be ashamed and repent before it is too late.
 - ii) Why? That's a timely question because the preacher has an answer for us in our next point.
- C. We've heard that if we go on sinning deliberately after receiving the knowledge of the truth, we should expect God's zealous wrath. Now we hear the reason behind why this is so important. There's

something for more glorious to protect and worthy of far more wrath than being stoned to death. The more severe punishment after receiving the knowledge of the truth.

1. To treat the possessions that Christ has purchased for us as though they mean nothing is wicked. Do we have a zeal of his glory?
2. Verse 29 asks the question—how much worse punishment do you think will be deserved?
 - a) There are three things he mentions followed by three statements from the Lord in return.
 - (1) But let's imagine you watch three fire fighters rescue your child from falling through the ice on a lake and those three fire fighters die in the process. Would it make any sense for you to go and throw your child back in the lake? What would that say about what you think about those three who lost their lives?
 - (2) Even more so, Christ's death. The first is how much more punishment will be deserved by the one who has trampled underfoot the Son of God?
 - (a) I think the first thing I notice is the honor the writer of Hebrews has. Is he over zealous or does this expose a lack of honor and worthiness of the Son of God in us?
 - (b) If the blood of Christ with one sacrifice for all time pays the penalty of all who believe then how valuable is the Son of God?
 - i) We think it's disrespectful to walk on furniture!!!
 - ii) To go on sinning deliberately after receiving the truth is like walking on Jesus.
 - iii) Do we love the worthiness of Jesus? Do we care that people who claim the name of Jesus also trample him underfoot?
 - (3) The second one is—how much more severe punishment will be deserved by the one who has profaned the blood of the covenant?
 - (a) To profane is to treat as common.
 - i) If we treated our finest china like a paper plates we would be treating something of great value like it was disposable and common.
 - (b) For someone who professes to be washed in the blood of Christ but goes on intentionally sinning after hearing the truth is treating the blood of Christ as common and worthless and disposable.
 - (4) The last one is—how much more punishment will be deserved for the one who has outraged the Spirit of grace?
 - (a) To outrage the the Holy Spirit of grace would be like seeing Jesus raise Lazarus from the dead and claiming that a demonic spirit did that, not God.
 - (b) Or you may recall the parable Jesus told about the servant who begged his master to forgive his million dollar debt to which he did, then that servant went and beat up a guy who owed him five bucks. The master heard what he did.
 - i) Matthew 18:33-35 ³³And should not you have had mercy on your fellow servant, as I had mercy on you?' ³⁴And in anger his master delivered him to the jailers, until he should pay all his debt. ³⁵So also my heavenly Father will do to every one of you, if you do not forgive your brother from your heart."
 - ii) This is an example of outraging the Spirit of grace.
 - b) Three responses from God
 - (1) Vengeance is Mine; I will repay.
 - (2) The Lord will judge his people.
 - (3) The preacher concludes with this—to fall into the hands of the living God is fearful.
 - c) I think we all know what God means when he says these things.
 - (1) Yet, as for Israel, they likely didn't expect their nation to show up the list of judgments. Throughout the prophets, God would pronounce judgment on the nations that had treated Israel wickedly.
 - (2) That was meant to encourage them to trust him and he would repay them for what they did.
 - (3) But, he would not overlook the apostasy of his own people. If they went on serving other gods then judgment was coming to them as well.

- (4) They could not claim to be sons of Abraham or God's people while disobeying what God had said. Obviously, God eventually sent them into exile.
- (a) As Paul says in Romans—not all Israel is Israel.
 - (b) You cannot identify as God child and claim to believe in the gospel and yet walk underfoot the Son of God.
- D. I don't want to end here. If you have read this passage closely, you noticed that phrase—by which he was sanctified.
1. The question will arise, can someone who was sanctified lose his or her salvation.
 - a) Our confession of faith in our bylaws says verbatim under Section 11: The Perseverance of the Saints
 - (1) We believe that only born-again believers endure to the end and that they are kept by the power of God through faith in Jesus Christ.
 - (a) The scripture references are—Romans 8:38-39 ³⁸ For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, ³⁹ nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.
 - (b) And 2 Timothy 1:12 But I am not ashamed, for I know whom I have believed, and I am convinced that he is able to guard until that day what has been entrusted to me.
 - (2) I believe every word of that statement is the truth.
 - b) The only problem is, we do not know who has been born again and who hasn't.
 - (1) We take someone's profession of faith and gladly baptize them. But neither of those things prove that someone has been regenerated.
 - (2) What proves that you are born again is evidence of the fruit of the Holy Spirit in our lives. Has God written his law on our hearts? Is our faith alive and verifiable through good works?
 - (a) And that's not just for a season but rather those who were truly born again will persevere in faith to the end.
 - (b) Jesus says in John 6:38-40 ³⁸ For I have come down from heaven, not to do my own will but the will of him who sent me. ³⁹ And this is the will of him who sent me, that I should lose nothing of all that he has given me, but raise it up on the last day. ⁴⁰ For this is the will of my Father, that everyone who looks on the Son and believes in him should have eternal life, and I will raise him up on the last day."
 - (c) And John 10:27-29 ²⁷ My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me. ²⁸ I give them eternal life, and they will never perish, and no one will snatch them out of my hand. ²⁹ My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all, and no one is able to snatch them out of the Father's hand.
 - (d) But Jesus also said in John 8:31-32 ³¹ So Jesus said to the Jews who had believed him, "If you abide in my word, you are truly my disciples, ³² and you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free."
 - c) In our passage today, if we go on sinning deliberately after receiving the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins, but a fearful expectation of judgment.
 - (1) To do this is to reject Christ's salvation and "has treated as common the blood of the covenant that has sanctified him" and deserves eternal punishment. (Grudem 801).
 - (a) There are people within a congregation who claim to be saved and live differently here than they do in front of others.
 - (b) There are also some who live their sinful lives openly for all to see with no evidence of repentance and we claim they are true believers.
 - i) You are not doing them any favors by affirming that.
 - ii) Church membership in part is the affirming of people we believe to be truly born again. Is that true of us?
 - (1) If going on deliberately trusting the Lord to the end is the evidence of true faith then the going on deliberately sinning to the end is evidence that we are not born again.

- (2) This text is warning us and it is calling us to action. And to the one who is living like this it giving you an opportunity to repent.
- (3) James 5:19-20 ¹⁹ My brothers, if anyone among you wanders from the truth and someone brings him back, ²⁰ let him know that whoever brings back a sinner from his wandering will save his soul from death and will cover a multitude of sins.
- (4) May this Palm Sunday be that day that Jesus truly reigns over our hearts.