

## Heb. 10:26-39

Earlier in this study we spoke about there being 5 or 6 warnings in this book (depending on how you divide them up). And today we come to another one of those (the second to the last).

- And I will say, just as when we came to a few of the other warnings, when read out of context of the rest of the letter, this warning has often been misinterpreted and misused by the more casual reader who is hopping around in the bible (therefore missing the bigger picture established through the previous chapters and verses). So hopefully today we can clear some of this up a bit, while getting some great instruction.

*<sup>26</sup> For if we sin willfully after we have received the knowledge of the truth (that Jesus is the once forever sacrifice that covered our sins past, present, and future [verses 14]), there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins, <sup>27</sup> but a certain fearful expectation of judgment, and fiery indignation which will devour the adversaries.*

So, what is this willful sin being spoken of here? Is it encompassing any and all sin? If so, **can I just ask how many people here today have sinned willfully since excepting Jesus as your savior?** If you didn't include yourself in that one you probably just now accepted Him and haven't had time to do so yet. I'm not making light of sin, but am trying to be a realist, because it helps determine what sin is being spoken of here.

- The bible tells us in many places that we will not live a perfect life this side of heaven (Rom. 7:14-25, 1 John 1:8-10 & 2:1, James 3:2, Phil. 3:12). So we know this cannot be speaking about sinning and then being somehow discarded by God. Which is something we have covered several times already in this book of the bible alone **and has been made clear to will not happen.**
- Now, just to be clear, there are those who claim Jesus and then live in a pattern or regular practice of unrepentant sin, and that is not the same as having moments of failure. That ongoing practice of unrepentant sin is an indication that such a person might not make it into the kingdom of heaven (1 John 3:6-10, 1 Cor. 6:9-11, 2 Pet. 2:20-22). **But for the true follower of Jesus the knowledge of His grace will always bring sincere repentance, followed by more of His grace.**

I guess the next question could then be, who is he speaking about here. The first identifier is they are the *adversaries* of God. And we should note actually two groups of people identified by the Holy Spirit here, **1)** “we”(those the author identifies as being with him in their true faith in Jesus), and **2)** *the adversaries* (enemies).

- Before you and I came to Jesus we were identified as being God's adversaries or enemies. Phil. 3:18-19 tells us, “*For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are enemies of the cross of Christ: whose end is destruction...* (see also Rom. 5:10, Col. 1:21)”. But our position in Jesus has greatly shifted. Col. 1:21-22 tells us, “*And you, who once were alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now He (Jesus) has reconciled in the body of His flesh through death, to present you holy, and blameless, and above reproach in His sight*”.
- Without these distinctions we just spoke about, you can come away with the wrong understanding of what sin is being spoken about here.
- In context and with the surrounding truths found in the rest of the bible, it is clear **it's rejecting or turning back to something other than faith in Jesus.** So now he is going to give us more details as he builds upon this.

*<sup>28</sup> Anyone who has rejected Moses' law (the Old Covenant) dies without mercy on the testimony of two or three witnesses. <sup>29</sup> 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 (the new covenant) by which he was sanctified a common thing, and insulted the Spirit of grace?*

So we get the clearest indication of who is being spoken about here. And it's those who rejected or renounced Jesus. And remember, this is the book of Hebrews, so the Holy Spirit is speaking to a nation who had made a covenant with God, mediated by Moses. And to whom God promised a coming Messiah and a better covenant (Jer. 31:31-34 [which we read through last time]).

- This is why **verse 26** speaks of there being no more or alternative sacrifice. Because there can be no greater sacrifice than the Son of God for our sin and for our reunification with God. And Jesus gave Himself for that very reason. This is also why **verse 27** speaks of *a certain fearful expectation of judgment for those who renounce or reject His sacrifice on their behalf.*

- And being that [verse 29](#) includes those who had been *sanctified* by the blood of Jesus, it must mean there were some who had renounced their faith in Jesus and turned away. Which makes the saying “keep the faith” a very relevant encouragement to share with one another.

Works do not save you, but faith in the finished work of Jesus does. He is either Who He said He is or He is not. And if He is (because He is) then what could anyone’s big picture plan in turning back from Him be? Whatever it is, it’s not a good plan, because it’s not an eternal plan. As a matter of fact, it’s no plan at all.

And he breaks this out further (for our understanding) by giving us [three ways God views rejection](#) of what was done for us through Him sending His only begotten Son into the world to die the death we deserved. Now before we look at these, let me also say it’s a mistake to view these in terms of how you see the significance of them. We assess things incorrectly all the time, inflating significance or diminishing it regularly. The way all people really need to read these things is in view of how God sees it. So, let’s go through these three distinctions to see that very thing.

- The first is the [1\) \*trampling the Son of God under foot\*](#). It’s interesting to me that today we see many men wearing shirts that say, “Don’t tread on me”, giving a strong warning against seeing their freedom and liberties as something you can disrespect. And I don’t think they are wrong. But it can be these same people and others [who think the cost to God for the freedom and liberty given to us in Jesus is something ok to tread upon](#). As we come to memorial day, it would be very unwise to stand amongst a group of soldiers who have been in combat and lost buddies [and begin to tell them the losses of their brothers and sisters didn’t matter to them at all, because the power of those who have suffered and lost others for you will bring strong and justified response](#). Now think about what God endured for our salvation and the power behind His response to those who tread on the sacrifice He has made.
- Next, He sees anyone who has rejected Jesus as [2\) \*counting the blood of the covenant...a common thing\*](#). You could also see this as people Jesus died for viewing Him as just one of many options. As though if it works for you, great. But if not, just choose something you like more. With the thinking that [1\) God stepping out of glory, 2\) to enter a fallen world in human flesh, 3\) to be despised and rejected by those He came to die in the place of, 4\) so that they could be set free from their sins and the penalty of it, 5\) to be adopted into the family of God and go to heaven, is no greater than believing in mythology, self-enlightenment, works of self righteousness, or some other religious or atheistic idea](#).
- And finally, He tells us of [3\) the \*insult\* it is to \*the Spirit of grace\*](#). It’s kind of like someone who knows that by moving in to save you they are going to die, but they do it anyway (they’re giving their life for yours). And later the father of that rescuer gets a chance to connect with the rescued person, and that person says to the father, “what your child did was not necessary because I would have saved myself. Therefore, I never even really think about them and don’t care what it cost you. They were a fool to get involved. So just go away and leave me alone”. Folks, it is no less harsh and disrespectful to God to reject the sacrifice of His sinless Son on your behalf. It’s utterly *insulting*. So now we come to God response.

*<sup>30</sup> For we know Him who said, “Vengeance is Mine, I will repay,” says the Lord. And again, “The Lord will judge His people.” <sup>31</sup> It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.*

Who “*His people*” is referring to here is an important distinction. We’ve already discussed this, but for clarity, it is the Jewish (or Hebrew) people. And what we know is by this time the vast majority had rejected Jesus. [But as we’ve already seen, this includes those who turned back from their faith in Him](#) (so it can certainly address the gentile believers who also do the same).

- But let’s take a minute and also talk about the *judgement* and *vengeance* of God, because I think this falls into the category of things people are uncomfortable with. I know this to be the case because of the way we see churches and believers try to dismiss verses like this (they would not tolerate “Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God” by Johnathen Edwards, which was instrumental in the first great American awakening of the 1730’s). [But are these ungodly characteristics being displayed by God, or that we simply aren’t being realistic?](#) Obviously, it has to be the second of the two, [1\) because our God is the only God, 2\) He is righteous in all that He does, 3\) and He is the very source and substance of love itself](#).
- First of all, we need to understand the word *vengeance* means “just retribution” or “to execute perfect justice”. And we have often spoken about how if God is righteous and just, He must deal with sin. To not deal with sin would be unjust. So [1\) He sent His son to cover our sin by His own blood](#) (that’s incredible

grace). **2)** But for those who reject it, there is a just judgment coming (that's righteous and just retribution). Unfortunately, we have perfect examples today of injustice of not dealing with sin in repeat offenders who are released to go on and destroy other people's lives. And many have felt a sense of anger.

- But when it's God who is angry, we know He is justified, for He has never sinned. Even having provided a way of escape for us who have. Folks, the cross is where God's justice and perfect love met. But without receiving by faith what happened there, only judgment remains. That should rightly scare anyone who has renounced or rejected Jesus. And the bible says that fear is the beginning of wisdom (Prov. 9:10).

And now we have a bit of a transition as the Holy Spirit again addresses these troubled and wavering believers who had not turned back from the faith and needed encouragement to keep on going.

*<sup>32</sup> But recall the former days in which, after you were illuminated (speaking of their coming to Jesus), you endured a great struggle with sufferings: <sup>33</sup> partly while you were made a spectacle both by reproaches and tribulations, and partly while you became companions of those who were so treated; <sup>34</sup> 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.*

Here is where I think so many new believers would benefit in gaining understanding, for it takes away the narrative of what has been identified as the prosperity gospel. Because right after reminding them of the day in which the spiritual lights came on and they walked out of darkness, he speaks of the suffering and struggles they had and would encounter. Because he doesn't want them to have endured such afflictions for the labors of love they gave to others, for nothing. The reality is that everything we do for Jesus in this life comes with rewards in eternity. We looked at this in 6:10 which told us, "*God is not unjust to forget your work and labor of love which you have shown toward His name, in that you have ministered to the saints, and do minister* (see also Gal. 6:9-10, Matt. 6:19-21 & 10:42)."

- I don't know about you, but the only way I can joyfully endure such challenges is when I am seeing things from a heavenly perspective, which requires **real and abiding faith**. Any of us can talk the talk, but how many of us will *joyfully accept the plundering of your goods, knowing that you have a better and an enduring possession for yourselves in heaven?*
- The truth is that very few people are willing to come to someone else's aid when it adds to their own difficulties. But when we live in faith, expecting what God has promised is coming, it becomes an irresistible draw we cannot easily ignore. Is this where our focus and reality in life is at?
- It was for these believers, until somewhere along the way they allowed their faith to fade, because they took their eyes off Jesus in heaven, and were looking at how to live to appease men on earth, in order to make life easier, prosperous, and more conflict free (Gal. 1:10, Isa. 2:22, 1 Thes. 2:4).

*<sup>35</sup> Therefore (after enduring all of that) do not cast away your confidence, which has great reward. <sup>36</sup> For you have need of endurance, so that after you have done the will of God, you may receive the promise: <sup>37</sup> "For yet a little while, And He who is coming will come and will not tarry.*

How many of us need some **endurance** right now? I speak to so many who feel like they have run out of the ability to wait for Jesus return any longer. Folks, no one gets a free ride in this life on a fallen earth. It can be filled with celebrations and sorrows, acceptance and rejection, and dreams and doubts. **But there is not another group of people who have reason to have so much hope.**

- **1)** Our God sees, **2)** intervenes, **3)** joins in all the seasons of life with us, **4)** working transformation in each of them, **5)** while promising us a day when all the trials and tribulations will end, **but the celebrations, love, and dreams will only forever be our reality.**
- So I think it's only right that **the Holy Spirit here tells us we need to develop our endurance muscles.** Sometimes we're just a little too self-pitying. **It's alright to struggle, but ongoing whining isn't going to help.** As a matter of fact, it can be that prolonged self-pitying that can cause us to forget to live in light of the promises of God. And how is that going to make our situation better? It's not!
- I know this can sound harsh to some, but the reality is wallowing around in the mire or returning to life without God isn't going to do a thing for you but steal your eternal hope. **He is coming again** (and will be right on time)! **Are you keeping your eyes on Him?**

<sup>38</sup> Now the just shall live by faith; But if anyone draws back, My soul has no pleasure in him. ” <sup>39</sup> But we are not of those who draw back to perdition (meaning destruction, ruin, utter loss), but of those who believe to the saving of the soul.

I think these two verses are so important in our understanding of the things God has been saying in this letter. We have talked about **1)** the work of Jesus forgiving our sins past, present and future. **2)** We’ve discussed our ability to now enter the true holy of holies in heaven because of the shed blood of Jesus Christ. **3)** We’ve discussed the washing and regeneration we’ve received because of Jesus. Which all leads to the reality that our salvation is not something to be gained and lost over and over. It is a one-time event, and it is forever.

- Yet there is and has been this tension and vital reality shared throughout this letter. And that is **the absolute need to continue to hold onto your faith in Jesus (2 Cor. 5:7)**. Ch. 11 is going to give us a case study on such **faith** by looking at imperfect people whose unwavering faith in God caused their record in this life to be more favorable than what we would assume, based on what we have in scripture concerning them.
- And we find in these verses that prior to faith in Jesus, everyone’s course in life was leading to utter loss (*perdition*). Because when he speaks of drawing back, you can’t draw back to a place you weren’t at before.
- So we see two parties listed here **1)** the just (or justified) who live because of faith in Jesus, and **2)** those who turn back from faith in Him. And the author notes himself and his audience as those who do not draw back or renounce their faith. I hope this includes everyone who has ever been a part of this church family.

Now I must say there are two basic interpretations on what this destruction is referring to, **1)** is it eternal destruction for those who apostatize by renouncing their faith in Jesus, or **2)** is it a temporary or earthly existent state of ruin for those who are in Jesus but are backslidden and living the like the world? This group could be those spoken of in places like **1 Cor. 3:10-15** who have lost their rewards and wasted this life (see also **2 John 1:8**, **Co. 2:18**, **Rev. 3:11**).

- But I’m afraid it speaks of the first, based on all of the other verses we have covered today pointing to that reality. And in both **John 17:12** (speaking of Judas as the son of *perdition*) and in **2 Thes. 2:3** (speaking of antichrist also as the son of *perdition*) **it clearly references the destruction of eternal magnitude** (as do all 8 uses of this word in the NT). **You cannot somehow lose your salvation by some sort of failure, but you can relinquish your faith willfully.** And there is no other sacrifice to then cover your sin. Your on your own.
- And the reason I believe this is so important is because each of us is going to face some real challenges in this life. Some will be the cause of living in a fallen world, others can be caused by others, and then there are those we create ourselves. **And the enemy and the world will constantly be telling us to just go ahead and give up on faith in our savior.**
- And some scientific discovery, hidden evidence, spiritual encounter will be reported at least every few months (even though they all end up disproved in a relatively short period of time or just forgotten because of their irrelevance) that your faith is in vain, a fairy tale, incoherent, or intellectual suicide. **Because the enemy wants everyone to go to hell in order to spite God.** And God wants us to place our **faith** in Jesus for eternal life.

Folks, wrestle with what you need to wrestle with (**Eph. 6:12**), or grieve as long as you need to grieve, or search for that answer as long as you need to search or until God reveals it to you (**Psa. 62:8**). **But never put your faith in Jesus to the saving of your soul in that question box.** Guard that treasure of reality and place your faith in that truth far above your emotions or worldly experiences. **They can lie to you and lead you to ruin.** Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding (**Prov. 3:5** [see also **Isa. 26:3-4**]).

- **There is only one appropriate place to put your faith, and it’s in Jesus.** And if you feel low on endurance, surround yourself with those how will keep pushing you into the arms of Jesus.
- And be those who take the other brothers and sisters to Him, who come alongside one another, who sacrifice even to your hurt. Because our God is coming, and He is a rewarder of those who walk in faith in Him.
- Be able to echo what Paul said at the end of his life, **“I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith (2 Tim. 4:7)”**.