

This booklet contains the notes from my Wednesday night Bible study at New Life Assembly of God in Janesville, Wisconsin. The study was made up of both lectures and questions and answers spread out over several weeks. Missing from this manuscript are the excellent answers that came forth from the study participants. That missing element lessens the value of this work. However, I trust you, the reader will still come to better understand the limits of God's amazing grace.

Pastor Michael Jackson

## **SINS FOR WHICH THERE IS NO PARDON**

Do you realize that there a number of sins for which there is no pardon, either here or in eternity? As sad as this is, it is true. Over the next several weeks, we are going to look at these sins. We will begin with the best known of this evils -- the Unpardonable Sin. Much confusion surrounds the Unpardonable Sin. I trust this study will help erase some of that confusion.

### **LETS SEE, NOW, WHAT THE BIBLE HAS TO SAY ON THE SUBJECT:**

- Matthew 12:31, **“And so I tell you, every sin and blasphemy will be forgiven men, but the blasphemy against the Spirit will not be forgiven.”**
- Mark 3:29, **“But whoever blasphemes against the Holy Spirit will never be forgiven; he is guilty of an eternal sin.”**
- Luke 12:10, **“And everyone who speaks a word against the Son of Man will be forgiven, but anyone who blasphemes against the Holy Spirit will not be forgiven.”**

**FIRST, THE PEOPLE IN THIS PASSAGE -- THE SCRIBES AND PHARISEES -- WERE ATTRIBUTING THE WORK OF THE HOLY SPIRIT TO SATAN.** Notice Matthew 12:22-24, **“Then they brought him a demon-possessed man who was blind and mute, and Jesus healed him, so that he could both talk and see. All the people were astonished and said, “Could this be the Son of David?” But when the Pharisees heard this, they said, “It is only by Beelzebub, the prince of demons, that this fellow drives out demons.””**

In light of the Lord’s victory over the demons, and in light of the people’s confession that Jesus was truly the Messiah -- David’s son -- these leaders attributed the works of the Lord to the devil himself. As we will see in a moment, on four different occasions in the Gospel of John the people accused Jesus of being demon possessed.

### **NEXT, THE SIN INVOLVED A DELIBERATE OR WILLFUL ACT OF UNBELIEF.**

Mark 3:22 describes the Pharisees **“coming down from Jerusalem.”** A survey of Mark 2 and 3 shows a pattern of opposition to Jesus’ ministry and suggests that their coming down to be with Jesus was with the same intention. They were set on harassing Him; on trapping Him.

**THE SIN WAS NOT COMMITTED IN IGNORANCE.** These Pharisees and scribes were experts in the Law. Matthew tells us that their blasphemous accusation came after they heard the people asking whether Jesus could really be the Messiah. They had just witnessed the healing of the demoniac. Certainly if anyone should have known that Jesus’ deeds fulfilled scriptural prophecies concerning the Messiah, it should have been these people.

**THE SIN WAS NOT A SINGLE MOMENTARY ACT.** While it may appear as such on the surface, the Greek rendering of Mark 3:22 is best translated, **“they kept saying,”** indicating that the scribes were dogging Jesus’ footsteps making this accusation repeatedly.

- John 7:20, **“You are demon-possessed,” the crowd answered. “Who is trying to kill you?”**
- John 8:48, **“The Jews answered him, “Aren’t we right in saying that you are a Samaritan and demon-possessed?”**
- John 8:52, **“At this the Jews exclaimed, “Now we know that you are demon-possessed! Abraham died and so did the prophets, yet you say that if anyone keeps your word, he will never taste death.”**
- John 10:20, **“Many of them said, “He is demon-possessed and raving mad. Why listen to him?”**

**THE SIN WAS COMMITTED IN FULL VIEW OF A DEMONSTRATION OF GOD’S POWER.** Luke 4:18 indicates that Jesus went forth **“in the power of the Holy Spirit.”** Consequently, the rejection of Jesus by the scribes and Pharisees constituted a rejection of the Holy Spirit’s witness of Jesus as the

Messiah.

It was here and then that Jesus said in Matthew 12:31-32, **“Every sin and blasphemy will be forgiven men, but the blasphemy against the Spirit will not be forgiven men.... whoever speaks against the Holy Spirit, it will not be forgiven him, either in this age or in the age to come.”**

Having said that, I want to share with you a letter that I recently ran across on the Internet. I want to read it and then I want us to discuss it:

I was ordained a Deacon in my Church about 1 year ago, by God's Grace and the inspiration of His Holy Spirit. Before I was ordained however, I had doubts about whether or not this was God's will. As a friend praised and encouraged me not to doubt and to rejoice, I made a very serious error in judgment and, in an attempt to be humble and ward off the praise I was receiving from him I said, My friend it is not God who is urging me to be a deacon but S---n (the enemy of God), so that I would fall into the sin of pride or take on something I was not ready." I have confessed this sin to God privately and in the presence of my priest and to the friend who heard this. However, to this day I am terrified that what I had done may be unforgivable. I have no excuse for saying something this stupid except that I did not intend any malice against God- I was simply trying to be humble- Yet my stupid words seem to have attributed the Spirit's work to His enemy- as the Pharisees did. Is this not the unforgivable sin.??? I am terrified.

**ASK:** What do you think?

From what we have already discovered, the unpardonable sin is not merely saying an unkind thing about the Holy Spirit. Nor was it an act of speaking against Jesus.

Look at the Apostle Paul record prior to Calvary. Scripture records that he was **“a blasphemer and a persecutor and a violent man.”** Nevertheless 1 Timothy 1:13 says that he was **“shown mercy.”** 1 Timothy 1:15 then continues: **“What I say is true, and you should fully accept it: Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am the worst.”**

Then, too, Peter denied the Lord Jesus 3 times.

**LIKE THE FELLOW WHO WROTE THE LETTER, EVERY ONCE IN A WHILE SOMEBODY ASKS ME ABOUT THE UNPARDONABLE SIN. THEY WANT TO KNOW IF THEY HAVE COMMITTED IT.** Well, if that question has ever troubled you, I want you to take this little test:

- Do you know when you do wrong?
- Do you feel conviction after committing a sin?
- Do you feel sorry over such an offense?
- Do you sense the Holy Spirit drawing you to repentance, to God, and to the altar?
- Do you ever experience a desire to serve the Lord and worship Him?
- Do you ever consider God?

If you answered even one of those questions with a yes, then in all likelihood, you are innocent of having committed this terrible sin.

If anyone today has committed this sin, it would be the one who is hardhearted, who has turned against Jesus, reviled Him, and become so depraved that he would claim that God's Spirit is Satan. As we have already heard, there is no possibility of committing this sin accidentally. Nor, I repeat, is anyone who has committed this sin likely to feel grief for having committed it.

The term blasphemy speaks of a deliberate and godless rejection of the saving power and grace of Jesus Christ. The reason the sin against the Holy Spirit will not be forgiven is not because God is unwilling or unable to forgive; instead, those who persist in this godless attitude stubbornly refuse to repent. They do not want to receive forgiveness and prefer to continue in their slander of God's

Servant. They have also shut off the only way to grace -- Jesus Christ and His Holy Spirit. In shutting Him off from their lives, they shut off His conviction, His drawing power, His work of wooing them to repentance.

**ASK:** Can you think of any one who has committed this evil? To be honest, I can't. I personally think that it is very rare. Remember, the Lord wants people to be saved. I have also found that people are, for one reason or another, rather cautious about the Holy Spirit -- even hardened sinners. They will talk about the Lord and use His name in vain, but one doesn't hear that when it comes to the person of the Holy Ghost.

**ASK: ARE THERE OTHER SINS FOR WHICH ONE CANNOT BE FORGIVEN?**

Actually, the answer is yes. There are several. Can you name one?

**1. ONE WHO DOES NOT CALL UPON THE LORD DURING THEIR LIFE:** The first unpardonable sin is to die without ever receiving Jesus. These folks are doomed eternally. They do not get a second chance. To die lost is to die without hope. The condition is irrevocable.

**2. TO SIN AWAY ONE'S DAY OF GRACE.**

1 John 5:16, **"If anyone sees his brother commit a sin that does not lead to death, he should pray and God will give him life. I refer to those whose sin does not lead to death. THERE IS A SIN THAT LEADS TO DEATH. I am not saying that he should pray about that."**

There is such a thing as a sin which leads to death, and John did not instruct his readers to pray for forgiveness in such a case, because this would not be in accord with God's will. The sin unto death is not detailed out.

- In 1 Corinthians 11:30 Paul speaks of those who partake of Communion in an unworthy manner. In response to this he notes, **"That is why many among you are weak and sick, and a number of you have fallen asleep."**
- **JUDAS ISCARIOT** may well have committed this sin unto death.
- Then, it may refer to a believer who persists in sin to the point where God judges him or her by physical death as in the case of **ANANIAS AND SAPPHIRA**.

This passage speaks of unbelievers who habitually practice sins while at the same time resisting repeatedly the grace of God. Proverbs 29:1 warns, **"A man who remains stiff-necked after many rebukes will suddenly be destroyed--without remedy."**

**I am reminded of a fellow named Harvey Cobb.** His sister, Pauline Stevens, attended a church that I pastored twenty plus years ago. Pauline was a gracious and faithful Christian. Harvey refused to serve God and walked far from Him.

One Monday my wife suggested that we go visit Mr. Cobb. I wasn't very excited about the idea. He lived about fifty miles from where we lived and besides, we didn't know the fellow. Nevertheless, Marilyn felt strongly that the Lord was urging her that we were to visit Harvey. What was I to do? We drove the fifty miles to visit this complete stranger.

Harvey received us kindly and invited us into his home. We exchanged small talk for a while and then we got down to the business at hand. We asked him about the condition of his soul. He admitted that things could be better but that he was not wanting to change at the present time. He was leaving shortly for Arizona due to his having severe emphysema. Harvey said that he might look for a church when he got there. He refused to allow Christ into his heart regardless of how much we urged him to do so. Marilyn asked Harvey what would he do if he knew he wouldn't live until he made it to Arizona. He sidestepped the question. He made it very clear that he wasn't about to change.

The next Monday evening I received a call from Harvey's sister. Harvey, had suffered a major heart attack and was in the hospital dying. She asked if I would come to be with the family. I said that I would.

The drive took nearly an hour. When I got into the town where the hospital was located, I saw a police officer who escorted me to the medical facility. As I entered the small dark lobby, a nurse met me and asked who I was there to see. By now it was quite late. When I said Harvey Cobb, she said that she was sorry, but Mr. Cobb had just passed away.

When I got to Harvey's room, the family was crying. Pauline said that her brother's death was awful! Just before he died the fellow opened his eyes wide, stared off into space, and then started pushing some invisible force away with his hands while crying out, "No! No! No!"

Mrs. Stevens told me that she believed that he was seeing the place where he was going. It was with that that he died and went into a Christless eternity! I preached his funeral. It was one of the saddest funerals that I have ever conducted. I have no doubt that Harvey Cobb is lost and in hell today.

God was merciful. The Lord sent us to visit the man only one week to the day before the fellow died. Harvey simply refused the Lord's offer! Proverbs 29:1 once again, this time I will read from *The Contemporary English Version*, "**If you keep being stubborn after many warnings, you will suddenly discover you have gone too far.**"

Was that Harvey Cobb? I think so.

### **3. MARK OF THE BEAST:**

The next sin that seems to be beyond pardon is the sin of receiving the Mark of the Beast. Again, those who commit this evil accept the Antichrist as their Messiah therefore the true and only way to salvation is cut off.

## THE SIN OF APOSTASY

I want to now move on to two very important and yet very difficult passages. I speak of Hebrews 6:4-6 and Hebrews 10:26. Let's take the first section first:

**HEBREWS 6:4-6, "It is impossible for those who have once been enlightened, who have tasted the heavenly gift, who have shared in the Holy Spirit, Who have tasted the goodness of the word of God and the powers of the coming age, if they fall away, to be brought back to repentance, because to their loss they are crucifying the Son of God all over again and subjecting him to public disgrace."**

The book *Hard Sayings of the Bible* published by Intervarsity Press really puts these words in perspective. Listen: "Most Christians know of individuals who for one reason or another have left the faith. They may not have actually denied the faith, but they are certainly not practicing the faith. For such people this is a very troubling passage. Is there anyone who cannot be brought to repentance? Can a person have shared the Holy Spirit and then be lost? And are these people really eternally lost? Is this really a description of a Christian?"

Good questions. People that have discussed the passage with me, though, always seem to focus their attention on verse 6 and they always have the same question, "Is this saying that once a person backslides, he or she can't be brought back to Christ?"

Before I answer that, let me say that this passage is not unique but rather is part of a group of passages concerning people who cannot be forgiven or brought to repentance. Over the past several weeks we have studied the Unpardonable Sin -- blasphemy against the Holy Spirit.

Then I John 5:16 speaks of a "**sin unto death**" (*King James Version*) about which prayer is useless. I used Judas as a case in point. Next, we talked about those who sin away their day of grace as well as those who take the Mark of the Beast.

Finally, Hebrews 4:6 refers to a class of people who cannot "**be brought back to repentance.**" The issue is not whether God would forgive them if they repented -- He would. We know that. The problem stems from the fact that there is no way to bring them to a place of repentance. Again, back to the book that I alluded to earlier, "They are like farmland that produces nothing useful; **'in the end it will be burned.'** People can so harden themselves against God that nothing will keep them from hell."

### **ARE WE SURE THAT THE PEOPLE SPOKEN OF HERE IN HEBREWS 6 WERE EVER REALLY SAVED IN THE FIRST PLACE?**

The writer here is speaking to believers for the context contains five distinct expressions which elsewhere in the Bible are used of true believers...

- "**been enlightened**" (This indicates that they had received the truth or light of God's Word in their lives),
- "**tasted the heavenly gift**" (often a reference to receiving the free gift of eternal life),
- "**have shared in the Holy Spirit**" (who except Christians receives this?),
- "**have tasted the goodness of the word of God and the powers of the coming age**" (again, these appear to be blessings associated with salvation and the resurrection. Sinners need not apply).

To be sure, these are people who have had a true Christian experience. In fact, this is one of the clearest descriptions of what happens to a person when he or she finds Christ that is found anywhere in the New Testament. Without a doubt, the writer was wanting to declare clearly that he was speaking about those who have been born-again believers.

And yet, these same people, fall away and lose their salvation to such an extent that "**It is**

**impossible**” for them **“to be brought back to repentance.”** Scary, isn't it?

Why can't they find Christ once again? The reason is, these people commit a sin known as apostasy - they are therefore apostates. We know this to be the case due to the phrase **“they are crucifying the Son of God all over again and subjecting him to public disgrace.”** That is, they once confessed that Jesus was Lord and Messiah, that the crucifixion was wrong and unjust. Now in rejecting the faith their actions testify that the crucifixion was correct after all-Jesus was a blasphemer and not Messiah. If they would have been there on that fateful day two-thousand years ago, they too would have cried, **“crucify Him, crucify Him!”** Such a witness exposes Jesus to public disgrace.

In addition to this, these believers were rejecting Christianity in order to return back to Judaism. One of the sins of the end times is this sin of apostasy. People will reject Christ and the true faith in order to embrace error.

I want to now read verse 6 to you from several translations:

- **“If they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance; seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame.”** (*King James Version*)
- **“And then have fallen away, it is impossible to renew them again to repentance, since they again crucify to themselves the Son of God, and put Him to open shame.”** (*The New American Standard*)
- **“And who then turn away from God. It is impossible to bring such people to repentance again because they are nailing the Son of God to the cross again by rejecting him, holding him up to public shame.”** (*New Living Translation*)

1 Timothy 4:1, states, **“But the Spirit explicitly says that in later times some will fall away from the faith. . .”** The terms **“fall away”** or **“falling away”** means: “To fall away; to turn away; to commit apostasy. To turn aside; to deviate.”

As such, it means...

- to turn aside from Christ.
- to turn away from Christ.
- to deviate from Christ.

That is, again, what these people in Hebrews 6 were doing. They were turning away from Jesus, turning aside from their faith.

Let me give you some additional examples in Scripture:

- Deuteronomy 13:13, **“...wicked men have arisen among you and have led the people of their town astray, saying, ‘Let us go and worship other gods’ (gods you have not known).”**
- Hebrews 3:12 also helps us here, **“See to it, brothers, that none of you has a sinful, unbelieving heart that turns away from the living God.”**
- 1 Timothy 1:19-20 adds, **“holding on to faith and a good conscience. Some have rejected these and so have shipwrecked their faith. Among them are Hymenaeus and Alexander, whom I have handed over to Satan to be taught not to blaspheme.”**

Boswell, in his *Systematic Theology of the Christian Religion*, describes the falling away as "a departure in a hostile sense, a rebellion." He also adds, it is "a revolt."

2 Thessalonians 2:3 marks this as a sin of the end times: **“Let no one deceive or beguile you in any way, for that day will not come except the apostasy comes first--that is, unless the [predicted] great falling away of those who have professed to be Christians has come--and the man of lawlessness (sin) is revealed, who is the son of doom (of perdition)....”** (*The Amplified Bible*)

Thus, the later days of this age will be marked by defection from the faith, a falling away, a withdrawal by many from the church.

I want to illustrate this, if I may:

- The Rev. William H. Willimon of Duke University said during a lecture at the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Kentucky, "It is no longer natural, normal and American to grow up Christian. Paganism is in the air we breathe and the water we drink. If our children grow up in faith, we are going to have to put them there." He continued on to note, the "world has declared war on the church...."
- Please notice this ad taken from last Sunday's Evangel: (Show Mission America add that declares that "More than 70 churches in America close their doors each week.")
- According to studies by the Association of Church Missions Committees, 250,000 of the 300,000 US Protestant congregations are either plateaued or dying.
- The *World Christian Encyclopedia* notes that more than 53,000 people leave church every week never to return. (From Focus on the Family's *The Pastor's Weekly Briefing*) 53,000!

Is there a falling away? The answer is obvious!

**DO ANY OF YOU RECOGNIZE THE NAME SAM KINISON?** Sam serves as a vivid illustration of an apostate. To prove that, I want to share with you some material that I found on various Kinison websites: "Formerly a preacher, Sam Kinison became one of the loudest and rudest comedians of the 20th century. Born on December 8th, 1953 in Yakima, Washington, Sam Kinison's beginnings were fairly innocent. His father was a Pentecostal preacher, and the family lived in a church in Peoria, Illinois. Sam and his brothers followed in their father's footsteps by touring churches across the Bible Belt and earning a decent living. But that wasn't enough for Sam. As his preaching became increasingly too much for the average churchgoer, he took his thoughts and ideas to comedy clubs."

"Sam became one of the great stand-up comedians of the 1980's. His life became the classic image of sex, drugs, and rock 'n' roll. Sam's shows sold out like arena rock concerts, and he quickly earned the respect of the biggest rock acts of the late eighties, like Motley Crue, Guns n' Roses, and Ozzy Osbourne, most of whom appeared in Sam's music videos. Hard-drinking and hard-partying became a major part of his act."

By the way, you might find this interesting, Kinison once dated Jessica Hawn. You will remember her from her role in the PTL -- Jim Bakker scandal.

"On April 10th, 1992, on their way to a sold-out gig in Laughlin, Nevada, newlyweds Sam and Malika Kinison were struck head-on by a pickup truck driven by a 17-year-old drunk driver. They were driving Sam's Pontiac Trans-Am on U.S. Highway 95, on a narrow stretch between Needles and Barstow. Sam, 38, who was not wearing a seatbelt, died on the scene." (I understand that he was decapitated - - while I have not been able to substantiate this) Malika, 27, was knocked unconscious but suffered only minor injuries.

I want to now share a few Kinisonisms, as they are called:

- "I used to be a preacher, I used to be a minister, and people think I changed overnight, and I didn't. It wasn't like I just woke up one day and said, 'HEY, FORGET THE BIBLE! WHERE'S THE PARTY?' It was a little more gradual than that, it took a little more time, it took a lot of women to disillusion me."
- "People are going: 'Man, aren't you afraid to tell jokes like that? Don't you get just a small chill that runs through your blood when you tell a joke like that? Aren't you afraid of going to hell?' No, I'm not worried about hell. Because I WAS MARRIED FOR TWO YEARS! HELL WOULD BE LIKE CLUB MED!"
- "I have lived a carnal life. My view of life is 'If you're going to miss Heaven, why miss it by two inches? Miss it!' I don't have to go through the thing of paying for it in the next life. I know I'm --- in the next life."

I have here a picture of Kinison and a group of twelve females making a mockery of the Lord's Last Supper. This is taken from a web site of a bar and restaurant that is owned by Bill Kinison, Sam's brother. The picture evidently hangs from the wall there. Bill, who also used to preach with Sam, owns the bar and is committed to keeping his brother's memory alive.

Finally, I want to share the epitaph from Sam's gravestone:  
 "In another time and place, he would have been called prophet."  
 Samuel Burl Kinison  
 Dec. 8, 1953  
 April 10, 1992

### **CAN A PERSON LIKE KINISON FIND CHRIST?**

Yes, if he truly would have turned to Him. However, as an apostate, he wouldn't turn to the Lord. He had:

- **"been enlightened"**
- **"tasted the heavenly gift"**
- **"have shared in the Holy Spirit"**
- **"have tasted the goodness of the word of God and**
- **"the powers of the coming age"**

None of that was good enough for Sam. He wanted more. He wanted booze, women, and song. He wanted fame. He wanted to worship another god besides the One True God -- he wanted to worship the god of self.

Romans 2:5-6 warns, **"But because of your stubbornness and your unrepentant heart, you are storing up wrath against yourself for the day of God's wrath, when his righteous judgment will be revealed. God 'will give to each person according to what he has done.'"**

Can you imagine the wrath that Kinison had put in store until his judgment?

### **BACK TO HEBREWS 6:4-6. WHAT LEAD TO THE APOSTASY FOUND IN HEBREWS 6?**

I want to share with you the verses that immediately lead up to verses 4-6 -- Hebrews 5:11- 6:1-3, **"We have much to say about this, but it is hard to explain because you are slow to learn. In fact, though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you the elementary truths of God's word all over again. You need milk, not solid food! Anyone who lives on milk, being still an infant, is not acquainted with the teaching about righteousness. But solid food is for the mature, who by constant use have trained themselves to distinguish good from evil.**

These people were slow learners --- or, **"DULL OF HEARING."** Hebrews 6:12 uses the term "sluggish." The Greek literally means: lazy or slow, "lazy eared" or even having a "heaviness in the head." They were likened to being in a spiritual coma!

Thus---

- since they people lacked discernment,
- since they weren't really into hearing God's Word,
- since they were lazy in spiritual matters,

**THEY BECAME EASY PREY TO THE ENEMY! THESE SAME PEOPLE WERE TO FORSAKE THE FAITH AND BECOME APOSTATE IN VERSES 4-6.**

I think it is important to point out here that:

- At this point in their walk with God, they should have been teachers, but they weren't.
- They should have been on spiritual meat, but they weren't.
- They should have been mature in the Lord, they weren't.
- They should have known how to discern right from wrong, but they couldn't.
- They should have been trained, but they weren't.

I have pastored people like this. As a rule, they like to blame everyone else -- pastors, board, teachers, whoever -- for their spiritual lack. The Lord does not buy into that here. The blame rested squarely on the shoulders of these stunted saints. It is obvious that the Lord held them responsible for their spiritual irresponsibility.

The writer faced the dilemma as to whether or not he should return to the basics of the faith, and try to once again train these folks. However, he quickly resolved not to go there. He said,

- **Therefore let us leave the elementary teachings about Christ and go on to maturity,**
- **not laying again the foundation of repentance from acts that lead to death,**
- **and of faith in God,**
- **instruction about baptisms,**
- **the laying on of hands,**
- **the resurrection of the dead,**
- **and eternal judgment.**

The problem wasn't in that they hadn't been taught these things, they obviously had been. The problem wasn't with the teacher, it was with the student! In failing to learn, they became prime targets for error -- including the error of apostasy!

As I have told you before, between 70% and 80% of those who are in a cult today were at one time a part of classical Christianity. Nonetheless, they fell into grave error and ultimately rejected the faith that they had once held dear.

As we close out tonight's study, I want you to listen to Peter's stinging statement in 2 Peter 2:20-21 regarding the terrible fate that awaits unfaithful, backsliding Christians, **"If they have escaped the corruption of the world by knowing our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ and are AGAIN ENTANGLED IN IT and overcome, they are WORSE OFF AT THE END than they were at the beginning. IT WOULD HAVE BEEN BETTER FOR THEM NOT TO HAVE KNOWN THE WAY of righteousness, than to have known it and then to turn their backs on the sacred command that was passed on to them."**

That pretty well sums it up, doesn't it?

## HEBREWS 10:26 -- DELIBERATE SIN

Hebrews 10:26-30 (*The Living Bible*), “If anyone sins deliberately by rejecting the Savior after knowing the truth of forgiveness, this sin is not covered by Christ’s death; there is no way to get rid of it. There will be nothing to look forward to but the terrible punishment of God’s awful anger, which will consume all his enemies. A man who refused to obey the laws given by Moses was killed without mercy if there were two or three witnesses to his sin. Think how much more terrible the punishment will be for those who have trampled underfoot the Son of God and treated his cleansing blood as though it were common and unhallowed, and insulted and outraged the Holy Spirit who brings God’s mercy to his people. For we know him who said, ‘Justice belongs to me; I will repay them’; who also said, ‘The Lord himself will handle these cases.’”

Verse 26 now from the NIV, “If we deliberately **KEEP ON SINNING** after we have received the knowledge of the truth, no sacrifice for sins is left...”

Sadly, this passage has been misused to support the teaching that there is no forgiveness of deliberate sins committed after one has become a Christian. However, everyone, if he or she is completely honest, who examines his or her life, will discover sin. It may not be a frequent event or a flagrant sin, but none of us has lived a perfect life. If we could be perfect, Jesus would not have had to die on the cross.

However, we also have to admit that some of our sins, I ashamed to say, are deliberate. That is, we do not deliberately set out to sin, but we know in ourselves that some deed or activity is wrong, yet we stifle our consciences and do it anyway.

- We get angry, lose our cool, and perhaps say something that we know that we shouldn’t say.
- We become jealous over someone else’s good fortune.
- We lie to get out of a jam.
- We speed.

Is this the kind of stuff that Hebrews 10:26 is talking about? Is the writer saying that there is forgiveness for accidental or unknowing sins, but not for the other type? And if this is the case, are all of us who have knowingly sinned after our conversion lost? If this is, in fact, the meaning of this verse, then terror and despair would be the daily course for each and everyone of us.

The Old Testament makes a clear distinction between willful or deliberate sin and inadvertent sins. Notice Numbers 15:22-29, “**Now if you unintentionally fail to keep any of these commands the Lord gave Moses--any of the Lord’s commands to you through him, from the day the Lord gave them and continuing through the generations to come-- and if this is done unintentionally without the community being aware of it, then the whole community is to offer a young bull for a burnt offering as an aroma pleasing to the Lord, along with its prescribed grain offering and drink offering, and a male goat for a sin offering. The priest is to make atonement for the whole Israelite community, and they will be forgiven, for it was not intentional and they have brought to the Lord for their wrong an offering made by fire and a sin offering. The whole Israelite community and the aliens living among them will be forgiven, because all the people were involved in the unintentional wrong.**

**‘But if just one person sins unintentionally, he must bring a year-old female goat for a sin offering. The priest is to make atonement before the Lord for the one who erred by sinning unintentionally, and when atonement has been made for him, he will be forgiven. One and the same law applies to everyone who sins unintentionally, whether he is a native-born Israelite or an alien.’”**

Now notice the very next verse, verse 30, “**But anyone who sins defiantly, whether native-born or**

**alien, blasphemes the Lord, and that person must be cut off from his people.”**

The example that follows this passage tells of a person who gathered wood on the Sabbath, presumably because his fire was going out and he had neglected to gather enough wood the previous day. Surely this was a small act, unlike murder or even theft. But it was also clear that he had consciously gone out to do work on the Sabbath and was not ignorant of the law against work on that day. It was a deliberate sin. He was stoned to death at the command of the Lord. A deliberate sin is not to be taken lightly. He was not stoned for gathering wood, he was stoned for deliberately violating the laws of God.

**THE DEFINITION OF DELIBERATE OR WILLFUL** here is: “to sin willfully as opposed to sins committed inconsiderately, and from ignorance or from weakness.” Again, that is what happened in the passage that I just read.

So what is the point in Hebrews 10? The people that sinned in this passage:

- Simply chose to sin
- They sinned willfully
- They practiced sin
- They lived to sin
- They sinned knowing that they were sinning in the eyes of God.

Once again, as in Hebrews 6:4-6, we are looking at people that are apostates.

- These sinners have **“trampled the Son of God under foot.”**  
It is told that in the days of the Hitler terror there was a man in Germany who was arrested, tried, tortured and put into a concentration camp. He faced it all with gallantry and emerged erect and unbroken. Then by accident he discovered who it was who had snitched on him-it was his own son. The discovery broke him and he died. He could bear up under the attacks of the enemy; attacks by one whom he loved killed him.  
When Caesar was murdered he faced his assassins with almost disdainful courage. But when he saw the hand of his friend Brutus raised to strike, he wrapped his head in his mantle and died. In like fashion, apostates once knew the Lord and now they too have lifted up their voice against the Lord. They have **“trampled the Son of God under foot.”**
- Treated the **“blood of the covenant”** as something common (in other words, looked upon Jesus' death as just any common criminal's death) and
- **“Insulted the Spirit of grace.”** This is deliberate sin, but deliberate in the sense that a person willfully is renouncing Christianity and rejecting Jesus, his death and the personal presence of the Holy Spirit.

Clearly, these people had known Christ as their personal savior -- they had **“received the knowledge of the truth”**. They had, nonetheless, developed a **“sinful, unbelieving heart that turns away from the living God”** according to Hebrews 3:12.

For such people there is no sacrifice for sin remaining. What remains is the judgment of God. The passage in Hebrews 10 alludes to a warning found in Deuteronomy 17:2-7. Let me now share that passage with you, **“If a man or woman living among you in one of the towns the Lord gives you is found doing evil in the eyes of the Lord your God in violation of his covenant, and contrary to my command HAS WORSHIPED OTHER GODS, bowing down to them or to the sun or the moon or the stars of the sky, (some wonder if this wasn't a warning against astrology) and this has been brought to your attention, then you must investigate it thoroughly. If it is true and it has been proved that this detestable thing has been done in Israel, take the man or woman who has done this evil deed to your city gate and stone that person to death. On the testimony of two or three witnesses a man shall be put to death, but no one shall be put to death on the testimony of only one witness. The hands of the witnesses must be the first in putting him to**

**death, and then the hands of all the people. You must purge the evil from among you.”**

In one of the early catechisms of the church, the writer ends by asking what happens if men disregard the offer of Jesus Christ. His answer is that condemnation must necessarily follow, "and so much the more *because thou hast read this book.*" The greater the knowledge, the greater the sin.

The writer to the Hebrews warned that, if under the old law, apostasy was a terrible thing, it had become doubly terrible now that Christ had come.

**LET ME CONCLUDE BY STATING:**

- That genuine (godly) sorrow for sin will lead to repentance (2 Corinthians 7:10),
- That one who comes to Jesus in repentance and faith will never be cast aside (John 6:37),
- That **“whoever calls upon the name of the Lord”** will find salvation (Romans 10:9),
- That 1 John 1:9 promises, **“If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.”**
- That 2 Peter 3:9 adds, **“The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. He is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance.”**
- Finally, Galatians 6:1 notes, **“Brothers, if someone is caught in a sin, you who are spiritual should restore him gently. But watch yourself, or you also may be tempted.”**

As you can see in these verses, Jesus understands human weakness and is quick to forgive -- if we repent and turn from our sin. Then too, Paul's response to failure was to restore the person, even when the sin was quite serious.