

Hebrews

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Hebrews 10:26-31



Vss. 26-29a

- On July 8, 1741, in Enfield, Connecticut, Congregationalist pastor Jonathan Edwards preached a sermon that was a catalyst for the First Great Awakening. The sermon was entitled "Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God". The sermon combined vivid images of Hell with corresponding scriptures and a heavy dose of the fear of God. But that was 282 years ago. Never mind that perhaps as many as 50,000 people came to Christ in New England alone during that time, today Connecticut is one of the most unchurch states in America. Perhaps a big reason for that is that people there and across the country have forgotten the fear of God over these last 282 years.
- This is exactly what was on the mind of the writer of Hebrews here in the middle of Chapter 10. His was a world not unlike ours, where the temptation to turn away from God is ever present. In his time there was pressure in two ways. One was the threat of political, economic, and legal persecution. Either you went along with what was customary and accepted or suffer the consequences. The second were all the same enticements people still see today. Just as Hansel and Gretel thought a gingerbread house looked enticing, people today are bombarded with enticing hedonistic messages designed to lure people away from God. The same was true in Biblical times. The 7 Deadly Sins have always been there: Pride, Greed, Lust, Envy, Gluttony, Wrath, Sloth. So how does a pastor keep all the sheep in the fold? Yes, you speak about Heaven and living every day in the joy of the Lord. But the danger is if that is all one does then falling into universalism is risk. This is the belief that because God loves the whole world, then the whole world was saved and forgiven there on the cross and everyone everywhere will go to Heaven regardless of how you lived. Adolf Hitler gets the same reward as Mother Teresa.
- No, says the preacher to the Hebrews! If you just go on sinning willfully, then you are turning your back on The Way of Christ and you have nothing to expect but a terrifying judgement and the "fury of a fire" that will consume you, as he quotes Isaiah. Then he turns to Deuteronomy and asks, "If one who has set aside the Law of Moses and lived and died without the mercy of God, how much more severe will be the eternal punishment of those who turn their back on the cross of Christ and live indifferent to the gift of the Son of God?" If God's punishment for apostasy under the old way was a terrible thing, then now it has become doubly so because we *know* the truth of Christ. The more we deny the Truth the greater the sin and the greater the punishment.

Vss. 29b-32

- The preacher then makes us look at sin differently. First, he says sin is “trampling the Son of God under foot”. In those days and up until the last century or so, streets were open sewers. *ALL* the household waste was just tossed out into the streets. It was garbage and excrement that was trampled underfoot. Thus sin is treating the gift of God’s only begotten Son like garbage and excrement, something thrown out and trampled on.
- Second, sin is failing to recognize and respect that which is truly sacred. The preacher cites the blood of Christ shed on the cross, the very blood of the New Covenant, and how sin disregards it as unclean, as something to be avoided. To hear that because of your sin it was your hand that held the nails as they were driven into Christ’s flesh and to know that it was for you He suffered and bled and died on the cross and yet to still brush that off like lint and ignore it, is indeed a brutal sin. What else is there to say about one who disregards the sacredness of Christ’s sacrifice on the cross?
- Third, sin is an insult to the Holy Spirit. As we read the Scriptures the Holy Spirit instructs us as to what is right and wrong as we follow The Way of Christ. To go on sinning willfully is to insult the authority of the Holy Spirit in your life. He lives and works within you to direct your path. To disregard the voice of the Holy Spirit within our hearts is an insult to the Holy Spirit and breaks the heart of the Father.
- God is just. He understands that when we choose against Him and choose to live by our way instead of The Way, that we have made our choice, and justice demands that we bear the consequences of those choices. Because of our sin, Hell is what we deserve and only Jesus Christ, our Advocate who stands with us before the Judgment Seat, is the only One who can save us, so when we fire our Advocate and choose to stand alone and represent ourselves we are doomed and we discover too late just how terrifying it is to fall into the hands of the living God.