

Worse Than An Infidel

by Stella Paterson

In *The Knowledge of Good and Evil - the harm it has done*, we showed that death came as a result of man's acquiring the forbidden knowledge. God told Adam and Eve they would die if they ate of the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil - the source of man's self-awareness and his inherent "need" to maintain his claim to himself. "Self" is a powerful thing and prefers to attain and achieve. But God asks us to give up self. He asks us to cease our trust in self and put our trust in Christ and His finished work on Calvary. He offers Life in exchange for the death that is guaranteed through "self".

God dealt with the sin of man by dealing with its source - flesh. He put sin away by the sacrifice of Himself when He came in the "likeness of sinful flesh." Jesus' fleshly body was battered, bruised and bleeding as He took the punishment that flesh so rightly deserved. This was foretold in the Law of Moses regarding the sacrifices for sin, when the flesh, skin and dung of the sacrificial animal were taken outside the camp to be destroyed. Hebrews 13:11-12 tells us, *"For the bodies of those beasts, whose blood is brought into the sanctuary by the high priest for sin, are burned without the camp. Wherefore Jesus also, that he might sanctify the people with his own blood, suffered without the gate."* But, rather than realize how Jesus dealt with the source of "self", many have continued on the path of "self". Look at what verse 13 tells us: *"Let us go forth therefore unto him without the camp, bearing his reproach."* If only we would follow Him outside the camp and bear His reproach, "self" would die with Christ and He would have the preeminence.

What is an infidel?

The phrase *"worse than an infidel"* can be found only in the King James Bible. It is used in the passage regarding a person's care for his family. *"But if any provide not for his own, and specially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse [Greek: more evil] than an infidel."* (1 Timothy 5:8)

The word "infidel" is taken from a Greek word which means "unbeliever." Here is the definition from Strong's Greek dictionary: *"(actively) disbelieving, that is, without Christian faith (specifically a heathen); (passively) untrustworthy (person), or incredible (thing)."*

When we stop and consider what could be "worse than an infidel," we will have to conclude that there is nothing - except for Satan himself. And when we keep in mind that an "unbeliever" is someone who does not believe/trust in Christ, the absolute importance of "believing" becomes more evident.

More than mental assent

When Jesus used the word which was translated "believe", He was not speaking of simple "mental assent." He was speaking of a relationship of rest in Him. It is the opposite of the self-reliance introduced in the Garden of Eden, when man "came into" the knowledge of good and evil.

As my book explains, man became a creature of mortal flesh because of his knowledge of good and evil. The Law of Moses tutored Israel in the putting to death of flesh until Jesus came as the Lamb of God to fulfil the requirement of "death to flesh" once and for all. What now remains is for man to put his trust in Him in order to have Life. This does not mean "eternal life someday" so we can escape hell, but "eternal Life here and now" with the indwelling Spirit of Christ living in and through us, as we saw in the last article. Then when Jesus returns for His Bride, our mortal bodies are changed and Eternal Life goes on for eternity.

It is not about sin

As was stated earlier, Jesus put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself - the "sin" being the fruit of "sinful flesh."

If God were to look at the sins of an unbeliever, He would, by the same token, be obligated to consider the "righteousness" of an unbeliever. He does not look at the unbeliever's deeds; He looks at the unbelief - his trust in self, the deadliest "sin" of all. And any "righteousness" would be merely "self-righteousness" - a real stench in the nostrils of God.

Oswald Chambers made a point we would be wise to write down and keep before our eyes - especially considering the prominence of today's apostate gospel. Here is what Chambers said: **"The effect of the Cross is salvation, sanctification, healing, etc., but we are not to preach any of these, we are to preach Jesus Christ and Him crucified. The proclaiming of Jesus will do its own work."** Do we make the power of the Cross of no effect by our incessant preaching those things intended to be the end product of preaching Jesus?

Jesus also spoke of this in John 12:32: *"And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me."* He was speaking of His death on the Cross, but the important thing we must remember is that HE will draw all unto Himself. Paul the Apostle also said, in 1 Corinthians 2:2, *"For I determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified."*

The apostate gospel is a man-made, self-centered (though well-intentioned) scheme to circumvent the true Gospel taught by Jesus and His apostles. The apostate gospel attempts to effect a change in man's deeds to satisfy an often

selfish "need" to be successful in "spreading the Gospel." If only we would preach that Jesus died to give Life to mortal souls, He would draw them to Himself. After all, it is not by the "*will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.*" (John 1:13) Our job is not to "get men saved" but to point them to Jesus. Only He can draw them, and only He can save them. Salvation is the effect of the Cross.

A "sanctification" message is another way self-absorbed man has tried to do the work of the Holy Spirit. If Jesus is preached, He draws men to Himself and becomes to them not only Sanctification, but "Wisdom, Righteousness and Redemption." (1 Corinthians 1:30) Jesus is Everything! He is Healer, Provider, Deliverer, Saviour and so much more. When we have Him we have All that there is to have. All these are the effect of the Cross.

It is about believing, or "having faith"

Remember what Jesus said about sin and unbelief: "***Of sin, because they believe not on me.***" (John 16:9)

Another phrase which shows the relationship between unbelief and sin is found in Romans 14:23b: "*...for whatsoever is not of faith is sin.*"

When Jesus got the attention of Saul of Tarsus and told him how he, as Paul, would take the gospel to the Gentiles, He spoke these words: "*To open their eyes, that they may turn from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive remission of sins, and an inheritance among them that are **sanctified by faith in me.***" (Acts 26:18) Their sanctification came through having faith in Jesus. The pardon [remission] was paid at Calvary and now what is needful is for man is to receive that free gift of pardon and put his trust in Jesus, allowing Him to be Life to them.

Maybe we, like the people at Capernaum, should ask Jesus, "*What shall we do, that we might work the works of God?*" Jesus' answer would be the same: "*This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent.*" (John 6:28-29) If we would only put our complete trust in Jesus, and walk by His Spirit, He would accomplish all that is needed. Where do we get the idea that WE need to be always "doing" for Him. Why can we not surrender "self" to His crucifying power and allow Him to work by His Spirit?

Repent and believe

The Apostle Paul replied to a question from some disciples at Ephesus, saying, "*John verily baptized with the baptism of repentance, saying unto the people, that they should believe on him which should come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus.*" (Acts 19:4) Remember that the definition of "repentance" is "reversal of another's decision."

A much deeper meaning has been obscured by the ever-popular belief that "repent" means to "turn from sins". That "deeper meaning" is found in man's condition of "self" and the necessity to "reverse the decision" that came through Adam and Eve. Man must come to rely on Christ rather than self. Until we are born of the Spirit, our trust is in self. Therefore self is on the throne of our life. But when Christ comes in, He has the right to reign. We must never reject Him and turn back to "self-rule." There are some strong words in Hebrews 10:38: "***Now the just shall live by faith: but if any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him.***"

The very next chapter in the letter to the Hebrews is known as the "faith chapter." It is full of accounts, telling of the faith of the forefathers. One verse in particular makes it abundantly clear that "***without faith it is impossible to please God.***" (Hebrews 11:6)

Considering what I have presented here, let me ask the question, "What could be worse than an infidel [unbeliever]?"

A study of the word "infidel" is available for your consideration. The study of the word "faith" is also now available.

For more articles along this line, see *The Gospel According to Jesus and False Gospel - Exposed*.