

Our Righteousness?

I find the fact that so many people believe that God will allow sin into heaven very interesting. Yes, they actually believe that God will allow sin into heaven in spite of all that has happened between God and Satan and God and man with the sin problem and how it has devastated this world as well as heaven. Satan as well as a third of the angels were banished forever from heaven because of sin.

You may be saying, "But how is that? Who is saying that, and if they are, how are they saying it? I haven't heard anyone saying that." Well, they may not be saying it in that many words. Error is almost always more subtle than that. It all begins with a little scenario that they use. I call it the "What If Theory" and it goes something like this.

What if a person who is a good Christian and is living an exemplary righteous life were to get angry at someone in a weak moment and lose their temper and sin. Then, while still in a rage, they suffer a heart attack and die instantly. They had no time to ask God or anyone else for forgiveness.

There are those who are very adamant that this individual would be saved. Why not, weren't they a righteous person who was simply tripped up in sin? Wouldn't God understand this and let the sin slide and cover it with Christ's righteousness?

But what does God's Word say?

"But when the righteous turneth away from his righteousness, and committeth iniquity, and doeth according to all the abominations that the wicked man doeth, shall he live? **All his righteousness that he hath done shall not be mentioned:** in his trespass that he hath trespassed, and in his sin that he hath sinned, in them shall he die. When a righteous man turneth away from his righteousness, and committeth iniquity, and dieth in them; for his iniquity that he hath done shall he die." Ezekiel 18:24, 26

"And the LORD said unto Moses, Whosoever hath sinned against me, him will I blot out of my book." Exodus 32:33

But aren't we told that "The character is revealed, not by occasional good deeds and occasional misdeeds, but by the tendency of the habitual words and acts." Steps to Christ 57. This quote is not saying that a little sin here and there is not a problem. It is telling us that our character is revealed by what we habitually do. In other words by what we are doing all the time. It goes on to say, "By what means, then, shall we determine whose side we are on?"

Who has the heart? With whom are our thoughts? Of whom do we love to converse? Who has our warmest affections and our best energies? If we are Christ's, our thoughts are with Him, and our sweetest thoughts are of Him. All we have and are is consecrated to Him. We long to bear His image, breathe His spirit, do His will, and please Him in all things.

Sins that have not been repented of and forsaken will not be pardoned and blotted out of the books of record, but will stand to witness against the sinner in the day of God. . . ." The Great Controversy 486.

"The righteousness of Christ is not a cloak to cover unconfessed and unforsaken sin; it is a principle of life that transforms the character and **controls** the conduct. Holiness is wholeness for God; it is the entire surrender of heart and life to the indwelling of the principles of heaven." The Desire of Ages 555

If you are being indwelt and controlled by the Holy Spirit can you sin at the same time? If you say you can then you are saying that the Holy Spirit is causing you to sin because it is He who is controlling your thoughts and actions. This can never be.

Do we have Christ's robe of righteousness covering us when there is unconfessed and unforsaken sin in our lives?

"The only hope of any man lies through Jesus Christ, who brought the robe of His righteousness to put upon the sinner who would lay off his filthy garments. . . . The pure and holy garments are not prepared to be put on by any

one after he has entered the gate of the city. All who enter will have on the robe of Christ's righteousness. . . . There will be no covering up of sins and faults to hide the deformity of character; no robes will be half washed; but all will be pure and spotless." Sons and Daughters of God 66.

"And when the king came in to see the guests, he saw there a man which had not on a wedding garment: And he saith unto him, Friend, how camest thou in hither not having a wedding garment? And he was speechless. Then said the king to the servants, Bind him hand and foot, and take him away, and cast him into outer darkness; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth. For many are called, but few are chosen." Matthew 22:11-14.

Do we have any hope of getting into heaven without Christ's robe of righteousness covering us? It is clear that we cannot enter heaven without Christ's robe of righteousness covering us. It is also clear that it is not covering us when there is unconfessed sin in our lives. So, can we be saved with unconfessed sin? The answer is an emphatic NO!

"But, but," you say, "what about the good person who is caught up in sin and dies before he has opportunity to make it right?" This has never happened and would never happen. Yes, you heard me right, it wouldn't happen! "But, but, what if Satan killed him before he had a chance to make it right?" Let me ask, Who is in control anyway? Is it Satan or God? Believe it or not, God is in control and He would never cut someone off or allow Satan to cut someone off before they had ample time to make the sin right. If God were to do this, the lost would have every right to accuse Him of being unfair, and that simply won't happen. We sometimes hear, "But, I knew someone who was a very good person and he was cut off." Well, you thought he was good just like the disciples thought Judas was good until he denied his Lord. What if he had died before his true character was revealed? Would you be shocked not to find him in heaven? God knows the heart and He wants to save us worse than we want to save ourselves, and He will never allow anyone to be lost who could be saved if given the time.

"The history of Judas presents the sad ending of a life that might have been honored of God. Had Judas died before his last journey to Jerusalem he would have been regarded as a man worthy of a place among the twelve, and one who would be greatly missed. The abhorrence which has followed him through the centuries would not have existed but for the attributes revealed at the close of his history." The Desire of Ages 716

No one but God/Jesus knew the sin that Judas was cherishing in his heart. They thought that he was a righteous man.

"The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance. 2 Peter 3:9. It is a marvel to me that God will bear with the perversity of the children of men so long, bearing with their disobedience and yet suffering them to live, abusing His mercies, bearing false witness against Him in most wicked statements. But God's ways are not as our ways, and we will not marvel at His loving forbearance and tender pity and infinite compassion, for He has given an unmistakable evidence that this is just like His character--slow to anger, showing mercy unto thousands of those who love Him and keep His commandments." This Day with God 187

What kind of a God would give the wicked every opportunity to change their ways and then turn around and cut off a righteous man in a moment of sin? Would you call Him just, good, righteous? I don't think so.

The life of King Saul is a good example of God's forbearance with the sinner. "God had borne long with Saul; and although his rebellion and obstinacy had well-nigh silenced the divine voice in the soul, there was still opportunity for repentance. But when in his peril he turned from God to obtain light from a confederate of Satan, he had cut the last tie that bound him to his Maker; he had placed himself fully under the control of that demoniac power which for years had been exercised upon him, and which had brought him to the verge of destruction." Patriarchs and Prophets 676.

The God we serve is loving and long-suffering and would not allow us to die without giving us ample opportunity to make our sins right if we are so inclined. But he will not forgive sins that have not been confessed. So, this theory when put in the light of God's long-suffering spirit towards us, is totally irrelevant. How can we believe that we serve a long-suffering God yet, at the same time, believe that He would allow us to be cut off in our sins? Those who believe this theory, whether they want to acknowledge it or not, do not truly believe that we serve a loving long-suffering God who desperately wants to save us, and/or, they are simply wanting to excuse sin and to allow it into heaven.

On the face of it, this theory would seem to support God's perfect unconditional love for us, since God is "not willing that any should perish." This theory makes God's love for us so powerful that it causes God to set aside His justice in order to save us. But God's justice is also perfect and He will not, He cannot set it aside. The wages of sin is death. That will never change. Yes, Jesus died for our sins, but He can only take and forgive the sins that we repent of and forsake. It would not be just of Him to take sins from us that we did not give Him. If He were to do that He would be taking away our free choice and forcing righteousness upon us.

The bottom line is that God will not share the heart with sin. One or the other will be there, but never both. We cannot serve two masters. Sin is rebellion against God and God will not force Himself upon us or abide in a rebellious heart. God is not the one who leaves, it is we who rebel and push Him out. God cannot have a relationship with someone who is in rebellion against Him. Rebellion is the result of pride, which is the worst kind of sin in God's eyes.

This may be one of the most diabolical errors that Satan has come up with, because it causes one to believe that they are still saved, safe when they are lost. Also, Satan knows that the longer we put off making something right the less likely we are of making it right. Pride also becomes stronger and stronger, making it harder and harder to confess our wrong and get back into a saving relationship with God. Please don't let a moment pass before making a wrong right - your salvation is dependent on it.

Now, back to our original question about our righteousness. You ask, "Doesn't my righteousness have any weight in the matter? Don't I get credit for my righteous acts?" What does the Bible say about our righteousness? "All our righteousnesses are as filthy rags" Isaiah 64:6. "But, what about our righteousness - the righteousness that allows us to be saved? Whose is it, isn't it mine? Whose righteousness is it that saves us? Isn't it ours?" No, it isn't. It is Christ's righteousness that saves us, not ours.

"Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved. For I bear them record that they have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge. For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God." Romans 10: 1-3

"Being confident of this very thing, that He which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ:" Philippians 1:6

"Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin: but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God." Romans 6:13

"Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness?" Romans 6:16

"For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of His good pleasure." Philippians 2:13

So, whose righteousness is it that saves us? It is Christ's, not ours. If we sin we're in rebellion against God and Christ can't cover us with His righteousness or count the righteous acts that He has worked in us as ours. Every one of them is removed from our record and all that is left is our sin. May I remind you of what Ezekiel said? "When the righteous turneth away from his righteousness, and committeth iniquity... **All his righteousness that he hath done shall not be mentioned:** (remembered) in his trespass that he hath trespassed, and in his sin that he hath sinned, in them shall he die. When a righteous man turneth away from his righteousness, and committeth iniquity, and dieth in them; for his iniquity that he hath done shall he die."

We have no true righteousness apart from Christ. And when we sin we have rejected Christ and the righteousness that He provides and are left with nothing but our sins and filthy garments. And there is no way that we can be saved in that condition.

See also "God's Relationship with Sin" which can be found at: www.thoughtsonchristianliving.org under the heading "Thoughts".