

Path to a Sinless Life - The Secret

by Stella Paterson

The intensity of destruction in the earth, as seen in the recent horrors the Japanese have experienced, is rivaled only by the intensity of error being promoted by numerous folks who name the name of Christ. Some may ask how anything could be worse than complete towns being destroyed by an earthquake and the ensuing tsunami; not to mention the nuclear threat that exists, with the potential to sicken and kill millions.

The simple answer would show us that the destruction of the body is of much less importance than the deception of man's soul in the eternal scheme. For those who die *in Christ Jesus*, having true faith in Him, they go on for ever with Him. But for those without Him, death is something to be feared.

With the increase of earthquakes *in divers places*, as Jesus said, and the resulting catastrophic destruction, there is a temptation to focus on those things. Jesus our Lord and Savior said, "*Now when these things begin to happen, look up and lift up your heads, because your redemption draws near.*" (Luke 21:28) At the same time, the antichrist spirit has infiltrated the "church"--the *institutional* as well as those who have walked away from *organized religion*, or *spectator christianity*. When we look in horror at the destructive *antichrist* teachings, and the resulting spiritual destruction, we must not yield to the temptation to focus on that--as grievous as it is.

You ask, "What has this to do with a *path to a sinless life*?" The answer is "Everything." Let me explain, by first asking once again . . .

What is sin?

Throughout this article we will be using this "punch line" to emphasize the point the Lord has led me to make: *Whatever is not of **faith** is sin.* (Romans 14:23b)

There are two closely related Greek words used when speaking of "faith" and "believe." One is the Greek "pistis" (#4102), which is used mainly as "*reliance upon Christ Jesus for salvation.*" The other is "pisteuo" (#4100), which is used mainly as "*entrusting our spiritual well being to Christ Jesus.*" We will be using both, sometimes inserting the meaning in place of *faith* or *believe*.

Some will hold up the Ten Commandments to show what "sin" is; even suggesting that simply not committing those "sins" would be pleasing to the Lord.

Do some who profess to be "Christians" believe this? If so, what is the difference in the Believer and the non-believer?

If a *sinner* were to perfectly obey the Ten Commandments, does that then make him a Christian? Would he not be just as *good* as a *Christian* who does the same? Anyone can stop committing adultery, coveting, stealing, lying, etc., so the same would apply there. Such *goodness* is self-righteousness, whether one professes to be a *Christian* or not. Rather than pleasing God, such *righteousness* is a stench in His nostrils, because we are told that "*without faith it is impossible to please Him.*" (Hebrews 11:6)

Let's take a closer look at Hebrews 11:6, which tells us that "*without **faith** [reliance upon Christ for salvation] it is impossible to be well pleasing to God.*" The verse goes on to say, "*for he that comes to God must believe that he **is** [God, the I AM], and that he is a rewarder of them that seek after [Greek: 'crave'] Him.*"

Keep in mind the words of Paul, in Galatians 3:23: "*But before **reliance upon Christ for salvation** [faith] came, we were kept in ward under the law [of Moses], shut up unto the **faith** [reliance upon Christ for salvation] which should afterwards be revealed.*"

"Sin" according to Christ Jesus

Jesus told us what sin is, when He said, "*And when He [the Spirit] comes, He will convict the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment: **of sin, because they do not entrust their spiritual well being to [believe on] Me; of righteousness, because I am going to My Father and you see Me no more; of judgment, because the ruler of this world has been judged.***" (John 16:8-11 EMTV).

In the verses that followed, Jesus said, "*I still have many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now. However, **when He, the Spirit of truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth;** for He will not speak on His own authority, but whatever He hears He will speak; and He will announce to you things to come.*" (John 16:12-13 EMTV).

Immediately following Jesus' ascension to the right hand of the Father, as promised, the Holy Spirit came and began His work. And He still does the same work today, revealing what is truth and what is not truth, in those who have ears to hear. As Paul said to those at Rome, "*But you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you. **But if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he is not His.***" (Romans 8:9) Those who are without the Spirit of Christ Jesus will very easily be deceived.

Further revealing what sin is, in John 3:18, Jesus said, "*He who entrusts his spiritual well being to Christ is not condemned; but he who does not entrust his spiritual well being to Christ has been condemned already, because he has not put his trust in the name of the only begotten Son of God.*"

Whatsoever is not of faith is sin

What is the "secret"?

The above paragraphs show us the path to a sinless life through *reliance upon Christ Jesus for salvation, and entrusting our spiritual well being to Him*. He imparts to us His Spirit, to give us Life in Christ Jesus--it is His Life that He lives through us. We simply rest in that Life, submitting anything of *self* to the crucifying power of the Cross. We must embrace the Cross, for to live according to *self* is not *entrusting our spiritual well being to Christ Jesus*--it is **sin**.

Whatsoever is not of faith is sin

The presence of the Holy Spirit in us is likened to a *seed* who comes to us from the Father. "*No one who has been born of God practices sin, because His seed abides in him; and he cannot sin, because he has been **born of God.***" (1 John 3:9 EMTV). And that is the fulfillment of this promise: "*And I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Helper, so that He may abide with you forever, the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees Him nor knows Him; but you know Him, because He abides with you and shall be in you.*" (John 14:16-17)

Wide-spread deception

Why is there so much deception in the would-be body of Christ Jesus? For the most part, I don't believe we should see it as intentional. Well-meaning *ministers* and those who share from the bible, whether in spoken word or writings, may believe they have been *born again*. But do they truly know Christ Jesus and allow His Life to be lived through them? Are they relying upon on Him for their messages? Or are the messages from their store of *self*?

How many are there who, with *natural* understanding of Scripture and in the power of *self*, preach sermons or produce writings that have not come by inspiration of the Holy Spirit of Truth? Andrew Murray said:

No words can tell the sad state of the Church of Christ on earth. I wish I had words to speak what I sometimes feel about it. Just think of the Christians around you. I do not speak of nominal Christians, or of professing Christians, but I speak of hundreds and thousands of honest, earnest Christians who are not living a life in the power of God or to His glory. **So little power, so little devotion or consecration to God, so**

little perception of the truth that a Christian is a man utterly surrendered to God's will! Oh, we want to confess the sins of God's people around us, and to humble ourselves. We are members of that sickly body, and the sickliness of the body will hinder us, and break us down, unless we come to God, and in confession separate ourselves from partnership with worldliness, with coldness toward each other, unless we give up ourselves to be entirely and wholly for God.

How much Christian work is being done in the spirit of the flesh and in the power of self! How much work, day by day, in which human energy--our will and our thoughts about the work--is continually manifested, and in which there is but little of waiting upon God, and upon the power of the Holy Ghost! Let us make confession. But as we confess the state of the Church and **the feebleness and sinfulness of work for God among us**, let us come back to ourselves. Who is there who truly longs to be delivered from the power of the self-life, who truly acknowledges that it is the power of self and the flesh, and who is willing to cast all at the feet of Christ? There is deliverance.

~ *Absolute Surrender* (Emphases added)

It is tragic that there is no realization that . . . *Whatsoever is not of faith is sin!* The term "born again" has been so misunderstood and misrepresented that even *ministers* may not have the Spirit of Christ in them, and therefore they are not His. The reality of such can be seen in these words from long ago, when William Dewsbury (17th century) said, ". . . *let every man and woman search their hearts with the light of the Lord, and it will truly manifest whether you are born again, and so feed upon the tree of life, or whether you **rest in outward formal conformity to the Truth**, having the heart in the earth, **for that spirit will turn against Truth**, as it has done.*"

There are also those who have known the Lord but have taken their eyes off Him, failing to continue in reliance upon Christ Jesus. William Dewsbury put it this way: "*Some others are drawn to delight their hearts in the gifts, parts, and knowledge, which the Lord has given them, more than in the Lord, the fountain from where they come; and **so abuse the gift, and feed upon the fruit of the tree of knowledge which puffs up, and makes man wise in his own eyes, and to say in his heart,--'I am wise and rich, and see, and want nothing,' when they are **blind, miserable, naked, and need all things**. Whatever any profess, as to the service of God, that are in this condition, they have an end to themselves in what they do, which grieves the Spirit of the Lord, **when men and women in a talkative spirit take upon them to declare the Truth, when the Lord neither calls them, nor speaks by them . . .*****"

Whatsoever is not of faith is sin!

Preaching or teaching the "Word" without the Spirit of the Word (Jesus) is nothing but religion. Leonard Ravenhill said, "*Religion has sent more people to hell than all the pubs in America.*"

Protection from deception

We have been talking about the need for preachers and teachers to be relying upon Christ Jesus. They will be held to greater accountability, for if they are deceived themselves, they will deceive others. So it is of utmost importance that every individual follower of the Lord Jesus Christ seek Him, and not, without discernment, subject himself/herself to the teachings of man. Discernment is a responsibility of ALL. Deception will surely come if we put our trust in man, without seeking the Holy Spirit for confirmation. The prophet Jeremiah said,

*"Thus saith the LORD: **Cursed is the man that trusteth in man, and maketh flesh his arm, and whose heart departeth from the LORD. For he shall be like the heath in the desert, and shall not see when good cometh; but shall inhabit the parched places in the wilderness, a salt land and not inhabited. Blessed is the man that trusteth in the LORD, and whose hope the LORD is. For he shall be as a tree planted by the waters, and that spreadeth out his roots by the river, and shall not fear when heat cometh, but his leaf shall be green; and shall not be careful in the year of drought, neither shall cease from yielding fruit.**" (Jeremiah 17:5-8).*

Whatsoever is not of faith is sin!

Jeremiah's words in the tenth verse reveal the One who will judge all, whether preacher, teacher or hearer. "*I the LORD search the heart, I try the reins, even to give every man **according to his ways, according to the fruit of his doings.**" (Jeremiah 17:10)*

Protection from deception comes to those whose trust (faith) is in the Lord, as Jeremiah said, "*he shall be as a tree planted by the waters.*" And we have these words which Paul told the Colossians, "*If then you were raised with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God. Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth. **For you died, and your life has been hidden with Christ in God.**" Colossians 3:1-3 EMTV*

Abiding in the Christ Jesus

There are no better words to describe what it means to *abide in Christ Jesus*, than His own words: "*Abide in Me, and I in you. Just as the branch cannot bear fruit on its own, unless it abides in the vine, so neither can you unless you abide in Me. I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; because **apart from Me you can do nothing.**" (John 15:4-5)*

In the 16th verse Jesus reveals what will befall those who fail to abide in Him. *"If anyone does not abide in Me, he is cast out like a branch and dries up; and they gather them and throw them into the fire, and they are burned."*

Whatsoever is not of faith is sin!

When desirous of seeing someone come to put their trust in Christ Jesus for the salvation of their soul, do we blurt out empty words from *self*, albeit well-intentioned? Or do we wait on the Lord for His direction, so that our words will be His words, and the Holy Spirit has something to *work* with in bringing a soul to Christ? Is our zeal to be a *soul winner* having the opposite effect? Are we insistent on seeing the *results* of OUR work for God?

When led by the Holy Spirit, the work is His alone. When we are led by the Spirit, we may "sow" a word which the Holy Spirit can quicken to a soul who is being drawn to Christ Jesus. And unbeknownst to us, someone else will be led to "water" the words we were led to "sow," but in God's time--not ours. Then ultimately, it is only God who brings to fruition the words *sown* and *watered*. Paul spoke of this to the people at Corinth. *"So then neither he who plants is anything, nor he who waters, but God who gives the increase. Now he who plants and he who waters are one, and each one will receive his own reward according to his own labor."* (1 Corinthians 3:7-8) We don't need to see the results; we simply must trust that it is God who is at work when we follow His guidance in *sowing* or *watering*.

Whatsoever is not of faith is sin

*"Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments and untraceable are His ways! 'For who has known the mind of the LORD? Or who has been His counselor?' 'Or who has first given to Him, and it shall be repaid to him?' **For of him, and through him, and unto him, are all things.** To him be the glory for ever. Amen. I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service. And be not fashioned according to this world: but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is the good and acceptable and perfect will of God."* (Romans 11:33-36; 12:1-2)

Faith - the fine line

There are so many areas we could expand on, in showing the folly of failing to trust our Lord Jesus for everything, so we will briefly mention a few more.

In a recent two-part article, we looked at the "antichrist" beliefs of modern-day Pharisees. The first showing how a growing number of people exalt the words of God above the Word of God, Jesus Christ, His Son. They call it "Sola Scriptura"

(Scripture alone). Their trust is in the printed words and their own understanding of them.

In the second part, we looked closely at the wide-spread belief that the *King James Version* is the THE only pure version of the bible. And in both parts, we examined Scripture in light of Scripture, revealing that the words they exalt above the Lord Jesus, the Living Word, are the same words that point to their guilt for not *entrusting their spiritual well being to Christ*. Their well being has been derived from their carnal understanding of words that have been spiritual from the beginning, and only their Author, the Holy Spirit, has the power to give understanding.

Whatsoever is not of faith is sin

This quote was found online: "You can know the Bible without ever knowing Christ, but you can't know Christ without knowing the Bible. The first century church had no Bible yet they still lived the Word of God because **Christ who is the Word lived it through them.**" (Emphases added).

The sinless life

"For by grace [Greek: 'the divine influence on the heart'] *you are saved through **reliance upon Christ for salvation**, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast.*" (Ephesians 2:8-9).

The *sinless life* is the one which is wholly surrendered to God, with the Life of Christ Jesus, through His Spirit, producing His fruit in the surrendered life.

In one who is not *relying upon Christ for salvation* and not *entrusting his spiritual well being to Him*, the fruit of the Spirit will not be there. The evidence will be that of one who walks by his flesh. Paul said to the Galatians, "*....having begun in the Spirit, are you now made perfect in the flesh?*" (Galatians 3:3) Salvation is not a one-time event--it comes from a life of daily dying to *self*.

Whatsoever is not of faith is sin

Then we have Paul's word to the Philippians: "*Having been persuaded of this very thing, that He who began a good work in you will complete it until the day of Christ Jesus;*" (Philippians 1:6 EMTV).

The best news

The last few Scripture quotes show clearly that it is solely a work of the Holy Spirit of Grace that accomplishes the work of faith in us. We simply must rest in Him. To "believe" is not a "work" of *self*--it is the opposite. Peter's words make it clear.

*"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to his great mercy begat us again unto a living hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, unto an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fades not away, reserved in heaven for you, who **by the power of God** are guarded through reliance upon Christ unto a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. Wherein you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while, if need be, you have been put to grief in manifold testings, that the **trial of your faith**, being more precious than gold that perishes **though it is proved by fire**, might be found unto praise and glory and honour at the revelation of Jesus Christ: whom not having seen you love; on whom, though now you see him not, yet entrusting your spiritual well being to Him, you rejoice greatly with joy unspeakable and full of glory: **receiving the result of your reliance upon Christ, even the salvation of your souls.**" 1 Peter 1:3-9*

Please read it again, and see the awesomeness of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. And remember that . . .

Whatsoever is not of faith is sin

There is much more that could be shared, but we must stop here, with these words from our Lord Jesus: *"And God, shall He not execute justice for His own elect, who cry out day and night to Him, and yet He is patient with them? I tell you that He will execute justice for them speedily. Nevertheless, **when the Son of Man comes, will He really find faith on the earth?**" (Luke 18:7-8 EMTV)*

©2004-2011 ekklesia4him.net. Permission is granted for not-for-profit reproduction or distribution (without any changes) provided this notice appears and this link is included: http://www.ekklesia4him.net/path_to_a_sinless_life_the_secret.html