

# The Deadliest Sin

by Stella Paterson

Before we begin, I trust you will forgive me for sharing something so personal, but I feel such a sense of urgency to show how very important this message is.

Years ago, I subjected myself to far too many antibiotics prescribed by a doctor who, in my opinion, was too quick to prescribe drugs. As a result I ended up with a very unbalanced bacterial count in my colon. Through my own research and following a healthier diet, along with avoiding the things that make a yeast fungus grow, I overcame the years of problems which began in the 1980s. In 1990 I did lose some parts of my diseased colon due to an overgrowth of Candidiasis exacerbated by mold in a home where we lived for several years. Again, I moved beyond that problem and lived a very healthy lifestyle, enjoying a life the doctors had not expected me to live. There was no sign of any symptoms whatsoever from about 1991 on.

In late January of 2003, I began to write *Calling Forth The Remnant*, which is a result of my prayer to be shown the meaning of Calvary. Seemingly out of nowhere came an attack so vicious it was almost unbelievable. It was like all hell was coming against me. As can be read in my testimony, I nearly lost my life. All that I went through was because of the message God gave me during my 12-year period in the "school of the Holy Spirit," as I call it.

During the 12-year period, God did a deep work in me to prepare me for the task that was to come. There were many revelations of passages in the Bible that brought incredibly profound understanding to the message of the Cross of Jesus Christ. There were the tears of heartbreak as I "saw" the church as God sees her. There were the hours of gut-wrenching intercession for the "lost in the pew". The honor and privilege to stand in the gap for those whom God loves was beyond description. To know the presence of the Holy Spirit, as He prayed through me, was something I lived for from day to day.

With the attack of the "parasites from hell," and the resulting surgery and long hospitalization, I was robbed of the ability to do some things as I once did. No longer can I lie on my face before God - an ileostomy apparatus on my abdomen prevents it. No longer can I even kneel in prayer before my God - the damage to my knees prevents that. Does that stop me from praying wherever I am? No! No longer can I read my Bible for hours on end - the damage to my retinas prevents that. Does that stop me from remembering all that He taught me and all the Word that is hidden in my heart? No! I use the e-Sword program where I can enlarge the font size for my study and writing resources. The devil only made me mad enough to persevere in obedience to God's call to share what He has taught me! God gives me strength each day, and when I am writing what He gives me His

Spirit quickens my mortal body, bringing to mind the Scriptures He wants me to use. The enemy's efforts are futile - with God there is always a way.

And now, to the subject of this article...

The Lord continually reveals more and more truths regarding the issue of today's apostate gospel. Is there a lot of sin in the world? Yes! Is there sin in the "church"? Yes - too much! Do the lost need forgiveness for their sins to have Life? No! They are flesh and need to be born of the Spirit. Does the "church" need forgiveness for its sin? Yes! If anyone in the "church" has never truly been born anew by God's Spirit, they need to repent of their self-righteousness, ask God's forgiveness for their efforts of "self" and come to Him in humble surrender.

It is much more difficult for a "churched" person to come to Christ than for one who has never been coerced into saying the "sinner's prayer." This is the kind of thing Jesus was addressing in His parable about the Pharisee who exalted himself while the publican humbled himself. The publican went away justified rather than the Pharisee who had "done all the right things" in his own eyes. The Pharisee was full of himself but the publican saw "self" for what it was and he was humbled before God. A Spirit-convicted soul is willing to give up "self" in order to have Life. Self is what we are born with - thanks to Adam and Eve. And in the new birth, the deadliest sin of "self" is replaced with Jesus' Life.

### **But the error goes on and on...**

In the past few days I have heard several sincere Christian folks attempting to explain how the gospel should be presented. Invariably it centers on the "sins" of those who need to hear the good news. What is the problem with this? And why do I continue to address it in my articles? I assure you, it is the biggest problem in Christianity today. The enemy of man's soul wants to keep us all in bondage to "self". Over a period of hundreds of years, he has been influencing Bible translations, preachers, churches and many a person who names the Name of Christ. His delight has been in seeing how many have fallen for his deceptive devices and accepted without question the tradition of man. I fully believe that tradition is one of Satan's strongholds. For the most part, God has been forgotten in the head-long plunge into apostasy. And the apostate gospel is undoubtedly the most harmful tradition of all because it keeps souls out of the kingdom of God.

I found a link to an audio message with a title which led me to think that maybe someone else was addressing the error of the apostate gospel. The speaker began by telling how saying a little prayer after the preacher does not make one "born again". But then he went on to quote the mistranslated verse in Acts 2:38 where Peter told the Jews that they must "*Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of sins...*" In the version the

speaker used, the word forgiveness was inserted in place of "remission" which is a more correct translation of the Greek word for "pardon/freedom."

The speaker went on to tell how 90% of the converts at a Billy Graham crusade "fall away from the faith." This man who is seen around the world as a great religious icon has only a 10% "success rate" according to statistics. What is wrong with this picture? How is it that such large numbers who said "the sinner's prayer" could have turned away from their Saviour? I believe the answer is that, in an emotional moment, they felt convicted of "their sins" and received a false salvation. They did not give up "self" for Jesus - they merely gave up sin in their own strength. And because "self" was still on the throne, their righteousness was of self. Jesus can only be our Righteousness when we give up self to Him - not just offer some sins to be forgiven.

If it were not for God's Spirit dealing with individuals, there would be no true "converts." In the midst of man's blundering, He is still at work drawing souls to Himself and opening eyes to behold Jesus. What a privilege is ours if we have been born from above by the Holy Spirit. What a great and wonderful God to never give up on us! Nevertheless, we must take this closer look at the so-called gospel that is so rampant in "evangelism" today.

The thing that I find so grievous is the absence of "Jesus" in man's fleshly attempts to rid the world of its sin. Jesus came to die that we might have Life, yet look at how we have rejected Him! We look at everything through eyes which are blind to the fact that we need Life - not less sin - if we are going to spend eternity with Jesus! Why do we sell short the price Jesus paid to free us from death and the resulting fruit of one who is dead in sin? Do we tell Him that He failed to "put away sin" [Greek: cancel sin] and we must keep people's sins as the focus in our efforts to evangelize? Do we not understand that the Life of Jesus and the work of the Spirit of Grace are sufficient to regenerate a soul? And that no one comes to Jesus unless the Father draws them? How can we even consider that a few words repeated after a "soul winner" can do the work that only God can do? Even using persuasive words, no human being can bring a person to the place where they realize their destitute condition of "self". Only God's Spirit can penetrate to that depth and effectively evoke the necessary response. Let us keep in mind that we are *"born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God."* (John 1:13)

None of us can "decide" when it is time for a soul to come to Jesus, and then go about doing all in our power to convince them of "their sin." Have we so minimized the whole gospel message that we who name the Name of Christ are coming between lost souls and the Saviour they need? There are too many "preachers" spewing out condemnation in the name of evangelism. This condemnation serves only to cause the lost to run the other way. The Body of Christ needs to get right with God then His Life in them will draw the lost to the Light of our Glorious Lord.

If the Body of Christ is going to be prepared for the days ahead, this is one area we must thoroughly understand. We must allow our minds to be purged of every trace of the apostate gospel if we are going to effectively minister to the lost. We must be prepared to speak truth to those whom God brings across our path.

### **What does the New Testament tell us?**

In the New Testament, the word "sin" and its synonyms (according to the translators) are used only 242 times. At the same time, the words "faith" and "believe" and their synonyms (according to the translators) are used 560 times. This alone tells us where the emphasis should be, according to God Almighty. Many of the references to "sin" are found in passages where Pharisees and Jews are being addressed, and where Paul is exhorting those at Rome regarding the Law. Keep in mind that sin is "the transgression of the Law" and "where no law is, there is no transgression." (1 John 3:4; Romans 4:15)

Jesus "put away sin" by the sacrifice of Himself, crucifying flesh on our behalf. At the same time, He nailed to His Cross the ordinances of the Law which were against the Jews. He canceled sin when He canceled the Law - the accuser of His people. (John 5:45) If the Law was "done away" (2 Corinthians 3:14) why does man insist on making Moses' Law under the Old Covenant the standard for New Testament Christianity? Does he not understand that the New replaced the Old? Not only do we have a New Covenant, but it is a Covenant made through Jesus' blood. Are we telling Him He shed His blood for naught? My, how His heart must grieve at our present-day "gospel" message! Can you imagine giving your all, only to have it completely rejected?

### **Without faith...**

The meaning of the words "faith" and "believe" seems to have been weakened in the minds of many. I have heard of some who say that it is not enough to believe in Jesus but that our sin needs to be dealt with. Jesus Himself said that "sin" is unbelief in Him. Here are His words: "*And when [the Holy Spirit] is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment: **of sin, because they believe not on me; of righteousness, because I go to my Father, and ye see me no more; of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged.***" (John 16:8-11)

I know that I wrote about this in *The Gospel According to Jesus*, but it is so vital for us to get this that I must repeat myself. First of all, John 3:14-16 tells us "*And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up: that **whosoever believes may in him have eternal life.** For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that **whosoever believes on Him should not perish, but have eternal life.***" "Belief" means more than mental assent - it is "*relying on Christ for salvation*" and "*entrusting our spiritual*

*wellbeing to Him.*" Therefore, that one word "believe" encompasses all that is necessary to have Life.

Later on, in John 3:18, Jesus made it clear what it means to NOT "rely upon Him for salvation" - we are condemned already. Read what He said: "*He that believeth on him is not condemned: but **he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.***" Did Jesus speak of sinfulness or forgiveness in His words? No, He did not! On what, then, does man base his concocted apostate gospel? There is only one answer: Bible verses taken out of context!

In John 3:6-7, Jesus told Nicodemus that because he was born flesh it was necessary to be born anew - this time by the Spirit. This is the true gospel of Jesus Christ from His own lips. Not once did He say that man must ask for his sins to be forgiven. Not once did He say that man must say a "sinner's prayer." Not once did Jesus say that He is watching to see when man "sins" so that He can judge him and sentence him to eternal damnation. NO! Jesus said that He did not come to judge, but that man is already judged because he is born a mortal soul. That is, until that mortal soul comes to **believe (rely on) on Jesus**, at which time he is now born from above by the Holy Spirit who begins His work of renovating His new temple.

It is time to listen to Jesus' words and stop accepting man's word as the "gospel" truth!