



GRACE-LOVE-TRUTH COURSE.

PART 4B: LIVING A HOLY LIFE

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5. LIVING IN FORGIVENESS

5.1 REPENTANCE

5.2 RENEWED THINKING

5.3 NO CONDEMNATION

6. A SCRITURAL EXERCISE

7. A GOOD CONSCIENCE

7.1 CONFESSION

7.2 HEALTH BY GRACE

8. CAN WE LOOSE OUR SALVATION IF WE SIN AS SOME CLAIM?

8.1 THE HEBREW CONTROVERSY

8.2 MISUNDERSTANDING THE ISSUE

8.3 THE CONTEXT OF HEBREWS

8.4 JEWS WITH CHRISTIAN LEANINGS

8.5 JEWISH MIXED BELIEFS ABOUT JESUS

8.6 THE FLOW OF THE BOOK OF HEBREWS

8.7 BACKSLIDE AND LOSE YOUR SALVATION - REALLY?

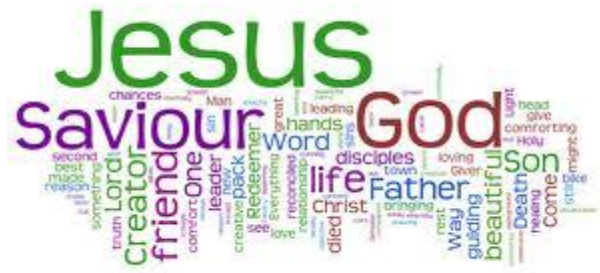
8.8 SIN AND YOU LOOSE YOUR SALVATION - I DON'T THINK SO?

8.9 GOD NEVER LETS US GO ONCE WE ARE HIS

8.10 ARE WE RESCUED BUT THEN THROWN TO THE SHARKS?

8.11 THE UNFORGIVABLE SIN

9. GROUP TIME



5. LIVING IN FORGIVENESS



5.1 REPENTANCE

Mat 4:17 "Jesus began to preach, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come near."

The Greek word to repent is μετανοέω metanoëo. Strong defines repentance as to think differently, to reconsider, morally to feel compunction. Thayer defines it as to change one's mind for the better, heartily to amend with abhorrence of one's past sins.

Grace thinking is not sin focussed but Jesus focussed. In grace repentance is about dealing with the unbelief that is the root of all moral sin and choosing to believe in God's goodness expressed in and through Jesus Christ. Most people think that to repent means to confess one's sins. This is incorrect. Repentance may lead to this but this is not what repentance actually is. When Jesus called people to repent, he was calling them to change their thinking and direction i.e. to change their minds about what is good and what is evil? What is righteous and what is unrighteous? What is Godly and what is ungodly? To recognize what is sinful and what is holy.

Under the Law repentance was mainly focussed on confessing moral sin and rebellion against God. Under the New Covenant of grace repentance should focus on unbelief and a change of mind that leads to faith in God which then results in a change of sinful actions. One of the crucial things that we need to repent of is the belief that we are still sinners under the dominion of sin and that God is angry with us and out to punish us. This is probably the biggest lie that is inhibiting believers today and disempowering the church.

5.2 RENEWED THINKING

Rom.7:23 "I see another law at work in the members of my body, waging war against the law of my mind and making me a prisoner of the law of sin at work within my members". 2Co. 10:3-5 "For though we live in the world,

we do not wage war as the world does. The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world. On the contrary, they have divine power to demolish strongholds. We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ".

Most spiritual warfare is in the mind and it's all about believing or doubting God's grace, goodness



and the sufficiency of the finished work of the cross for us personally. The key to freedom is repentance leading to renewal of the mind from sinful patterns of thinking. This comes about when we accept we are in a state of grace which allows the truths and promises found in the scriptures to be appropriated in faith and to change our thinking (Rom.12: 2). We replace lies from Satan and our sinful nature with truths from the Scriptures. We reject any thinking or teaching that says Satan, sin, death and sickness etc. have a right to afflict us or that God is still out to punish us. Under grace all the enemies rights and any punishments have been cancelled at the cross (Col.2:14). We are no longer afflicted by God for sin and any thinking that says otherwise has to be rejected.



5.3 NO CONDEMNATION

Rom 8:1-4 "Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.

John 3:17 For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him".

John 8:10 -11 "Woman, where are they? Has no one condemned you?" "No one, sir," she said. "Then neither do I condemn you," Jesus declared. "Go now and leave your life of sin."

Freedom from condemnations is one of the most important aspects of Jesus grace. Jesus was condemned so we could be free from condemnation. Jesus made it clear in the above scriptures that his ministry is not one of condemnation but grace and salvation. On the other hand the Law is a ministry of condemnation (2Co.3:9) and those who mix law and grace will constantly feel condemned, guilty and unqualified. Sadly, so many believers still separate themselves from the Lord and beat themselves up because they carry the guilt and shame of their past and present sins and their short comings. To focus on sin and short comings can drive us crazy and result in double mindedness about who we are as children of God. Declaring that we are unworthy sinners denies what Jesus has bought for us on the cross and denies God's grace. This is a false and misplaced humility that robs us of joy and life in Christ. Condemnation and guilt are the biggest cause of sickness, depression, fear and passivity in Christians. Let it be known today that the Scripture clearly states that we are free from condemnation and we are no longer guilty. When we



condemn ourselves we are allying ourselves with the work of Satan, who along with the Law (Jn.5:45) is the Accuser (Rev.12:10). Satan's very name means one who accuses and condemns. We must stop condemning and disqualifying ourselves, stop our anguish over our failures, stop punishing ourselves, or expecting punishment for something that Jesus has already paid for, been punished for, been cursed for and dealt with on the cross. To focus on our sin instead of focusing on our righteousness (Ro.3:22) is tantamount to denying the effectiveness of the cross. Our sins, past present and future are completely forgiven (Heb.10:17) and we need to learn to live in God's wonderful state of grace by focusing on Jesus. Knowing Him, trusting Him and abiding in His grace empowers us to say "No" to sin and to overcome (Titus 2:12). We believe the Word of God; the solution to sin is grace (Rom.6:14). Some may say "Ah, but this only applies if you live by the Spirit". Correct. When we are saved and in grace we are in the Spirit and no longer in the flesh, but those who trust in the Law are still alive in the flesh and are not in the Spirit and therefore the Law condemns them. Law condemns us as guilty, grace acquits and finds us guiltless. Those who still feel condemned and guilty are those who have a mixed gospel of grace and law or works. Get rid of the law, embrace the good news of grace and be free of condemnation.

6. A SCRITURAL EXERCISE

The Woman Caught in Adultery

John 8:3-11 (KJV), "And the scribes and Pharisees brought unto him a woman taken in adultery; and when they had set her in the midst, They say unto him, Master, this woman was taken in adultery, in the very act. Now Moses in the law commanded us [Leviticus 20:10], that such should be stoned: but what sayest thou? This they said, tempting him, that they might have to accuse him. But Jesus stooped down, and with his finger wrote on the ground, as though he heard them not. So when they continued asking him, he lifted up himself, and said unto them, He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her. And again he stooped down, and wrote on the ground. And they which heard it, being convicted by their own conscience, went out one by one, beginning at the eldest, even unto the last: and Jesus was left alone, and the woman standing in the midst. When Jesus had lifted up himself, and saw none but the woman, he said unto her, Woman, where are those accusers? Hath no man condemned thee? She said, No man, Lord. And Jesus said unto her, Neither do I condemn thee: go, and sin no more."

Discuss the above story in light of the gospel of grace and Leviticus 20:10. What does the above story tell us of hypocrisy, of God's grace and no condemnation? Do you think this woman carried on sinning?

7. A GOOD CONSCIENCE

1Tim. 1:1-20 Holding on to faith and a good conscience. Some have rejected these and so have shipwrecked their faith.

Grace clears our consciences. When we are in grace, understanding that we are forgiven and not condemned, understanding that we are God's beloved children and righteous in Christ, leads to a good conscience and peaceful mind. Faith isn't any good unless we have a good conscience within ourselves (Heb.10:22). What are we aware of, our righteousness or our sin? We must always be conscious of our righteousness in Christ and not allow any false teachings to undermine us and shipwreck our faith.

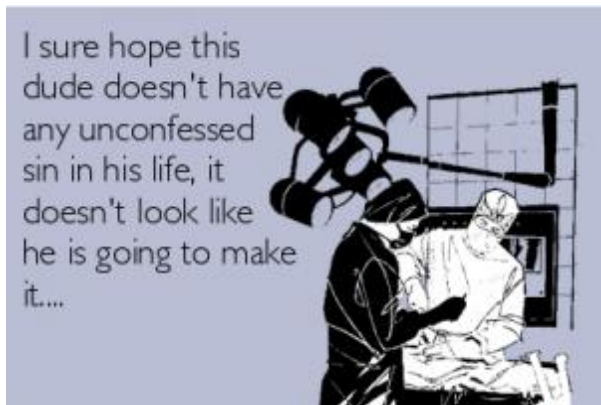
7.1 CONFESSION

1Jn 1:7-10 If we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus, his Son, purifies us from all sin. If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.

If we claim we have not sinned, we make him out to be a liar and his word is not in us.

1 John 2:12. "I write to you, dear children, because your sins have been forgiven on account of his name".

It's helpful, good and often needful to confess sin and the things we get wrong if and when the Holy Spirit guides us to do so. It can help us off load our burdens of guilt and condemnation, heal relationships (Jam.5:16) and talk with God about the issues we need help with. When we sin it can be a release to confess what we have done wrong but we need to be clear in our understanding of confession as New Covenant believers in grace. Confession a tool that God has given us, is there to help us off load, it's not there as a condition to maintaining our salvation. Any conditions added to grace denies the effectiveness of the cross and put the onus back on our performance or "doing"



instead of focussing on Jesus. For a Believer there are no conditions that can be added to grace. Once saved, confession is no longer a prerequisite for God's forgiveness or eternal life. When we came to Christ we repented; we acknowledged that we were sinners that needed help, we confessed our sin (1Jn.1:7-9) and confessed our need to be saved. God responded by purifying us from all sin and unrighteousness through the blood of Jesus, forgiving us, wiping the slate clean and no longer remembering our sins (Heb.10:17). If God says that He has forgiven us and remembers our sin no more then he doesn't want us focussing on our sin and reminding Him of them, again and again and again. Now that we are in Christ all our sins are dealt with on the cross, past, present and future, whether we are aware of them or not, or whether we confess them or not. The salvation and blood of Jesus is totally and permanently effective; we are now forgiven, righteous and have eternal life, it's as if we have never sinned. This is the offense of grace.



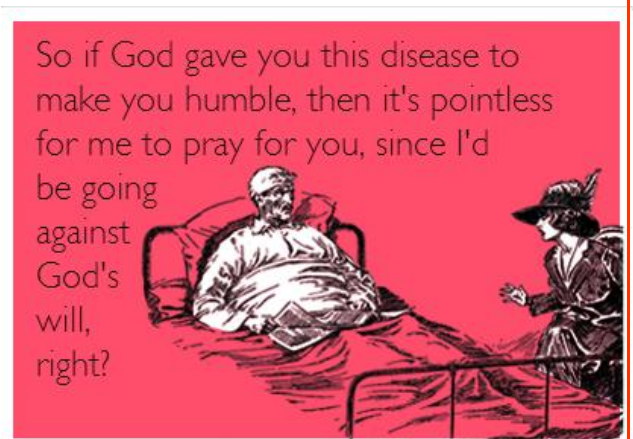
There is a false teaching going around that unconfessed sin separates believers from God and their salvation. Think about it, not only is this absurd but it totally denies the work of the cross. It would mean that our sinful actions are more powerful than Jesus' atonement and shed blood. We know that Scripture teaches that nothing now can separate us in Christ from the love of God (Rom.8:39). The movie "Joan of Arc" is a good illustration of the bad fruit and mental instability which comes with the false doctrine that unconfessed sins separate us from God and condemn us to hell. Joan rightly understood that we all sin in some way, none of us are, or can be, righteous in ourselves. However, because Joan had no revelation of grace, she became totally obsessed with confessing her every sin and thus could hardly leave the church confessional. Instead of relying on the finished work of the cross the church of the day (16th century Catholic) had added a law of confession to the cross and made salvation conditional, this drove her crazy. This teaching causes believers to feel unworthy, condemned, unqualified to be intimate with God, and unable to receive anything from God except his wrath for their sins. This kind of obsession with sin and confession actually leads to more condemnation, insecurity and strangely enough, more sin.

On the other hand, putting our focus on Jesus and our righteousness in him brings true life and change! Try confessing what Jesus has earned for you on the cross: "I am righteous, I am forgiven, I am loved, I am blessed, I am a child of God, I am Holy, I have eternal life, sin has no power over me". This will build you up and this will glorify Jesus.

7.2 HEALTH BY GRACE

Luke 5:23-25 Which is easier: to say, 'Your sins are forgiven,' or to say, 'Get up and walk'? But that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins..." he said to the paralyzed man, "I tell you, get up, take your mat and go home." Immediately he stood up in front of them, took what he had been lying on and went home praising God.

Under the Old Covenant of the Law God the Judge afflicted people with sickness because of sin - this was part of the curse of the Law. Grace changed all that. In the above story, when the man knew his sin were forgiven by Jesus healing came. Christians who are not in grace and who have a high consciousness of their sinful state, subconsciously disqualify themselves from healing and blessing. They just don't believe they deserve to be healed and they still believe God is judging them. Condemnation brings death which manifests in sickness. On the other hand consciousness of our forgiveness and a clear conscience from sin leads to healing. If you believe you are still being punished for your sin then sickness is a sure way of this wrong belief manifesting. However when we know our sins are forgiven and we are righteous it will manifest in our physical life.



8. CAN WE LOOSE OUR SALVATION IF WE SIN AS SOME CLAIM?

There are various false teaching concerning sin that need to be addressed if we are to live in freedom and confidence in the finished work of the cross and God's grace.

8.1 THE HEBREW CONTROVERSY

Heb 1:3 "The Son is the radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of his being, sustaining all things by his powerful word. After he had provided purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty in heaven".

The book of Hebrews is a wonderful letter written to the



Jewish believers and Jewish none believers dabbling in Christianity . It may have been a general letter addresses to a number of Jewish communities. It declares the glorious divinity of Jesus, His eternal heavenly priesthood on our behalf, the finished work of the Cross, the sufficiency and uniqueness of His blood and the grace of a better New Covenant. It is an important letter for us all, in that establishes the replacing of the Old Mosaic Law Covenant by the New Covenant of Jesus' Grace along with the foundational truth that no other sacrifice except that of Jesus is effective in dealing with sin. Jesus is the only priest that can sit down in the presence of God - because His work was finished on the cross.

8.2 MISUNDERSTANDING THE ISSUE

Due to a lack of contextual revelation of grace, some parts of the book of Hebrews have been badly misunderstood and misused by those who have added law to grace. Certain scriptures from Hebrews, quoted in isolation can lead to condemnation, a lack of confidence and a waning assurance in the enduring sufficiency of the Cross. These scriptures need clarification in light of our foundational New Covenant beliefs that we are saved only by grace through faith and not by works (Eph.2:8), that we proclaim the Gospel of Grace (Acts 20:24), the Spirit of Grace (Heb.10:29) and Jesus' New Covenant (Heb:10:16-17). We must again reiterate that one of the major issues addressed by all the letters of the New Testament was the division in the Early Church between those who believed Jesus' work on the cross to be a sufficient atonement for all sin and those that wanted to add Mosaic Law and religious rules to the Cross (the Judizers).

8.3 THE CONTEXT OF HEBREWS

The first thing that may be a revelation to many is that the letter of Hebrews was written to Jews and not to Gentile – I'm stating the obvious, that's why it's called Hebrews. Unlike most of the letters it was not addressed to a specific church, to an individual believer or to the saints but to Jews who had



various beliefs with regard to Jesus and who were influencing the church in Jerusalem. This is a crucial point to understand as the book was written to a specific people, the Jews interested in, or committed to Jesus, for the specific purpose of bringing them freedom from the Law of Moses, their Jewish traditions and the Temple sacrifices. However as I said before, Hebrews is also an important book for everyone, especially in the African context where many false teachers are mixing Christianity with ancestor veneration and animal sacrifices, just like the Jews of Paul's time.

on with Jews who come to know Jesus. To give you a taste of what some Messianic Jews believe, here is a link to a Messianic fellowship in Israel [Shema- what is Messianic Judaism?](#).

8.6 THE FLOW OF THE BOOK OF HEBREWS

The Jews in Jerusalem were struggling and many had their feet in both camps of Christianity and legalistic Judaism, or a good mix of the two. The book of Hebrews was written to try to draw Jews fully into Christ and the his finished all sufficient sacrifice on the cross. To understand the correct interpretation of the difficult passages in Hebrews it is helpful to have an understanding of the flow of the book of Hebrews.

Chapter 1: Jesus was divine and provided a finished atonement for sin (1:3).

Chapter 2: A call for the Jews to pay attention and receive Jesus' salvation (2:3).

Chapter 3: Jesus is greater than Moses, but the Jews had hardened their heart to the gospel and were still in the sin of unbelief (3:12).

Chapter 4: Like their forefathers were still trying to obtain their righteousness by works (4:10) instead of accepting and resting in the finished work of the cross (Ro.9:31-10:4).

Chapter 5: They were spiritual infants, they did not understand that true righteousness is a gift received by faith (5:13).

Chapter 6: Many of these Jews had heard the gospel and knew the doctrines of Christ and they had seen the Holy Spirit's miracles. Sadly they still chose Moses Law and the Temple's animal sacrifices over Jesus' sacrifice. Having known what Jesus had done on the Cross and then rejecting it for another sacrifice, they could not have their minds changed (6:4). To repentant actually means to change one's mind and actions and this they refused to do, they would not give up their animal sacrifices. They may have followed Jesus as a Rabbi but they would not accept his sacrifice for their sins and therefore were lost - and in fact were never saved in the first place.

Chapter 7: They were still following the Levitical Priests in the Temple and seeking perfection through the Law instead of righteousness though Jesus, our Eternal High Priest in heaven.

Chapter 8: These Jews were being called to let go of the Old Mosaic Covenant and fully embrace Jesus' New Covenant in which their sins are totally forgiven (8:12).

Chapter 9: These Jews were rejecting Jesus' blood sacrifice and still attending the Temple sacrifices (9:12). They were basically claiming that the blood of Jesus was not good enough and they could not



enter into Jesus' salvation because they could not let go of the Law's animal sin sacrifices that were so much part of their traditional culture.

Chapter 10: Here the Law is declared as set aside by the New Covenant (10:9). Those Jews who kept sinning through unbelief, despite knowing the good news of Jesus' gospel - cannot be saved (10:26). Anyone rejecting grace and Jesus' blood as sufficient is eternally condemned (10:26-29).

Chapter 11: These Jews are reminded that the father of the Jewish people was Abraham who received righteousness by faith (11:6). Their father was not Moses who taught righteousness by Law - which always failed to produce righteousness.

Chapter 12: The Jews are reminded that the sin of unbelief had always hindered Israel and the Lord had often disciplined and punished them for it (12:5) and yet they still rejected Him (12:14). They were now called to leave the Law given on Mount Sinai and come into the New Covenant through Jesus' blood (12:24).

8.7 BACKSLIDE AND LOSE YOUR SALVATION - REALLY?

Heb 6:4-6 "It is impossible for those who have once been enlightened, who have tasted the heavenly gift, who have shared in the Holy Spirit, who have tasted the goodness of the word of God and the powers of the coming age and who have fallen away, to be brought back to repentance. To their loss they are crucifying the Son of God all over again and subjecting him to public disgrace".



Traditionally many teachers claim that this

scripture is about Christians who backslide and lose their salvation. This is incorrect, this letter is addressed to Hebrews not to "backsliders" to quote this scripture out of the context of the whole letter is to misuse it. We must remember that Hebrews was written when the temple sacrifices and the Levitical priesthood in Jerusalem was still in full swing and at full power. There was huge pressure for Jewish Christians to still participate in this system, shockingly even from the Apostle James (Acts 21:18-24). The whole context of Hebrews is about Jews rejecting Jesus as their great, heavenly, high priest that replaced the priests in the temple of Jerusalem. So what do these scriptures actually mean in their correct context and how do we correctly apply them today? The Jews, Israel - it's Scribes, it's teachers of the Law and the common people had been given God's word in the scriptures, they had experienced miracle after miracle, they had seen the Holy Spirit touching people. They knew the power of God. They even witnessed firsthand Jesus ministering by the power

of the Holy Spirit with amazing signs and wonders - all specifically for Israel (Mt.15:24). They saw Jesus die on the cross and witnessed his and others resurrection (Mt.27:52) from the dead. On Pentecost they witnessed the out pouring of the Holy Spirit on the Apostles (Acts 2:5). They had been enlightened to God's plan of salvation by Jesus and the Apostles ministering in their very midst and YET they still chose to reject Jesus and cling to the Law of Moses for their righteousness. No matter how many miracles they saw, no matter how good God was to them they fell away from God's gift of the Messiah sent to save them. A stubbornness set in, there to this day. Nothing could get them to change their minds, nothing would get them to recognize their sin of self righteousness and rejection of the Messiah. Sadly this blindness also affected some Jewish Christians believers who never fully rejected the Law and accepted Jesus as their righteousness. This scripture still applies to Jews today who still reject Jesus despite all the evidence that he is their Messiah.

8.8 SIN AND YOU LOOSE YOUR SALVATION - I DON'T THINK SO?

Heb 10:26-29 "If we deliberately keep on sinning after we have received the knowledge of the truth, no sacrifice for sins is left.....how much more severely do you think someone deserves to be punished who has trampled the Son of God underfoot, who has treated as an unholy thing the blood of the covenant that sanctified them, and who has insulted the Spirit of grace?"

This scripture has be used to teach that if we deliberately sin after being saved then we lose our salvation and can never regain it. Just thinking about this carefully will show that it is error. Quite simply, if we are honest, we have all deliberately sinned since we have been saved. We have all been tempted at some stage and we have all fallen. Thank God that is exactly why grace is available to us. In his love God has given us grace and remembers our sins no more. To use Hebrews 10 to teach that sin can cause us to lose our salvation is ultimately to deny the



effectiveness of the cross and condemn ourselves to hell as we all have and will fall short of perfection and righteousness if it is based on our sinless performance. If we say we are without sin we are liars (1Jn.1:8). We are then in the dangerous position of denying grace and taking up an arrogant self righteous position. So you may ask what is the deliberate sin does this scripture refer to? It is deliberate unbelief in Jesus. As we have said earlier the sin the Holy Spirit is concerned with is unbelief in the Son of God, this is then sin he convicts people of (Jn.16:9), this is the unforgivable sin. The whole context of Hebrews is about the Jews accepting or rejecting Jesus as being greater

than Moses, being their great high priest of grace, and being their atonement for sin. The sin that condemns all men is the sin of unbelief, the sin of deliberately rejecting Jesus after hearing the good news of his salvation and grace. This is the unforgivable sin. Reject Jesus and one's sins can never be forgiven, one can never bring any other sacrifice that will save.

8.9 GOD NEVER LETS US GO ONCE WE ARE HIS

To conclude. Using these scriptures from Hebrews in an incorrect way shows a complete misunderstanding of God's grace, righteousness, the work of the cross and how we are saved in the first place. Our salvation is not and never was, conditional on our performance or our self righteousness. Salvation has and will always be God unearned and undeserved gift of God's love to all who would take hold of it in faith. If salvation is based on our performance then we are all lost (Ro.3:9) because at some point in our lives, if we are honest, we may either



backslide or may intentionally sin – without grace, no one is righteous and we are all lost. Although we are no longer sinners we do know that without Jesus' grace we are the worst of sinners and we are lost. This is the humility we walk in. When we see a sinner our attitude is not one of self righteousness and arrogance but one of compassion and mercy, knowing "There but for the grace of God goes me" (1Tim.1:15). The parable of the Prodigal son (Luke 15:22) clearly teaches that the Father never lets His sons go, once a son always a son, even if you reject being a son. We may be unfaithful to God but he will never be unfaithful to us. He will never let's those who are truly saved walk away, it's no longer our choice. We no longer live but Christ lives in us (Gal.2:20), we are now an inseparable part of Him. We are sealed eternally by the Holy Spirit (Eph.4:30).

8.10 ARE WE RESCUED BUT THEN THROWN TO THE SHARKS?

Teaching that sin can cause us to lose our salvation is like a Coast Guard who rescues his own son from drowning only later to throw him back in the sea because he behaves badly or is not grateful enough. Come on, God's not like that. So brothers and sisters, be of good cheer and get rid of any doubt that you can lose your salvation, it's a lie that denies the effectiveness of the Cross and God's unconditional love. If you are a "back slider" or have deliberately sinned and allowed that to

separate you from God, call out to the Father and receive His forgiveness and love once again. He will empower you in grace to hold the course and say no to sin.

8.11 THE UNFORGIVABLE SIN

Mat 12:31 "And so I tell you, every kind of sin and slander can be forgiven, but blasphemy against the Spirit will not be forgiven".

Many Christians live in fear that they may have or will committed the unforgivable sin that Jesus talked about in the above scripture. This condemnation and fear is a scheme of the devil and is a wrong belief that needs to be repented of. Firstly this scripture was not addressed to people generally but specifically to the teachers of Israel, the Pharisees who actually new that Jesus was the Messiah and full of the Holy Spirit but still chose to reject his offer of salvation and call the Spirit within him, demonic. Not only did they reject salvation but they slandered God himself, despite knowing the truth. The unforgivable sin is simply rejecting the Holy Spirits revelation of salvation through the grace of Jesus Christ. Anyone who know the truth and dies in their sins can never be forgiven.

Now we understand we are free from sin we need to focus on our righteousness and identity in Christ. In the next part we will look at our righteousness.

9. GROUP TIME

I the group discuss the issue of that ALL our sins are forgiven and our traditional over consciousness of sin. Is the message of grace too good to be true? How do you feel?

Group exercise and questions. Please answer the following questions.

What sin has God forgiven?

Do believers have a sinful nature?

Name three types of sin.

What sin is the Holy Spirit concerned with?

What is sanctification?

How are we sanctified?

What is God solution for sin?

Who is our Advocate and what does he do?

What does the Greek word metanoeo mean? Explain.

What happens if we do not confess a sin?

Can we lose our salvation, if so how?