

98-02-15b

We're back now from our break, and we resume our study and conclude our study in 1 John 3 this morning. This is not the easiest passage to go to as a side study from a main emphasis, but we have examined in particular the idea of abiding in Christ and what that means, and that that is not automatic, that it is a choice, and that based on our choice, for which we are responsible as believers, we are either going to be classified as of God or not, and there's no middle ground. We've seen this idea of no middle ground in our studies on Friday nights in the parables, and in the parable of the warring king, the parable of the tower builder, the parable of the hidden treasure and the pearl of great price, the last four parables that we've studied, we've seen this idea that Jesus teaches that this is an all or nothing proposition.

To sit down and count the cost doesn't mean be sure you're ready to pay this heavy price. It means be sure you know what the price is and that you know how to pay it. Be sure that you sit down ahead of time and plan so that you will finish what you start.

You don't want to build half a tower. You don't want to fight half a battle and suddenly realize that you're going to have to surrender. His whole emphasis in those parables is make sure ahead of time that you know what the price is and that you have it and that you're going to succeed when you build your tower or when you fight your battle.

You've got to know what you're doing and know how to do it. That's what we're looking at in 1 John 3. We know that we need to abide in Christ. We know that we need to be free of the power of sin and the lingering effect of sin in our lives.

We have to know how to do that and we have to do it all the way. It's not a half-baked proposition. It's not a part-way, occasional, part-time calling.

It's a full-time thing. And when it is full-time and when we pursue our calling in a dedicated way, motivated by the hope of the return of the Lord Jesus Christ, these things are going to be true of us. We are not going to be characterized by sin.

People aren't going to look at us as a category and say, sinners, failures. We are going to be of God. But it is possible for us as believers to fail to make that decision.

And this is what Jesus illustrated for his generation when he talked about the two roads. The wide road that goes through the broad gate that leads to destruction and the narrow road that leads to life and the few there are who find it. That is not a picture of salvation.

That is a picture of the choice that believers face. Most of us, unfortunately, as believers, are going down the wide, broad road through the gate that leads to destruction. We are the withered branches.

We are the wood, hay, and stubble crowd. Why? We don't heed John's exhortation in 1

John 2 and 3. We don't heed the words of the Lord Jesus Christ in John 14 and 15. We don't seize on the means how to abide, how to produce fruit, how to have the indwelling presence of the Lord Jesus Christ, the indwelling presence of God the Father himself within us.

And because of that, because we have not sat down and counted the cost, because we have not thought ahead and developed our plan and pursued our strategy and tactics the way the Bible outlines it, we fail. And if you're not of God, you're of the devil. That's the only two choices you have.

You're either a disciple or you're not worthy of Christ. That's the way Jesus outlines it. Anyone who puts his hand to the plow and then turns back, looks over his shoulder, is not worthy to be my disciple.

Anyone who loves father, brothers, sisters, mothers more than me is not worthy of me, Jesus says. You're either worthy or you're not. You're either of God or you're not.

You're either pursuing that calling, asking, seeking, knocking, abiding, letting the Word abide within or you're not. There is no middle ground. There's not this lukewarm status.

Remember what Jesus tells the church? I work that thou work hot or cold. But being lukewarm, I will spew you out of my mouth. Who's he talking to? Believers.

He says, get on one side of the fence or the other. Either get with the program, be a disciple, be Christ-like, abide or not. There is no lukewarm.

There is no middle ground here. And that's why John says in 1 John 3.10, In this the children of God and the children of the devil are manifest. Whoever does not practice righteousness is not of God.

This tells us that there is more to the Christian life than the intake of the Word of God. We do not measure ourselves by how often we expose ourselves to the teaching of the Word of God. This is a wonderful thing.

We know that let that which you have heard from the beginning abide in you. Well, you've got to hear it for it to abide. We have to expose ourselves.

And our particular strand and tradition in Christianity has emphasized the intake of the Word of God, the teaching of the Word of God, and exposing ourselves to it. But that's not where it begins. This does not say, in this the children of God are manifest.

Whoever hears the teaching of the Word of God is of God. And, of course, you have James and his being a doer and not a hearer only. This is a parallel idea.

We practice righteousness. Now, immediately when I say practice righteousness, we have a whole weight of tradition in the Christian world that says, Well, we've got to go

forth and do good. We've got to minister to the sick and afflicted round about us and so forth.

What does it mean to practice righteousness? It means to walk in the light. Righteousness comes by faith, not by deed. That's the theme of the Book of Romans.

That's the tension between those who were legalists and who saw their righteousness in the works of the law. What's the law? The law is just a list of righteous things to do. Do we have lists of righteous things to do today? Do people have a concept of what righteous deeds are? Such as witnessing, ministry, meeting needs, clothing the naked, feeding the hungry, ministering to the sick.

And we say this is the definition of righteousness. Any time this is taking place, righteousness has happened, is our sort of superficial conclusion. Well, that's not the case.

In God's eyes, it is not the act of ministry or the act of service that counts. It's the faith that should have motivated it. And you can have the act without the faith.

People do these things out of altruistic motives. You have all kinds of unbelievers and atheistic people who do these acts of service. The American Red Cross is not inherently a Christian organization.

They do a lot of wonderful things. That's not righteousness. Righteousness is only declared by God where faith exists.

So this is the key. Without faith, there is no righteousness. Are there faithless believers? Yes, there are.

And that's why in 1 John 3.23, John says this is his commandment, that we should believe on the name of his Son, Jesus Christ. By default, through our training and our brainwashing almost in the Christian world, we think, well, he's talking about salvation here. He's not.

This is not salvation. In 1 John 3.23, the commandment of the Lord Jesus Christ to believers is to trust in the name of his Son, Jesus Christ. This is the first block in the foundation.

Change of mind away from dead works and faith toward God. Trust in Jesus Christ on an ongoing daily basis. That's the means of living the Christian life.

And that is Christ's command. And what is the outworking of that faith motivated by the hope that John has mentioned at the beginning of the chapter? Love one another as he gave his commandment. The commandment is to faith.

The commandment is to love. The motivation for it is the hope that John mentions. So, is

it possible for a believer to be of the devil? Yes, it is.

What does Jesus say to Peter when Peter starts bringing up a bunch of human viewpoint objections to the possibility of the cross? Get thee behind me, Satan. You're thinking the thoughts of men and not the things of God. We as believers can be of the devil.

And that's a scary thought. And it ought to motivate us. It ought to remind us of our responsibility, of the nature of our choice.

We are not left with an ambiguous, unclear situation that depends on our energy to resolve it. It has been spelled out clearly. We are to abide in him so that he can abide in us.

And we know how that is done. It's a wonderful study in 1 John. But it tells us in verse 12 of chapter 3 here that Cain was of the wicked one and murdered his brother.

We've had that concept of being of the devil and of hating one's brother and being a murderer in verse 15, haven't we? Well, Cain is the example of that. This is another piece of evidence in my mind, not that it's a terribly important point. But I think that Cain is a believer.

I think he will be resurrected at the beginning of the millennial kingdom along with his brother Abel and his brother Seth and Adam and Eve and all the other Old Testament saints. Because this is a passage that talks about believers and the choices that face believers. And John says, don't be like Cain.

Well, if you're a believer, you can't be like Cain because you can't become an unbeliever again. He says, don't be like Cain. This is the message that you heard from the beginning.

Remember what he says over in verse 24, chapter 2? Let that abide in you which you heard from the beginning. What is the message that you heard from the beginning? 311. Love one another.

Not like Cain who was of the evil one and murdered his brother. Why did he murder him? Because his works were evil and his brothers were righteous. Not because he was an unbeliever and Abel was a believer.

Because his works, because his choices. And that's a key. Turn back with me now to Genesis chapter 4. Let's pick up in the picture the details of the relationship between Cain and the Lord.

The two brothers bring their sacrifices. This is interesting that we don't find any mention of Adam and Eve here. Did Adam bring his sacrifice for himself and his wife? It's not mentioned.

If this was an annual type of event, sort of a prototypical day of atonement or annual sacrifice of some sort, we don't have any mention of Adam. Why? Because the picture that God gives us, the illustration that He presents us with here is the choice. You've got two brothers.

Same standing. Same father and mother. Same training.

Same teaching. Same opportunity. If anything, Cain is in the favored position being the firstborn.

When they bring their sacrifices, Cain is not respected nor is his gift. And he's very angry and his countenance falls in 4 or 5 of Genesis. So, the Lord comes to Cain.

The Lord confronts him. The Lord questions him. Just as He did Cain's parents in the garden.

Why are you angry? And why has your countenance fallen? If you do well, we saw that verb last time, that yataw verb. If you produce good, if you function in the good, will you not be accepted? You haven't been accepted. You and your sacrifice have been rejected.

If you do what you're supposed to, you'll be accepted. Notice it doesn't say if you trust the person you're supposed to trust. If you believe in me, you'll be accepted.

If you come to faith, what is the basis of salvation? Is it deeds or faith? Well, in every age, faith. Hebrews 11, 6, without faith it is impossible to please God. He that comes to God must believe.

Must believe that He is. Must believe that He rewards those who diligently seek Him. If you do well, this is what you say to a believer who is now under obligation.

Who has now been called to faithful obedience. Obedient faithfulness. Actions matter for a believer.

Actions don't matter for an unbeliever. It's what think ye of Christ. What is your attitude? Are you going to trust God? Are you going to accept Him or not? But he says if you do well.

If you function and produce in the good. Will you not be accepted? And if you do not. If you do not do well.

Sin crouches at the door. This is the alternative. You can either be mastered by sin.

Or you can master sin. God tells Cain in verse 7. That sin's desire is for him. Sin has the desire to control him.

To overwhelm him. To be the dominant force in his life. God says you must rule over it.

Mashal. The very same verb that God uses in Genesis 3.16. Your desire shall be for your husband. Same word for desire.

And he shall mashal. He shall rule over you. Sin has a desire.

Has a craving for us. As believers. It thwarts the purpose for which we are saved.

Jesus Christ died to deliver us out of the evil that characterizes our age. Not just to save us from the lake of fire. But to deliver us in time.

To deliver us on a daily basis from the influence and the power of sin. Romans chapter 8. There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus. For what the law could not do, Christ has done.

And we are no longer slaves to sin. This is the picture that God presents to Cain. He says sin is waiting there.

Crouching at the door. Interesting. This is the first mention of door.

Door of what? What kind of doors did they have in those early days? What door might there have been? If they dwelt in tents, is this the tent flap? What is a door? Well, a door is a place of entrance and exit. So, Cain is in the presence of the Lord. And if he is not doing well.

And he exits. Sin is right there waiting for him. You can either dwell in the presence of the Lord.

Reminds us of what John talks about in terms of abiding with. Abide in me. I abide in you, Jesus says.

If you go out that door. If you leave the presence and the fellowship of God. Sin is crouching at the door.

And it has a craving for you. The same kind of craving that a wife has for her husband. But you must master it.

You must rule over it. You must be dominant over it. It must not be dominant over you.

Is what God tells Cain. Now, that's only a possibility for a believer. An unbeliever has no ability to master sin.

Believers do. And it's a choice. We choose who is going to rule.

We choose which master we serve. No man can serve two masters. You serve one or the other.

So, what is Cain's response? What is Cain's answer to this question that God asks? Well,

it's not recorded for us, is it? We don't have any record that Cain says anything. His response is in his actions. And in verse 8, Cain spoke.

Or literally in the Hebrew it says, Cain said to Abel his brother, dot, dot, dot. And the gap there is not filled in in the Masoretic text. If you go to the Samaritan Pentateuch or the Septuagint, it says Cain said to his brother Abel, let us go to the field.

I don't know. And nobody knows which of those is original. There's been some sort of deficit that has occurred in our text because the construction is not normal.

They've kind of smoothed it over in the English. Cain talked with Abel his brother. But this doesn't mean talked.

It says he spoke. It's the common pattern. He spoke to him saying.

And then we don't have the words there. These early versions supply that. And I think that it was at Cain's behest or request or suggestion that they go to the field.

And the result is that Cain rose up against Abel his brother and killed him. Now this issue, and I pointed this out last time, the problem here is between Cain and God, right? Cain brought something to God. God didn't accept it or him.

And it indicates that all is not well between Cain and God. What is the issue between Cain and Abel? Why does Cain rise up in wrath and murder his brother? Well, this is some sort of transference, isn't it? The real issue is between Cain and the Lord. But Cain takes it out on his brother.

Cain vents his wrath and his vengeance on his brother. Abel didn't run up there and snuff out the divine fire on Cain's sacrifice, did he? Or whatever other method God used to signal his acceptance. It wasn't Abel's fault that Cain's sacrifice was not accepted.

We have that often quoted question that is about to come up here in our passage when God says, where's your brother? And Cain says, how do I know? Am I my brother's keeper? Well, is Abel Cain's keeper? Did Abel have some sort of responsibility for Cain and failed, and that's why he is worthy of death? Not at all. When you think about this in this early time in history, you don't have historical precedence and everything else. You've got these two brothers out in the field there.

One is accepted, one is not. The one who is not, God comes and points out, you have an issue with me. You're not doing well.

If you do well, you'll be accepted. I will accept you and I will accept your gift if you do well. And you and I will have a relationship.

If not, if you're not willing to do well, you're going to have a relationship with sin. Sin is crouching at the door and it craves you. This is your alternative.

This is your other choice. Its desire is for you, but you are supposed to rule over it. Well, what happens here? Cain doesn't Yataav.

He does not do well. He doesn't acknowledge his transgression. What was the key to abiding? What was the key that we saw in 1 John as far as relationship with God and fellowship with God, abiding with God, purifying ourselves.

The one who has this hope in him purifies himself. And we saw that in 1 John 1.7 and in 1.9. And that involves acknowledging sin and walking in the light, doing well. Let's take a quick, just quickly review some of the passages that talk about the doctrine of repentance.

This is when you see all of the parallels between this and Genesis 3. When God confronts Adam and Eve, they acknowledge their transgression. The serpent does not. Based on their acknowledgement, God is able to restore them.

God is able to forgive them and make provision for them. And even though their sin has consequences, they have the freedom to live in and with God. Their circumstances change as a result of sin, but their relationship with God is restored.

They still have the opportunity for fellowship. They have the opportunity to rule over the sin that has entered life and the human race. Cain does not do that.

You can look at passages. When we think about repentance or confession of sin, we immediately think 1 John 1.9. There are a host of passages, and you may want to make note of these. We won't have time to turn to all of them.

I will read some of them to you, and you can note the reference if you like. 2 Chronicles 6.29 Whatever prayer, whatever supplication is made by anyone or by all your people Israel, Solomon says at the dedication of the temple, when each one knows his own burden and his own grief and spreads out his hands to the temple, then, O LORD, hear from heaven your dwelling place and forgive, and give to everyone according to all his ways, whose heart you know. For you alone know the hearts of the sons of men, that they may fear you to walk in your ways as long as they live in the land which you gave to our fathers.

Solomon prays, when people come to this place and spread out their hands and acknowledge their burden and their grief, then, O LORD, hear and forgive. The next chapter, 2 Chronicles 7.14 If my people who are called by my name will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, they acknowledge that they've done wrong and they turn. This is getting back to walking in the light.

Then I will hear from heaven and will forgive their sin and heal their land. Notice in that context that God says, I will forgive their iniquity, I will heal their land when they turn

from, not when they acknowledge alone, when they turn from. Jeremiah 36.3 It may be that the house of Judah will hear all the adversities which I purpose to bring upon them, that everyone may turn from his evil way, in order that I may forgive their iniquity and their sin.

Daniel 9.8 This is an example of confession of sin in the Old Testament. Daniel praying, O LORD, to us belongs shame of face, to our kings, our princes, and our fathers, because we have sinned against you. Have we thought about acknowledging and confessing before God the sins of our leadership? It's easy to throw rocks at the leadership, but Daniel, when he sees the sin in his government, confesses it to God.

O LORD, our kings, our princes, and our fathers, we have sinned against you. To the LORD our God belongs mercy and forgiveness, though we have rebelled against him. We have not obeyed the voice of the LORD our God to walk in his ways, which he set before us by his servants the prophets.

Yes, all Israel has transgressed your law and has departed so as not to obey your voice. Therefore, the curse and the oath written in the law of Moses, the servant of God, have been poured out on us, because we have sinned against him. What curse is Daniel talking about here? Well, read Deuteronomy, just as one example, Deuteronomy chapter 28.

Deuteronomy chapter 28, Deuteronomy 28.15 It shall come to pass, if you do not obey the voice of the LORD your God, to observe carefully his commandments and his statutes, if that which you have heard from the beginning does not abide in you, we might paraphrase, all these curses will come upon you and overtake you. Cursed shall you be in the city, and cursed you shall be in the country. Cursed shall be your basket and your needful bowl.

Cursed shall be the fruit of your body and the produce of your land, the increase of your cattle and the offspring of your flocks. Cursed you shall be when you come in. Cursed you shall be when you go out.

Turns a phrase for military action, coming in and going out. The LORD will send on you cursing, confusion and rebuke in all that you set your hand to do, unless you are destroyed and until you perish quickly, because of the wickedness of your doings in which you have forsaken me. Talking to believers, talking to the people of God.

They were there and they forsook. The LORD will make the plague cling to you until he has consumed you from the land which you are going to possess. The LORD will strike you with consumption, with fever, with inflammation, with severe burning fever, with the sword, with scorching, with mildew.

They shall pursue you until you perish. Sent unto death. Your heavens which are over

your head shall be bronze, and the earth which is under you shall be iron.

Agricultural discipline. The LORD will change the rain of your land to powder and dust. From the heaven it shall come down on you until you are destroyed.

We don't like to think about these things coming on believers, do we? But that's exactly the audience to whom he speaks. These are terrible retributions and disciplinary actions on believers. The LORD will cause you to be defeated before your enemies.

You shall go out one way against them and flee seven ways before them. You shall become troublesome to all the kingdoms of the earth. Even when you're trying not to go to war with anybody, they're going to find you troublesome and come and attack you.

Your carcasses shall be food for all the birds of the air and the beasts of the earth. And no one shall frighten them away. The LORD will strike you with the boils of Egypt, with tumors, with the scab, with the itch from which you cannot be healed.

This just gets more and more gruesome. You would think that in the face of such a warning and such a certainty as these statements from God, that this would be the farthest thing from anyone's mind or from anyone's life. The LORD will strike you with madness and blindness and confusion of heart.

Have you ever wondered about the latter end of some of us as believers as we get older? What is the nature of our life toward the end? Are we miserable? Be not deceived. God is not mocked. Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap.

He that sows to the flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption. He that sows to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting, eternal life, life that partakes of the divine, life that partakes of the eternal. It depends on what we sow.

That's not a salvation passage. That is a believer's life passage. Same thing here.

The LORD will strike you with madness and blindness and confusion of heart. You shall grope at noonday as a blind man gropes in darkness. You shall not prosper in your ways.

You shall be only oppressed and plundered continually, and no one shall deliver you. You shall betroth a wife, but another man shall lie with her. You shall build a house, but you shall not dwell in it.

You shall plant a vineyard, but shall not gather its grapes. Your ox shall be slaughtered before your eyes, but you shall not eat of it. Your donkey shall be violently taken away from before you and shall not be restored to you.

Your sheep will be given to your enemies. You shall have no one to rescue them. Your sons and your daughters shall be given to another people, and your eyes shall look and fail with longing for them all day long, and there shall be no strength in your hand.

A nation whom you have not known shall eat the fruit of your land and the produce of your labor. You will be driven mad because of the sight which your eyes see. The Lord will strike you in the knees and on the legs with severe... I mean, it goes on and on and on.

These are the promises of God to those who forsake His way, to those who do not abide, to those who are not of God. It's a serious, serious consequence. And why does this come upon them? If you do not obey the voice of the Lord your God, if you do not observe carefully His word, His commandments, His statutes, if when you do fail, you don't turn, you don't repent.

Now, this is essentially a living death, isn't it? This is the life of someone who has no relationship with God, no recourse to God, no blessing from God, no sustaining grace and life from God. This is what Daniel mentions in chapter 9. All Israel has transgressed your law and has departed so as not to obey your voice. Therefore, the curse and the oath written in the law of Moses, the servant of God, have been poured out on us because we have sinned against Him.

We have sinned. Lots of people sinned, but this is unconfessed sin, unacknowledged sin, unrepentant sin. There is no turning from the way.

This is what we see pictured over in 1 John. Now, therefore, our God, He says in verse 17 of Daniel 9, hear the prayer of your servant and his supplications, and for the Lord's sake, cause your face to shine on your sanctuary which is desolate. O my God, incline your ear and hear.

Open your eyes and see our desolations and the city which is called by your name. For we do not present our supplications before you because of our righteous deeds, but because of your great mercies. That ought to be a memory verse any time we think about acknowledgement and confession of sin.

We do not present our supplications before you because of our righteous deeds, but because of your great mercies. Daniel 9.18 O Lord, hear. O Lord, forgive.

O Lord, listen and act. Do not delay. For your own sake, my God, for your city and your people are called by your name.

Terrific passage. The Lord mentions this, Luke 17.3 Take heed to yourselves. If your brother sins against you, rebuke him.

If he repents, forgive him. The basis for forgiveness is repentance. If he sins against you seven times in a day, and seven times in a day returns to you saying, I repent, you shall forgive him.

Luke 17, verse 3 and 4. 2 Corinthians 2, verse 3 I wrote this very thing to you.

Remember the issue where the man in an incestuous relationship with his stepmother. In 1 Corinthians, Paul says, You should have separated from him.

Speaking as though I'm there, I turn him over to Satan for the destruction of the flesh. Notice that is a believer who has been turned over to Satan, who is of Satan. And who you choose, that's who you get to serve.

But now in 2 Corinthians, I wrote this very thing to you, lest when I come I should have sorrow over those from whom I ought to have joy. And so forth. He says in verse 4, I wrote to you with many tears, not to grieve you, but so that you might know the love which I have for you.

If you read on down through that context, he says in verse 9, I wrote to you that I might put you to the test whether you are obedient in all things. Can you obey when it comes to the doctrine of separation? Can you obey when it comes to the doctrine of touch not the unclean thing? Purge this defilement out of your midst as a group. Now in verse 10, whom you forgive anything, I also forgive.

Indeed, if I have forgiven anything, I have forgiven that one for your sakes in the presence of Christ, lest Satan should take advantage of us. We are not ignorant of his devices. This individual, as a result of his discipline, repented.

And Paul is telling the Corinthians, If you forgive him, I forgive him. If he is worthy of forgiveness, if he has turned and repented, then we need to bring him back into the fold so that Satan will not take advantage of us. James 5.15, the prayer of faith will save the sick.

The Lord will raise him up. If he has committed sins, he will be forgiven. Confess your trespasses to one another and pray for one another that you may be healed.

This is not confessing random sins. This is when you sin against a person. You acknowledge to that person.

This is the picture that Jesus gave of, if you have an issue with your brother, drop your sacrifice and go be reconciled to your brother. We acknowledge to one another when it is necessary for the healing process. The effectual, fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.

There are cases where sin is unforgivable. What are those cases? Those who are not repentant. Those who do not acknowledge.

As long as that sin is unacknowledged, as long as there is no repentance and turning, that sin is unforgivable. Deuteronomy 29.18, lest there shall be among you a root bearing poisonous fruit and wormwood. It is possible for there to be a bitter root springing up among you, causing dissension and strife, like Paul talks about.

It goes all the way back to Deuteronomy 29.18, lest there be among you a root bearing poisonous fruit and wormwood. It shall be when he hears the words of this curse, he will boast, saying, I have peace, even though I walk in the stubbornness of my heart, in order to destroy the watered land with the dry. The individual hears the words of this curse, and he says, well, I don't see the curse coming on me.

The nation is blessed, so I can go my own individual way, and I won't suffer all of these curses. The Lord shall never be willing to forgive him, it says in Deuteronomy 29.20. But rather, the anger of the Lord and his jealousy will burn against that man, and every curse which is written in this book will rest on him. And the Lord will blot out his name from under heaven.

We're going to be returning... I'm so tempted several times we run across these things that talk about the books in heaven, and your name being blotted out of the book, and so forth, and what are the books. Everybody assumes that there's one book, and it's for salvation. It's not.

There are a lot of books, and there are books from which our names can be blotted out. It is the book of inheritance. It's the book of eternal life in the future.

Not in the sense of rescue from the lake of fire, but in the sense of where you stand before God in the eternal future. Are you inside the city or outside? Are you qualified to inherit, or are you not? And this is one of those passages. People say, well, this is just the book of the living.

He'll die the sin unto death. Well, one of these days we'll take up that study. All the curses which are written in this book will rest on him, and the Lord will blot out his name from under heaven.

Let me just say this. This blotting out from under heaven is not the sin unto death, because the curses that are written in the book are curses during life. He's going to live and suffer all of these things, and he's going to be blotted out.

Then the Lord will single him out for adversity from all the tribes of Israel, according to all the curses of the covenant which are written in this book of the law. The whole point here is the unrepentant are under a curse and cannot be forgiven by God. That's the point.

Deuteronomy 29.18-21 2 Kings 24.3 Surely at the command of the Lord it came upon Judah to remove them from his sight. Why? Because of the sins of Manasseh, according to all that he had done, and also for the innocent blood which he shed. For he filled Jerusalem with innocent blood, and the Lord would not forgive.

Why would the Lord not forgive the shedding of innocent blood? No repentance. No forgiveness. Nehemiah 4.4 Hear, our God, how we are despised.

Return their reproach on their own heads, and give them up for a plunder in the land of captivity. Do not forgive their iniquity, and let not their sin be blotted out before thee, for they have demoralized the builders. Nehemiah is trying to rebuild the walls.

There are Israelites who are attacking him, and he prays that God not forgive their sin because they are not repentant. They are attacking those who are trying to rebuild the city of God. You can find this in Isaiah 2:6-11. Isaiah prays to God that these who have grandized themselves and pleased themselves, he says, Do not forgive them.

Enter the rock and hide in the dust from the terror of the Lord and from the splendor of his majesty. The proud look of man will be abased, and the loftiness of man will be humbled, and the Lord alone will be exalted in that day. We either humble ourselves in repentance, or God will humble us in that day.

Many other passages. Isaiah 22:9-14 Verse 14 The Lord of hosts revealed himself to me. Surely this iniquity shall not be forgiven you until you die, says the Lord of hosts.

All of these who ought to be weeping and shaving the head, wearing sackcloth instead. There is gaiety and gladness, killing of cattle, slaughtering of sheep, eating of meat, drinking of wine. Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die.

The old famous phrase comes out of Isaiah 22 Verse 13 The Lord of hosts says, That will not be forgiven until you die. Jeremiah 18:23 Yet thou, O Lord, knowest all their deadly designs against me. Do not forgive their iniquity, or blot out their sin from thy sight.

But may they be overthrown before thee. Deal with them in the time of thine anger. There are sins that are not forgiven.

And the reason they are not forgiven is there is no humility, there is no confession, there is no turning, there is no acknowledgment. Hosea 1:6 The woman conceives and gives birth to a daughter. And the Lord said to him, Name her Lo-Ruhamah, for I will no longer have compassion on the house of Israel, that I should ever forgive them.

I will have compassion on the house of Judah, and deliver them by the Lord their God, and will not deliver them by bow, sword, battle, horse, or horseman. They will be delivered by the Lord. Why? There is still the spark of humility, repentance, and turning in Judah, but not in Israel, northern tribes.

God says, I will no longer have compassion on them, I will no longer forgive them. Matthew 12:31 Every sin and blasphemy will be forgiven men, but the blasphemy against the Spirit will not be forgiven men. Anyone who speaks a word against the Son of Man, it will be forgiven him.

Whoever speaks against the Holy Spirit, it will not be forgiven him, either in this age, or in the age to come. Reminder of the convicting ministry of the Spirit. You respond to that

ministry, you're forgiven.

You do not respond to that ministry, you're not forgiven. That has application both at the point of salvation, and in the lives of believers. Same idea in Mark 3, 28 and following.

Assuredly, I say to you, all sins will be forgiven the sons of men, and whatever blasphemies they may utter, but he who blasphemes against the Holy Spirit never has forgiveness, but is subject to eternal condemnation. Same idea. Luke 12-10 Anyone who speaks a word against the Son of Man, it will be forgiven him.

To him who blasphemes against the Holy Spirit, it will not be forgiven. By definition, if you reject the convicting ministry of the Spirit, you're not turning, you're not acknowledging, you're not being forgiven. You can't come to Christ if you reject and speak against the Holy Spirit.

You cannot be forgiven as a believer if you reject the convicting ministry of the Holy Spirit. And the curses that came upon Israel in the spiritual realm, come upon us. So, repentance, acknowledgement, confession, turning is a key that determines whether we are blessed or whether we are cursed.

And that cursing can constitute essentially a living death. Being cut off from God for a believer is the equivalent of death. And that's important to us as we examine Genesis 4, because that's what's going to happen to Cain.

Why is it that when Cain commits a premeditated murder, speaks to his brother, says, let's go to the field, takes him out there and kills him, why is Cain not executed? We know from the law that when you shed innocent blood, the penalty is death. The same question pertains in other cases such as King David. Well, this is the basis for the answer.

Cain does die in the same way that Adam and Eve die when they partake of the fruit. There is an irrecoverable rupture in the relationship with God as a result of sin. And Adam and Eve have that largely repaired because of confession, because of acknowledgement.

Cain does not. And after this murder, in verse 10, what have you done? The voice of your brother's blood cries out to me from the ground. You are cursed from the earth, which has opened its mouth to receive your brother's blood from your hand.

When you till the ground, it shall no longer yield its strength to you. A fugitive and a vagabond you shall be on the earth. This is a two-verse summary of Deuteronomy 28, isn't it? He is cut off.

And Cain recognizes it. He says, This punishment is greater than I can bear. You've driven me this day out from the face of the ground.

I shall be hidden from your face. I shall be a fugitive and a vagabond on the earth. It will happen that anyone who finds me will kill me.

It's essentially a living death. And we're going to see next time that the principle of redemption has a number of different applications. There is a substitute for a penalty in the Lex Talionis, in the law of Talion, or the law of an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth.

You can substitute for that payment. Instead of giving an actual tooth, you can pay money. Instead of returning an actual injury that has been inflicted during a struggle, you can pay money.

You can compensate for damages. This is our modern principle of insurance. We can pay someone money that is the equivalent of damage that has been done.

And even in the case where the penalty is a life, that can be redeemed. That can be substituted. It's the basis of our salvation.

We owe a death penalty, but something else has been put in its place. In this case, the sacrifice of Christ Himself. The first born in Israel were redeemed with money before the Lord.

This is an equivalence for a life. We're going to find here that the curse placed upon Cain is the equivalent of the death penalty for him. We'll substantiate that from Scripture when we pick up our study next week.

I'll give you that as food for thought this week. We want to remind ourselves in closing of that choice that we face. We have the same choice as Cain.

We have the same choice that John outlines in his epistle. Are we going to abide? Are we going to purify ourselves? Are we going to seek those things that result in the indwelling Christ, the indwelling Father in our lives? It's an all or nothing proposition. It's not casual.

It's not automatic. And it's not something we do halfway. It is something to sit down and weigh and measure out to be worthy to be a disciple of Jesus Christ.

Let's close in prayer. Thank You, Father, for the truth of Your Word. We thank You for Your indwelling Spirit that gives us the capability to understand these things, to have that which we have heard from the beginning remain with us and abide in us.

And as a result of treasuring and making application of these things, we know that You Yourself and the Lord Jesus Christ will come and dwell in us. We acknowledge the worthiness of that goal. We pray that we can achieve it through that which Your grace has supplied to us.

We pray that we'll be reminded of these things and move ever closer to the fulfillment of

them in our own lives. We ask and pray these things in Jesus' name. Amen.