

The Kingdom of God and Eternal Life (13)
Will Christians who still live in sin have Eternal Life?
Sermon by Pastor Sylvia Chan

Today we are going to study another important aspect of eternal life, that is, after we have come to know Yahweh God and the Lord Jesus Christ, if we continue to live in sin, will we have eternal life in the kingdom of God?

I had this question in my heart before I became a Christian, before I committed my life to Yahweh God and the Lord Jesus Christ. Why? At that time I thought I was quite a good person, even though I did sin, but those were very minor sins such as selfishness, arrogance, looking down on people who were worse than me, being jealous of people who were better off than me, and I did tell some minor lies a few times etc. But I felt that all these were very minor sins, while some so-called Christians had committed far more serious sins than I, they were far worse than me. If on Judgment Day Jesus Christ will punish me for those minor sins that I have committed, yet grant those so-called Christians eternal life in the kingdom of God, that would be really unfair! This judgment is unfair! That's why I didn't want to become a Christian!

Praise be to Yahweh God, He understood me, He didn't punish me. On the contrary He granted me grace upon grace, He helped me again and again despite my criticism against Him and His Son. Finally His great love changed my heart! You can read my testimony "Goodness and Lovingkindness will follow me all the days of my life" on the CDC website.

I think many people think in the same way as I did. Today we are going to look at this question: Will Christians who still live in sin have eternal life in the kingdom of God?

Eternal Life is for those who obey the Lord Jesus Christ

^{NAU} **John 3:36** "He who believes in the Son has eternal life; but he who does not obey the Son will not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him." (Joh 3:36 NAU)

This passage says that he who believes in the Son Jesus Christ has eternal life, but he who does not obey him will not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him. It means that belief and obedience are linked together, those who believe in Jesus Christ will obey him; if anyone doesn't obey Jesus Christ, then he doesn't truly believe in Christ, his faith is not the true faith.

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Let's continue to look into this passage. After someone has committed his life to Yahweh God and the Lord Jesus, if he continues to live in sin, will he have eternal life in the kingdom of God? Definitely not! The teaching of the Lord Jesus Christ is righteous, holy and full of love. Sin is against the Lord's teaching; anyone who obeys the Lord does not live in sin, anyone who lives in sin does not obey the Lord.

All the things I did in my non-Christian days such as selfishness, boasting, looking down on people, jealousy, lying, these are sins. At that time I thought these were just very minor, I thought I was still a very good person, but actually this kind of behavior is against the teaching of the Lord Jesus.

No one can say, "Even though I commit some sins, but I still believe in Yahweh God and the Lord Jesus Christ." This statement is nonsense. Whoever believes in the Lord Jesus should obey the Lord, and he will not live in sin. On the contrary, whoever lives in sin disobeys the Lord Jesus, and he will not see life, but the wrath of God remains on him.

^{ESV} **Hebrews 5:8 – 9** Although he was a son, he learned obedience through what he suffered. ⁹ And being made perfect, he became the source of eternal salvation to all who obey him,
(Heb 5:8 – 9 ESV)

The word "he" in this passage refers to Jesus Christ. Even though he is a son, he also has to learn obedience through suffering. Then how much more do we have to learn obedience? And it is only after the Lord Jesus was made perfect through suffering, then he became the source of eternal salvation to all who obey him; he is not the source of salvation to those who disobey him. This confirms salvation is for those who obey the Lord Jesus Christ.

Through these two passages John 3:36 and Hebrews 5:8 – 9, we see that those obey the Lord Jesus Christ would be granted eternal life, but those who disobey the Lord would not see life. True faith in the Bible is not simply belief in the mind, but true faith includes obedience. If we truly believe in the Lord Jesus, we would obey him and not live in sin. Those so-called Christians who live in sin will not have eternal life in the kingdom of God.

Does it mean that Christians never commit sin?

^{RSV} **1 John 3:6** No one who abides in him sins; no one who sins has either seen him or known him. (1Jo 3:6 RSV)

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The word “him” in this passage refers to Yahweh God, it doesn’t refer to Jesus Christ. Why? Because it says, “no one who sins has either seen him or known him”; many people at that time (the New Testament time) have seen the Lord Jesus, but many of them didn’t believe in him and continued to live in sin. Therefore the word “him” doesn’t refer to Jesus, it refers to Yahweh God; of course they didn’t see Yahweh God with their physical eyes, they would see Him with their spiritual eyes; and to see Yahweh God and to know Him are linked together, to see Yahweh God means to know Him.

It says here that those who sin are people who have never seen Yahweh God or known Him, but those who live in Yahweh God would not sin. Does it mean that Christians are perfect and don’t commit a sin?

In order to answer this question, we have to look into the Greek word for “sin” in this verse. It says here “No one who abides in him sins”. The Greek word for “sin” is *ἁμαρτάνω* (*hamartanō*), this word is in present tense.

The present tense in Greek indicates a continuous action, something that happens continually or repeatedly. Therefore this verse 1 John 3:6 is not saying that Christians are perfect and never commit a sin, what it says is that those who live in Yahweh God would not sin continually or repeatedly, they would not keep on sinning again and again.

^{NAS} **1 John 1:8 – 9** If we say that we have no sin, we are deceiving ourselves and the truth is not in us. ⁹ If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. (1Jo 1:8 – 9 NAS)

This passage says clearly that if we say we have no sin, we are deceiving ourselves, and the truth is not in us. Sometimes it is because we are not careful, we don’t seek the guidance of the Holy Spirit, we just do things according to our own ways and wisdom, so we end up doing the wrong things but not deliberately. Once we realize we have sinned, we have to confess our sins immediately to our Father in heaven, He is faithful and righteous, He will forgive our sins and bring us back to the right path.

Even true Christians do sin, but we would not be controlled by the power of sin, we would not be sinning deliberately and repeatedly. On the other hand, even though we do commit sin because our words, our thoughts and our deeds have not been perfected yet, our hearts have to be perfect in total obedience to Yahweh God.

I am very hot tempered by nature, and whatever things I do, I want to do it and finish it as fast as possible. When I first became a Christian, at that time I couldn't control my hot temper. When someone said something against me, I got very upset. After that when I calmed down, I regretted it and I came before Yahweh God to confess my sin and ask for forgiveness. I asked Yahweh God to change me, and He did. Today there are still some people who really hate me for some reason; when you preach the word of God faithfully, you will make people hate you. Some people would deliberately say things to irritate me, they want to see me get hurt and upset, I can see through their intention, but I am not angry with them. Sometimes I would even do things to ease their anger a bit. Some people hate me for different kinds of reasons I don't understand why, but I don't hate them, I even pray for them, I ask Yahweh God to change them.

Does it mean that Christians only need to ask God for forgiveness then all their sins would be forgiven?

But on the other hand does it mean that when a Christian commits a sin, he only need to ask God for forgiveness, then all would be forgiven no matter how serious their sins are, and they can just go on sinning and sinning?

This is exactly what many non-Christians think; I have a relative who thinks in this way, he doesn't believe in Yahweh God and the Lord Jesus Christ, and he doesn't want to listen to the gospel either, because he thinks Christians can just keep on sinning, all they need to do is to confess to God and ask for forgiveness, then all their sins would be forgiven. He thinks that's extremely unfair, he thinks that would make Christians become irresponsible and more sinful!

What do you think? Is it true that every time we commit a sin, we only need to confess to God and ask for forgiveness, then all our sins would be forgiven?

It is definitely not like that! This kind of teaching is extremely dangerous, it is a deception from Satan!

^{NAS} **Hebrews 10:26 – 27** For if we go on sinning willfully after receiving the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins, ²⁷ but a certain terrifying expectation of judgment, and the fury of a fire which will consume the adversaries. (Heb 10:26-27 NAS)

Here it says that after we have received the knowledge of the truth—that means we have come to know Yahweh God and the Lord Jesus—yet we go on sinning willfully, there is no longer a sacrifice for sins, that means no more forgiveness of sins, but simply waiting for the raging fire that will consume the adversaries of God.

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Yahweh God knows every thought in us, He knows whether we are sinning willfully or not, or we simply don't know or we are not careful etc.

When a Christian sins willfully, that means he sins deliberately, that is a rebellion against Yahweh God. Our Father in heaven is kind and loving, but He is also righteous and holy, He would not tolerate His people to live a sinful life.

Conclusion

Now let's sum up everything. The true faith includes obedience. If we truly believe in Yahweh God and the Lord Jesus Christ, we would obey the Lord Jesus' teaching. He who believes in the Lord Jesus Christ will be granted eternal life, but whoever does not obey the Lord will not have eternal life. Salvation is for those who obey the Lord. If a Christian commits a sin due to ignorance, he has to repent as soon as he realizes it, then Yahweh God would forgive him. We should never sin deliberately; never think that when we sin, all we need to do is to confess before Yahweh God and ask for forgiveness, then all our sins would be forgiven, so we can just go on sinning again and again. Be careful! Yahweh God knows our hearts, if we go on sinning deliberately, it would come to a point there is no more sacrifice for sins, no more forgiveness, we are simply awaiting a raging fire that consumes the adversaries of God.

Eternal life in the present age is the foretaste of the eternal life in the kingdom of God. If right now we are living a life of righteousness, then we will be granted eternal life in the kingdom of God. On the contrary if we are being controlled by the power of sin, then we will not be given eternal life in the kingdom of God.