

Shall We Go on Sinning?

Whenever I share the gospel message of free and full forgiveness through faith in the blood of Jesus, the response is quite predictable. “Why then should you live a good life or fight against sin?” a friend protested. “If salvation is a free gift received by faith and you don’t suffer at all to make up for your sins, you might as well live in sin and still end up in heaven.”

To many Catholics this objection is proof positive that the message of evangelical Christianity is evidently false, and sadly many close their ears and their minds to the gospel. Yet we can be sure that God’s grace is not an incentive for sin, but rather the only sure ground for holy living.

Let me ask my Catholic friends a few questions myself. Why do you seek to live a good life? Why do you strive to avoid sin? What motivates you? Is it merely your personal gain, to reduce your suffering in purgatory and to merit eternal life? If so, do you realize that your motive is basically self-centered? Is it this selfish attitude that raises the objection to the evangelical message?

Please think again about God’s purpose in salvation. God does not merely forgive and leave the sinner in his miserable sinful state. He does not simply save from hell; He also saves His children from their sinful self. God forgives; He also renews the heart.

The Holy Spirit says: “This is the covenant that I will make with them after those days, says the LORD: I will put My laws into their hearts, and in their minds I will write them,” then He adds, “Their sins and their lawless deeds I will remember no more” (Hebrews 10:16, 17).

Notice the two aspects of salvation: (1) forgiveness (“their sins and their lawless deeds I will remember no more”) and (2) a new heart (“I will put My laws into their hearts, and in their minds I will write them”). God’s people are both forgiven and changed; they acknowledge their sins with tears and repentance and willingly obey God's commandments.

One cannot be forgiven and yet continue to wallow in sin. Such creature simply doesn’t exist on the face of the earth.

Why then should I live a good life and fight against sin?

I pursue holiness because God has given me a new heart that wants to please Him in all things. God loves me and He has forgiven all my sins for Christ’s sake; it is only reasonable and natural to love Him who has been so merciful and kind to me.

The suggestion that I can spit in God’s face because He has been so good to me is unthinkable and disgusting to the regenerate mind! Yes, God has forgiven me completely – I will not spend one second in purgatory because Christ’s blood cleanses me from all sin. That amazing love is my highest motive for living a godly life before my Saviour.