

Is Sin Deceiving You?

SATAN'S BIG LIE:
"Sin will make you happy, and
there are no bad consequences."

Sunday, 10/14 – 8:00 & 10:45 + Monday, 10/15 – 7 PM
21st Sunday after Pentecost / 20th Sunday after Trinity – 2018

Introduction: Dear friends in Christ: We sin whenever we fall short of God's perfect will – sometimes *by doing what is wrong*, and other times *by failing to do what is right*.

Today, *as we focus on the second half of Hebrews chapter 3*, we are going to ➔hear an important warning, ➔learn how to heed that warning, and ➔consider a sad example of people who did not pay attention.

1. **Warning:** ¹² **Take care, brothers, lest there be in any of you an evil, unbelieving heart, leading you to fall away from the living God.**
 - a. Think about the loving tone of those words; they were written by a man, *but they ultimately came from God the Father by the Holy Spirit*.
 - b. The main problem is that a heart can become UNBELIEVING; in other words, it did believe, but

then it stopped believing †the Bible to be true, †sin to be sin, and †Jesus to be the only way to heaven. And how does an unbelieving heart tie in with evil, thus with wickedness? Lenski wrote “that ‘a heart of unbelief’ is ever wicked, for no greater wickedness exists than unbelief” (117). *That is a very strong statement, but remember that Jesus is the key to heaven; for those who – by God’s grace – believe, they are blessed forever; but for those who – by their own fault – do not believe, they are cursed forever!*

- c. And why a reference to “the living God”? Because He “keeps his promises and executes his threats” (Lenski, 118). As a living human has a beating heart, *so the living God is alive and active according to His Word and promises!*

2. **Remedy:** We have just learned of the danger – *falling away from the living God, so now what?*

- a. **Remedy:** ¹³ **But exhort one another every day, as long as it is called “today,”** // To exhort someone, means to *earnestly urge that person!* In this case, that earnest urging is in connection with NOT FALLING INTO UNBELIEF! Note also that such urging is to take place every day – *from us to others and from others to us!* Such urging must be in connection with God’s Word, so we exhort others †to read and heed, †to be warned *by the threats and encouraged by the promises!*

- b. **Problem:** [And why is such urging necessary?] **that none of you may be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin.** // So what is the

deceitfulness of sin? The forces of evil, the sinful world in which we live, and our own sinful nature try to tell us that sin is okay – ✦just do it, ✦don't worry about it, ✦you won't suffer any negative consequences! But all such things are deceitful, *thus dishonest*, and intend to lead us – *inch by inch* – to the place of unbelief and eternal punishment! Regarding the sin that we permit into our lives, Lenski noted that “each deceived individual has his own peculiar argument and plea to justify his folly [*foolishness, sin*]” (120).

- c. Remedy: ¹⁴ **For we have come to share in Christ, if indeed we hold our original confidence firm to the end.** ¹⁵ **As it is said, “Today, if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts as in the rebellion.”** // So WHAT are we to hold firmly to the end? Our “original confidence”! What does that mean? Before we trusted in Christ, we trusted in ourselves; then, *by God's grace and power*, we began trusting in Jesus for ✦the forgiveness of our sins and ✦our entrance into heaven; *that was our original confidence!* So how does God work to maintain that original confidence in us? He works through His Word to keep showing us ✦our sin and ✦our helplessness; then *He keeps pointing us to Jesus and His work!*

3. **Example**: If we stopped here, we might say, “Ah, that would never happen to me; I would never fall away from the living God!” Therefore, *to reinforce the deceitfulness of sin*, we come to a powerful example!

- a. **16 For who were those who heard and yet rebelled? Was it not all those who left Egypt led by Moses?** // Think about the contrast: They were enslaved for generations, **and then** God caused the ten plagues and they were set free; then the parting of the sea, the destruction of Pharaoh's army, and the water, manna, and quail in the desert. NEVERTHELESS, most of them stopped believing in the LORD 😞😞😞!
- b. **17 And with whom was he provoked for forty years? Was it not with those who sinned, whose bodies fell in the wilderness?** // *So their sin had grave consequences!* Because of their unbelief, the LORD let the adults wander in the desert until they all died – except for two. The LORD freely offered them the Promised Land, yet, *due to their unbelief*, they did not enter!
- c. **18 And to whom did he swear that they would not enter his rest, but to those who were disobedient?** // As belief leads to obedience, *so disbelief leads to disobedience!*
- d. **19 So we see that they were unable to enter because of unbelief.** // And how did their falling away occur? *From the deceitfulness of sin!* So, *inch by inch*, the people ▶ drifted away from God's truth, ▶ became more accepting of their sin, and ▶ ended up in unbelief 😞!

Let Us Pray: Dear Holy Spirit, keep us 😊 in the Word, 😊 sorry for our sins, and 😊 ever-trusting in Jesus as our Savior!

CONNECT WITH US → Website: www.BethlehemLutheranChurchParma.com
 Podcast: Benefit from the Bible | Facebook: Bethlehem Lutheran Church Parma
 Bethlehem Lutheran Church, 7500 State Road, Parma, Ohio 44134, 440-845-2230