

THE UNPARDONABLE SIN

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The sin God never forgives.
The sin against the Holy Spirit.
The sin which no one ever confesses.

Let's now tune into a conversation which Jesus had with the religious leaders of His day.

Matthew 12:31-32. "Wherefore I say unto you, All manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men: but the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost shall not be forgiven unto men. 32. "And whosoever speaks a word against the Son of man, it shall be forgiven him: but whosoever speaks against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world, neither in the world to come."

So you see, this sin is absolutely unparalleled and absolutely unforgivable. It's not going to be pardoned in this world nor in the world to come. So if there's one subject that we ought to be clear on it's the subject that we're discussing now. In fact, to understand why Jesus said that, it's necessary to read the following verse. This is the background which led Jesus to make that rather astounding statement.

Verses 22-23. "Then was brought unto Him one possessed with a devil, blind, and dumb: and He healed him, insomuch that the blind and dumb both spoke and saw.

23. "And all the people were amazed, and said, Is not this the Son of David?"

You can appreciate the tremendous impression that the healing of the sick and the dumb and the blind had upon the people. They said, "Isn't this just the Son of David?" But the Pharisees, the religious leaders had a very, very different reaction.

Verse 24. "But when the Pharisees heard it, they said, This fellow doth not cast out devils, but by Beelzebub the prince of the devils."

Why, they said, "Well, it's very easy to understand why this man is casting out devils. He is in league with the devil. That's why He can cast them out."

Verses 25-30. "And Jesus knew their thoughts, and Said unto them, Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation; and every city or house divided against itself shall not stand:

26. "And if Satan cast out Satan, he is divided against himself; how shall then his kingdom stand?

27. "And if I by Beelzebub cast out devils, by whom do your children cast them out? Therefore they shall be your judges.

28. "But if I cast out devils by the Spirit of God, then the kingdom of God is come unto you.

29. "Or else how can one enter into a strong man's house, and spoil his goods, except he first bind the strong man? And then he will spoil his house.

30. "He that is not with Me is against Me; and he that gathers not with Me scatters abroad."

You see, it was the very fact that these religious leaders attributed to Satan the work of Jesus that led Christ finally to make the statement in verses 31 and 32.

Verses 31-32. "Wherefore I say unto you, All manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men: but the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost shall not be forgiven unto men.

32. "And whosoever speaks a word against the Son of man, it shall be forgiven him: but whosoever speaks against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world, neither in the world to come."

35. THE UNPARDONABLE SIN

Now people have pictured all manner of sin to be the unpardonable sin. Some have suggested that it's adultery; others, murder; and still others, abortion. But this verse says that all manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men.

You see, the unpardonable sin is not some particular sin. For the Bible says that God will forgive a man's sin, no matter what he has done if he comes and confesses it.

Well, what is the unpardonable sin then? You see, the sin that is unpardonable is the sin that a man refuses to repent of and therefore can never be forgiven. Every sin, according to this verse, can be forgiven unto men, but the unpardonable sin cannot because it is never confessed. The unpardonable sin is not just a particular sin. The unpardonable sin is the condition of man as a man persistently refuses to yield to the Holy Spirit, he then finally commits the unpardonable sin.

Now how can a person get into a condition by which he cannot repent? Well, the Bible tells me that if I continually put off the promptings of the Holy Spirit as He continues to speak to my heart, and tells me what I ought to do, if I continually refuse to acknowledge His leading, the Bible says that finally my condition will be that it leads to the unpardonable sin. No man can gain forgiveness without repentance. But when a man commits the unpardonable sin he no longer repents because the Bible tells me that it's the Holy Spirit, God Himself, that gives us repentance. We don't repent of ourselves.

The Bible says that repentance is a gift of God just as much as forgiveness is. So once the Holy Spirit no longer operates in my life, if I push the Holy Spirit away by refusing to accept what He is asking me to do, eventually I get to the stage when I no longer want to repent because the cause of repentance is gone from my life, the Holy Spirit. When I don't repent I don't gain forgiveness and therefore commit the unpardonable sin. In fact, let me read you what Jesus said on this point.

John 16:8. "And when He is come, (that's talking of the Holy Spirit), He will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment."

What does the Bible define sin as in 1 John 3:4? The transgression of the law. So the very first work of the Holy Spirit when He comes into a man and woman's life is to convict us in the fact that we're breaking God's Ten Commandments.

I've had people come along to these meetings and they say, "Since I've come along to these meetings I don't feel better. I feel worse because in my heart I feel unworthy." Well, that's a very, very good sign. That's an indication that the Holy Spirit is working upon your heart because the very first work of the Holy Spirit when He comes into our life is to convict us of sin, to make us feel uncomfortable in the life that we're living.

The work of the Holy Spirit is to convict us of sin, and of righteousness, to lead us to want to do the right thing, and of judgment. We can no more repent without the Holy Spirit than we can gain forgiveness.

Acts 5:31. "Him hath God exalted with His right hand to be a Prince and a Savior, for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins."

So the Bible says that repentance is a gift of God just as forgiveness is a gift of God, and we can no more repent of ourselves anymore than we can forgive ourselves. They're both given to us as a gift from Jesus, and it is the work of the Holy Spirit that leads us to want to repent. If we no longer have the Holy Spirit leading our life we will no longer want to repent, therefore we will have no forgiveness and therefore commit the unpardonable sin.

John 6:44. "No man can come to Me, except the Father which has sent Me draw him."

So none of us can come to God except Christ draws us. We don't even come to God, but first God comes to us. God always takes the initiative. It's always God first that works upon our life and then we respond as He leads.

35. THE UNPARDONABLE SIN

We must accept repentance from the Holy Spirit. As He comes into our life He leads us to be convicted. We don't have to pray for the Holy Spirit to come down here onto the earth. He's already here. As He comes into our life He will draw us. He will draw us away from sin and draw us to Himself. Then He will convict us of the way we have been living is not what God wants us to do and it's not the right way. So we will feel guilty about the way that we have lived in the past. That's the conviction of the Holy Spirit, so that we will be driven to Christ to ask Him to forgive us. But the Bible says if we resist, as the Holy Spirit comes into our heart, and we resist this conviction that comes into our hearts, the Bible says that the Holy Spirit will leave us.

Genesis 6:3. "And the Lord said, My Spirit shall not always strive with man."

You see, the Bible indicates that while the Holy' Spirit is striving with our hearts, it is not always going to do that. "My Spirit will not always strive with man." For if we don't yield as He convicts us, then finally we will say No to the Holy Spirit for the last time, and then we commit the unpardonable sin.

Now the sin that's unforgivable is not some dastardly deed, some terrible sin, because all manner of sin and blasphemy can be forgiven. But the sin that cannot be forgiven is the sin that we don't repent of because the Holy Spirit no longer s able to lead us. We have resisted. We have said No. We have no yielded.

In fact, in the middle of the Bible, Psalm 51, David prayed a very, very good prayer. David had committed two dreadful sins. He had murdered a man and then committed adultery with his wife, and in Psalm 51 David is praying for forgiveness. Notice his concern in the next verse.

Psalm 51:11. "Cast me not away from Thy presence; and take not Thy Holy Spirit from me."

Now David was concerned that the Holy Spirit would be removed from him, and every one of us ought to be concerned about that, too. He said, "Cast me not away. Take not Thy Holy Spirit from me." So this clearly teaches that the Holy Spirit can leave a man. The Bible makes it very clear that if we continue to resist and we do not yield as the Holy Spirit talks to our hearts and convicts us, and we feel in our hearts the thing that we ought to do, and if we don't do it, then eventually the Holy Spirit will leave us.

Notice something else that we can do to the Holy Spirit.

Ephesians.4:3. "And grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption."

You see, we can grieve the Holy Spirit. The attitude that we assume toward the Holy Spirit will determine and seal our fate.

The question that we ought to determine in our hearts right now is, What is our attitude toward the Holy Spirit? Are we resisting or are we-allowing the Holy Spirit to lead us step by step? As He shows us what is right that we follow, as He convicts us of some things in our lives that are wrong, by God's grace we decide to quit with those things. Because if we do not yield, we'll finally grieve the Holy Spirit and He will leave us.

Sometimes the step that God wants us to take is maybe some habit that God wants us to get rid of that's only going to ruin our life. Others, it may be sport. Some, it maybe a family relationship that is coming between us and God that stops us from making a full and entire surrender to God.

Well, the Holy Spirit won't leave you immediately, for what He does is that He comes to us and He gives us sleepless nights. I've had people tell me that they've had sleepless nights over many of these things. That's the .work of the Holy Spirit. That's God giving us a restless spirit until we decide to do that which is right. You are not to be upset with God for allowing you to have that experience. That's a God of love and mercy, trying to draw you, trying to lead you. But how many people today in the world trade on the long suffering of God? Because God is long suffering people trade on it.

35. THE UNPARDONABLE SIN

Some years ago over in the Boston Commons, something like Hyde Park in Sydney, you know, where people get up on a soap box. There was a man, a rationalist got up on a soap box, and he said, "Look! I'm going to prove to you that God doesn't exist." He took his watch off and he hung it up. He said, "I'm going to give God sixty seconds to strike me down dead. If there is a God, You strike me down dead in sixty seconds." There was a hushed silence over that audience. There were many Christians there who thought that the man would drop down dead any second, but finally the seconds ticked by. Sixty seconds went by and he was still standing there. "Ah, there," he said, "God doesn't exist, I've proved it to you." There was an old Christian man down toward the front of the audience that afternoon and he said to the audience and to the man, "Fool! Thinks he can exhaust the patience of God in sixty seconds." That's not a bad answer either.

But listen! God is not in the business of making people die or causing them to die, striking them down. That's not God's work. God wants everyone to repent. God is longsuffering. God is not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance. It's not God's desire to carry out the whims and wishes of foolish people like that. God wants him to repent. God wants us all to repent.

Ecclesiastes 8:11, "Because sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily, therefore the heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil."

Can you see what the wise man is saying? Because God doesn't strike a man down when he makes a defiant statement like that, people say, "Ha, Ha! God doesn't exist." And they go on carrying on their ordinary life without caring about God.

In fact, some years ago a man wrote to the editor of a newspaper. He said, "Dear editor get some Christian to explain this: I plowed my field on the Sabbath. I hoed it on the Sabbath. I planted my potatoes on the Sabbath. I hoed my plot on the Sabbath. And I dug my potatoes on the Sabbath. Last May I had the best crop of potatoes I have ever had. Get some Christian to explain that." Some days later a man wrote a letter to the editor, "Dear Editor. Please tell your potato man that God doesn't settle all His accounts in May." And that's right. God doesn't settle all His accounts right now. A man may be able to get away with his defiant attitude. Because he has a defiant attitude against God, God doesn't go around striking people down. But there is a day coming when every one of us will give an account on the day of judgment.

Mark 9:43-47. "And if thy hand offend thee, cut it off: it is better for thee 'to enter into life maimed than having two hands to go into hell, into the fire that never shall be quenched: 44. "Where their worm dies not, and the fire is not quenched:

45. "And if thy foot offend thee, cut it off: it is better for thee to enter halt into life, than having two feet to be cast into hell, into the fire that never shall be quenched:

46. "Where their worm dies not, and the fire is not quenched.

47. "And if your eye offend thee, pluck it out: it is better for thee to enter into the kingdom of God with one eye, than having two eyes to be cast into hell fire."

Now what is Jesus talking about here? Is He suggesting that we ought to mutilate our bodies? Is that what He's saying? I think not. What Jesus is saying is that anything or anybody that maybe as dear to us as our right eye, if that is causing us to not make an entire surrender to God, it is better to pluck it out, just as literally as if our eye is the cause of keeping us out of heaven. Jesus said that it is better to get rid of your eye and going to heaven without sight, than go to hell with your sight. No matter what attachment it is, that which is as dear to us as our eye, maybe a job, maybe a relationship, maybe a family tie, if that will come between us and God, God says it's better to get rid of it. Maybe go through life a little maimed than to take it and go to hell. That's what Jesus is saying here in Mark 9. But there are some people who will never heed this warning and Jesus told about it.

Hosea 4:17. "Ephraim is joined to idols, let him alone."

You see, finally God gives up on a man, and there's no hope for him. If we continue to cling to those things which we know are wrong, those things which are stopping us from being obedient to God, the day will come when God says, "He's joined to his idols, just let him alone." Once God leaves a man or a woman

35. THE UNPARDONABLE SIN

alone, they no longer have any desire. I have met people like this. They have no interest in God. They have no interest in the Bible. They have no interest in eternal life. God says they're joined to idols, just let them alone. And that's a tragedy.

There's something else that we can do to the Holy Spirit.

Isaiah 63:8, 9. "For He said, Surely they are My people, children that will not lie: so He was their Savior. 9. "In all their affliction He was afflicted, and the angel of His presence saved them: in His love and in His pity He redeemed them: and He bare them, and carried them all the days of old."

These people He's talking about are people who are looking to Jesus as their Savior. You know, you would think that these people who are being saved and being redeemed would be willing to follow God, but notice the next verse what happened.

Verse 10. "But they rebelled, and vexed His Holy Spirit: therefore He was turned to be their enemy, and He fought against them."

Here's a people who are saved. They have looked to Jesus as their Savior, as their Redeemer, but finally they rebelled against God and they vexed the Holy Spirit. They drove the Holy Spirit away. And When a man or a woman rebels against God's impressions, he finally vexes or drives away the Holy Spirit.

If you take the time some time, you look up a concordance, and look up the word "rebellion." I think just about in every case in the Bible where God's people rebelled against Him, they were rebelling against the Ten Commandments. God is pleading with His people, and He says, "If you continue to rebel and not to follow what I've asked you to do, then you will vex the Holy Spirit" and the Holy Spirit will leave us.

You know, I found that it's relatively easy thing to lead people to accept Jesus as their Savior. I've seen it with people with tears running down their eyes, admitting to me that they've learnt more about the Bible in the meetings that they've attended than they've learnt in all their life. They've been wonderfully impressed with the simplicity of the Bible, and how it just makes so much good sense. But those same people, when we read to them from the Word of God and we teach them about the commandments and in particular the Sabbath that most Christians are treading underfoot, they don't want to hear anymore. Down in these last days God says it's no different.

I'll now read you a prophecy for the last days.

Isaiah 30:8. "Now go, write it before them in a table, and note it in a book, that it may be for the time to come for ever end ever."

If you have a margin in your Bible, what does it say next to "for the time to come for ever and ever?" The latter days. This is a last day prophecy dealing with the latter days. Now what is going to happen in the latter days?

Verse 9. "That this is a rebellious people, lying children, children that will not hear the law of the Lord."

You imagine that! God here predicted that in the last days, His people will not want to hear the law of God. Is that true today among Christendom? Are Christians interested in listening to the law of God? Certainly not. Just about the only thing that a Christian will ever say about the Ten Commandments in these days is the fact that they are done away with. You're not under law, but you're under grace. They feel with that, that the law of God has been done away with.

In fact, in the next verse it doesn't show human nature up in a very good light.

Verse 10. "Which say to the seers, See not; and to the prophets, Prophecy not unto us right things, speak unto us smooth things, prophecy deceits."

35. THE UNPARDONABLE SIN

What a commentary on human nature today: In the last days, God says, The people will not be interested in hearing the law of God. All they will be interested in hearing is easy, light things, that appeal to the ear. That is the commentary on Christendom today. And if you ever wanted to see a Bible prophecy fulfilled before your eyes, you have seen it, and are seeing it.

I guarantee by this stage that you have heard that plenty of Christians tell you that the law of God is unnecessary to keep. It's been done away with, nailed to the cross. You're a legalist, a Jew, and all the other expressions that are used to try to emotionally charge to stop a person from stepping out to follow God's Word. God predicted that that would be the case. So let's not be astounded when we find that some of our Christian friends who we may have admired over the years, repeating the very prophecy that God said would be that they would reject the law of God.

I remember I was studying with a young couple some years ago. We got to the stage of talking about the Sabbath, the necessity of stepping out to follow God. He worked on Sabbath. I knew that there was going to be a problem. And after I had presented the Bible teaching on the Sabbath, I said to him, "What are you going to do about it? It's not just enough to know in our minds what is right. God wants us to respond in our hearts and to be obedient. What are you going to do about it? I pray that you would be obedient and do what He asks you to do." "I know it's the Sabbath. I know what God wants me to do, but I've got to go into the championships. It's been putting money into me, and I've put all this training in. I just have to have one more. This championship will be the last. No more after that. I've got to go in." This was on Sabbath, you see, Saturday. Well, he was pled with. I was visiting with him and I pled with him not to do it. One more time, he said. Well, he determined. After talking to his wife, he said, "We have decided to pray about it." I said, calling him by name, "If you want to commit the unpardonable sin, that's the best way that I know to go about doing it. Look: If you were stealing and I explained to you from the Bible that the Bible says in the commandments, Thou shall not steal, tell me, what would any person think if when an appeal was made for you not to steal any longer and you say, Well, I'm going to pray about it. For God has clearly told us in His Word what He wants us to do. No good praying about it. What we need to do is to get down on our knees, and ask God for the grace to do what He's asked us to do. Not to get down on our knees and ask God and say, God, do You really mean what You say in Your Word? Do you really want me to keep the Sabbath? When He has clearly said in the fourth commandment that the seventh day is the Sabbath.

Our prayer ought to centre in asking God for strength and for grace to do what He's asked us to do. In fact, in Psalm 19 is a wonderful statement. I hope that it will be our prayer as it was David's prayer.

Psalm 19:13. "Keep back Thy servant also from presumptuous sins."

What is a presumptuous sin? When a person commits a presumptuous sin, what type of a sin is that? A deliberate sin, a planned sin. Now why did David ask to keep him from presumptuous sins?

Verse 13. "Let them not have dominion over me: then shall I be upright, and I shall be innocent from the great transgression."

What is the great transgression? What is David alluding to when he says that, I'll be guiltless from the great transgression if I don't commit presumptuous sins? What sin is that? That's the unpardonable sin. David knew that if he continued to do that which was wrong, that which was against God, continually, finally that will lead to the unpardonable sin.

God knows and so does the devil that if we continue in a course of action that we know is wrong, every time we do it and we resist the pleading of the Holy Spirit, it becomes doubly hard to do the right thing the next time. That's why the devil comes to us and appeals to us and says, "Well don't be in too much of a hurry to do this. Don't be in too much of a hurry to step out and keep the Sabbath. Don't be in too much of a hurry to be baptized. Put it off till a little bit later." The devil very well knows that the longer you put it off, the harder it is to decide. So he plays the waiting game. We are sometimes deceived by what he says and we think that we'll be more ready in twelve months time. We'll be in a better position in twelve months time to be able to step out. The facts are we will be in a worse position. The devil will make sure of that over the next twelve months. He will get your mind off the things of God. He'll try to bury your mind in

35. THE UNPARDONABLE SIN

material things. He'll get your mind in a thousand things, but one of them won't be the Word of God. So when the twelve months come, you find that you're further away than you ever were.

That's why during these lectures, if a person doesn't make a decision for God, the chances that he will ever do it after are extremely remote. For if we continue to resist the pleading of the Holy Spirit as we read and study through these series, and if we resist then, we will never do it when the Holy Spirit is not able to speak to us so clearly, so distinctly as now in such a meeting as this. The devil knows that. That's why he continues to get us to put it off. The trouble is, you see, our hearts become harder.

It's like in Colorado over in America. There is a spring there that comes up out of the earth. Then fish go into it, they become solidified or calcified. That's the way sin treats our hearts. Every time we continue in sin and resist the Holy Spirit, our hearts become harder and more difficult, less pliable.

Let me now read you something which is quite astounding. The trouble is, some of these people who commit the unpardonable sin become preachers in churches and people think they're God's ministers. Listen to what Jesus said.

Matthew 7:21. "Not every one that said unto Me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven."

Just because a person claims to be a follower of Christ, that's no indication that he is of God.

Verse 21. "But he that doeth the will of My Father which is in heaven."

Now that's the key. Another translation says, "But he that keeps the commandments." You see, keeping the commandments is the evidence, it is the fruitage of the life and that's what counts. It's not a matter of what a man professes with his lips. It's not a matter of what church he belongs to or anything like that at all. It is what a man does in his life. He that doeth the will. And that is the way you can tell a man of God from a man that's not of God.

People say to me, "All churches appear to be right. All ministers appear to be right." Listen! Here is a very simple test and it's a Biblical test, and the test is this, Does that man who professes to be a man of God, does that church that professes to be a church of God, does it keep God's commandments? If it doesn't, it's not of God. Now I didn't say that. That's what the Bible says.

Verse 22, "Many will say to Me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Thy name? And in Thy name have cast out devils? And in Thy name done many wonderful works?"

Talk about healings and works and charismatic gifts of the Spirit. They'll be manifest in all these churches, and these men will say, "Look! Haven't we healed in Your name? Haven't we cast out devils? Haven't we done this, and haven't we done that." What will Jesus say?

Verse 23. "And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from Me, ye that work iniquity."

You see, they were working for the devil. They thought they were working for Christ. They were Christian ministers, in Christian churches, but they were not willing to be obedient to God and to keep His commandments, and that's the acid test. That's the Biblical test. That's how you can work it out. You cannot work it out on the basis of sincerity because all people appear to be sincere. You cannot work it out on the basis of what is done, and the excitement, and the froth and the bubble, that is often associated with some churches. That's not the indication. The indication is, Are they obedient? Do they keep God's commandments? If they don't, then they're not of God.

People say to me, "Surely one little sin isn't going to keep me out of heaven. Just one little thing. Surely God is not going to stop me from going to heaven because of that."

Mark 10:17-21. "And when He was gone forth into the way, there came one running and kneeled to Him, and asked Him, Good Master, what shall I do that I may inherit eternal life?"

35. THE UNPARDONABLE SIN

18. "And Jesus said unto him, Why call thou Me good? There is none good but one, that is, God.
19. "Thou knows the commandments, Do not commit adultery, Do not kill, Do not steal, Do not bear false witness, Defraud not, Honor thy father and mother.
20. "And he answered and said unto Him, Master, all these have I observed from my youth.
21. "Then Jesus beholding him loved him, and said unto him, One thing thou lacks."

This young man was not only an earnest young man, but he came running. Not strolling to Jesus. He was in deadly earnest. But he was also reverent. He kneeled down in front of Jesus. Now how many things did this young man lack? Just one. You know, when a man in the Christian life is as far along as this young man, Jesus would come along and say, "There's one thing you lack." If Jesus came along to me and said, "You only lack one thing," I would take a lot of courage with that because I guess most of us would say that we lack more than one thing. But this young man had made such progress in the Christian life that Jesus said that he only lacked one thing. But as you read the story, that young man did not surrender that one point, and he was lost eternally because of it. One thing can keep us out of eternal life. One un surrendered sin, no matter how small or how big it may appear, if it is not yielded to God, it will stop us from having eternal life.

How many cancers do you need for it to kill you? Just one. How many holes in a boat need there be in order for the boat to sink? Just one. So one sin can keep us out of heaven.

- James 2:10-12. "For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all.
11. "For He that said, Do not commit adultery, said also, Do not kill. Now if thou commit no adultery, yet if thou kill, thou art become a transgressor of the law.
12. "So speak you, and so do, as they that shall be judged by the law of liberty."

You see, Jesus said that if you break one of the commandments, it's just as bad as if you broke the whole ten. And every one of us are going to be judged by the law of liberty. That's why it's important. That's why God encourages us to keep the commandments because we're going to be judged by them. To break one is as bad as breaking them all.

Like the law of the land, If I murder a man and the police came along to me, and I say, "Look: I've always accepted the marriage laws, and I always drive the right speed, and I try to lead a perfect life in every way," will that help me at all? No. If I've murdered a man, no matter how perfectly I have lived in another way, I go behind bars. So it is with God. To break one is to break them all.

You know, I remember years ago when we stepped out for this unpopular truth. Our family laughed at us and we were given the butt of all jokes and sneers. "Step out to keep your Sunday on Saturday," they said, "What a strange idea that is!" Over the years as they have passed, I realized that I gave up nothing when I stepped out for this truth. But I've had a lot of happiness and peace and joy in my heart, knowing the Bible as God has revealed it to us. It's a wonderful confidence that will bring to your heart.

God has some wonderful things in store for you. If you will only step out and do what is right, you think of the infinite possibilities there are that God can use you, not only to lead your family but to lead others. Maybe we have some apostle Paul's in the making. We have some Mary Magdalene's in the making, Martha's, Mary, the mother of Jesus. Infinite possibilities. It would be a tragic thing if some of us were at the stage when we were about to say No for the last time.

I always tremble at this stage of the lectures and there are still some people unsundered, some who have not yielded their life to Christ. That worries me.

Let me tell you of a couple of experiences that have happened over the years as I have thought about the men and women who have refused to step out to follow God.

I was running some meetings down in New South Wales. There was a man who came along every night and he used to sit right down in the front seat. Never missed. Marked his Bible, absorbing the truth,

35. THE UNPARDONABLE SIN

wonderful. Finally the Sabbath was presented, and I said to him, “God wants you to step out and to do that which is right.” Well, he hesitated and he said, “Look! I’m a barber. We do a lot of business on Saturday mornings down in the shop.” Well, I tried to encourage him that if he stepped out that God would bless him abundantly. God would make up for him as I’ve seen so often in other businesses.

God has made it up in the other five days what he would do in the five and a half. But he didn’t yield. Within two weeks of my visit and my appeal to him that night, I buried him. I would never forget his sister coming to me, after we had buried the casket walking away from the graveside, and his sister came up to me. I have never met her before, but she told me how Jack had appreciated the meetings. He had often discussed them with her, and she told me how he wanted to do that which was right. I couldn’t help it as I looked back to the hole in the ground, a man who never counted on dying. He counted on living a little longer. He was planning eventually to retire in the not too far distant future, then he said, “I will have no hesitation and I’ll keep the Sabbath.” But he never lived to retire. I buried him instead.

Also we were running some meetings on another occasion and a man came along to the meetings. He was a coal miner, working down in the mines. He was convicted of the Sabbath. He said, “Look! I’ve got to work one more Friday night and then I’m going to step out and keep the Sabbath.” Well, he was pleaded with not to go down again when he knew a thing was right. Just one more, he said, I have got to do it this week, but that will be all. He went down that night, and with four or five other fellows he never came up again. He was killed in a fall of rocks.

Down in Newcastle some years ago we had a young man coming to our meetings. He was the surfboard champion of New South Wales. As he was coming along to the meetings he was absolutely convinced of the truth. He said, “I’ve never understood these things. I’m going to step out and keep the Sabbath, but I’ve got to compete in the New South Wales surf championships. When I’ve done that, that’s it. I’m finished, and then I’ll keep the Sabbath from then on.” These championships were going to be held on the Sabbath, Well, he was pled with, “Don’t do it. Don’t go ahead and disobey God, even though in the future you’re planning to be obedient. You have no guarantee on tomorrow.” Well, he just felt that he must compete, and he was the champion. One afternoon he was practicing on Bar Beach in Newcastle. He was there riding away coming in and out and all of a sudden his friend heard a scream, and he turned around, and he noticed the torso of his friend floating in the water. A shark had just come along and cut him in two. He never lived to either keep the Sabbath or to participate in the New South Wales championships. Life for him was gone.

That’s why God always appeals today. Today if you will harden not your hearts. “Accept Me today because tomorrow maybe too late.”

I believe that if you feel as strongly as I do about this matter of making a decision for Christ, every person who is going to be saved and surely all of us would want to choose salvation, has to make a decision. I believe that every one of us, in the seriousness of the times that we live, realizes the necessity of making our decision for Christ and for His truth, to step out and keep God’s commandments and the Sabbath.

Men can harden their own hearts until they cannot repent’. That is why the Bible puts such emphasis on making one’s decision to obey God “today.” The Bible never talks about making a decision to obey God “tomorrow.” The Bible says, “Now is the accepted time.” “Today if ye will hear His voice, harden not your hearts.” “Today, lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin.”

It is a solemn thing, but true, whether you realize it or not, that if you fail to act on a call, the next time that call is made, your heart will be a little harder than it was before. It will be a little harder to yield every time. You can go on and on refusing to yield to the calls of the Holy Spirit, until you become hardened to the most solemn appeals. It is a terrifying situation, but there is nobody to blame but yourself. Sin is a deceitful thing. God’s counsel is, Do it today, lest your heart be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin. Psalm 95:7-11.

With all the earnestness that I can muster I earnestly plead with you. This may be the last opportunity that you may ever have to stepping out and being obedient and to follow God. As God speaks to our hearts and we realize the seriousness of the days in which we live, surely there wouldn’t be one of us who wouldn’t

35. THE UNPARDONABLE SIN

want to link our life up with God's movement in these last days. The message of God to step out and keep His Sabbath, to keep all of the commandments, to follow God in all that He asks .us to do. When you and I make a decision like that, God's power will come into our life to enable us to be able to do it. We can't keep the commandments ourselves. We can't do what God wants us to do ourselves. But when we make a decision, the power of God comes into our life and enables us to do what we can't do ourselves, and that's the beautiful joy of the Christian life. That's why being a Christian is such a living vibrant experience, for God's power is flowing through us moment by moment, day by day.

As we make our decision, God will help us to keep to it, and you won't do that in your own strength either. It's only as we allow the power of God.

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