

# The Sin of All Sins

by Bill McLeod

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*Unbelief is the most serious sin of all, as it grieves God and prevents Him from working in our lives.*

**Duration:** 1:07:57

**Scripture:** Psalm 119:128, Joel 2:13, Matthew 5:1, Romans 15:4

**Topics:** "Unbelief"

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## Description

In this sermon, the preacher shares two stories to emphasize the importance of not hiding our sins. The first story is about a man who was trapped in a trailer that caught fire, but miraculously found the strength to rip a hole in the wall and escape. The second story is about a man who shot his friend and tried to cover up the crime by pretending he got lost. However, his sin was eventually discovered when his friend's body was found in an iceberg. The preacher emphasizes the biblical principle that our sins will eventually be exposed and encourages listeners to repent and seek forgiveness from God.

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## Transcript

Wherefore, holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, consider the apostle and high priest of our profession, Christ Jesus, who was faithful to him that appointed him, as also Moses was faithful in all his house. For this man was counted worthy of more glory than Moses, inasmuch as he who has built the house has more honor than the house. For every house is built by some man, but he that built all things is God.

And Moses, in truth, was faithful in all his house as a servant, for a testimony of those things which were to be spoken after. But Christ as a son, over his own house, whose house we are, if we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope, firm unto the end, wherefore, as the Holy Ghost says, today, if you will hear his voice, harden not your hearts. Now this is a quotation from the Psalms.

As in the provocation in the day of temptation in the wilderness, when your fathers tempted me, proved me, and saw my works forty years. Wherefore, I was grieved with that generation and said, they do always err in their heart, and they have not known my ways. So I swore my wrath, they shall not enter into my rest.

Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God. But exhort one another daily, while it is called today, lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin. Well tonight, God has led me to speak on the subject of the worst sin of all.

What Spurgeon called the bottom line of sin. The most serious sin of all, the most crippling sin of all. Now I'm referring to unbelief.

The bottom line of sin, it was the original sin in the Garden of Eden, because Satan insinuated doubts into the heart of Eve, and she bought his program, and the result we know. It's affected all of us in a very disastrous way. Spurgeon said it was the bottom line because he based that in 1 John 5.10. It says, he that does not believe God has made him a liar, because he does not believe the record that God gave of his son.

We wouldn't dare to call God a liar, but every time we doubt him, we doubt his promises, or allow unbelief in any way to creep into our heart, we're doing exactly that. We're calling God a liar. And one of the great problems among Christians is this, that the average believer does not think that unbelief is a sin.

He thinks it's unfortunate, he wishes he had more faith, but he never faces up to the fact that the Bible calls it an evil heart of unbelief. An evil heart of unbelief. I frequently hear people praying or saying, oh, I don't have much faith, I wish I had more faith, I find myself doubting God all the time.

And they're really sort of putting the blame on God and excusing themselves. They're saying, well, I pray for more faith, I pray every morning for more faith, and it somehow doesn't seem to come. And so perhaps unconsciously, but just as really, they're blaming God for the problem.

And he calls it an evil heart of unbelief. If you include the prayers in the Psalms, and they've sometimes been called ejaculatory prayers, God save me, the Lord deliver me, short prayers, if you include all those, I think there's a couple of hundred in the Psalms, then in the Bible altogether, there's around 600 prayers. There are 231 references to faith, there's 134 references to trust, there's 121 references to hope.

If I add rightly, 486 altogether. Unbelief. Satan, when he came to Eve, as someone said, began with a positive and ended with a negative.

He began with a yes. Well, I like a positive person, no doubt with a smile. He says yes.

This helped to disarm her. Do you think God really said this about the tree? This is how it went. And she began to doubt.

Satan knew what he was doing when he talked to Eve, because she got it from her husband, he got it from God. And was distinctly told in Timothy, 1 Timothy, that Adam was not deceived. In other words, he walked in with his eyes wide open, probably because of his love for Eve, he did not want to be separated from her.

His love for Eve was greater than his love for God. And that was the problem. There's a verse in Psalm 119 that says, therefore, I esteem, that is I count, I esteem all your teachings, all your precepts to be right, and I hate every false way.

We're living in a day when many of the teachings of the Bible are being questioned. Why? They tell us Paul was a woman hater. And the things Paul says about the woman should not be accepted.

The sermon on the mouth, that's for the kingdom age. Well really, if it's for the kingdom age, then it means that in the kingdom age, we're going to have hypocrites and sinners of different kinds. But that's what some people are saying.

I read something recently really disturbed me. The writer was saying, you should not preach the gospel from the four Gospels or the book of Acts, but only from the epistles of Paul. And he raised this question, he said, would you say to a sinner, if you want to be saved, if you give all your money to the poor and take up your cross and follow Jesus, is that what you tell a sinner? I don't know what he did with the Gospel of John.

The Gospel of John preaches the gospel as clearly as anything. And the gospel is found in all four Gospels as far as that's concerned. But this is a very popular teacher.

Everywhere I go, people have his books in their library. All scripture is given by inspiration of God and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, and for instruction in righteousness. All of it.

And in Romans 15, Paul said, referring to the Old Testament scriptures, whatever things were written before were written for our learning. It's all inspired of God. There are parts that are difficult to understand.

Read your Bible. As Moody read his, Moody said, I read my Bible the way I eat fish. If I come across a bone, I don't stop eating fish.

I lay the bone on the side of the plate and I go right on, I go right on eating fish. So if you come across something you don't understand, don't spend hours mulling over it. Commit it to God, ask God to tell you what it means, and sooner or later you'll get an answer.

Might be a month, might be an hour, might be a day, might be a year, who knows? But God will give you an answer. But it's all inspired of God. It's all profitable for doctrine, and the burning question is, what did God say? Because by this word, someday we're going to be judged.

If we're going to be judged. Unbelief. It grieves God greatly.

It grieves God so greatly that even Moses was denied entrance to the promised land. Remember what happened? They needed water, and God said, I'll stand on the rock. Now you smite the rock with your rod and water will come out.

Now would you take a piece of wood and smite a rock and expect water to come out? No, I wouldn't. Unless God told me to do it. Then I'd expect it.

And he did, and the water came. The water overflowed. Rivers ran.

After all, it was a million and a half people to be taken care of. It wasn't some little brook. On another occasion, God said, speak to the rock.

And Moses didn't believe that would do it, so he smote the rock with his rod, and God said, because you did not believe me, you'll never enter the promised land. Unbelief. Israel wandered 40 years in the wilderness.

From Mount Horeb to Kadesh Barnea, the borders of the promised land, was only an 11-day journey. It says in Deuteronomy chapter 1. An 11-day journey became 40 years of wandering in what is called a waste-howling wilderness, serpents and scorpions and salt pits and all the rest of it. 40 years.

Because of their wicked unbelief at Kadesh Barnea. I remember as a young Christian sort of scratching my head and saying, why did God put this big deal on them just because they failed once at Kadesh

Barnea? There was a reason for it. They've been doubting God all along.

In Numbers 14, God said to Moses, how long will it be? How long will his people promote me? How long will it be, ere they believe me? For all the signs which I have done among them. Look at the miracles in Egypt. There was no reason why they should not be any doubt.

Absolutely none. No nation ever saw the power of God as Israel did. And they had no reason whatever for doubting God.

Think of the crossing of the Red Sea. Think of the manna coming down every day. And twice as much in the sixth day, so they wouldn't have to gather on the seventh day.

I mean, they had daily miracles. And God was extremely angry with the people because how long will it be before they'll believe me? So they wandered for 40 years until a whole adult generation died in the wilderness, their bones bleached under the sun, and their children entered the promised land 40 years later. Underneath grieves God because some people become agnostics throughout the belief.

Some become atheists. An agnostic believes there may be a God, but if there is a God, he doesn't communicate with man. The atheist simply says there is no God.

I read something the other day about a couple who have professed to believe in God. I don't think that everyone's saved. They've been going to church.

They decided church wasn't for them. They talked it all over. And finally they decided they better, they were really atheists.

And so they said, we better tell our daughter. But she was only seven years old. So they sat her down.

They said, now honey, we want you to understand, mother and I, we don't believe there's a God anymore. And she said, does God know about this? You know, good question. I remember hearing in a school classroom, the teacher wrote on the blackboard, God is nowhere.

He was an atheist. And the kid would get up and walk to the blackboard, pick up a chalk and put a line after the W. God is now here. Well, that was good.

There's different ways of handling these problems, you know. People often say, well, I've never committed adultery. I haven't killed anybody.

I haven't stolen money. Why should I go to hell? In Revelation 21.8, there's a list of eight sins that send men to hell. And the first two are the fearful and the unbelieving.

And then come the abominable, the whoremongers, the murderers, the idolaters, and the liars. The top of the list are the fearful and the unbelieving. He that believes, Mark 16, he that believes in his baptist shall be saved.

He that believes not shall be damned. He that believes on the Son has everlasting life. He that believes not the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him.

You don't have to do anything to go to hell, dear people. If you don't believe in Christ, you cannot go to heaven. We've seen, my faith looks up to thee, thou Lamb of Calvary, Savior Divine.

Now hear me while I pray. Take all my guilt away. Oh, let me from this day be holy thine.

And that's how men get saved. But we're lost if we don't believe in Christ. I am the door.

I am the door, he said. By me, if any man enter in, he shall be saved. Are you saved? Have you entered in by the door? There was a woman, they called her You might have read about her.

She lived in Toronto. She was so well known when she died. The mayor of Toronto was at her funeral.

She'd been raised Roman Catholic, but somebody one day preached the gospel to her. She couldn't read or write. And she became a true believer in Jesus Christ.

And one day she was walking down the street. And the priest saw her walking down the street, and he picked her up to give her a ride. And he took advantage of the opportunity to try and show her the great mistake she'd made.

And finally, he told her, you know, the apostle Peter is the rock on which our church is built. And Peter has the keys to the door of heaven. Do you understand that? She said, yes, but Jesus said, I'm the door.

I've got the whole door. I don't care who has the keys. Well, that was good theology, right? I think so.

Unbelief prevents God from working. Psalm 78. It says they turned back, and they tempted God, and they limited the Holy One of Israel.

That is, they limited what God could do through unbelief. In the same psalm, they said, God, you provided water. Can you set a table in the wilderness? Can God do this? Can God do that? Constantly questioning what God could or could not do.

They turned back and tempted God, and they limited the God of Israel. In Mark 6, and also in the Gospel of Matthew, we read that in Nazareth, his hometown, he could there do no mighty works because of their unbelief. Now, if you read all the accounts about Nazareth, up to a certain point, he worked some miracles there.

And that unbelief took over, and they were saying, well, who does this guy think he is? We know his father and mother. Who does he think he is? And unbelief took over, and from there on, it says, he could not do any mighty works, except he laid his hands on a few sick people and healed them. No mighty miracles in Nazareth because of their unbelief.

So, whether it's Old Testament or New Testament, it's the same. The God of heaven can work where men are filled with unbelief. And it's the same for your church, as for any church in the country.

Spurgeon was in the church one time. He said, the building was filthy. There were cobwebs hanging everywhere.

Everything looked dirty and unkempt, untidy. And after meeting, he saw a couple of men leaning against the wall. And he walked over and said, I presume you're deacons of this church? And they said, how did you know? Well, he said something like this, you look like the building.

Wasn't exactly charitable, but there wasn't any faith there. You can sense that sometimes. You get in some churches, and people are not expecting God to do anything.

Indeed, some people are praying nothing will happen because they got some skeletons hanging in the closet, and they don't want them to start clunking around, making a noise, drawing attention. So they're hoping nothing will happen. One fellow invited me to come to his house for coffee on a Thursday night.

I don't drink coffee, but I was there anyway. My wife drinks gallons of it, enough for me. And anyway, he went home and said, honey, guess what? I invited Bill McCloud to come to our house for coffee on Thursday night.

She said, what? What are you going to do that for? She said, what if he asks us if we're filled with the Holy Spirit? What are we going to tell him? Oh, I never thought of that. And they were both petrified to have me come to the house. But what happened, Wednesday night, they both came forward and they met God.

They could hardly wait for Thursday night to come. We had a fantastic time of fellowship. But the wicked flee when no man pursues.

But the righteous are bold as a lion. People like to hide their sin. The most useless thing you can ever do is to hide your sin, because it says in Psalm 90, Thou hast set our iniquities before thee, our secret sins in the light of your countenance.

Up in northern Canada, two Eskimos went hunting, and one came back alone. He said, my friend wandered away in a blizzard, but I couldn't find him. I don't know what happened to him.

I searched all over the place, couldn't find him. And they accepted his story, and that was that. But next spring, what had actually happened, he shot his friend, he hated him, took him hunting, shot him between the eyes, and they dragged him to the shore.

He was an iceberg not far away. And somehow he got this body into a big crack in the ice, covered up with snow, couldn't be seen. And that was that.

But in the spring, this iceberg was bobbing around in Hudson Bay, and somebody happened to go by and saw an Eskimo in the ice with a bullet hole between his eyes, went and told the Royal Canadian Mounted Police. They went up there with a power boat and chipped his body out, and they found it was this man who supposedly had wandered away in a blizzard, and so the guy's sin was found out. The Bible says, be sure, be absolutely sure your sin will find you out.

Sooner or later, dear people, it's much better to take care of it now, at the cross, get our sins forgiven. He that covers his sins shall not prosper, whoso confesses and forsakes them shall have mercy. God is just waiting for us to be guilty.

And Hosea chapter 5 goes like this. God said, they shall go with their flocks and their herds to seek the Lord, but they shall not find Him. Listen, if Israel's going to seek God with flocks and herds, it's because they're going to offer sacrifices.

Don't they mean business? Why would God hide Himself from them? They shall not find Him, it's said. And in the last verse of that same 5th chapter of Hosea, we're told why. God said, I will go and return to my place until they acknowledge their offense and seek my face.

So they were seeking the face of God, they were not admitting their sin. And we never get anywhere with God when we come to God that way. When we come to seek the face of God, the first thing we've got to

talk about is our sin.

Search me, O God, and know my heart. Try me, and know my thoughts, and see if there be any wicked way in me. You can see it in your wife, and wives can see it in their husbands, but everybody's blind when it comes to their own sin.

I've had people tell me, I remember one lady said, I've asked God 50 times to search my heart, and He hasn't shown me a thing. And I said, then who is lying, you or God? She said, I'm not. I said, God is? She said, what are you getting at? What it says in Job, then He shows them their work, and their transgressions that they have exceeded, and He opens the rear to discipline.

And He commands that they return from iniquity. Now, my Bible says that God shows us our sin. You tell me He doesn't.

Who's right? I said, why don't we kneel here, and you ask God from your heart of hearts to search your heart, and He did. And she broke and began to cry, all kinds of junk poured out. She hated the place she was, she was a pastor's wife, and she hated the church they were serving, and hated the town.

She'd come from bricks and clunder in the mountains, gosh, she's up in the prairies now, she hated that. She hated some of the people, and you know. But she was telling me that there was nothing there.

God hadn't showed her anything. There's one thing God can do to your people, is to show us where we're wrong, where we've made sin. Now, David said, thy gentleness has made me great.

God is very gentle with His people. He gently leads those that are with young. It says in Isaiah 40, and every Christian is, pregnant with spiritual young, a possibility that you can win people to Christ.

It doesn't matter who you are. My mother led people to Christ. And when she'd gone about four months, one time, without winning a soul to Christ, she said to me, I think there must be some sin in my life.

She couldn't understand how she'd go for four months, and not meet some of the Christ. Unbelief, then, it cripples God. It shuts heaven to sinners.

When you stop to think of the thief on the cross, Jesus said to this thief, now remember he was a thief, he had never been baptized, he never had any of the seven sacraments, he really had nothing going for him at all, except faith. Lord, remember me. It wasn't really even what you might call a sinner's prayer.

God be merciful to me, a sinner. He never even prayed that prayer. He just prayed, Lord, remember me, when you come into your kingdom.

And everything was wrapped up in that. And Jesus said, today you'll be with me in paradise. God doesn't hate us.

God doesn't chase us around with a big stick as Moody believed when he was a young Christian worker. He learned better later on. He gently leads us, but very firmly.

He doesn't let us get away with anything. If you can sin and get away with it, you're not born again. Now, unbelief prevents God from answering prayer.

Do you remember the story of the man who had a child demon possessed and he brought him to the disciples and they couldn't cast the demon out? In Luke chapter 9 verse 1, Jesus Christ had just given the twelve apostles power over all demons. In the 40th verse of the same chapter, nine of them tried to cast a demon out of a child and it didn't work, they couldn't do it. So the question is, didn't Jesus really give them the power? Oh, yes he did.

But they didn't believe it. And so when Jesus cast the demon out so quickly and easily and powerfully, afterwards they said, Lord, why couldn't we? And he said, because of your unbelief. Now he'd given them the power, they had the promise, that's what it was, a promise, power over all the power of the enemy, but they didn't believe it.

So when they ordered the demon to go, they didn't believe the demon would really respond to that. And they weren't disappointed, he didn't. I want you to notice something about the story.

Because in Luke chapter 9, the same chapter, they came to Jesus and said, Lord, we saw a man cast the old demons in your name and we forbade him because he doesn't follow with us. Do you know why they forbade him? Because they were embarrassed. He could do what they couldn't do and they were apostles while this guy wasn't even an apostle.

And he could do what they couldn't do and it was extremely embarrassing. You can understand that. Also, in Luke chapter 10, Jesus sent 70 men out, they were not apostles, they were ordinary lay people, you never read about them again, just one place.

He didn't give them the power to cast out demons, he told them to heal the sick and preach the kingdom, and they came back and said, Lord, even the demons are subject unto us through your name. So the 70 had more faith in the apostles then. It seems so strange, doesn't it? But I mean, that's exactly what we're reading in the word of God.

So, when Jesus came down, the Pharisees were needling the apostles because they couldn't cast this demon out. There's hundreds of people apparently standing around watching, and the child is fronting at the mountain on the ground, all this kind of stuff. And Jesus came on the scene, of course the Pharisees backed away, they were afraid of him, not of the apostles.

And he asked what happened, and the father said, well, I brought my child as a demon and it throws him in the fire and sometimes throws him in the water, and then he said to Jesus, if you can do anything, have compassion on us and help us. Now, dear people, that's not faith. If you can do anything, it goes like this, oh Lord, if you can do anything, it goes like this, it's up to you, not up to me, if you can believe.

So, what Christ was really saying was this, yes, I want to do it, yes, I can do it, yes, I will do it, but only if you believe. In other words, the responsibility was on the father, not on Christ. And Christ wakes, and says immediately, the father child cried with tears and said, Lord, I believe, deal with my unbelief.

I mean, faith was there, but unbelief was rising up, and he wanted to believe, and Christ saw that little spark of faith, and cast the demon out. Why couldn't we? Unbelief, because of your unbelief. All things are possible to him who believes.

That's why I say, dear people, it's the number one sin of all the sins there are, this is the worst, because it's the one sin from which all other sins come. Now, when unbelief takes over the Christian's heart, anything can follow, and sometimes God's. Anything.

You're supposed to walk in faith, believe in God. These marvelous prophecies, does anybody remember how many there are? 7,487 promises. There's only about 33,000 verses.

Dr. Herbert Walker, remember, has this all in the book. Certainly, we need to know. Here's the good thing, when you're reading the Bible, every time you come across a promise, put a big P in the margin.

And by the time you've gone through the Bible once, and I hope it doesn't take a lifetime to do that, George Mueller read his Bible through 200 times, from cover to cover, he read it through 100 times on his knee. He wasn't worshipping the book, he was worshipping the God of the book. But 200 times.

I don't know where he found the time. He spent 3 hours a day praying, and on top of that he prayed with his wife an hour a day. He said if he didn't pray 4 hours a day, he couldn't get all the work done.

Remember, he was co-pastor with Henry Craig of a church with 1,200 members. That would be enough to keep him busy the rest of his life. He had 2,000 orphans in an orphanage, and a staff of 250 or 300.

He fostered, he founded a missionary organization called Scriptural Knowledge Institution, and he sent money and men and material around the world. He probably raised more money for the China Inland Mission than anybody. He was a close friend of Hudson Taylor's, but he found the time.

And he was a great man of faith. But he said faith is like a muscle, the more you use it, the stronger it becomes, the less you use it, the weaker it becomes. He said when I started off, and I'll put it in the Canadian or American dollars, he was talking about shillings and pounds, but he said when I started off, I had difficulty believing God for \$5.

But the time came when I could believe God for \$50,000 with no trouble at all for the work of God. He probably prayed in, if you're thinking in terms of gold currency today, he probably prayed in about \$90 million. He never told anybody, ever told his needs, or the needs of those 2,000 orphans, and he had no government assistance, whatever.

But nobody ever went hungry, nobody went without clothes. God took care of the whole thing. For years and years, he died, I think when he was 94, was active until the last, he made 13 world tours after he was 70 years old, if you can believe it.

But he said it's so simple, God said it, I believe it, that settles it. That's it. There's that chorus, faith, mind, faith, the promises, and looks to God alone, laughs at impossibilities and cries, it shall be done, and cries, it shall be done, and cries, it shall be done, laughs at impossibilities and cries, it shall be done.

So faith doesn't look at the problems, it looks at the promises. And the promises more than take care of the problems. There will always be problems, because man is born into trouble, as his sparks fly upward, and he was born of a woman who was a few days and full of trouble, both these texts of John and Job.

But forget about the problems, forget about the troubles, and believe God. In Sault Ste. Marie, Ontario, I had a crusade with a number of churches years ago, and there was a lady attending the meetings, came for counseling.

I preached on the prayer of faith. I said the Bible doesn't know about the prayer of unbelief, but it does talk in James 5 about the prayer of faith. Now she had three problems.

One, she was getting terrible migraine headaches, used to get them once a month, now she was getting them once a day. And then she had a child, eight years of age, a girl, who had some kind of a mental block, who never spoke a word outside the house. She would talk a little bit in the house, they took her to some psychiatrist, he said, well, there's a block somewhere, we can't get a hold of it, we don't know what it is.

There's no reason why she can't talk, but she couldn't talk outside the house. She was going to school. The third thing was her husband.

He had a stomach that was so bad, all he could eat was milk and soup. And so she heard me preaching the prayer of faith, and she decided she was going to go whole-heartedly, she was going to pray for all three things. Well, then she shared this with her pastor, and he was a good man, but he said, you know, it may not be the will of God, and man, if God doesn't do it, you're going to fall flat on your face.

You better go careful, sister. And so she decided not to do it. But a week later, came back with a great force, the prayer of faith, the prayer of faith.

She decided to pray. I was back in the area about 18 months later, and they had me in for coffee, and she told me what happened. Within 24 hours, oh yeah, the other thing about her 8-year-old was that the kid had never professed salvation.

They prayed for him, talked to her, and she would sit there like a dummy, wouldn't say a word. Within 24 hours, the daughter came and said, Mom, guess what I just did? I just prayed and asked Jesus to come into my heart. And she went to school that day, and suddenly got up in the classroom all unannounced, and repeated the 23rd Psalm from memory, and he was talking normally ever since.

She said, me, migraine headache, I've had one in 18 months, only one, and that began when I began to doubt God. And she pointed to her husband, she said, him, he can eat cactus and barbed wire. Well, the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise them up, and there may be times, and there are times when it may not be the will of God for various reasons, to heal the sick.

But mostly, I believe it's God's will to do this. We have to find out, perhaps, if God is disciplining us through the sickness. This happens too.

We search our hearts before God. I think he's far more willing to heal than we are to be healed. Do you remember when they prayed in Acts chapter 4? They had been forbidden to preach the gospel.

Ever notice how their prayer went? They asked God to stretch forth his hand to heal, and that signs and wonders might be done by the name of your holy child, Jesus. I mean, they prayed for miracles to happen. Why? I know people can see miracles and not believe.

We're told that. If they don't believe most of the prophets, they won't be persuaded, even if somebody is raised from the dead. It says that in Luke 16, so we understand that.

But some people are moved to explore the gospel if they happen to see a miracle. Some people. Not by any means everybody.

So, it prevents God from answering prayer. It prevents God from working unbelief. It robs the word of God of power.

Paul said the gospel of Christ is the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believes. If you don't believe, it doesn't do anything for you. I think of two brothers raised on the same wall.

No favoritism showed to one or the other. The one boy is in full-time Christian work. The other kid is in penitentiary on a five-year stretch.

What was the difference? One believed and one did not believe. That was the difference. It robs the word of God of its power.

In 1 Thessalonians 2, Paul said, he was rejoicing, he said, because, he said, when you received the word of God, which you heard about us, you did not receive it as the word of men, but as it is in truth the word of God, which effectually works also in you that believe. The Bible works effectually in you if you believe. When you read the Bible, how do you read it? Some people yell their way through a chapter or two once a day.

And they may miss for a few days. I remember being in a church one time, and the pastor pointed out a certain deacon, and he said, he's the best Christian I've got. He's red-hot for God.

It wasn't long after, my wife and I happened to be talking to this deacon, and he got honest about his spiritual life, and he said, I haven't read the Bible or prayed in two weeks. That was the hottest man he had? Something wrong, terribly wrong. His problem really was busyness.

Sometimes we say we're busy. I heard somebody say, we're not busy, we're buzzy. If what I'm doing takes away time from God, then I'm doing something that isn't right.

He expects us to give him, he expects us to give him what somebody has called quality time. Quality time. Abraham was called a friend of God.

Remember that? A friend of God. Moses was called a friend of God. David was called a man after God's own heart.

John the Baptist called himself a friend of the bridegroom, Jesus. And God wants us to give him quality time. Anyway, unbelief robs the word of God of power.

Then it robs a Christian of joy and peace. Do you remember Romans 15, 13, Paul said, the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace. What are the next two words? In believing, in believing that you may abound in hope through the power of the Holy Spirit.

1 Peter 1, 8, Peter said exactly the same thing in slightly different terms. He said, Jesus Christ, whom having not seen you love, in whom though now you see him not, yet believing, you rejoice with joy and speak of all and full of glory. So unbelief robs us Christians of joy and peace.

A Christian wakes up in the morning and says, I feel rotten, I'm going to have a bad day, and he has a bad day. He didn't get it started right. I wrote a little tract called, Starting the Day with God.

Some of you may have seen it, I don't know. In Regina, our headquarters, they tell me there's more demand for that little tract, not because I wrote it, but because it's obviously meeting a need in people's hearts than for anything to hand lead. I mean, we sell tapes.

I think they've probably sold 100,000 tapes over the years, and thousands of books and pamphlets and tracts and stuff, but they say there's more demand for this little tract, Starting the Day with God. I think I saw a copy on their board down in the foyer here. A fellow wrote me to the New England States, a pastor.

He said, I read that little tract, I applied the principles, I got revived. He said, I've never known the power of God the way I see it in my life now, just by applying those simple principles of Starting the Day with God, getting along with God somehow, making time, getting up half an hour earlier, whatever you have to do in order to spend time with God. We need that.

I find for myself, and I have to confess honestly, sometimes I leap out of bed, I've got a thousand things to do, I don't start the day with God, what do I do? Sooner or later, things begin to go backwards. I've got to stop in the middle of the day and do what I should have done at the start of the day. Starting the day with God, then He's with us.

It's not that He forsakes us, we know that, but He wants us to give Him time. If you and I treated our best friend the way we treated God time-wise, we probably wouldn't have any best friends. Because what we do, dear people, we go to God with a grocery list, we try to make a celestial errand boy out of God.

God, I want this, I want that, I want something else, and you better hurry up, because I'm in a hurry. This is how we treat God. So He's not really a friend at all.

We just got Him running around doing all kinds of things. I think God would just be delighted to have us come and not ask for a single thing. We just spend some time in His presence and thank Him for who He is, and what He's done, what He's going to do, and just praise Him, ask Him for nothing.

Ralph and Lucy Terry, in their meetings, in their crusades, when people meet God in the personal revival, they instruct them, don't ask God for anything now for three days. Just thank God for three days. It's a good practice.

I find if I'm cold spiritually, and sometimes I am, I get warm just by praising God. I begin to think about all the wonderful things. He daily loads us with benefits.

His thoughts to us are more than can be numbered. He's got to prepare a place for us, for me, for you. Thousands of things we can thank God for.

It's wonderful. It also robs the Christian unbelief, robs the Christian of power. In Acts chapter 6, it says about Stephen, and Stephen was appointed as a deacon, people think, perhaps the name wasn't given then, but it's to carry on some of the business of the church.

And he became an outstanding evangelist. And it says in Acts chapter 6 that Stephen was full of the Holy Ghost. And the same chapter says Stephen was full of power.

But in both cases, it first says he was full of faith and the Holy Ghost. He was full of faith and power. And the two go together.

I forget the name of this Christian, I remember reading in a book, he was a Christian worker about a hundred years ago, and he went forward to me, and he prayed, went back to his seat, and a friend leaned forward from the pew behind him and said, why did you go forward? He said, I went forward to be filled with the Holy Spirit. He said, did you receive? He said, yes I did. He said, how do you feel? He said, I don't

feel any different than I did before.

I didn't ask God for a feeling, I asked God for the fullness of the Holy Spirit. And from that night he believed it. Sam Chadwick was a wonderful Christian worker in England years ago, and he was reading in the book of Judges.

And he came across this, it says, and the Spirit clothed Gideon. He looked at it, the Spirit clothed Gideon. He took this pencil, and he scratched out Gideon's name, and he wrote in Sam Chadwick.

And he believed it from that moment. And we had never heard of Sam Chadwick if he hadn't had this simple meeting with God. Believing God.

You ever notice how the four Gospels end? Matthew ends and says, and they worshipped him, but some doubted. Mark says, Jesus Christ reproached his disciples with their unbelief and their hardness of heart after the resurrection. It doesn't say he reproached them for their unbelief, he reproached them with their unbelief.

He threw it in their faces. You didn't believe I'd be raised from the dead. Aha! What do you believe now? Then in Luke's Gospel, Luke chapter 24, the last chapter, he said, O fools in slow of heart, do you believe all that the prophets have spoken? Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into his glory? And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself.

And the second last chapter of John, we have Jesus Christ dealing with doubting Thomas. Now the world says, seeing is believing, and the Bible says, believing is seeing. In Mark, they said, the chief priests and elders, they said, let Christ the King of Israel descend now from the cross that we may see and believe.

Seeing is believing. That's what the world says, and that's what Thomas said, although he was an apostle. He said, except I shall see in his hands the print of the nails, and put my finger in the print of the nails, and thrust my hand into his side, I will not believe.

So Thomas will say, seeing is believing. And Christ came on the scene. He said, Thomas, reach hither your finger, and behold my hand, and thrust your hand into my side, and be not faithless, but believing.

And Thomas said, my Lord, my God. And Jesus said, Thomas, because you have seen, you have believed. Blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed.

And that blessing comes on us. We haven't seen, but we have believed. And that blessing, I say, comes on us.

So, it robs us of power, the power of God's Spirit, our unbelief. How do you come? Let me ask you this question. How did you come to this meeting tonight? Did you come in faith, believing that God was going to speak, that God was going to work? You know, most of us don't do that.

We go to church, we're in a big, plus getting the kids ready, you don't have time to pray or think or anything, you just get there, and you hope that something might happen. I was in a big church in Ontario one time, they had a revival a year before, and they told me, so when you get into that church, they said you'll be swept off your feet by the faith, the love, the enthusiasm of people, just like you were walking on the air. It's like everybody in that congregation, they were saying, sickened, you know? I mean, it's just

great.

I was only there for one Sunday, but something wonderful had happened in the congregation, and people were filled with faith, believing God. You know, back in Ohio years ago, Dallas Billington, he only had grade 5 education, never saw the inside of a theological institution of any kind, but he was a man of God, he worked in a rubber factory, and one day he was praying, and God said, I want you to start a Sunday school. So he rented an auditorium called Rymer School.

He rented an auditorium there, and that Sunday they had 14 people, which included a janitor and his wife, and the offering was \$2.70. And that Sunday I was there with my wife, as a visitor, I was not preaching there. There were 5,000 in the Bible class, and Dallas Billington was still the pastor, the head pastor, there were 5 pastors altogether. And you know, people, when he preached, they murdered the Queen's English, to use a Canadian term.

You know, he'd say, use guides, or something else that you're not supposed to say grammatically, you know. And his preaching was like the Book of Proverbs, it was all text, there was no context. Like he'd say, now watch the two people say something great, now watch the two people say something great.

And so, to read his sermons was kind of boring, but to hear him preach. Dallas Billington is dead now, which means he's more alive than ever. His son Charles is the head pastor now.

They've had to enlarge the building from 5,000 to 7,000. Tremendous youth work there. Very simple, very seldom used films, almost never, maybe once for Christmas or something.

And they have a tiny kitchen in the church, about the size of your kitchen probably at home. And I remarked on that, and they said, well everybody's got a kitchen, why do they need one in the church, you know. Our business is to win souls.

You know that church, when I was there, which is about, it's over 20 years ago, when I was there, they had started 140 other churches. 140 churches. So we're putting all our eggs in one basket.

But it's beautiful to see the simplicity of their faith, just to believe God. We've lost that. So we come to church like we've met a little circus.

One of us is going to hang, one of us will pray, one of us will preach, one of us will preach. People have to stop that. I don't know what you do here, I have no idea.

But, I know what goes on in church all across the land. Unbelief, finally it's Israel's major problem and always has been. There are 16 million Jews in the world, there's only 3 million in the land of Israel.

There are 13 million scattered around the world. Why? Why are they having all the problems they're having in the land of Israel? Because they're not there with the blessing of God, that's why. They're there in total unbelief.

Only 8% of the Jews in Israel are orthodox Jews and believe that Messiah is going to come. Only 8%. And that 8%, if they had their way, they would make it impossible for missionaries of any kind to set foot in Israel.

Well fortunately, they're not having their way. Do you remember Paul said, in 1 Thessalonians chapter 2, he said about Israel and his own people, they please not God, they're contrary to all men, forbidding us to

speak to the Gentiles that they might be saved, to fill up their sins always, for the wrath has come upon them to the uttermost. And that phrase to the uttermost means their people in point of time, to the end of time, God's anger is on his people because of what they did to the Old Testament prophets.

And finally, because of what they did to Christ. That was the final test, that was their final opportunity. And God said in Hosea 9, Hosea chapter 9, My God will cast them away because they did not listen to Him, and they shall be wanderers among the nations.

And they're still wandering, we call them the wandering Jew. And their problem has always been unbelief. In Romans 11, Paul says, he was talking about Gentiles, and he was saying don't be proud just because some Jews were broken off the tree.

He said they were broken off because of unbelief, and you stand by faith, be not high minded but fear. And so, it was unbelief that broke them off from the old olive tree. And that's been their problem down through the centuries.

I think there's 6 million in your country, there's 300,000 in Canada, there's 500,000 down in Argentina, there's about 500,000 in England, about the same over in France, in Algeria I think there's 200,000, in Tunisia there's probably 50,000, I mean they're all around the world, wherever you go you find them, the wandering Jews. They rejected Christ, their true Messiah, and down through the history they followed 15 false messiahs who led them into all kinds of problems, in some cases as many as 100,000 Jews died because they were following a false messiah. Christ said I'm coming in my Father's name and you believe me not, if another shall come in his own name, him you will receive.

That's exactly what they did. And so in Zechariah chapter 7, it says they made their hearts as an adamant stone. The word adamant, the word diamond is a corruption of that word, the words are closely related.

There's a stone called adamantine because it's so hard to break. They made their hearts like a diamond, as hard as a diamond. Unless they should hear the law, and the words which the Lord of hosts has sent in the spirit by the former prophets, therefore came a great wrath from the Lord of hosts.

And three things or four things happened. One, God said, it has come to pass that as he called and they would not hear, so they will call and I will not hear. The first thing then was, God said, I will not answer their prayers, I will hear them when they pray.

The second thing was this, God said, I scattered them with a whirlwind among all the nations of the world whom they knew not. And third thing was, the pleasant land they lay desolate. And today most of the pleasant land is still desolate.

Thank God for those areas they reclaim. These people need to pray for them. Like Paul said, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is that they might be saved.

For I bear them record that I have a zeal for God, but not according to knowledge. For they have been ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God. For Christ is the end of the lawful righteousness to everyone that believes, and the poor Jew doesn't know that.

Unbelief has been their problem, and still I see their problem today. Let's pray that God will do a powerful work among them. Let's pray that God will do a powerful work in our own church, in our own community.

We should never be satisfied with where we're at or what has happened. We're supposed to break forth on the right hand and the left. It says, spare not, lengthen your cords, strengthen your stakes.

Don't spare. And God will provide, as we launch out in faith, God will provide, do all we can to support missionaries in other countries. He that has pity on the poor lends to the Lord, and that which he has given, God will repay him.

We don't give because God's going to repay, but I might add this thought. If God borrows from you, if you loan to God, when he returns the money, he's going to do it with interest. I've found that every time I've done it.

I don't do it for that reason, but God will never be your debtor. And we can't out-give God. Like the attorney used to say, I shoveled out, and God shoveled in, but God had the biggest shovel.

And that's what we find. Christ said, give, and it shall be given unto you. Good measure, pressed down, shaken together, and running over, shall now be given to your bosom.

For the same measure that you give of all, it shall be measured to you again. I give stingily. Well, like it says in 2 Corinthians chapter 8, he that sows sparingly, and he's talking about giving in the context, he that sows sparingly shall reap also sparingly.

He that gives bountifully shall reap also bountifully. And that chapter ends by him saying this, God is able to make all grace abound toward you, that you always having all sufficiency in all things may abound to every good work. If you don't have any glue on your fingers, God will pour money into your pocket, so you can give it away, and help the work get done around the world.

I often wonder about Canada, the second largest country in the world. You have more people in California than we have in the whole of Canada. We only have 27 million people in Canada, one of the wealthiest countries in the world.

You know the tar sands in northern Alberta, there's more oil in the Canadian tar sands than there are in all the oil deposits in the world put together, including the United States, Soviet Russia, and all the Arab countries of the world. And the figure for the world is 6, for Athabasca it's 11, it's almost double, and 85% of that oil is recoverable, except it's in sand, it's a constant process, they're developing a process now, which if it comes to fruition as they think it will, we can laugh at the Arab countries. I say to myself, why did God give us that? Why did God give us these huge copper deposits? We have some arctic islands that are pure iron, they're so pure that they can actually feed it directly into furnaces, they don't have to cobble it at all.

I say to myself, why does God do this to 27 million people? It doesn't seem fair to me. All I can say is, I think God has something great He expects from us as a nation in return. Not to be jealous and hang on to these things, but to do all we can to make sure that His gospel is preached around the world.

Unbelief will hold us back every time. It cripples the work of God. I say, it's our major sin, it's our problem.

We deal with that, and all these other things will fall into place. We should never come to a church service. I never come to a church service, whether I'm attending the church I attend in Winnipeg or wherever I am, without spending time in prayer.

If possible, I'd like to spend a couple hours in prayer, at least spend a half an hour, spend some quality time with God before I go to the house of God. And I think all of us, we can't all spend the same time, but we can do something, make some time. Now, in closing, what causes unbelief? It's associated in the Bible, well, wait a minute, James 1.8, a double-minded man is unstable in all his ways.

James 4.8 says, double-mindedness is the result of impurity of heart, unconfessed sin. If there's sin in my heart, not dealt with, I'm convicted, I can't exercise faith, I'll be full of unbelief all my days, until I deal with the sin. It's as simple as that.

Then, as we note in Mark chapter 16, it was connected with hardness of heart. He reproached them with their unbelief and their hardness of heart. And in the text we read in Hebrews chapter 3, take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief and departed from the living God, but exalt one another daily while it's called today, lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin.

In Ephesians 4, Paul spoke about what he called the deceitful lust. In Hebrews 3, he talks about the deceitfulness of sin. What does he mean? Well, sin is deceitful, dear people, because it promises more than it provides, and anticipation is always greater than realization.

You go ahead and do that thing, you know it's wrong, you go ahead and do it, and afterwards, like the Bible says, your mouth is full of gravel. Why did I go and do that when I knew it was wrong? Deceitfulness of sin cripples us. And then, in John 5, verse 44, Christ raised another problem.

He said, how can you believe? How can you believe who receive honor one of another and seek not the honor that comes from God only, the fear of man? If you're seeking for honor, you'll never have much faith, I can promise you that, unless you're seeking solely the honor of God. You don't really care what other people think or say or do. What do you do when you hear somebody curse and take the name of God or the name of Jesus Christ? Ever say anything? No, you feel a sore corner kind of going through you, but you don't say anything.

But in Proverbs 29, God has something uncomplimentary to say about the person that hears cursing and does not rebuke it. And the context is the fear of man brings a snare. I was in the home a while ago, and there were two men there.

They were visiting there, I was visiting there, the ladies had gone out, my wife had gone out with the lady of the house. And these two guys got talking. I never heard such blasphemy in all my life.

And I said, listen. I said, this absolute garbage you guys are pouring out of your mouths. You know what it says in Psalm 139? It says, those who take God's name in vain are enemies of God.

I said, you two men are enemies of God Almighty. I'll tell you another bad word came out. The one fellow, the younger fellow, he was about 40.

He went on a binge. He went on a real drunk. He blamed me for it because of what I'd said in the house.

And he was on this binge for about three weeks. Had to go and get dried out. He blamed me for this.

The other fellow, from that point on, every time I met him, he was just as sweet and nice as can be. It depends. I was in a shoemaker's store one day, shop, and there were six people or so sitting there, and a fellow came in.

And he had a big uniform on, with a flat hat, braid and everything, SFD, Saskatoon Fire Department. And he had a big mouth. And pretty soon he's blaspheming.

And so I walked over to him and I said, sir, I'm going to have to hurt your feelings. I said it as kindly as I could, with a smile, you know. He said, what, what? What are you getting at? I said, I'm going to have to hurt your feelings.

He said, what are you getting at? I said, well, I said, you know, you're talking about my best friend Jesus, and I don't like the way you talk about him. He just stood there and he stared at me, and finally said, sir, I want to apologize to you. I'm very sorry for doing that.

Before I got out of that shoemaker's place, he apologized to me at least three times. But people, mostly when that happens, Christians have nothing to say. Nothing to say.

Why? Because we're afraid. And the fear of man brings a snare. That's why.

How can you believe we receive honor one of another and seek not the honor that comes from God only? Then in Matthew chapter 21, Jesus Christ indicated that unless we know what repentance is, we'll never know what faith is. Because he said, John the Baptist came unto you in the way of righteousness, and you did not believe him. But the publicans in the heart of us believed him, and you, when you've seen it afterwards, did not repent that you might believe.

In Mark 1.15, Jesus Christ said, The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand. Repent, and believe the gospel. So before you believe, you must repent.

And in Acts chapter 20, Paul said he went about the country preaching two things. Repentance towards God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ. In that order, by the way.

Repentance towards God. What is repentance? A little parable Jesus told Matthew also. He said, a father said to a man, he said to his son, son, go home today and pray.

He said, I will not. But afterwards he repented and went. What did he do? He repented.

What did he do? He changed his mind. And basically, repentance is a change of mind. Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts, and let him return unto the Lord.

That's repentance. And you can't exercise faith unless you repent. Unless you know what repentance is.

To turn away from your way, your sins, with all your heart, and adopt and accept God's way with all your heart. The Bible talks about the way of truth, and then the way of the wicked. Sometimes as Christians we're walking in the way of the wicked.

Maybe not the same depth that they are, but still. It says, by reason of whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of. In 2 Peter chapter 2. Take heed, brethren, he's talking to Christians.

Lest there be at any of you an evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God. But exhort one another, daily let us call today, lest any of you be harmed through the deceitfulness of sin. Last of all, how do we deal with it? People first of all call it what God calls it.

What did he call it? He called it an evil heart. Call it that. Don't excuse your unbelief.

Listen, in Canada I know three families that have 12 children, living in different parts of Canada. In one family, there's only as far as I know one child that's saved. The attitude of the parents seems to be, well, you know, maybe someday the others will be saved, maybe they won't.

We hope they will, but we don't really know. In the second family, the father was cold spiritually. He was a born again believer, but quite cold.

His wife was trying to walk with God. And there were six in that family that accepted Christ. In the third family, 11 of the 12 were saved.

And one day the father phoned me. He lived 165 miles away from where I lived. He said, Bill, could I come down so we could spend an hour or two praying for my son? He had such a concern because that one child was not in the ark of safety.

So down he came. His son was living common law in Kelowna, British Columbia. He built his own house trailer and they were living in his house trailer.

She was a godless person. And so we prayed for his son that day. And I remember when we finished praying, we talked about it.

And I said, now look, brother, we just talked about it together. We've asked God to do it. Now let's commit it to God and believe that God's going to do it.

So we did. And we just praised the Lord. He was going to do it.

That kid lasted one month, that's all. You know what happened? He was in the back of the trailer cleaning it with some cleaning solvent of some kind. And the gal that came in lit up a cigarette and the fumes caught and the thing was a raging inferno.

And he was trapped in the fire and she was blown out. She wasn't hurt, just got singed a little bit. And he had to get out of there or die.

There was no window or door he could get out of. And he actually, he says that God gave him superhuman strength and he ripped a hole in the wall with his bare hands. He said he doesn't know how he did it, but he had to or die.

And he phoned his dad and said, Dad, can you come down here? My gal and I, we want to become Christians. And so he flew down there and led them to Christ and then he married the two of them. It was one month later.

But the attitude of the parents. Don't let Satan have any of your kids. Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved and thy house.

And thy house. Isaiah 44, 3 and 4. I will pour water upon him that is thirsty and floods upon the dry ground. I will pour my spirit on your seed, your children, and my blessing on your offspring.

And people say, oh yeah, God's done that, but my kids haven't responded. Well, look at the next verse. And they shall spring up as among the grass, as willows by the watercourse.

Believe God for your kids. Don't let the devil have them. No matter where they're at right now, spiritually speaking, believe God for them.

We have a right to do that. And more than that, God expects us to do this. But in closing again, the problem is we don't call it what God calls it.

We don't really think it's a sin. We think it's unfortunate. Faith works by love.

We're not filled with the love of God. Love believes all things. 1 Corinthians chapter 13 tells me.

Love believes all things. We need to be filled with the love of God. Emptied of self and filled with the love of God.

Something Spurgeon said. He said, praising God with all my might in the sea of God's delight, self is drowned and I am free. Christ and love remain in me.

Self has to die for me to be filled with the love of God. And Spurgeon put that in plainer terms when he said, you will never know the fullness of Christ's love until you die utterly to yourself. Let's just pray.

And while we're in the attitude of prayer, may I ask this question? Is unbelief a problem to some extent, at least in your heart and life? If it is, would you raise your hand so I can see that? Yes. God bless you. Yes.

Yes. Yes. Yes.

Yes. Yes. I see those hands.

Yes. Thank you. God bless you.

Thank you.

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