

The Crime of Unbelief

by David Wilkerson

The crime of unbelief is a serious sin that grieves the heart of God and provokes him to anger, with consequences that include rejection, depression, breach of promise, curse of dumbness, and emptiness and leanness in the soul.

Duration: 31:21

Scripture: Ezekiel 8:6-16, Mark 9:24, Romans 14:23, Hebrews 3:12, Revelation 21:8

Topics: "Faith And Doubt", "Sin And Unbelief"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher discusses a vision that the prophet Ezekiel had, where he witnessed a horrible crime being committed behind closed doors in God's house. The preacher emphasizes that even though people may clean up their lives and appear to be pure, there may still be a deep-rooted sin of fear and unbelief within them. The preacher highlights that doubting God's power and lacking trust in Him is considered a serious crime in the eyes of God. The preacher concludes that unbelief is the sin of the heart that grieves God the most, and that it is more important to address this sin than any other sin committed on earth.

Transcript

Crime of unbelief. I believe that the heart of God is concerned about this matter of unbelief more than any other sin committed on earth. He considers it a crime to doubt his word.

He considers it a crime to doubt his power. Man, if I cried out against sins, man, I've preached against homosexuality, I've preached against adultery and drug abuse and all these abominations and that's exactly what they are, they're abominations. But God's been showing me that he is far more concerned about the sin of the heart, the sin of the mind, because the real issues of life come out of the heart and that's where the sin is really committed that grieves him most, because unbelief is the sin of the heart.

I've known Christians who have forsaken every other sin in their life. I've known Christians that had a secret affair going. I know Christians that have been slipping off drink and they're using drugs and everything and they've cleaned up their lives and yet they still do not enter into victory.

And they say, Lord, I don't understand. Man, I've given you everything. I've laid down, I've cleaned up my life.

You've helped me clean up my life and I'm clean and pure now and they're still depressed. There's something wrong. And the reason for this, in spite of cleaning up the flesh, they're unaware of a very deep-rooted sin in them that hasn't been plucked out.

There's a tremendous crime that they're guilty of. They have not yet fully learned to trust the Lord. They're serving him only out of fear, but they've never entered into a life of confidence and trust.

Thousands of people in the Church of Jesus Christ cry out for deliverance from some flesh trap. They say, Oh God, I'm in the flesh. Deliver me.

Yet God's Word puts the sin of fear and unbelief above all these other sins. But the fearful and the unbelieving and abominable and murderers and warmongers and sorcerers and adulterers and liars shall all have their place in the lake of fire. And what hence the list? But the fearful and unbelieving.

The prophet Ezekiel, in a vision, I saw this and it really touched my heart because the Lord took this man and he hung him by the nap of the neck between heaven and earth and began to show them the abominations in God's house. And then he said, I want to show you something very, very sober, very serious, a horrible crime being committed. It was being committed behind walls.

He said, now Ezekiel, break through that wall. There's an inner chamber. There's a secret place where a very horrible crime is being committed.

And inside this secret chamber, hidden down in this secret chamber, out of the eyes of everyone else, Ezekiel and the Spirit broke through that chamber. Seventy elders of Israel were going through their priestly motions with their censors in hand. Go in, the Spirit said to Ezekiel, and behold the wicked abominations that these men do.

Ezekiel said, so I went in and I saw and behold every form of creeping things and abominable beast and all the idols of the house of Israel portrayed upon the walls. And there stood before them the seventy men of the ancients of the house of Israel with every man his censor in hand. And a thick cloud of incense went up.

Then said he unto me, son of man, hast thou seen what the elders of Israel are doing in the dark? And what were these venerable old saints of Israel doing? These men who had seen the miracle power of God, were they smoking opium? Were they in a sex orgy? Were they gambling at gambling tables? No, the abominable crime was committed in the minds. In fact, Ezekiel couldn't see it first. The Lord said, I want you to look into their minds.

I want you to hear what they're thinking. It was a sin. They were indulging it in their hearts.

It was the sin of unbelief. For, the scripture said, for they say, the Lord no longer seeth us. The Lord hath forsaken the earth.

God no longer is occupied in helping us. He's no longer involved in our lives. Now you think of this, please.

These were the most venerable, old, pious men of God. This was the cream of the crop. This was the leadership of Israel.

These are the spiritual leaders. And here they are in this secret chamber. They've backslidden.

And they're saying, what's the use of serving the God that brought us out of Egypt, brought us through the wilderness? That God is no longer answering prayer. That God is no longer with us. That God no longer sees what we do.

That God has forsaken the earth. For if there was a God, why do we have all the trouble we have? Why is our nation in such a mess? He doesn't care anymore. He's forgotten.

So these men absolutely gave up. Why serve him when there's no sign in our lives that he's at work anymore? Oh, what a tragic vision this was. How it grieved God then and how it grieves him now when his people doubt him.

It provokes him to anger. Now it's to be expected that the enemies of God outside the church would not trust him, not believe him. But how it must grieve the heart of God when his children make themselves an enemy to him by their unbelief.

Micah the prophet said, even of late, lately, my people have risen up as my enemy, saith the Lord. My people have risen up against me as an enemy, for they no longer trust me. They no longer put their confidence in me.

You see, there was a time Israel really believed God. They trusted so completely in the Lord. He just delivered them out of Egypt.

They'd come to the Red Sea. The scripture said, and Israel saw the great work which the Lord did to the Egyptians. And the people feared the Lord and they believed the Lord.

You see, in spite of all these miracles, in spite of the waters opening, miracle after miracle, they lost their confidence in the Lord almost immediately. I'm going to show you how in just 40 days from Mount Sinai, all of Israel backslid with the exception of a handful. Moses absolutely grew weary of reprimanding them for their lack of faith.

You see, they're in another crisis now. Eight of ten spies have brought an evil report about the giants in the land. And it caused a wave of unbelief to sweep over God's people.

They began to murmur. They complained, oh, that we had never left Egypt. What good is it coming out here to serve God when things seem to go wrong? And Moses cried out to Israel.

I said unto you, I said, you dread not, neither be afraid. The Lord your God goeth before you. He shall fight for you.

Remember in the wilderness how he bore thee as a man carried his son? Yet in spite of all of that, you didn't believe the Lord your God. And the Lord has heard the voice of your words, and he's angry. You could say, well, why would God get angry at these people? After all, they're in a wilderness full of snakes and everything is dark and black.

It's just human nature to doubt when things go wrong. Oh, but friends, God hears that complaining spirit, every murmur against his faithfulness. He hears every accusation that he's not answering prayer.

He knows every time you pick up the telephone and voice that unbelief to somebody. You're saying, I've prayed and I've fasted and I can't see any evidence of his work. Every suggestion in your mind that God is not working in your behalf grieves the heart of God.

The scripture said, the Lord knoweth the thoughts of man. The scripture says, and they tempted God in their hearts by asking meat for their lust. They spake against God.

They said, can God furnish a table in the wilderness? Can he give us bread? Can he provide flesh? Therefore the Lord heard this and he was angry because they believed not in God. They trusted not in his salvation. Let me show you how serious this is with God.

Let me show you saints. Let me show you something. I want to show you five tragic consequences of unbelief in Israel.

First of all, it caused the Lord to reject the entire house of Israel. Nothing more or less than unbelief. And the Lord rejected, you listening? And the Lord rejected all the seed of Israel.

Oh, how heavy that is. How serious. And the Lord rejected all the seed of Israel and afflicted them and delivered them into the hands of their enemies until he cast them out of his sight.

And why? Because they would not hear, but hardened their necks like the necks of their fathers and would not trust in their God. Secondly, unbelief brought upon them a flood of depression and physical troubles. A flood of depression.

And the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the Lord and the anger of the Lord was hot against them. Therefore the children of the Lord were troubled and oppressed because they believed not in God. Why were they oppressed? Because they lost their faith.

Thirdly, it caused a breach of promise. Unbelief voided all of God's precious promises that he'd made to them. Every one of his promises became inoperable, voided, and God caused it a breach of promise.

And here it is. Israel hath tempted me now these ten times. How long shall I bear with this congregation which murmur against me? I've heard the murmurings of my people which murmur against me.

And as you've spoken in my ears, so will I do unto you. Each day for a year, forty years, shall you bear your iniquity, and you shall know my breach of promise, because you trusted not in my word. Breach of promise! Do you understand that that is still what happens today, that every promise in the Bible is breached? You have no claim on it? It does not work in your life because of unbelief.

Fourthly, unbelief causes a curse of dumbness, powerlessness, ineffectiveness. It ties you up, it binds you. It's a spirit of dumbness.

The Lord, remember, spoke to Zechariah the prophet. He's a priest of the temple. God promised him a son.

His name was to be called John. The Spirit spoke to Zechariah and said, I'm going to do great things with your son. He's going to be a mighty man of the Spirit.

And of course, Zechariah believed none of it. He didn't believe a word of it. Oh, he heard God speak.

He heard, and it was confirmed in his heart, and none of it which Zechariah believed. And behold, thou shalt be dumb and not able to speak until the day these things come to pass, because you believe not in my words, and they shall be fulfilled in their time. And Zechariah was cursed with a spirit of dumbness.

He couldn't speak. He became totally ineffective. He couldn't minister in the temple any longer.

And his faith returned. God answered prayer. John came on the scene, mighty man of the Holy Ghost.

And when he was born, Zechariah asked for a writing table, and he wrote saying, his name is John. And immediately, Zechariah's mouth was opened, and his tongue was loosened, and he spake and praised God. You see, when his faith returned, the dumbness left him, and Zechariah began to prophesy under the anointing of the Holy Ghost.

Fifth, unbelief causes an emptiness, a leanness in your soul. It causes that empty pit in the stomach that people talk about. They soon forgot his works.

They waited not for his counsel, and he gave them their requests, but he sent leanness to their soul. He allowed them to experience an emptiness. Isn't that tragic? Five unbelievable curses on these children of Israel, simply because they allowed unbelief to rule their lives? Do you remember the faith they had when they came through the Red Sea? Do you remember the song of confidence they sang? Oh, they sang, they danced, they praised God.

Here's what they cried. The Lord is our strength and our song. He has been our salvation.

We will exalt his name. His right hand has been glorious in power. He's dashed our enemies to pieces.

Who is like unto our God in holiness? Praises, doing wonders. You've led forth your people. You've been guiding us with your strength.

The Lord shall be our King forever and ever and ever. Isn't that something? God will never let you down. We'll never disbelieve anyone.

We'll never let unbelief come in. Lord, you've done so much. It would be blasphemy to doubt you again.

But how soon, how soon they forgot his works and turned to unbelief. They limited the Holy One of Israel. Listen to the cry of the Father.

He'd heard them singing this song. He heard their promises. I'll never doubt you again.

Lord, you've answered my prayer. You've been so good to me. But folks, isn't it just like us? God does so many beautiful things and then when we hit another crisis, we begin to doubt him all over again.

We never do learn to trust him. And then when God answers prayer, we hang our head in shame, saying, why couldn't have I believed? Why couldn't I hold on? We feel that shame and listen to the cry of the Heavenly Father. And the glory of the Lord appeared in the tabernacle before all the children of Israel.

This grieves me. First time I read this, I'd seen him many times, but while God was giving this message to me, I felt his grief and I began to weep. Listen to it.

And the Lord said, how long will you people provoke me? And how long will it be before you will come to believe me? For all the signs and miracles which I've showed among you, and God keeps saying, when am I going to find a people? Where will I find somebody? Where will I find a people who will not give up on me? In spite of not seeing any evidence. In spite of seeing no miracles or signs or any of these. I've done that in the past for you, but because right now I'm testing you.

You're going through a trial of faith. Where can I find somebody who will not give up on me? Where will I find a people? How long do I bear with my people? How long? Will there ever be a generation? Don't take lightly what Jesus said. When I come, will I find faith on the earth? Because we talk about faith.

There's a lot of preaching about it, but oh, in that crisis, how many of us give up? How many of us refuse to hold on when the hour's dark and everything's going wrong? How many of us grieve the Lord? How many times the Father must have stood by you and me and said, when will you trust me? When are you going to come to the place that you finally lean on me completely and said, come with me, Lord, I am yours. Live or die, I belong. You're going to do right by me, Lord.

We've learned nothing from these lessons. Here, right before us, we've got the most detailed example in all of history, showing us what unbelief does. How it alienates a people from God.

How it provokes and angers the Lord. How it causes emptiness and fear and depression and confusion. How it opens the door to every kind of evil.

How the enemy comes in. And even with all of these examples detailed in front of us, we have the New Testament warning us not to fall into that example of unbelief. But with whom was the Lord grieved forty years? Was it not with them that had sinned, whose carcasses fell in the wilderness? And to whom swore he that they should not enter into his rest, but to them who believed not? So you see, they could not enter in because of unbelief.

Let us labor therefore to enter into that rest, lest any one of you fall into the same example of unbelief. Unless you and I do the same thing, go down the same road, and stand before God, and the Lord says, you had an example. I showed you what happened to Israel.

They were a classroom. They were examples. You were not to fall after that.

You had their example. You had my word. You had the Spirit, and yet you failed.

Yet you wouldn't trust me. You wouldn't believe me. Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God.

And he was talking to the church. He wasn't talking to drug addicts and alcoholics. He said, beware, lest there be in any of you, God's people, an evil heart of unbelief.

For we are made partakers of Christ, if we hold the beginning of our confidence steadfast unto the end. If we hold fast that confidence in the Lord. Jesus has warned us that you and I are going to go to the greatest trial of faith that any society or any generation has ever had.

The children of Israel in the wilderness, that test they had is nothing to the test that the new spiritual Israel is going to face. We've got our own wilderness. We have our own invasion of serpents.

We've got something far more intense. The furnace that we go through is seven times hotter than the seven times hot fire as the three Hebrew children. Here's what Jesus warns us through Peter, that the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold, though it be tried with fire, might be found under praise and honored glory at the appearing of the Lord Jesus.

Our young people are being tested like northern generation. Dad, Mom, do you know what it's like to go to school when ninety-five percent of the kids are blowing pot? When almost every kid around you is drinking

and that's all they're talking about is sex and pot, getting stoned, shooting crank. Do you know what it's like for our college students to go to our pagan schools where there's no support? There's nothing.

They stand alone like the three Hebrew children. The future seems so impossible. Depression hangs overhead and poverty and hunger.

And our kids, they're getting scared. They're really getting scared everywhere I go because things seem to be spinning out of control. Countries are closing to missionaries and kids say, how do I go to a foreign country now? The countries are closing.

I want to give my life to the Lord. But I wonder, in spite of all these dark things, I wonder how many in this last day when things get dark, how many are going to hold on? I wonder how many, in spite of all this talk about faith, how many at that last day when the trumpet of God sounds, how many are going to be so expected and excited and full of faith and say, oh God, I've jettisoned my unbelief. I believe you.

I trust you fully. Jesus warned that some will believe for a while, but then when the test comes, they're going to fail. He said they're on the rock of day, which when they hear, they receive the word with joy, but they don't have root in themselves because in a little while, in a time of testing, they're going to fall away.

He said when the fire falls, when the test comes, they're going to fall away. How long have you claimed to believe God? It's been five years, 10, 15, 20. How many teachers, missionaries, and evangelists I've met who preached faith all their lives and then when the test came, they failed God? I had a preacher's son come to me, bitter and hard and cold.

His mother had been praying for him. We got to the bottom of it, what had turned him bitter, because he'd been so tender to the Lord. When he was a young man, he'd such a call of God in his heart and grieved me as a college student to see him so hard now.

I said, Jimmy, what happened? His grandmother did it to him. His grandmother had been a great missionary, a great missionary for 50 years. Grandma came home from the mission field and grandpa died.

Her husband was taken. The Lord took him home and she grieved for two or three years, couldn't understand. She was just a little angry at God.

And she finally wound up, this dear saint of God, been in the mission field for 50 years, wound up in front of a television set on a rocking chair for three years, just rocking back and forth. Didn't pray, didn't read her Bible, absolutely, absolutely withered. Her faith withered, her joy withered.

That boy went up to grandma one day, he watched her withering inside. Just like some of you grandmothers and grandfathers here once had a touch of God. You used to be an example of faith to the young people, to your children, and now look what's happened.

That boy went to his grandma one day in the bitterness of his heart and saw how dry and empty she was. He said, Grandma, you've been lying all your life. You've been telling lies, haven't you? She looked at him and said, you've been telling me all my life what Jesus could do, how he could keep you by his power, what he could do for a soul that gave him everything.

Grandma, why doesn't it work for you? What happened? And he looked at his grandma and said, Grandma, I don't want anything that you've got, nothing you can say. He said, I don't want what you've got. He turned his back on God.

And how many dear old-timers, how it grieved my heart. You knew what it was to weep between the porch and the altar. You had such a dynamic living faith.

I had someone called my hotel room the other day, a dear old saint of God that knew my dad and mom. And she's still going on with the Lord in such a way. And she said, David, in your meeting, something happened I haven't seen in years.

My eyes began to quiver again because when the Spirit comes on me, my eyes quiver. And I thought, oh, that's blessed. That's beautiful.

I want to see. I don't care what it takes. If it takes your eyes quivering, your heart quivering, oh, that you could quiver once again under the anointing of the Holy Spirit and say, oh, God, renew my faith.

Give me back my first love. Give me back that simple childlike confidence in you. Hallelujah.

Jesus said to Mary and Martha, didn't I tell you, if you would believe me, you'd see the glory of God. That's what he said to you and me. Didn't I tell you, you'd believe me, you'd trust me, I'd believe you, I'd show you glory.

Folks, God's not waiting for you to do some great work for Him. Everywhere I go in the country, I have people come up to me and say, Brother Dave, I feel like I've called to the full-time ministry. All kinds of people are selling their houses and their lands and getting in a car, trying to go somewhere to find a ministry they can give themselves to.

Oh, people, I can't tell you how many people come down to where we're at in East Texas. There are about 15 ministries down there. Agape, Youth of the Mission, our ministry, about 15.

We're a little tall, so down there in East Texas. I don't know what's happened. I mean, almost every day, two, three, four, five carloads a week.

People coming down, they've got all their belongings packed in an old bus or on a car, and there they are, they just drop in and say, I gave up my job, I gave everything because I'm so empty inside and I want to give God everything I have. And sometimes God is in it, but many, many times He is not, because God's not looking for your house. He's not looking for your car.

You can't make Him any richer than He is right now. What's He going to do with your house? What's He going to do with your car? It's a pile of junk anyhow. A young man came up to me.

For 15 years, he'd been collecting coins. It was worth thousands of dollars. He said, Brother Dave, God told me I had to give you my coin collection.

I said, I don't want your coin collection. I said, that's not what God wants. He's not looking for your coins.

He's looking for your faith, your trust. That's not your idol. It's been unbelievably.

He's not wanting anything you possess, not your land or your worldly possessions. He wants your confidence. He wants your trust.

God's not calling you to just sell your house and your land and go out and do something because that's not going to solve your problem. You're still going to be restless. And I know that.

I know that. In fact, I've given some of these people chances and they still, a year later, they're still looking to get in a car and go somewhere else, always running. They're running away from that simple confidence God is looking for.

For without faith, it's impossible to please God. He that cometh to Him must believe that He is and that He's a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him. You can cry a river of tears and that's not going to touch God.

You can give Him everything you have and that's not going to touch Him because He said without faith, possible. No way you can please Me other than your faith, your confidence in Me. God said, if you'll trust Me, I'll use this confidence you have in Me to give you something in your heart to help you rise above this crumbling world.

Do you know saints of God? He wants us so much to have this confidence in Him that while everything around us crumbles, we don't have to be like the world, afraid. A lady friend told me, she said, Brother Wilkes, you told me to go get my neighbor, bring him to church. I went to my neighbor and said, will you come here, Brother Wilkes? And she said, why in the world would I go to church? He said, I can't even listen to the news, I'm so scared.

Why would I go to church and get scared? And it's crumbling all around and people, they don't even want to watch the news anymore. You know, probably half the country now doesn't even listen to the news anymore, they're scared. And the Lord said, He wants us to have something.

He said, when you lay down, you shall not be afraid. Yeah, you shall lay down and your sleep shall be sweet. You will not be afraid of sudden fear, neither the desolation of the wicked which is coming, for the Lord shall be your confidence.

He shall keep your foot from being taken. So cast not away, therefore, your confidence with that great recompensive reward. Little children, abide in me that when He shall appear, we shall have confidence and not be ashamed of His coming.

And this is the confidence that we have in Him, that we ask anything according to His will. He hears us and we know if He hears us, whichever we ask, we know we shall have that petition of Him. You shall not be afraid of evil tidings, because your heart shall be fixed, trusting in the Lord.

Your heart shall be established and you shall not be afraid. And in that day, this song shall be sung in Judah. Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on Him.

The Lord showed me something beautiful. I like to pray while I'm walking in the woods. One day I was walking in the woods and I saw a little sparrow on the ground.

I thought it was a snake at first, because I saw a cloud of dust. I jumped back and it was a little bird falling out of a nest and the wing had been broken. It was just trying to fly, it was just flopping over and I was

pitiful.

I'm kneeling down holding that little bird and the scripture came to me that I'd seen many times and didn't understand. It's in Matthew. Not a sparrow falls to the ground.

And I used to think it said not a sparrow falls to the ground without your Father knowing about it. But in Matthew it doesn't say that. It's not a sparrow falls to the ground without the Father.

He's right there. He doesn't fall into your sin, but He's there when you fall. Not one falls without the Father.

Can you imagine that? Not a sparrow falls and breaks its wing. And I'm looking at that little bird and I think of the times my wing had been broken and how I thought that He wasn't there. And here I am and the Lord said, see that little bird, that broken wing? I know all about it.

I'm with that bird right now. That bird didn't fall without my knowledge. I'm with that bird and if I'm with that bird, how much am I with you? I'll not forsake you.

Oh, hallelujah. Not one of you have been wounded without the Father being with you all the time. He's right there.

He feels the burden of your heart. The only reason He says, have faith in Me, trust Me, because He knows that's the only way He can get through to you and meet your need, because unbelief ties His hand. He doesn't say, anger at your unbelief because I'm mad at you.

I'm angry that I want to help you so bad and you're tying My hands. His anger is against, or tying Him up. Not against us, but what we're doing to ourselves.

And the Lord's saying, hey, I'm trying to get through to you. Don't bind Me anymore. Let Me loose.

Let Me free. It's the only anger. Oh, how He wanted to work with Israel.

How? The only thing of anger. God went about it and He was angry at Israel. That didn't mean that He was impetuous.

That didn't mean that He had a wrath against the unbelief itself. It was what they were doing to themselves. He said, you're dying in that wilderness.

You're dying in despair. I have all this glory waiting for you. I want to take you into the promised land.

I want to give you the grapes of Eschol. I want to give you honey and milk, and I want to feed you, and I want to give you corn from the land, and I want to give you joy unspeakable and full of glory, and you're tying My hands. Let's not tie Him up anymore.

Say, God, forgive my unbelief. Set Me free, O God. Amen.

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