

Apostasy and the Unpardonable State

by Jeff Noblit

Apostasy is a willful purpose and pattern of sin, a turning away from true faith and a renouncing of what you once held a loyalty to, which can lead to the unpardonable state.

Duration: 47:47

Scripture: Matthew 6:33, Hebrews 6:4-8, Hebrews 10:25-26, 1 John 2:19

Topics: "Apostasy", "Gospel Grace"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher discusses the concept of apostasy, which is a willful purpose and pattern of sin. He emphasizes the importance of preaching against sin, guilt, and judgment, as it is the work of the Spirit to convict the world of these things. The preacher expresses concern about the prevalence of minimizing or excluding these topics in some churches, which he believes goes against the work of the Spirit and hinders the growth of the church. He also highlights the significance of the gospel as the means of grace, explaining that turning away from Christ in the gospel renounces the means by which God extends His grace to us.

Transcript

Hebrews chapter 10. If ever there was a time for you to sit on the edge of your pew and make sure you do not miss what God is saying, it's now. And not just for your own souls and your own family, but also because this is a day of dire need for discernment considering what is going on in the professing evangelical church.

We come to Hebrews chapter 10 verse 26. He has exhorted them in verses 24 and 25 about staying faithful to their profession and not falling away into apostasy. And then in verses 26 and going down through the rest of the chapter, He warns them with the severe wrath and judgment that will come upon those who have made a profession and then fall away.

Let's look at verse 26. He says in Hebrews 10, 26, for if we go on sinning willfully after receiving the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins. I've entitled this apostasy and the unpardonable state.

Apostasy and the unpardonable state. Now, this text does not speak specifically about what is called the unpardonable sin. I'm calling it the unpardonable state because that's more biblically accurate, but it's so intertwined with so connected to the apostasy the text deals with.

I want to deal with them together. Now, if you looked up the word apostasy in Webster's dictionary, you'd find this. It means to revolt, to defect or a defection, to abandon a previous loyalty.

And that's a perfect description of the Greek word that is mentioned here. And when he says we go on sinning willfully, apostasy is saying that we made a profession and a position publicly and openly. We embraced something, then we turned and defected and worked against it and no longer held to it any longer.

It means to openly and willfully renounce your faith in Christ. Now, the only place the word apostasy is used in the New Testament is 2 Thessalonians chapter 2, verse 3, where Paul writing to the church at Thessalonica is talking about the coming of the Lord and he says, let no one in any way deceive you for it, the second coming that is, will not come unless the apostasy comes first and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the son of destruction. That's the Antichrist.

So he's saying there that before our Lord returns, you will note in professing Christendom, a great apostasy, a great turning away from true faith, the true Christ, the true gospel and true churches to a false one. And we know Revelation teaches there's going to be a great false or harlot church. Folks who are Catholics, Baptists, Presbyterians, Methodists, siblings of God, independents, etc., etc., will come out of their former profession and join this great false church.

And brothers and sisters, I want to tell you, we are closer to that than I believe we've ever been on planet Earth. Oh, they're saying the right thing. They're using the name Jesus.

They're throwing scripture around. But when you see the heart and the practice of the churches, it looks more apostate than it does true very often. So apostasy is the turning away, the renouncing of what you once held a loyalty to.

That's what this text is talking about. Now, I'm going to add to that what I'm calling the unpardonable state. You've heard a lot about or maybe you thought a lot about the unpardonable sin.

And again, I don't think that's biblically accurate, because if you study the text, it doesn't mean just one sin. It means a state, a place you get to where you've broken God's final deadline and you can never be saved after that point. It's an unpardonable condition or state you come to.

It means you've digressed to a state and you're resisting the work of the Holy Spirit. That is the work of him convicting you of sin and revealing to you, Christ, you resist that until the spirit finally abandons you and no longer will ever influence you again. The unpardonable state.

This much is true. You can reach the unpardonable state and have never been an apostate. You may have never professed Christ and may have never said you were Christian, never had believe it's baptism, but you can be a pagan who continues in sin until you reach the unpardonable state.

But those who are professors and then become apostate, they do seal their doom forever. They put themselves in an unpardonable state. And that's what he means at the end of verse 26, when he says there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins, they bypass, they leave behind the only hope of salvation.

It's over forever for them. Now, here we have in this text several things that I want to bring out to you at this point, four sub points that we need to look at. First of all, understand that apostasy is a willful purpose and pattern of sin.

A willful purpose. Now, this isn't all it is. But first in the text, it says it's a willful purpose and patterns that you see as a child of God, a true, regenerate, born again, wrought by the Holy Spirit, new life, Christian cannot as a purpose and pattern of the life live in sin.

Now they do sin, but it is no longer their goal, their aim, their ambition, nor their lifestyle to sin. Now, Paul, when he's writing to these Jewish believers who are being tempted to go back into Judaism. And by the way, as many of them went back, they didn't just leave Jesus out.

They just modified Jesus so he'd be comfortable in their new thing. That's the day we live in the day of customizing Jesus, the day of modifying the biblical Jesus so that he fits everyone. And it's sickening to me, and furthermore, and infinitely more serious, it's sickening to God.

You don't mess with the Christ of Scripture. You humble yourself before him. You don't adapt him to your culture and your style and your personality and your likes or dislikes.

You die for yourself and humble yourself and honor him for who he has revealed himself to be. So he's charging these brothers and sisters here, not with apostasy necessarily, but trying to keep them far from getting there. That's why he says, if we go on sinning willfully.

In other words, there was probably an apostate spirit working, tempting them. I suppose that's true in every church in every generation. You moms and dads will go home this week and there'll be forces work on you.

They would try to lead you away for your devotion to the true Christ, the true gospel and the true church. Trying to make steps in the other direction. And we need this warning that if we kept going, we could become totally apostate, fully, truly apostate.

And then he uses the plural pronoun we. He wants to include himself. He said, this includes me and everyone else.

We professors of faith in Christ can fall into this and we need this warning. Now, you just the word willfully, if we go on sinning willfully, that means he's not talking about a sin of ignorance. He's not talking about a sin of compulsion, but as I think it was Go said in his commentary, but the sway and bent of one's own rebellious will and perverse disposition is to sin.

The sway in the bent of your heart is toward embracing, loving, relishing in and walking in sin. When you get into that pattern, you're well on your way to true apostasy. It's like the Jews of Jeremiah 44, verses 16 and 17.

The prophet says, our records rather as for the message that you have spoken to us in the name of the Lord. Now, listen, we are not going to listen to you. And they're God's people, the Jews, and they say the prophet, we're not going to listen to God's message, but rather we will certainly carry out every word that has proceeded from our mouths.

But our own ideas of serving God are better than yours. Now, notice by burning sacrifices to the queen of heaven, the pagan idol and pouring out libations to her just as we ourselves, our forefathers, our kings and our princess did in the cities of Judah and in the streets of Jerusalem. For then we had plenty of food and we were well off and we saw no misfortune.

We want the kind of religion that promises health, wealth, prosperity, and we're going to do good. Don't give us the truth. Prophet will turn against it.

That's apostasy. That's turning aside from the truth to the error. Apostasy is a mind set on sin and set against God and God's holy will.

Now, now here's where I'm going to say this often. Here's where you need discernment. Many people use God talk and Jesus talk and use scripture, but they're apostate.

So it's got to be more than just the talk and the things they're saying. You've got to look at their values, their doctrine, their viewpoints and the pattern of their lives. You see, it's a serious sin to sin through ignorance or weakness or temptation or under compulsion.

But that's not what this verse is talking about. It's further than that. Apostasy is that deliberate willfulness.

It's much more serious to sin and it's much more worthy of greater condemnation. The point he's making is that sin never stands still and we must fight against sin in our weakness and in our temptations so that it does not progress into willfulness and obstinacy. Where we are in obstinate ways with stiff necked and brazen countenance going to our sin, not regarding anyone.

Well, this sinning of verse 26 is a continuing, a living. I like what one man said. He said, if they're trading in sin, it's a good way to view it.

We don't have many craftsmen or tradesmen anymore, but you know what it means when somebody says, I'm a carpenter by trade. I've given myself to this discipline. It means they've chosen the trade of carpentry.

They studied carpentry. They disciplined themselves in carpentry. They persevered and they're progressing in the trade of being a carpenter.

Well, that's what this means. They turned their back on Christ and they determined to give themselves to study, be disciplined in and progress in sin. That's apostasy.

It's like Ahab of 1 Kings 21, verse 21, verse 20. And they have said to Elijah, Elijah's God's man, God's prophet. Have you found me? Oh, my enemy answered.

I found you. Now notice this because you have sold yourself to do evil in the sight of the Lord. That's apostasy.

You've given yourself totally over to turn your back on God and live in sin and selfish, brazen rebellion against God. It's like those in Romans chapter two, verse five, whom Paul said had stubborn and unrepentant hearts. Now you sin and I sin.

But we need to have tender, repentant hearts when we have our quiet time or we have a Bible study or the preacher preaches and our sin is exposed. Amen. We're all repenters.

But if you get in a position where you keep hardening and you keep resisting and you keep hardening and you keep resisting, you have the spirit of apostasy. You may not have become an apostate. But he's warning, don't do that.

And when we get into the judgment that's coming on apostates, it's meant to startle us. It is meant to make us tremble and that'll be coming in the following weeks. So this trading in sin is what causes God to change his countenance from a benevolent brother father to an exacting judge toward you.

Well, it's a purpose and a pattern willful sinning. Secondly, the text points out to us that apostasy is a willful and open rejection of Christ and his gospel, a willful and open rejection of Christ and his gospel. I know these overlap well, but notice he gives us more things here in verse 26, not ongoing sinning willfully, but here we have the phrase after receiving the knowledge of the truth.

Now here, the serious gravity of this scene is sin is rather the after receiving the knowledge of the truth. Now, what does he mean by truth? Well, he means the scriptures generally, but specifically the truth of Christ and Christ gospel. What we have to realize is that the Bible record of Christ and his gospel is vastly superior to all of the writings.

Take all the writings of mankind, poetry or prose or whatever it may be. They're full of fiction. Take the writings of judicial law.

They're important, but they're constricted to time. We won't need those in eternity at all. Take the ceremonial law of Scripture and all the ceremonial law that we've learned this from Hebrews was just a shadow of the substance and Christ is the substance.

Take the moral law that God gives us in Scripture. It's good, but the moral law cannot convert the soul and neither can the moral law condemn the soul that's found Christ. So all of those writings are inferior to the truth of Christ and the gospels.

Here's that one great, pure and undefiled truth from God. God is the author of this truth. The Bible says it's God's gospel.

This is the truth that brings salvation to man, which means it has a glory, glory rather, and a dignity beyond all others. It is the truth about that special one unique person, the Lord Jesus Christ, the one of highest excellence and dignity. It is the truth that fulfills all the prophecies and all the types of the Old Testament and of all sacred Scripture.

It is the truth that has the power to create life when Christ is preached and taught the spirit of God works and birth life, evidence and repentance toward God and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. And it is the truth that brings the spirit of God to us and his gifts. This is no small thing when you turn your back on Christ in this gospel.

It's the truth from God. Now, when you turn your back on Christ in the gospel, you are renouncing, in effect, the means of grace. Now, what do we mean when we preachers say the means of grace? Now, all are saved by grace, so you're not saved.

And one way to understand grace is that God is giving you or doing for you what you could know wise or in no way earn or deserve. OK, what is the means whereby I can get what I can't earn or deserve? The means is the preaching of the gospel and the preaching of Christ. Faith comes by hearing, hearing the word about Christ, Romans tells us.

So when you turn your back on that, you turn your back on God's means of grace. Now, it's even more serious here because they didn't just hear it and turn their back on it. They heard it, embraced it, received

it, professed they believed in it, committed to follow him as prophet, priest and king, and then renounced the truth of Christ in the gospel.

That is apostasy. That is such a more grievous sin than other sins, and it deserves a more serious punishment. It is a resolved and settled obstinacy against the goodwill of God that God has manifested for our own good.

It is the basis of ingratitude. Listen, folks, the gospel truth is the most blessed, loving gift and message of all the ages. No greater blessing could the creator bestow upon his creatures than to say, I'm sending my own special son to take your place in judgment and endure my wrath on a cross for your sins, that if you will but repent and believe on him, you shall be saved for eternity.

What ingratitude to embrace that and then say, I now push it aside and go my own way. That's the sin he's talking about here. It's literally a sin against our own good and our own rescue from eternal misery.

So it's a purpose and pattern to sin. He goes a little further and he shows us that it's an open and willful rejection of Christ in the gospel. But thirdly, the apostasy here is a willful and open rejection of the spirit's illumination, a willful and open rejection of the spirit's illumination.

I use the word illumination. You could say the spirit's work, the spirit's convicting, but the spirit does more than just convict. He gives life.

He enables faith. So I just use the broader term illumination. The text tells us that if we turn away, if we're apostate after receiving the knowledge of the truth.

Folks, you can't receive the knowledge of the truth apart from the spirit's illumination. You can't. It's not.

The man who wills are the man who runs, but God, who has mercy, who can cause you to see and understand the things of Christ. If the spirit of God isn't working, you can't receive it. So these are people who have sensed and experienced.

They know something of at least to a degree, the illuminating, the revealing, the working of the Holy Spirit in their hearts and then turned away. This is a parallel truth to what Paul, whoever the writer, human writer is of Hebrews, I believe it's Paul, what he taught us in chapter six. Remember chapter six, we had the sermon series, The Pretenders.

Remember that we won't turn there for time, but it's Hebrews six, four through eight. And in Hebrews six, four through eight, I pointed some things out to you about people who are very, very close to being truly Christians. And then they turned away.

And that's what an apostate is. He's embraced the gospel. He's learned of Christ.

The spirit has worked on him. He's really close, but he turns away and goes his own way. In chapter six of Hebrews, four through eight, we found out that there's a non-saving repentance just as there's a non-saving faith.

Men can have changes of heart, even concerning God, but it be short of true conversion. Men can come to something of a faith in Christ just as the demons also believe and shudder, but they're not converted. In Hebrews six, we saw that some were enlightened in their minds, but not changed in their hearts.

We saw that some had tasted of Christ and the Greek words here are essential, but it never swallowed or taken in Christ. Jesus said, if you eat this bread, not just taste it, it really comes in and substantially changes you. They tasted of Christ, but didn't swallow.

They'd experienced something of the work of the spirit, but not the regeneration of the spirit within their hearts. They tasted something of the goodness of the gospel, but they had not experienced the power of the gospel to change them. They even had some comforts of heaven, but their future was hell, the text showed us.

And thus they lost salvation. Do you hear what I said? They lost salvation. Now, old time bad, just listen up so you don't misunderstand me.

I did not say they lost their salvation. That can never happen. Amen.

Once you are truly converted or saved, you can't lose it. But the picture in this text, in Hebrews chapter 10 and Hebrews 6, it was so close. It was so there.

It was so real. It was so in their hands and they let it get away. They lost it.

They fell away from grace and turned back to go toward the law or whatever else it was they wanted to follow. So these having in our text in Hebrews 10, 26, having received the knowledge means more than being exposed to it. The Greek scholar tell us that phrase received the knowledge of the truth means they acknowledge it.

They said, yes, I with my mind can conceive the truth of the gospel. I with my heart have affection for Christ in the gospel and I in my will consent to try to follow the teachings of Christ in the gospel. But all sort of true saving conversion, this kind of apostasy is well documented throughout the scriptures.

It's a clear biblical teaching. Deuteronomy 13, 13. Listen to what it says.

Some worthless men have gone out from among you and have seduced the inhabitants of the city. Say, let us go and serve other gods whom you've not known. They served Jehovah, turned their backs.

We're going after other gods now. First Samuel 15, 11, Saul, I regret that I've made Saul king for he has turned his back from following me and has not carried out my commands. Saul, an apostate, close, but never truly converted and finally turns from the loyalty and the profession to Christ as king and savior that he had made.

What does the New Testament tell us about this kind of apostasy? It's all in the Bible. First Timothy 4, 1 and 2. But the spirit explicitly says that in the latter times some will fall away from the faith. That means they embraced it, not savingly, but embraced it, looked like it, joined the church, took Sunday school, became a deacon, some even preach.

Matthew 7 says, Lord, we preached and cast out demons. And he says, depart from me, I never knew you. Again, some will embrace it and look real, but they will ultimately fall away, paying attention to deceitful spirits and the doctrines of demons by the means of hypocrisy of liars and steered in their own conscience, as with the branding iron.

First, John 2, 19, speaks of this apostasy. They went out from us, but they were not really of us, for if they had been of us, they would have remained with us. But they went out in order that it might be shown that

they are not all of us.

They embraced the things we embrace, and then they turned and forsook us. And by the way, I'll bring this out later, but the text without equivocation says abandoning the true church is the same as apostasy against Christ. You cannot separate the body from the head.

When you abandon the body, you abandon the head. Now, people don't like that today. They like to think, well, I can I can leave a true and healthy church and go to one that's not true and one not healthy.

It's just kind of a choice. It's another brand of Christianity. You know, it might be, but it might not be.

It may be apostasy. And that's what was happening here. They went out from us.

And when they went out from them, by the way, they joined with somebody else. I don't know who it was. We don't have that fact, but there are many cultic sects and groups and modifications of Judaism and secretism of Christianity and Judaism and the Stoics and the Gnostics and all kinds of junk out there.

And when these people left the truth, the true Christ and the true church, they joined up with something. And I guarantee you, it had the Christian labels all over it, had the Jesus talk all over it, threw scripture around. It's a day, brothers and sisters, for discernment.

Don't just look at the veneer, look at the heart and the lifestyle and the purposes and the policies of the church. The parable of the stalls points this out. Remember, Jesus was given the parable and he says, a sower goes and he sows seed.

Now the seed is the gospel, seeds of the gospel. And he throws some seed out and it goes by the hard places, by the road. And that's what happens to the gospel.

It lands on some hard hearts and birds come along, picturing Satan and it's plucked away, doesn't do them any good. Some seed is sown on shallow soil, crops are right underneath the stall and the roots go down quickly. A stalk goes up quickly, but it has no depth and the sun scorches and it dies off, never was truly converted.

Looked like it for a while. Then he said some seed is sown in the weeds, among the weeds and the thorns and the bushes. It's a pretty good stall, but all those weeds are there and it grows up good for a while, but ultimately the thorns and the weeds grow and choke it out and it dies out.

Looked good for a while, wasn't the true thing. Then he said, some seed is sown on the good soil and it bears fruit and keeps producing. Same picture, same truth, embraced but didn't last, embraced but didn't last.

Now Judas Iscariot, one of the original twelve apostles, is the head of the church of the apostates, the Christ rejecters, those who have embraced him and then abandoned him. Matter of fact, he's the prophet, priest and king of all the apostates. He's the prophet because his life example points to the way of the wickedness of embracing Christ and then abandoning him.

He's the priest because his example illustrates how one can go from the doorstep of salvation to the deepest dungeon of hell's torment. He's the king in that his diabolical betrayal of the crown prince of heaven is king of all traitorous deeds of all scripture and all recorded history. His lust for selfish ambition, worldly gain, power and position, his desire to use Christ for these selfish ambitions is second to none in

all recorded scripture and history.

How do you view Christ today? Is Christ something that you use because you want wealth? Is he someone you use because you want your diseases healed? Is he someone you use because you want him in hell? Or do you embrace him as the king of glory and the most wonderful of all and the treasure of your heart and the darling and the most precious one in all the world and the universe to you? The Judas spirit is the using of Jesus to help us out. That's the apostate spirit. Turn from it and run to Christ in true faith if that's where you are today.

You see, this sinning against the illuminating worth of the spirit as the spirit reveals Christ in the gospels is the highest of sins. It's a sin against the third person of the Godhead when you sin against the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is not just some force that you can toy with.

He's God and he comes to you and he starts revealing to you your sin and your lostness and your wickedness. He reveals to you the judgment of God that's rightfully over you and he begins to show you Christ and how you need him. When you push that away, you're looking God in the face and saying, I'll have none of you in my life.

It's a serious sin. That's why Hebrews 10, 29 says we insult the spirit of grace when we become apostate. Acts 7, 51 says you men who are stiff necked and uncircumcised in heart.

Now, that's a key phrase. They had all the outward appearance of being God's people, but their hearts were not changed by the power of God. Uncircumcised in your heart and ears.

And here's the phrase, and always resisting the Holy Spirit. I don't know where your theology is. I'm as sovereign grace as any man walking on earth.

But if you're a Calvinist and believe in sovereign grace, you must hold to the mystery that the spirit of God works on men, convicts men and draws men and reveals Christ. But yet it can be resisted. I do believe there's an effectual calling that will accomplish its work to bring men to Christ.

But there's mysteries here I don't understand. And by the way, I don't need to understand them. There is a work of the spirit that you can resist and push away.

And you need to be fearful of doing that. This rejection and contempt for the Holy Spirit is the greatest dishonor that can be done to God, because it's God you're rejecting. Well, the fourth, this apostasy is a willful and open abandonment of the true church.

A willful and open abandonment of the true church. Now, that's what our context points out explicitly clear. What is he saying in verse 24 and 25? Let us consider how to stimulate one another.

That's us in the church, one another to love and good deeds. Now, we have to consider how to stimulate or the word is provoked there. Remember what that word means.

It means vinegar. It means splash vinegar on each other if necessary. Jolt one another, startle one another.

It literally has the idea of agitating, making somebody a little agitated. You ever got somebody agitated at you? The Bible says there's times when you and I, as brothers and sisters in Christ, have to prod one another and agitate one another to stay faithful and keep serving Jesus, lest we keep sinning willfully and

ultimately prove to be apostate. Verse 25, not forsaking our own assembling together.

That's going to church. That's meeting with church. Last time I checked, that meant whenever the church is ordained to meet, you ought to be there if you can, as is the habit of some.

He said some are already drifting in that habit of missing it. But encouraging one another and all the more as you see the day drawing near. And then in contrast, he comes to verse 26 and says, if you stop meeting with the church and if you stop, your ministry is stirring one another up to stay faithful.

If you stop assembling together and you walk in that willful sin, then severe, drastic consequences will come your way eventually, lest you repent and turn back. A willful and open abandonment of the church. First John 2, 19 again, they went out from us, but they were not really of us.

Or if they'd been of us, they would have remained with us. But they went out in order that it might be shown that they are not all of us. You see, you just can't abandon the church, the body without abandoning the head.

Jesus Christ, if you're unfaithful to the church, you're unfaithful to Christ, period. That's what the text is teaching. You cannot be loyal to Christ and then disloyal to his body, the church.

Now, I do understand and know that there are true believers who feel trapped in such shallow, unbiblical, compromising congregations that it is a struggle. That's true. That does happen.

But your job is to pray and speak God and find the most biblically healthy church you can find. Join that church, obligate yourself to membership in that church and pour your life out for the brethren in that church. Lest you be like one who keeps on willfully sinning and ultimately proves to be apostate and can never be saved at all.

You see, Ephesians 5.25 tells us Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her. Now, that's what Jesus thinks about his body. You think Jesus would come to church? He did far more than that.

He said, I'll give my life for it. Jesus gave his life for these brothers and sisters around you. Now, he's saying, if I'm in you, you do the same.

Give yourself and at minimum be faithful when you assemble together. 1 John 3.16 gives the compliment, For we know, loved by this, that he laid down his life for us, the church, and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren. 1 Corinthians 8.12 tells us to sin against the brethren.

And if you're not faithful and exercising your service ministries to the body, you're sinning against the brethren and Christ. Don't do that. That is a clear sign that you are at least under an apostate spirit and taking some steps toward apostasy.

Don't do that. Listen to the word of God. Humble yourself before it.

Don't fall away. Say, brother, if you really think there are people who are true apostates, I'm telling you far more than I think any of us would really want to admit. How is it that I can go talk to men and witness to men in their 40s and 50s and 60s? And I can read the things of Scripture.

I can read the things of our sinful losses, the wrath of God. And they're just totally flatline. It doesn't impress them.

It doesn't make a dent on them. It doesn't affect their emotions. They're just hardened.

No one knows for certain, but it's likely they've come to that unpardonable state. Push the illuminating work of the spirit away, push the truth of Christ away so they cross God's deadline. Join a true biblically healthy church and pour your life into that church with your service and for the advancement of that church.

Now, finally, Roman numeral two. Now, you will be pleased to know that this Roman numeral is not as long as Roman numeral one, but the unpardonable state. Let's talk about that for just a moment.

A word about the unpardonable state. Now, I want to say this to encourage many of you. In every church, there are some overzealous souls who fall into morbid introspection of themselves, worried and anxiety ridden that they committed the unpardonable sin.

And they so examine themselves and so worry and are so anxiety ridden because they think that every willful sin after they've received knowledge and conviction that it's sin is the unpardonable sin. It is not the unpardonable sin. That's not what the Bible is teaching there.

Matthew Henry, the old Puritan divine said it this way. Now, listen closely to Dr. Henry here. The sin here mentioned, meaning the unpardonable sin, is a total final apostasy when men with a full and fixed will and resolution despise and reject Christ, the only savior, despise and resist the spirit, the only sanctifier, and despise and renounce the gospel, the only way of salvation and the words of eternal life.

And all this after they've known, owned and professed the Christian religion and continue to do so obstinately and maliciously. Now, if you're doing that, you may be apostate. If you're doing that, you may have reached the unpardonable state.

But it's not that you have sinned after you knew from God's word and from God's will that something was sin. That's not the unpardonable sin. The unpardonable sin or the unpardonable state come from Matthew 12, 31 and 32.

Therefore, I say to you, any sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven men, but blasphemy against the spirit shall not be forgiven. Boy, I want you to listen in this last couple of minutes. Listen, and whoever shall speak a word against the Son of Man, it shall be forgiven him.

But whoever shall speak against the Holy Spirit, it shall not be forgiven him either in this age or in the age to come. You see, to reach an unpardonable state of sin, one has to continually refuse and reject and furthermore, consider the work of the Holy Spirit as an evil thing. Did you hear that? The unpardonable sin is when one now has is continually refusing and rejecting the work of the Holy Spirit, and they now consider the Holy Spirit's work an evil thing.

Now, I'm going to say something in just a few moments. I really want you to hear. In fact, I want you to hear all of this.

But I really want you to hear the rest. The person who's come to an unpardonable state, the more light the spirit gives them, the greater they sin in rejecting it and assigning that light, that revelation, the spirit showing them as the work of something evil. The final stage or state of this resistance and rejection is the full resolute conviction that the person, the precious person, rather, of the Holy Spirit is an evil, corrupting person with a defiling and corrupting ministry.

And when you get there, the Holy Spirit withdraws Himself from you and He never bothers you again and your eternal state is fixed, doomed, condemned forever. Now, here's what I want to say to you. Rick Warren sold 20 million copies of The Purpose Driven Life.

Twenty million copies. Some of you read it. I'm not going to condemn you for reading it.

There's just about 20 million better books you could have read. Rick Warren first wrote The Purpose Driven Church. In his teaching, he says to minimize sin, minimize guilt in your churches.

Don't tell people they're lost under the wrath of God, condemned and doomed forever. What did Jesus say the Holy Spirit will say when He comes? He will convict of sin. So, in effect, Rick Warren, Bill Hovels, Robert Shuler, Joel Osteen, and the whole bunch, when they minimize what God, the Holy Spirit, empathizes, are they not, in effect, saying that's not profitable and that's not good? I'm smarter and I'm wiser.

The Spirit wants to convince of sin. Do you see the seriousness of that? Folks, this isn't just another little branch of Christianity. This isn't another little twist on truth.

This is heresy. This is wrong. And if it is not outright apostasy, it's the spirit of apostasy and going toward apostasy because the precious, perfect, sovereign Holy Spirit of God says I want to convict.

And my preachers are my means to be my spokesmen, to give them my truth so that I can bring people to their woe and loss and condemned and judged and ungodly position so that they'll see Christ and turn to Him and reach for Him and be saved. But when you promote a philosophy of ministry that de-emphasizes and minimizes what the Spirit of God does emphasize, that is saying the Spirit is unwise and even evil and not profitable. Now, here's what happens.

And I'm telling you, these churches have tens of thousands of people coming to them. Well, no wonder. It means nothing.

Now, listen to what I'm telling you. Whatever is moving those people's lives, it's not the Holy Spirit, because he convicts of sin and they don't like that. Whatever Christ you turn to when you don't feel that you're a wretched sinner is not the real Christ of Scripture.

Did you hear what I'm saying? It might be some little errand boy to satisfy your wandering desire, some little God to patch up your life and make your marriage happier. It's not the Christ of Scripture who rescues you from the wrath of God. So they have a false Holy Spirit that leads you to a false Christ, which leads to a false conversion, which builds a false church.

And this stuff is covering the globe, folks. It's rapidly covering the world. It has the name Christianity.

It sounds like Christianity. It looks like Christianity, unless you're discerning. Am I saying these men are out and out apostates? No.

But they're flat under the influence of a spirit of apostasy. Listen to your pastor. I do not have the right or the freedom to toy with the message of Scripture.

I must preach what it is. Lock me in jail. Empty the church.

I must preach the truth and let the Spirit of God use it and see if God won't vindicate this truth by changing and transforming lives that no one can explain under the gospel. Hey, by the way, we've been seeing a lot of that. Isn't God good? Now, that's not hard to understand, is it? Jesus said the Spirit will come and convict the world of sin, of righteousness and the judgment to come.

And a man that stands up and has a philosophy of ministry either tells you to minimize the preaching against sin and guilt and judgment or some of them say leave it out altogether. Then they are contradicting and calling the work of the Spirit an evil thing. Because they're building empires and powers unto themselves.

They are not building the church of the Lord Jesus Christ. And in our Southern Baptist Convention, this stuff has been swallowed hook, line and sinker. That's why I'm thankful for the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary that I fellowshiped with just this last week who see this and want to stand against it.

But very few churches will stand. I'm willing to stand, will you? When they call you a cult, when they call you narrow, when they call you mean spirited. It's a day for courage.

It's a day for discernment. Now, back to the sin of the unpardonable state. There are two occasions when salvation is impossible.

Two occasions when salvation is impossible. Number one, before the Spirit of God deals with you, you cannot be saved. You can run down aisles, you can cry crocodile tears.

But if the Spirit of God has not worked on you, as Jesus said, in wrought conviction, you cannot be saved. The other occasion when the Spirit of God, you cannot be saved rather, is after the Spirit of God has left and you no longer feel conviction. And that is the unpardonable state.

That's why verse 26 says in the last phrase, let me just read all of it, but we'll emphasize the last phrase. Listen now. For if we go on sinning willfully after receiving the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins.

They turned their back on, left behind. The Spirit of God has abandoned them. They can no longer be convicted of Christ.

They can no longer be drawn to Christ or wooed to Christ by the Spirit. They can no longer see their sin and their losses and that God's wrath justly is over them. They can no longer see Christ as their only hope of salvation.

They sealed their doom. The sacrifice for their sin is no longer present. Literally, it means it's left behind.

They were never, ever truly converted. And now they are fixed for eternity and they will face God in their sins. Thank God for true gospel ministry, true gospel teaching, true gospel preaching, genuine work of the Holy Spirit, and genuine, biblically verifiable repentance and faith so that we can know that we know we're God's.

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