

# The Two Final Calls

by Mike Gilchrist

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*Mike Gilchrist's sermon emphasizes the urgency of responding to God's final calls to both sinners and saints before it's too late.*

**Duration:** 27:44

**Scripture:** Matthew 6:33, John 12:37, John 12:39

**Topics:** "Holy Spirit"

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## Description

In this sermon, the speaker recounts a personal story about his friend Shorty who passed away at a young age. The speaker emphasizes the importance of getting right with God and warns that there are consequences for not doing so. He shares how Shorty's death served as a wake-up call for others who were living without Christ. The speaker emphasizes God's love and desire for people to turn to Him, even when they make mistakes.

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## Transcript

The Bible teaches in no uncertain terms that God does extend a final call. In fact, the Bible teaches that God extends two final calls, one to the sinner, one to the saint. And when God extends a final call and that call is rejected, there is no call beyond that.

It's all over, the curtain drops. I want to take you to the 12th chapter of the Gospel of John and read it to you. Let's take them in the order that I mentioned them.

God's final call to the sinner, and then God's final call to the saint. John chapter 12, verse 37 tells us, Though Jesus had done so many miracles before them, yet they believed not on him. All that says is this.

No matter what he did, no matter what he said, no matter what they heard, no matter what they saw, no matter what they felt, their answer to him was one emphatic no. No, they said, we will not have this man Christ to rule over us. They didn't want him, mister.

They didn't want him. And their statement is recorded in God's word. Now notice what happened to them in verse 39.

Therefore they could not believe. Therefore they could not believe. In verse 37, they would not.

In verse 39, they could not. There was a long time when they could, but then there came a time when because they would not, they could not. Did you know that if you want, you can't at a given point? Now let me explain this.

Look up here, please. Let me share with you as simply as I know how. How could this possibly happen? There are two verses in the Bible that help to clarify it.

One is in the New Testament, one in the Old. The verse in the New Testament says, Except the Spirit of God draw man, he cannot come to the Father. Except the Holy Spirit draw you, you can't come to God through Christ.

My Spirit is poured out on all flesh. The fields are widened to harvest as a result. The Holy Spirit convicts everybody, calls everybody.

He's calling you and you and you and you to God through Christ. He's calling you, young ladies, calling you, young man. He's calling you.

And unless he called you, you couldn't even come to God through Christ. I've been preaching since I was 18. That's been 12 or 13 years now.

And I'll tell you something I have. Now, that's to see if you're really here. I'll tell you something I've never seen in all these years.

I've never seen one person come down the aisle, coming to the pastor or coming to me saying, I don't want to, I don't want to. I'm coming, but I don't want to, I don't want to. They don't ever say that.

They always come and say, I want to. I want to be saved. I want to give my whole heart to Jesus.

I want to become a Christian. I want Christ in my life. I want to.

Where did they get the want to? I just told you where they got it. Where did they get it? Holy Spirit. Holy Spirit puts a want to in your heart, doesn't he? I came to Jesus because I had a want to.

God's Holy Spirit put a want to in my heart and I came to him. And every one of you who have come to him came because you had a God-given want to. And those who haven't come, he's given you a want to also.

I know that. He hasn't skipped you, bypassed you or let you alone. And you have a want to.

But I have to be honest with you tonight. There's another verse, Old Testament verse, Genesis chapter 6. It says, my spirit shall not always strive with you. My spirit shall not always strive with man.

My spirit will not always call you. What, ladies and gentlemen, what would cause the Spirit of God ever to stop calling anybody? One thing. Here it is.

When a person tramples underfoot the love of God, the shed blood of the Son, the call of the Spirit, to a part beyond which God in his infinite wisdom knows that it would be morally wrong to let that person go any longer trampling underfoot the grace of God, God in his infinite wisdom determines this is the time when I will extend a final call. And God calls that person. And if at that point they say no, then God simply reaches down and says, my spirit shall no longer strive with you.

God withdraws his spirit. And they never come to God through Christ. Why? Because God will turn his back and won't listen to their cry? No, that isn't it.

That isn't it at all. It will not be a matter of them coming to God and saying, oh God, I'm ready. Lord, please hear me.

Receive me, Lord. I want to be saved. And God would say, no, I didn't say that.

That isn't it. It's not that at all. It's not a matter of them coming to him and calling on him and being turned away.

It's a matter of them not coming to him at all because they won't want to. They just won't come because they won't want to. They can't come because they don't care.

The want to is gone. It's not there anymore. God's spirit no longer calls.

And they just won't come. You know what bothers me tonight? And I was thinking about this in view of the final service. Some of you, God really talked to you Wednesday night, talked to you Thursday night, talked to you Friday night, Saturday night, talked to you this morning.

Some of you didn't come to the meeting, but God talked to you apart from the meeting, didn't he? I mean, he's got a lot of ways to talk to you. Something so wonderful happened. And you said, oh, this is great.

God spoke to you. Your car almost ran off the highway. You saw 7,000 pounds of flying steel coming right at your face.

And suddenly you swerved and missed it. God spoke to you. Baby got sick.

God spoke to you. Thought you might lose the job. God spoke to you.

A windfall came and God spoke to you. Through exciting things, through advancements, through adversities, God has been talking to you, talking to you. He's used every bit of it to call you to Jesus.

So far, so far, you've said no. You've heard a thousand wonderful songs like we've sung this week. Great hymns, amazing grace.

What a friend we have in Jesus. You know the invitation hymns, Just As I Am, The Savior Is Waiting, all these wonderful hymns and choruses, special music like David and Carol have given. You've heard sermons, mountains of sermons.

And God through all of this has called you and called you and called you. And until this night, you have not yet said yes. Jesus is Lord.

He's Lord. He's never become your Lord. You even walked the aisle one day to alleviate the conviction, but you didn't make Jesus Lord and you've never been saved.

One more time, He's calling you tonight, isn't He? What bothers me is this. It's not as strong as it used to be. What was once a great flame is now a little flicker.

If that spark ever flickers and dies and goes out and God ever decides it would be wrong to let you trample underfoot the grace of God any longer, God will stop calling you. The spark flickers, dies. You'll never be

called again.

You'll never come to God. Please don't let that happen to you. Son, please don't let that happen to you.

Dad, please don't let that happen to you. It happened to them. They would not and then they could not.

They would not and then because they would not, they could not. It does happen. I have to be honest with you.

It does happen. And I'm going to go to my grave believing that's what happened to a whole lot of people that I've read about in the Bible. For instance, like Herod.

God loved him and called him and loved him and called him and loved him and called him. And he kept saying, no, no, no, no, no. He stole his brother's wife.

God sent his best preacher, John the Baptist, into his life to give him another call. You know what he did to John? Hey, mister, he took God's preacher and cut his head off. Served at the platter to dance.

And God still loved him and would have saved him even beyond that atrocious act. And God called him and called him and Herod kept saying, no, no, no. And one day God said, final call.

Called him for the last time. And Herod said, no. And God walked away and a worm came crawling out on his arm.

I guess he thumped him off, wouldn't you? One got him in the neck, one in the back, one in the throat, one in the chest. The man was suddenly alive with worms and he began to scream internally and externally. The worms were gnawing.

And he died. You know why the Bible says he died in Acts 12? Says he was smitten by an angel of God. When a person hears God's final call and says no to that, the Bible seems to be very, very emphatic about the teaching that he doesn't live very many days after that.

Check out Belshazzar. God loved him and called him and loved him and called him and he trampled underfoot the grace of God. And one night he got drunk and defiled the sacred vessels of the sanctuary.

Went to sleep in a drunken stupor. God called him for the last time. He said, no.

And a hand came floating through the air, one finger protruding, wrote on the wall, you are weighed in the balance and found wanting. Tonight you die. And mister, he was found cold and stone dead the next morning.

I'm going to my grave believing he died on the heels of God's final call. So did Herod. So have others.

I want to be simple with you tonight. God loves you. And I'm not preaching a God with a big stick by any means.

Mister, God loves you so much. And son, God loves you so much. Saw your dilemma, wanted to forgive you of your sin and change you from the sinner that you are.

God clothed himself in flesh, came from outer space to planet Earth, put himself in the hands of cruel men who tortured and tormented him and finally nailed him on a cross and murdered him. God could have

saved himself when they stood at the foot of the cross and said, come down from the cross. If you can.

He could, but he couldn't. Oh, he could. He just couldn't.

He couldn't save himself if he were going to save you and he preferred to save you than himself. So he just could not bring it to pass that he'd come down off that cross. He stayed there and died for you.

Don't tell me God doesn't love you. God loves you. And after he died for you, he's called you and called you.

How many times has God called you? How many times this week has he called? And once more tonight, God's calling. You may suppress the call and the loud voice may just be a whisper, but it's still there and God's still calling you. And the greatest honor in this world is to be called of God.

If God just whispers to you tonight, if all you hear is a whisper, please come. One of these days, God in his infinite wisdom and justice knows that it'd be wrong to call you again. You'll hear a last call.

And that's it. If you reject that one, it's all over. I beg you not to let it happen to you tonight.

Now, hang on. Watch me, please. The Bible also teaches that there is a final call for the saint as well as the sinner.

Two things, two questions. Number one, have you ever heard it said that if you're really, really saved and you get away from the Lord, let's say you come to Jesus, you make him Lord and Savior and then you get away from the Lord and you backslide and you drift and you wander and you go away, you'll always come back before you die. Have you ever heard that one? How many of you ever heard you'll always come back before you die? Have you ever heard it? I don't ask you to believe it, just have you heard it? Heard that all my life.

Don't you dare believe it. Not a word of truth in it. God's word does not say if you get away from God, you'll come back before you die.

You can come back, but God's word teaches the opposite. If you don't come back, you'll die sooner than God planned for you to die. There is a time to be born and a time to die.

You have a birthday and a death day and the Bible teaches if you don't get back to God, you move your death day inward. Not coming back to God will shorten your life. Nowhere in the Bible does it say you'll come back.

It says you'd better hurry back. Hey, how many of you ever heard this one? Once saved, always saved. You ever heard that one? Let me see your hand.

You believe it? Keep it up. That's a good one. You can believe that one.

Don't let anybody talk you out of that one. That's a good one. Once saved, always saved.

Be sure you get that clear. Once Jesus is Lord and Savior, you're always saved. But I'm gonna be honest with you.

We got a lot of folk. We say they're backslidden, but they're not. You got to go somewhere before you can slide back and they've never been.

And we say he's out on a limb, but he's not out on a limb. He's never been up the tree. And you got to get up the tree before you can get out on a limb.

We got a lot of people we call stray sheep. They're not stray sheep. They lost goats.

They never were sheep. But if you're ever a sheep, you're always a sheep. And even if you act like a goat, the shepherd doesn't come, lift you over his head, kick open the gate, and throw you out of the sheepfold and say, revert to goat head.

He doesn't do that. You know what the shepherd did with a sheep that had a chronic straying problem? After he tried everything else, he'd just take his rod. Thy rod and thy staff, they comfort me.

The staff was a long, crooked instrument for helping the sheep out of a ditch. The rod was a short, blunt instrument, a weapon-like instrument for fighting off wolves and wild animals. But he would take his rod and take his little sheep and go whack, break his leg.

He's hard to go hobbling down to the disco with a broken leg. And then he'd mend it. He'd carry him, he'd feed him hand to mouth.

He'd love him, win his affection. Little sheep would get well, he'd put him down, he'd stay right with the shepherd. Thy rod comforts me.

Once you're a sheep, you're always a sheep. We have five daughters and a son, great kids. When they were little, I could say to my kids, do this, they did it.

Don't do that. They didn't do it. Most of the time.

But I got to be honest. There were some times when they were like their mother. They didn't do everything I said.

They were still mine. I never did lift them over my head, kick open the door, throw them out, and say, you're not mine anymore. I never did do that.

I just kept them, applied a little practical psychology where they could feel it most. Applied the Board of Education to the seed of knowledge and kept them. They were still mine.

If they obeyed me, they were mine. If they disobeyed me, they were mine. If we were in the same room together, they were mine.

If I were a thousand miles away, they were still mine. Distance and disobedience never changed the fact that they were mine. They were mine.

They were mine. We never got out of relationship. We just got out of fellowship.

A child of God can get out of fellowship, but never out of relationship with his heavenly father. Amen. But if you get out of fellowship with God, stay with me.

You don't come back. What does God do? What do you do, sir? What do you do with your boy when it happens? You got a little boy. What's his name? Johnny? Yeah, Johnny.

Hey, Johnny. Come here, boy. Johnny walks up to you.

You look at him. You grin. You reach out and you mush his hair a little.

You say, boy, you get right. He feels the warm touch of your hand on his hair. He sees the grin on your face.

He looks at you and he says, OK, Daddy, I'm sorry. All is well. That's all you have to do.

Nothing else. Suppose that doesn't work. What do you do? You say, I call him back.

I say, Johnny, come here, boy. This time there's no grin. There's no mushing of the hair.

You say, son, you get right. That's a strong command. If little Johnny says, OK, Daddy, I'm sorry.

All is well. And if he doesn't get right, what do you do then? You say, I call him back. I say, Johnny, come here, boy.

Now, son, I have spoken to you. You seem to be hard of hearing. I'm now warning you.

If you don't get right, I am going to get you right. In fact, son, you are just about to go into the getting right business. Now, that's a pretty clear warning.

If under the warning, little Johnny gets right, you don't have to do any more, do you? Suppose Johnny doesn't get right. What do you do? You say, Johnny, come here, boy. He comes.

And you say, son, I've spoken to you. I've loved you. I've commanded you.

I've warned you. Now, this is judgment day. And I beg your pardon.

What was that? You know what I'm going to say. What? Oh, God, my thank you. Yeah, that was it.

Beg your pardon. You don't believe that. Why? Oh, you hear what she said? She doesn't believe it because she said, God is love.

God is love. Hey, that's why I believe it, because God is love. My mother was love, too.

You know, she said, Michael. When she called me Michael, I knew the fat was in the fire. I woke up to my mother.

I put on my very best pepsodent grin. I'd say, yes, mother. She'd say, wipe it off.

And I wiped it off. And she'd say, son, and I don't know where she got this expression, but she'd say, son, I've spoken to you till I'm blue in the face. Go get a switch.

I had to go get a good medium-sized switch off the tree. She got the biggest one on the tree. I had to peel it, bring it to her, hand it to her.

And my mother would take that switch and flip it and always made three statements. Number one, she'd say, son, I hate to do this. I agreed with that.

Number two, she'd say, son, this hurts me worse than it hurts you. I never did agree with that. And then my mother said, son, I'm only doing this because I love you.

You got a mother too? Boy, did she love me hard. She loved me long. She loved me often.

I was taught to say I was reared, but I was raised. Off the floor almost every day by Pete Switches. And I thank God for it because tonight I'm behind the pulpit instead of behind prison bars.

My mother taught me some law. It did hurt her worse than it hurt me. She did hate to do it and she did do it because she loved me.

Does God love you? Are you his child? If you get too big for your britches, do you think God's going to enlarge your britches? Think again. God will reduce you because he loves you. I didn't say God had a big stick.

Did I say God had a big stick and he's going around just looking for somebody to use it on? Did I say that? Huh? Just go around. Big old bad God with a big stick. Bam! Boy, I didn't say that.

God's not that way. That's not the God of this Bible. You better be glad he's not.

I tell you, if God were that way, you'd talk about a deaconless church. No Brother Jerry. You've been long gone.

Oh! But I sure wouldn't be here. No David round. Carol singing like angels.

Talk about a bunch of empty pews. If God had a big stick, we'd all been blown away a long time ago. Come on, amen? God's very patient, very loving.

God's put up with a lot of junk from all of us, hasn't he? And I know God is love. And I'm not saying God cares a big stick, but I am telling you this, listen to me. The God who died for you, who called you and who saved you, if you're his child, is determined, absolutely, relentlessly determined to conform you to the image and likeness of his son.

Are you listening to this? You are predestined to be conformed to the image and likeness of his son, and God's going to make you like Jesus, with or without your cooperation. He's going to do it with or without your cooperation. If you don't let him do it in Texas, he'll transfer you.

I mean, he'll get you to the place. I mean, he'll let you get to the place where you have proven to God you're not going to make me like Jesus in Texas, and God will sign your transfer papers and transfer you from Texas to heaven and finish it there. But he'll do everything he can first.

He'll apply pressure. He'll deal with you. He'll wrap circumstances around your life to get your attention.

But if nothing works, if none of that works, God will one day say, final call, final call, final call, unsaintly saint, final call, Mr. Rebel. And you stand in that invitation, and you say, no! And God will say, okay, I love you too much to leave you here like you are. I love you too much to let you cause others to stumble over you.

Now you come home, and God signs your transfer papers. And don't tell me it isn't true. You go home and read 1 Corinthians 10, and you'll find God signing 23,000 transfers in one night.

You go home and read 1 Corinthians 11, and you'll find God telling some folk there, for this cause, many of you are weak. That's not the only reason for weakness, rebellion. And for this cause, many of you are

sick.

And that's not the only reason for sickness. There are four good, solid reasons for sickness in the Bible. And for this cause, many of you are dead because they rebelled against God.

Go home and read 1 Corinthians 5, and you'll find God transferring a church leader. He said, turn him over to Satan for the destruction of his flesh, that his spirit might be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus. Go home and read 1 John 5, and you'll find where God said to John, don't pray for these people anymore, it's too late.

They've sinned unto death. The sin unto death is the sin of continuing in sins of disobedience and rebellion through the love of God, and the call of God, and the command of God, and the warning of God, and the chastening of God, and the increased chastening of God, until God says, final call, and you say no! And God says, that's it, transferred. I was 15, got introduced to the pool hall, never drank, never drank, never was on drugs, never was arrested, never got in trouble.

But I did get into the pool hall at age 15. My first contact was some disreputable people. I met a tough guy named Shorty.

I liked him. I said, if I can swing it, we're gonna be buddies. I butted up to him, and he taught me to shoot eight ball in rotation.

Well, about six months after I met Shorty, he was led to Christ, and he joined First Baptist Church. And he wouldn't even come and shoot pool with us anymore, but he'd come out of pool hall with his Bible on the way to church, and invite us to go to church with him, and give us his testimony, and I got all shook up. And partly because of his changed life, I was deeply touched and convicted.

And along with his testimony, God sent Clint Sheehan, our new pastor, to ambush me one day after school. He was sitting in the car, waiting for me at the end of the walkway. He had been praying for me, heard about me, knew I was lost, seen me in church and knew I was unsaved.

Talked to me about being born again on the way home that day, picked me up and took me home. Between Shorty's testimony and Dr. Sheehan's witness to me, I got so into conviction that six weeks later I was saved, and I joined First Baptist Church, and Shorty and I went to everything together. He was 25, I was only 15, but he was single, and we were in the same Sunday school class together, went to church training together, Sunday morning, Sunday night, Wednesday night.

We went to everything but Girls Auxiliary and WMU. We'd have gone to that if they'd let us, couldn't get enough. Study courses, revivals, just everything.

Had a great year. We were so close. Shorty and I were really growing together, and all of a sudden he began to slip away, he began to drop out, and then he didn't come anymore.

I went to see him. I said, Shorty, were you saved? Sure, Mike. Well, I said, Shorty, has God mistreated you? No, no, God hadn't mistreated me.

I said, Shorty, you sure are mistreating him. A lot of our buddies are saying it's not for real. Oh, Shorty's dropped out.

And some of them, Shorty, would have been saved, I believe, by now, but they're using you. Come on back. Oh, Mike, he'd say, I know I'm messed up, but he said, I'm coming back.

I'm coming back. I said, good, Shorty. When? I don't know.

I don't know, but I'm coming back. I'm coming back. I said, Shorty, hurry! He didn't hurry.

He didn't come back. I went back to see him again and again. Others went.

He didn't come back. One night I lay in bed asleep. The fire whistles went off all over town.

I thought, my, it must be a big one. Got up the next day in the Rhodes Hotel. It burned flat to the ground on the main street of our little city.

I walked over to a man standing by the smoking, smoldering ruins, and I said, sir, was anybody hurt? He looked at me and he said, yes, young man, everybody seemed to have ample time to get up and get out. But one man just couldn't seem to wake up. And he lay there in a bed and was consumed by the fire.

They found his remains in a mattress on the third floor. And I said, third floor, sir, my best friend lives on the third floor. Some, there were some people living there all the time and some renting just the hotel rooms.

And I said, my best friend's on the third floor. Who, who, who, who, who was it? And he said, Shorty Hurst! Like a knife through my heart. I said, oh no.

He said, oh yes, tragic accident. And I said, accident? Not really. And I walked away and I'll tell you what happened.

You check this out when you get to heaven. God's a good mathematician. God knows that 12 is more than one.

And I know a dozen people stumbled over Shorty that year into a Christless, hopeless future. They said, it's not for real. Oh, Shorty, messed up.

And God said, Shorty, I can't let you keep doing that. Come on back. And somehow Shorty lay in a bed.

You want to get up and tell us how he did it? You've been doing it. Hey son, how do you do it? Hey dad, how do you do it? He said, no! To God. God said, Shorty, I don't have a big stick and I love you.

And I love you so much. And I love them so much. I can't leave you here like you are.

For their sake and your sake, I don't have a big stick, but I got a pen. And God signed his name on the bottom line of a transfer paper. And God said, Shorty, come on home.

I went to his funeral. Wept like a baby. Went to the cemetery.

Rainy, soggy, South Louisiana day. Stood under the umbrella. They finished the graveside ceremonies.

Everybody left. I stayed. The old man took the crank and he began to turn it.

The tapes began to roll. Casket went down into the dirt and mud. He took a shovel and started throwing mud over Shorty.

And I thought I was going to come apart at the seams. My first Christian friend, my best buddy, gone! Age 26 now. Age 26.

Committed the sin unto death. You want to laugh? Anybody want to laugh? Stand up and laugh. It happens.

Smile your heads, please.

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