

A House Divided Cannot Stand

by Shane Idleman

The sermon emphasizes the importance of unity in our lives and the consequences of disunity, calling us to repentance and a constant state of unity with God.

Duration: 53:06

Scripture: Matthew 12:25, Matthew 12:31

Topics: "Unity And Repentance", "Sin And Redemption"

Description

This sermon emphasizes the importance of unity in various aspects of life, including within families, churches, and relationships with God. It addresses the concept of the unpardonable sin, highlighting the need for genuine repentance and a transformed life. The urgency of responding to God's call and the distinction between struggling with sin versus embracing a sinful lifestyle are key points discussed.

Transcript

Lord, we come here not as prideful, arrogant people who know everything, but humble people who need You to speak to us. Lord, we need You to speak into our situation, into our lives. Lord, we have family members that don't know You.

We pray that You would begin convicting and drawing them. Lord, I also pray for the churches in this valley, that they would be united instead of divided. Lord, I pray for Lancaster Baptist and Calvary Chapel and First Assembly and the Highlands and the Vineyard, Lord Valley Bible.

All the churches, Lord, that believe in the essentials of the gospel, that we would be united. Lord, You have to bring unity, that's where Your power flows. Lord, bring unity in our homes, cause spouses to fall in love again with each other.

As we put You first, as we look to You, from our relationship with You, everything else will fall in place. Lord, I do pray that You guide my words tonight, give me precision and clarity, Lord, but let us leave here different than when we arrived. This is Your service, have Your way here tonight, and we pray this in Jesus' name, amen, amen.

You guys can be seated. There's a lot of announcements, but I'm going to have you go ahead and just look in your bulletin after the service. Not during, right? Not right now, after the service.

And the printer accidentally sent us a few thousand of these instead of five hundred, so we have a lot of extra Christmas cards out in the foyer, and we're not going to be upset if you grab a handful and give them out at work this week to friends, neighbors, better than going in the recycle bin, right? Okay, so with that said, I've got a lot to say and not a lot of time to say it. It's my usual dilemma. So turn to Matthew chapter 12, verse 20, if you have your Bibles, I would encourage you to bring it.

I would encourage you to turn to the Word of God as much as possible, have it with you. It's okay to highlight in it, you should see mine. Matthew chapter 12, and if you haven't been here before, we've been going through the book of Matthew, probably for the last year, we're probably going to be here a little bit longer, and we're stopping, we're doing series throughout the study, but we find ourself tonight in Matthew chapter 12, and I want to talk to you tonight on the subject of a house divided cannot stand.

A house divided cannot stand. And I threw this out to the first service, I'll throw it out to you as well. I want to do something a little bit different tonight, not as far as a sermon preparation, but just maybe in our heart preparation.

And tonight, let's all agree not to do a lot of this, but a lot of applying, applying the truth to our lives. Many times we can say, oh, yeah, it sounds great, yeah, I've got to work on that, got to do that, but then nothing happens. We leave here and nothing changes.

This is a good reminder that the power of the word of God is in the application, not in the knowledge alone. I can know what the word says, but the power comes when I apply it to my life. And on this topic, you're going to be screaming every step of the way, because it's hard.

Disunity is everywhere. It's hard to bring unity into a situation. But a house divided cannot stand.

And I don't know if you want to take this into your workplace, or the context of this into your workplace, into your home, into the church, into the ministry, but I will tell you right now that the enemy will bring division every chance he gets. Division will tear apart a church. Division will tear apart a family.

Division will tear apart your relationship with the Lord. Division is something that God does not look upon lightly. And here's why.

I believe that the spirit of God, the spirit of unity is what God wants, and the spirit of division is what the enemy wants to bring in. And any time God is doing something good, he wants to bring division, he wants to bring enmity, he wants to bring war, he wants to bring chaos, he wants to bring confusion. And that's one of the reasons why I prayed for the churches.

And I think with Christians too, the enemy gets us arguing over the non-essentials. And we're dividing over the non-essentials. Well this, and well that, and the rapture, and this, and eschatology, and pneumatology, and all the ologies, and the hermeneutics, and the homiletics.

I love all of that, but the essentials are, was Christ born of a virgin, did he raise the third day, is the scripture inerrant? There are things that are crystal clear that are essentials. But we like to bicker over the non-essentials. And churches split over the non-essentials, and preference gets involved, and preference gets in the way, and we bring all this division.

And a lot of church splits that I've seen, actually it was part of one, it was very detrimental, they're still picking up the pieces I think nine years later. And I've seen a lot, I've heard a lot, churches closing, and

nine times out of ten it's over non-essentials. It's over things that are not, they're not essential.

You don't have too many churches dividing over, well, you know, now this group believes in the inerrancy of scripture, and this group doesn't, you know, usually those people wouldn't be going to the church in the first place. The enemy brings in subtleties, complaint, you know, you've heard of the worship wars before, right? We want the contemporary, we want old hymns, we want it loud, we want it soft, we want it quiet, we want it noisier, we want the lights dim, we want the lights on, we want, it just, preference plays a role. Should I wear a suit and tie? I don't know, I get lectured, I get an email every now and then that's saying that I'm not a true pastor because I'm not wearing a suit and tie.

And preference comes in, hey, you better repent to your congregation, and it's like, where do they come up with this disunity, disunity? The devil likes to stir disunity, and he brings it in, we have to be careful. And I think the context, a house divided cannot stand, a few chapters earlier, you remember where Jesus spoke about the man who builds his house on the rock, he says, those who hear my sayings and do them, here we go, back to the application, right? Jesus says, he who hears my sayings and does them, I will liken him to a man who built his house upon the rock, and when the winds came and the floods came up and the rains descended, it did not fall because it was founded on the rock. But the foolish man who heard my words and did not do them built his house upon the sand, and great was its fall when the storm came.

See, it's going back to the application, doing the word of God, if you apply scripture to your life, you will not be disappointed. I can look somebody straight in the eye and tell them the truth on this point every single time, if you obey the Bible, you will not go wrong. Will life go perfect? No.

Will life be challenging? Yeah. Will there be trials? Yes, but you will not go wrong by obeying the word of God. People say, I've tried it for a week, but they're not changing.

The Bible doesn't say try it out for a week as if we try on a coat to see if it's going to fit. It says, do this, and the benefits come in later. And just remember this, unity is essential to peace.

Unity is essential to peace. I often say, happy wife, happy life. Right? Well, some people aren't, that one didn't go well with everybody.

Happy husband, happy life, you know? Actually that would be a good thing for a marriage series for a few weeks because this issue of marriage, and I've seen, I can't remember a time where the enemy's coming after family so strongly, and marriages, and everything's just going haywire. People are, you know, marriages are falling apart, and adultery is now epidemic in the church, and pornography now, 68% of men are addicted to pornography. Wow! Where is this coming from? The enemy wants to bring division.

We need a wake up call. Unity is essential to peace. Peace with God, peace at home, peace with others, peace on the job.

Why? Because unity is the heart of God. Unity is the heart of God, disunity is the heart of Satan. Might sound a little strong, but check it out, and I'm not talking about being unity for the sake of unity.

In other words, there are some people I can't be united with because they're against God. In other words, I can't be part of the ecumenical movement where all churches come together and sing kumbaya, right? You can believe this about that God and that God, and let's just all come together. That's not unity.

True unity is unity of truth, unity of spirit, unity of faith. When I'm united with God, even though I might not be united with others, I'm still in unity with Him. So I'm not talking about that kind of unity tonight.

I've talked about that many of other times. The unity I'm talking about tonight is the type we can foster, where a house divided cannot stand, and a house united cannot fall. So let's look at Matthew 12, verse 22.

Then one was brought to him, who was to Jesus, who was demon-possessed, and we talked about this a few months back. Really the Bible, when it talks about demon-possessed, if you look in the original language, the Bible says that a person has a demon. There's a demon inflicting, it seems to be possessing them, taking over.

This man was also blind and mute. I read that and I think I have problems. Wow.

I mean, you're demon-possessed, you're blind, you're mute, and Jesus comes and heals him. So that the blind and mute man spoke and saw, and all the multitudes were amazed and said, could this be the son of David? Now when the Pharisees heard it, they said, this fellow does not cast out demons except by Beelzebub, the ruler of demons. And I didn't know to laugh or cry reading this.

It's like, these guys are amazing. You just see a legitimate healing. Legitimate healing.

This person's free. And they said, oh, you did that by the power of Satan. And I've noticed that people like to blame a genuine move of God on the devil if they feel uncomfortable.

If they don't quite agree with it, they want to blame it on the devil. But Jesus says, a house divided cannot stand. It will go on to read that the devil's not going to cast out the devil.

He loves that. He's destroying that life. He would be divided against himself.

But sometimes when we see a genuine move of God, oh, that's of the devil. Listen, if Christ is exalted, the person leaves praising God, the truth is elevated, that's not of the devil. That's God.

That's moving. You can see a genuine move of God results in a love for truth, a love for his word. Everything I just mentioned, his truth is elevated, Christ is exalted, God is honored in that healing.

How can you say that's of the devil? But people will throw that out there. Now for more on demonic possession, I actually gave a message entitled, Releasing the Shackles of Oppression. And there's the link to that.

You can also go on our website, it'll be on the notes, you can just click, it'll take you right to that video. But we talked about that Christians cannot be possessed, but they can be pestered. Did you know that? Oh, yeah, we can be pestered.

We can't be controlled because we're controlled by the Holy Spirit. But we can be pestered by satanic influences. And I just want to throw that in there because we were talking about the demon possessed man here.

But then Jesus knew their thoughts and he said to them, Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation, and every city or house divided against itself will not stand. And there's no gray area here, Jesus saying if a house is divided, if a kingdom is divided, it will not stand. And I found this in my own life, maybe you've seen this too, it's not if disunity causes problems, it's when.

It's just a matter of when. But sometimes we go around like, well, it's just not going to say anything, right? Just let it go. Just let it kind of run its course.

And as it's running its course, it's not going in a good direction. Disunity seems to just flourish where we allow it. And Jesus saying if a house is divided against itself, if the kingdom is divided against itself, it will not stand.

So it begs the question, do you believe God's word? And I was challenged about this today. How many of you, do we believe God's word? Well, most of us would say yes, then believe this, disunity will lead to desolation. Disunity will lead to desolation.

Not a matter of if, right, but when. Jesus said every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation. Well, we really don't know what that word means today.

Back then they did. Today, what this word means is misery or loneliness, a state of complete emptiness or destruction. Do you know that people feel that right now? Even some in this room? If my spiritual antennas are up correctly, right? There I can tell there's misery, there's loneliness, there's a state of complete emptiness or destruction.

And I don't want to just make an umbrella statement out there that covers everything because I know that there are peaks and there's valleys, there's highs and lows, there's a season for everything. And not everything can be blamed on this, but a lot of times, if a person remains divided against God, if there's division with God, in other words, they're fighting against God. They know God's called them to do something, whether it's humble themselves, whether it's break this certain pattern, whether, and they know, and they're just, they're fighting against God, it will lead to desolation because there's no unity there.

You see, you're not going to win against God. We cannot win against God. When God calls us to, I prayed with a lady after the first service, said, I need to finally just fully surrender my life.

I'm tired of putting everything and everybody first. It's just resulting in anger and frustration. And she was prayed, we prayed, she was set free.

Because you can't be at war with God and have unity there. Some of the most miserable people on the planet are Christians who are at war with God. And you don't have to be an unbeliever to be, I mean, unbelievers are already at war with God.

The Bible says that they are at enmity with God. The carnal mind is at enmity, it's at war with God. But as believers, sometimes we know God wants to work in this area, we know we've got to humble ourselves, we know we've got to change this, I know I need to go apologize, I know I need to stop being hard hearted, I know I need to do this to my spouse, I know, I know, I know, but I'm not going to.

I'm not going to. Or kids to their parents, right, or parents to their kids, I mean, this is all different types of dynamics. I'm not going to do that.

What's that lead to? Desolation, misery, loneliness, a state of complete emptiness or destruction. But there's hope. That's the hope of this message, is to call us back to that place of unity.

And that's why I preach repentance as often as I can, because repentance takes a divided heart with God and unites it once again. That's the power of repentance, I repent, Lord, I confess, I'm sorry, I'm back united with Him. And as weeks and months go by, what happens? Drifts and drifts, and I quench, I grieve the spirit of God, and now I'm divided again, I'm fighting Him in certain areas.

And then I repent, and I'm back united with Him again. And the Christian walk is difficult. I mean, if anybody has mastered it, and you just have tons of peace and joy flowing out of every single day, please see me afterwards.

I need to know the secret to that. Because it's peaks and valleys, it's ups and downs, but we keep our eye focused on Him. I believe a believer, and I might get in trouble with this, some of you might not agree, but we should be in a constant state of repentance.

Even if it's not daily, I mean weekly, we should be in a constant state of repentance. Lord, I'm sorry in these areas, help me in this area, help me treat my spouse better, help me treat this person, my anger, my attitude, my arrogance, Lord, help me get back in right alignment with You. And we're in a constant state of repentance.

Because I've noticed what the other side is, if you're not doing that, you're getting harder and more prideful and more arrogant. And there's nothing worse than a proud Christian. I know, I am one.

I've confessed before, I'm a prideful man working on humility on a daily basis. And you bring that to God. Pride is one of the last sins to leave, and it's one of the first to return.

I mean, the amount of pride that I see when I'm talking with people, counseling people out on the streets, wherever it is, it's amazing. It actually helps keep me humble. Because you see that and go, Lord, if that's in me, please get it out.

Please get it out, take it from me. And again, the enemy wants to bring division. Do you realize that a person united with God is powerful? They'll pray for the sick and they will be healed, according to God's word, from time to time.

They'll walk into a place and people could sense the power of God there. They'll go into a job and they'll make a difference. They'll speak life, they'll speak wisdom.

God will be working through them. It's called a spirit-filled believer, filled with the spirit of God. That's why the church, for the most part, is dead and callous and cold and nothing's happening.

We resemble a graveyard, not an army. The church in America resembles a graveyard. Lives are not being changed.

The passion's gone. Why is that? We're not in unity with God. Because when we're in unity with God, and I'm not talking about perfect harmony, we're not going to get this on this side of heaven, but you can be in right relationship with God, filled with the spirit of God, when you renounce those things he's calling us to renounce and you turn from those things.

You'll experience times of refreshing from the presence of the Lord by returning to him. So if you remain divided against God, you will be in misery and loneliness and a state of complete emptiness or destruction. You know how I know this? Because I pray this with people all the time.

It's not a comma for people to say, God just seems distant. I'm miserable. I'm miserable.

I'm empty. I'm lonely. And that's usually followed by, I know that God wants me to do whatever that is.

It's been as bad as confessing an affair to being too concerned with their looks, you know, too concerned with their looks. And it's all about me to affair. I mean, there's things all in the middle, but when we're resisting God, we're not united with him and there's division there.

It's difficult to live that life. It's just ironic because we think God's going to, like we can negotiate with him like a salesman. Come on, and we negotiate with their spouse and negotiate with other people.

It's like, he's going to give. I know he's going to give. He's going to say, uncle.

No, he's not. He's not going to do any of that. He'll draw and he'll convict like a loving father.

Loving father. You know, my kids want to bring stuff in the house. It's raining outside.

They want to bring shovels and mud and dirt in the house. It's like, nope, I'm not giving on this one. It's not going to happen.

It's a loving father saying, no, that's not going to happen because I know what's best for you. And we don't. And then we have to trust him.

Let me say this too. If you remain divided against fellow believers, your faith will falter. I try to work on this.

You can ask my wife. I'm Facebook apologizing, email apologizing, calling people apologizing for the last 15 years, whenever I know, because I don't like that division. You know, I don't know how I'm better than them.

Hey, if I've done anything wrong, I apologize. Let's not have this wedge in between us because that wedge creates disunity. When believers are not united, Jesus said, father, I pray that they be one like we are.

Yeah, but you don't know what they did. And you don't know what they did. And you don't know what they did.

And that person over there did that. And there's no way, Shane. Well, you're just going to.

How long are you going to remain disengaged from God? How long are you going to be just that? That unity is not going to be there. I mean, it's amazing when people ask for forgiveness. They make that phone call.

They send that email. The joy that comes after that. It's amazing.

I'm so glad you wanted to do this a year ago. I don't know. I'll tell you why.

It's five letter word. P-R-I-D-E. You're not telling me I was wrong.

They're going to call me. I'm not calling them. Well, the Bible doesn't say that.

The Bible says if somebody's offended us. I mean, half the calls I make is not something I necessarily did. It's probably the way how much you think this happens every day or every week.

You know, it's like, you know, once in a while you upset people, right? Hey, I'm sorry. I did have to apologize last week. I posted a great article about Joelstein.

And I just had a few comments that, you know, rubbed some people the wrong way. And, you know, so I called him, emailed, said, OK, I'm sorry. I said, next time what you need to do is say, here's a great article about Joelstein.

No negative comments, please. And then that would help it. So those kind of things, you want to keep that bridge.

And they were fellow pastors, actually. That the whole point was, I'm sure you're curious now, right? That, you know, all the people is leading to the Lord and these things. I said, OK, I said, he's more of a motivational speaker.

He doesn't mention sin. He doesn't mention hell. He doesn't mention judgment.

I just heard that they asked him about abortion. He's like, I don't know. I can't really say.

Let me get back to you. I mean, it's just nothing scriptural that's difficult. Nothing.

That's not a pastor. That's a motivational speaker. That's a people pleaser.

He said, well, he's definitely a pastor. Who are you? You just imagine you don't have a big audience. I'm like, oh, I've never had that big audience.

Because nobody's going to want to hear that. Not millions of people are not going to want to hear what I'm saying. I got that now.

So I finally, when I tell him, I said, don't even read the comments. Don't even, I'm never doing that again. I learned my lesson, you know, and it was a nice comment.

It was like, what do you guys think of this article? Here's what I think. Why did you ask me what I think if you post on Facebook? So that was two days of damage control. Yeah, pastors.

Yeah, there are a few, a few younger pastors. So I just left it that. If you remain divided against fellow believers, there are also pastors here locally that you would know if I said their names.

I've got dinner or lunch with them over the past few years because bad reputations kind of get out there. And, you know, I think they're the softy little, let the sinner go. And they think I'm this hard, you know, mean guy.

And so we meet and have lunch. Oh, I thought this about you. I thought, oh, I'm glad we hadn't, you know.

So you remove that friction, you remove that division and you should, but you have to work on it. It doesn't happen on its own. You know, so if you know, if there's friction between believers, we're called to go to them and work it out.

And then, you know what I love about that? Then you're filled with the spirit of God again. Then that joy returns, that peace returns. Now there's a little step in my step because I'm excited.

I'm passionate. And now the word of God becomes active and living. And now I'm getting a lot out of the word of God.

Now worship is changing my heart. Why? Because I got rid of that disunity. There's an end result that's good.

God's word always has a good result. I mean, I wish I had an hour to tell you about the benefits of fasting. Oh, don't talk about that.

Anytime God tells you to do something, the benefits are there as well. If you remain divided, here's the one that's not going to be popular. If you remain divided in marriage, it will lead to misery, isolation, and complete emptiness.

If it will, if you remain divided. Well, Shane, what should I do? Well, here's the key to unity. Now this is coming from a guy.

He asked my wife, I haven't mastered this yet, but we try. Don't win the argument. Do I have to win every argument? If so, it's not going to be pretty.

Don't win the argument, right? Don't get your way. Be willing to come in second place. Be willing to apologize and forgive.

I got a funny example from this week. I told her to leave for a few hours and me and the girls wrapped a few presents, right? I wrapped a few presents, put the wrapped presents in the stocking. And then I'd get a lecture.

When she gets home, I say, you don't do that. Nothing goes in the stockings until the night of. Now the kids are like, okay, I didn't know that.

I was raised the other way, you know? And then the real in tune people are going to be saying, do you know the spiritual roots of Christmas, pastor? You don't have stockings in a tree, do you? I mean, that's pagan worship. I don't know, but I get a lot of joy out of just worshiping God on that morning. I can do whatever you call it, whatever you want.

But if we're focused on Christ, a lot of these, there's freedom in this area. But these little things like, do I have to win this argument? Okay, well, you know, now I'm not talking about sweeping things under the rug and being a doormat. Oh, I'm second place, whatever you want.

There's a time you got to take a stand. And if somebody's being abusive and they're being this, and people have got to get involved and confront. I'm not, you know, I'm not talking about that, right? Okay, good.

But to bring unity in the home, it's something very interesting. Everybody wants to win the argument. They want to get our way, right? We want to get our way.

What we like to say is, you don't have to get the last word in. Are you willing to apologize and forgive? And that's how you bring unity back in the home. And it's interesting, you should watch kids when they see parents model this.

It's amazing when the kids see, oh, dad's wrong sometimes. Yeah, I'm asking for forgiveness. I'm asking, you know, and the kids see that model.

They see there's arguments and how it's worked out. Arguments and how it's worked out. I was reading in one of Billy Graham's books that his kids actually regretted that they never saw his mom and dad argue or handle any of that.

They would go out and do that later when the kids weren't around. So then they get married and get into, oh, wow, this didn't happen in our house. Yeah, it did.

They just went in the back room. So it's healthy for people to see us model these things. In a nutshell, if you are divided, you are not aligned with God's will.

Are you divided against God? Are you divided against fellow believers? Are you divided against your spouse tonight? I would encourage you to rethink that and get in the right relationship with him. Nothing good comes from disunity. On this note, I remember an online listener wrote the church a few, probably a few years ago now.

She said, my marriage is lifeless and cold. Where did the passion go? We live in the same house, but we barely know each other. I love him, but I don't like him.

Divorce never crossed my mind, but now the thought is a daily struggle. And that's not uncommon. Somebody's got to take the initiative.

Somebody's got to take that initiative and say, I want unity in this house. Let's work towards it. Because the enemy's going to come in and bring disunity.

And I truly believe that the man should initiate in this area. I got chewed out two weeks ago for saying this, but I'm going to say it again. Well, you never beat up the wives.

Oh, yeah, it's coming. But the men need to lead in this area. Usually, as the man goes, the family follows.

As the family goes, the nation follows. So the next time you want to complain about the nation, look in the mirror. Honestly, we want to blame everything from God to the government, but we don't want to take the initiative in our own homes.

It's difficult. Me and my wife, just this week, she goes, we got to get back into family devotionals again and pray with the kids. Oh, where'd that go? Yeah, it just leaves.

These things just leave. You don't have to do anything. They'll just leave.

So you have to work towards unity in the home, work towards putting God first again. And now seeing our kids pray, I'm just, I'm excited. I'm anxious to do it tonight now.

But unity, disunity is not, here sometimes people say, we talk about disunity. Like, yeah, but that's not a big sin. You know, I'm not caught in adultery.

I'm not caught in this. It's not, I mean, okay, Shane, I know I need to do this, but it's not a big sin. And I was reminded of a quote from Frederick Shoffler.

He said, who is that? That knocks so loud. And the answer came back, just a little sin. So I opened the door and all of hell came in.

Isn't that true? Well, who's that? Let's just, just a little sin. It's okay. Just a little sin.

So I opened the door and all of hell came in. Folks, that's how sin works. It's not a nice little cute little Easter bunny at Christmas time, right? Or those cute little elves that are on Facebook, doing all kinds of mischief now in their homes.

You know, it's like, oh, look at that little cute little thing. Once you open the door, all of hell comes in. We open the door and allow things.

And usually it progresses. When sin is allowed, it doesn't digress. It progresses.

I've often said that sin either grows or withers, depending on whether you feed or starve it. So if you're feeding disunity, it's going to keep growing. And then it turns into what we call, we had a blow out.

What's that? You're driving down the street? Your car? No, blow out in the home. Yeah, well, I guess I'm just going to guess that it didn't just all start that day. Oh no, this has been weeks and months adding up and adding up.

You got to grab that because you open that door and all of hell comes in. And the enemy would love nothing more than to destroy the family. And destroy a relationship with God.

That's what he does. He brings disunity. Verse 26, if Satan cast out Satan, he is divided against himself.

How then will his kingdom stand? So Jesus just, I did a long rabbit trail. So let's come back. Jesus just cast out this demon.

This person is perfectly well. And now he's saying, if Satan cast out Satan, he is divided against himself. How then will his kingdom stand? And if I cast out demons by Beelzebub, by whom do your sons cast them out? So two schools of thoughts here on reading different commentaries.

One is that the Pharisees, some of the religious leaders could cast out the demonic realm, could cast out spirit demons. They get to call it exorcism. And Jesus saying, if they do that and it's of God, then why can't I? If I did it and they're doing it, by whom do your sons cast them out? Or which, I don't know where I'm leaning.

I might lean towards more of a mocking where he's saying, and if I cast out demons, by whom do your sons cast them out? Like they don't cast them out. He comes, Jesus comes and binds a strong man. He comes on the scene.

Now the whole demonic system is disrupted. Now the devil, he used to be the prince of the world and still is, but he used to be in control. Now Jesus comes on the scene and binds a strong man and takes control.

And now he's above Lucifer. Remember, Jesus and Satan aren't co-equals. They're not co-equals.

Satan is a defeated foe. They're not co-equals. So however you want to interpret that, Jesus said, by whom do your sons cast them out? Therefore they shall be your judges.

But if I cast out demons by the spirit of God, surely the kingdom of God has come upon you. Or how can you enter a strong man's house and plunder his goods unless he first binds a strong man? And then he will plunder his house. And he who's not with me is against me.

And he who does not gather with me scatters abroad. So Jesus is saying, I've come, I've bound the strong man. I've conquered.

These demonic influences have to submit to me. And earlier, remember where we read that Jesus said, until John the Baptist, until now the kingdom suffers violence and the violent take it by force. There's a spiritual upheaval.

The ruler of darkness has now been subdued and Jesus has plundered his goods. That's what he's saying here. I've come into the strong man's house.

I've tied him up and I'm casting out demons. I'm in control. I'm plundering the strong man.

So he's showing it's a ridiculous argument. I'm casting out demons. I'm healing the sick.

And you're gonna sit here and say that I'm a Satan. If this was Satan, his whole kingdom would be divided. He possesses somebody, now he heals them.

Devil doesn't do that. The devil doesn't come in and now when the Bible talks about great signs and wonders will follow these, there's gonna be deception at the end and all that. And that's a whole nother sermon for a different time.

But suffice it to say a genuine healing of God will result in God being glorified. The truth being exalted, Christ being praised, a person being put in a deeper relationship with God. How in the world is that of the devil? It makes no sense.

So Jesus said if it was, his whole kingdom would be divided against itself. And then he goes into verse 31, which makes a lot of people nervous. This whole part of scripture is called the unpardonable sin, the unpardonable sin.

And I have people ask me this a lot. Have I committed the unpardonable sin? Let me answer that briefly before I get into this. If you're thinking that, no, you haven't.

If you're a believer, you could be caught in sin. But there are people who are running the risk of committing it. If they breathe their last breath and do not repent, they will have committed the unpardonable sin.

It's not pardonable because they never repented and embraced Christ. I'm gonna try to unpack that real quick. Verse 31, therefore, I say to you, every sin and blasphemy will be forgiven men, but blasphemy against the Holy Spirit will not be forgiven.

Anyone who speaks a word against the Son of Man, it will be forgiven. But whoever speaks against the Holy Spirit, it will not be forgiven him, either in this age or in the age to come. So here's the context.

They're in danger of blasphemy against the Holy Spirit. And I believe this can apply to many non-believers today. People are in danger of blaspheming the Holy Spirit.

And here's, in a nutshell, gosh, it's gonna take me a while to get through this, but I wanna mainly get this point across. A person can blasphemy against God or the Son of God. How many people did that before we were saved? Lord's name in vain.

I mean, just cursing like a drunk sailor, right? We're just saying all this kind of, I don't, God this, and I don't care. And then once the Holy Spirit convicts and draws us to God, we repent. And now we're saved.

Those sins were forgiven. Somebody can blasphemy against the Son of God and be forgiven now. But the blasphemy against the Holy Spirit is if you keep ignoring that conviction, the Holy Spirit drawing you to Christ.

The Spirit was convicting these people, convicting them. Listen, this is the Son of God. You better turn to Him.

Look at all these miracles. No man ever spoke like this, man. No man ever healed like this, man.

The Spirit is convicting them. But Jesus said, you stiff-necked people, always resisting the Holy Spirit. So they're committing the unpardonable sin because if they die, it's unpardonable.

They never repented and embraced Christ and asked for forgiveness. So people right now in this audience can be on the verge of committing the unpardonable sin. There is a sin that at some point may be unpardonable.

And that is the sin of blasphemy against the Holy Spirit, rejecting the conviction of the Holy Spirit. So as I'm preaching, as I'm convicting, as I'm pointing you to Christ, you have a decision to make. Do I continue to ignore that conviction or do I submit to it and embrace God? Now, here's a pardon.

We're talking about the unpardonable sin, right? Okay, what is a pardon? A pardon is the action of forgiving or being forgiven, right? God pardons us. He forgives us. 1 John 1.9, this is for you if you're in this spot.

If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us of our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. I love how God doesn't say, I might consider if your works outweigh this, if you do this. He'll say, if you confess, if you repent, I will do this.

I will pardon you. So see, that's the pardon. The unpardonable sin is rejecting that pardon.

It's rejecting God's gracious gift of salvation. If a person rejects that, they have committed the unpardonable sin. Once they breathe their last breath here, that's why there's always urgency in the gospel.

Is that interesting? I mean, people get upset sometimes. They'll say, why are you so this? Why are you so passionate? Why are you so loud? Why do you get it worked up? The urgency, the urgency. Do you not realize that people are on their way to hell? And these sermons get picked up a lot of different places on the radio and YouTube and Vimeo and all the different outlets that the messages go.

There's urgency there. Some people I'll never speak to again. Some people you'll never speak to again.

This is like, ah, try God out in 10 years or 20 years and try it out then and you have fun right now. There's an urgency there. The gospel always says, not next week is the day of salvation.

Today is the day of salvation. Turn now while you might be saved. Look unto him and be saved.

It's urgency. It's a proclaiming. Jesus, when he came to the city of Israel, of Jerusalem, he said, oh, Jerusalem, you were not willing.

If you would just turn to me, if you were not willing, there's this urgency. Jesus would spend weeks ministering to cities. Oh, Bethesda, Chorazin, if you would have repented, if the good works that were done and you were done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago with sackcloth and ashes.

Turn to me, the Son of God is here now. Go and preach repentance. Bring the people in.

Tell them that the kingdom of God is here. Tell them it's at hand. There's an urgency there.

But you get to some churches and it's like, well, we might get to it some month, next year. I mean, you know, there's no urgency there or in witnessing to people. Now, I know we can't just go, you know, hit them with a sledgehammer.

You gotta turn, you gotta turn. You gotta turn or you're gonna burn. But there should be an urgency there, a prayerful consideration.

Lord, give me the time, the right time to say something. Open the door. There's an urgency with the gospel.

I like what A.W. Tozer said, the idea that God will pardon a rebel who has not given up his rebellion is contrary to scriptures and to common sense. The idea that God will pardon a rebel who has not given up his rebellion runs contrary to the scriptures. Now, he caught a lot of heat for this because a lot of people misunderstood.

And we're not saying that a person must reform, they must change to be saved. But we are saying that change follows salvation. So what he's saying is, if you think God pardons a rebel who has not given up his rebellion, means that the rebel never really repented.

He's not given up his rebellion. So there's no pardon there. And he gave a good analogy.

He said the governor of one of our states was visiting the state prison incognito, in disguise. He fell into a conversation with a personable young convict and felt a secret wish to pardon him. What would you do, he asked, if you were to get lucky enough to obtain a pardon? The convict, not knowing who he was speaking to, snarled and replied, if I ever get out of this place, the first thing I'll do is cut the throat of the judge who sent me here.

The governor broke off the conversation, withdrew from the cell, and the convict stayed in prison. To pardon a man who had not reformed would be to let loose another killer upon society. And that kind of pardon would not only be foolish, but it would be downright immoral.

And that's his whole point is, of the unpardonable sin of talking about a pardon. If a person has not, there's no fruit in their life. There's no evidence of salvation.

You have to question, did I truly repent? Is Christ really the Lord of my life that there's zero fruit? And challenging people on that area. Matthew 7, Jesus says, many will call on me on that day and say, Lord, Lord, we did all these things in your name. He'll say, depart from me, I don't even know you.

And I am concerned on one hand, I don't want people leaving here like, oh man, I don't even know if I'm saved. I mean, it's crystal clear. If you've believed on the only name that saves and you've repented, there's salvation there, you might've drifted, but you know you're secure.

But the group I'm concerned with is those who say they've been Christians all their life. They own a Bible, they go to church, but there's no fruit. There's no difference in them.

They're walking according to the lust of the flesh, not the pull of the spirit. And they think they're on the narrow road, but they're really on the broad road of destruction because no repentance has taken place. And that's why Jesus said, all sins will be forgiven, except that of blasphemy against the Holy Spirit.

So if these people are continually blaspheming the Holy Spirit, somebody sometimes needs to come in and rattle their cage and say, wake up, Paul says, examine yourself. Is Christ really in you? Romans 8, it's a great passage there, but in there it talks about, there's therefore no condemnation to those which are in Christ Jesus. There's no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.

And then it goes on to say, who walk not after the flesh, but after the spirit. So you can tell by the walk, the direction of my walk tells who I'm serving, the fruit. And it's not a perfect walk, right? It's like, oh, he did everything perfectly, but the heart is bent towards God.

I'm wanting to do things for God. He proves he is forgiven by being the opposite of what he was. Oswald Chambers said that, a person proves that he is forgiven by being the opposite of what he was.

And again, you don't have to prove anything. You don't have to do good works, but we should be opposite of what we were once we come out of darkness into light of God's knowledge and grace. James 2.18, but someone will say, you have faith and I have works.

Show me your faith without your works and I will show you my faith by my works. Verse 19, you believe that there is one God, you do well, even the demons believe and tremble. Is that interesting? A lot of people know there's a God, yeah, even the demons believe and tremble, that's not a big deal.

But what do they do with it? They repent and they put their faith and their trust in God. And then verse 20, but do you want to know, oh, foolish man, that faith without works is dead. Faith without works is dead.

Martin Luther didn't like, I think he would try to get rid of most of James during the Protestant Reformation because Roman Catholic Church kept using this. Ah, see, works, works, works, oriented, works, base, works. But that's not what this is saying.

He's saying, faith without works is dead. If you say you have faith, but you have no fruit, your tree is dead. Faith without works, faith without any fruit, faith without any love for God or the things of God is dead faith.

It's not genuine faith. So it calls us to examine our life. And that's why I put this in the bulletin.

This might help some of you because a lot of times what Christians deal with is a struggle against sin, not a lifestyle. You know, there's a big difference. And I wrote this week on the Christian Post, an article entitled, can a person be gay and still be a Christian? Any yes or no's? Oh man, I got some maybes.

Can a person be gay and still be a Christian? Well, the answer is no, you're right. But let's reframe the question. Can they struggle with same sex attraction and still be a Christian? Yeah, there you go.

See, struggle versus lifestyle. And that's sometimes what we get caught up on. When Paul said in 1 Corinthians 6, don't quote me on this, 1 Corinthians 6, 9, I believe it is.

He said that neither fornicators, sex outside of marriage, nor adulterers, cheating on your spouse, nor idolaters, putting anything before God, nor drunkards, nor swindlers, nor homosexuals, nor everything, shall enter the kingdom of heaven. So what he's saying there is not that there's struggles in those areas. I mean, alcoholic is one drink away from bondage.

A porn addict is one click away from bondage. I mean, are they not Christians? Same thing with this area. So he's saying, if you embrace that lifestyle, if you say, I don't care, I'm gonna commit adultery till the day I die, God, I just love women.

I was born that way. Right? Paul says you're not gonna make it to heaven because you haven't repented that sin. Or somebody's caught in a party lifestyle.

Man, they party in their 20s. That was fun in college, great. Now you're 55.

It's not cute. Looking for a disco and it's in 2015. But they love that lifestyle.

Paul says you're not gonna inherit the kingdom of God. All that lifestyle does is it reflects the heart. The Paul makes a huge list saying thieves, covetous, alcoholics, drunkards, the whole list there.

Everything means I'm embracing the sinful lifestyle and I'm not giving up. And he talks about homosexuality there too. If he says a person's not gonna give that up, says, no, there's nothing wrong with it, God made me this way, then you cannot be a Christian.

Because a Christian will notice the sin in their life and they'll repent from it. But the analogy is this, the following analogy may help. A pig and a lamb both find their way to the mud.

The mud represents a sin, the wrong that we all fall into. The pig wallows and enjoys the mud and may even lead others in. But the lamb hates its condition and it cries out when it's stuck.

So you see the difference? Are you a pig wallowing in the mud? And I love it, I'm enjoying it, I don't care what this guy says, I'm gonna go out and do it tonight. Or are you like, man, Shane, I'm caught in this, I'm stuck, I need to come back home. I need to get back in my relationship with God, I'm stuck in this struggle.

So you see the difference there between a struggle and lifestyle? That's what the Bible is clear on. Listen, turn to God. You're not caught in the unpardonable sin if there's conviction there.

You're caught in the unpardonable sin if you have not yet surrendered your life to God. I mean, what's it gonna take? How long are you gonna keep fighting God? Because you won't win. You can't win.

So I just want to enjoy myself for a while. No, you won't. It's not fun.

Sin is miserable. Heart is a way of the transgressor. The reason most people don't want to submit to God is they go, I don't want to be like that guy up there preaching and on my way to Africa on the mission field.

No way. I love my Seagram 7 and late night TV. But that's what keeps people from the kingdom of God.

They love this world more than the things of God. And you have to understand, anytime God calls you into a relationship with it, it's 10 times better than what you'd think is out there in the world. That loving

relationship.

So you have not committed the unpardonable sin if you're a Christian caught in struggling sin. Because I see a lot of people say, if I committed the unpardonable sin, I'm stuck in this. It's like, no, the unpardonable sin is rejecting the conviction of the Holy Spirit.

I wouldn't encourage them to stay in that spot. You know, repentance needs to take place. And that's why I love repentance because it's renewing our fellowship with God.

It's getting us back on track with God. It's that lamb coming out of the mud through repentance and restoring our relationship with God. So there's two types of people basically.

Number one is if you're caught in a sinful lifestyle, repent of it tonight. Repent and say, Lord, I need to be back on track. I need that pardon.

I need to feel that pardon again. I know the pardon is not invalid, but I want to feel the joy of my salvation again. I want to feel, like David said, when Nathan confronted him, he said, the bones that you have broken are rejoicing.

Lord, have mercy on me. Cleanse me and I'll be white as snow. Wash me and I'll be white as snow.

Lord, restore the joy of my salvation. And that comes through repentance. Or if you haven't ever done this before and you can tell because you wanted me to hurry up and you want to get out of here and you don't want to come back again.

That's a sure sign, right? It's what we always say. If you don't like what I'm saying, it's because you need to hear what I'm saying because it's through the word of God. The Bible's convicting drawing.

So I would just encourage you, do business with God tonight. Say, Lord, I need salvation. I pray that you would save me.

I repent of my sin. I confess. Even if you want to pray with us after the service, we'd love to pray with you in the back.

You know, and it's really the heart breaking because you can say a quick little prayer and not be saved. The Bible doesn't say, say a prayer and be saved. Mommy, drop another bombshell.

It doesn't say, ask Jesus into your heart or accept him as if he's a little guy just sitting on the corner and needs to be picked up. I've said all those things, so I'm not mocking that. But I am saying the Bible says, repent, confess, and believe.

If you confess with your mouth and believe in your heart and repent of that sin, you will be saved. That's God's formula for being united with him again. And I would just encourage you to do that tonight.

Video: <https://sermonindex2.b-cdn.net/QKIXwVrvE28.mp4>

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