

(Basics) 63. Unbelief

by Zac Poonen

Unbelief is a serious sin that insults God and can make you fall away from Him, but faith can overcome it.

Duration: 12:48

Scripture: Job 23:10, Matthew 6:33, Matthew 10:31, Mark 4:37, Romans 8:28, Hebrews 13:5-6

Topics: "Faith And Trust", "Overcoming Unbelief"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker focuses on the destructive forces that can harm our inner life, often without our awareness. He uses the story of Jesus calming the storm in Mark's Gospel to illustrate the power of faith and trust in God. The speaker emphasizes the importance of believing that God will never leave or forsake us, and that He can work all things together for our good. He encourages listeners to have faith in God's knowledge and care for every detail of their lives, and to let go of fear and embrace faith.

Transcript

And today we want to continue looking at those seriously evil things that are destroying our inner life, which sometimes we may not even be aware of. The word of God is like a x-ray machine or a scanning machine that shows us what our inside is really like. We want to turn today to Mark's Gospel, chapter 4, and see there how, when Jesus was traveling in a boat across the lake with his disciples, we read in verse 37, there was a fierce gale, a storm, and the waves were breaking into the boat, and the boat was filling up, and they were going to sink, and the disciples were scared, and Jesus was asleep in the boat.

They woke him up, and Jesus rebuked the wind, and the wind became still. They were afraid they'd perish. They asked him, Teacher, don't you care that we are perishing? And he said to them, Why are you so timid? How is it that you have no faith? When we look at Jesus rebuking his disciples, we find him reserving his strongest rebukes for one sin, and that was unbelief.

We've been looking at the sins which Jesus hated the most, sins which are not considered sins by most people in the world. Hypocrisy, pride, selfishness, hatred, and fifthly, unbelief. Now, unbelief is definitely not considered a sin by anybody in the world.

The sad thing is, I think 99% of believers, born-again believers, also do not consider unbelief as a sin. They consider it as a weakness. They think of it as, Yeah, I don't have enough faith, brother.

It's a weakness, they think. It's like saying, Well, I'm not able to lift so many kilos. I'm weak.

My right hand is weak. Now, if it were a weakness, it's not serious. It's serious because it's a sin.

Jesus rebuked it as a sin. In fact, it's such a serious sin that in the book of Hebrews, we're told in Hebrews 3, we're given a warning in verse 12, Take care, brethren, He's talking to believers, lest there should be in any one of you, in you believers, there can be an evil, unbelieving heart. What is an unbelieving heart called? An evil, unbelieving heart.

Now, an adulterous heart, we can understand it being called an evil, adulterous heart. Jesus spoke about an evil and adulterous generation in Matthew 16. A murderous heart, that we can say is an evil, murderous heart.

Maybe even a selfish heart we could, if we are a little more sensitive, we'd say a selfish heart is also an evil heart. Or a proud heart is an evil heart. Maybe we got that much light.

Or a hypocritical heart is an evil heart. Maybe we have that much light. Or a heart full of hatred is an evil heart.

But how many people who have light on all these sins would also say that an unbelieving heart is an evil heart. And that's what it says here in Hebrews 3.12. In fact, it can make you fall away from the living God altogether. That's how serious it is.

An unbelieving heart can make you fall away from the living God. And so we see, this is another sin that we need to take seriously. Seven times Jesus rebuked His disciples for unbelief, even after His resurrection.

He was rebuking them only for unbelief. It's not that they had conquered all their other sins in their life. I'm sure they were defeated by hundreds of sins.

All those disciples, they were still seeking who is to be the greatest and many, many things. But Jesus rebuked them for unbelief. Now, unbelief is a sin because it is an insult to God.

When God has said something and you don't believe it, it's an insult to God. Supposing you're a student in a college and your father sent you a letter saying, Son, I've put one thousand rupees in your bank account for you to pay your fees. And you say, Well, I'm not so sure whether Dad really has put it.

He may be bluffing me. Don't you think that's an insult to your father? It certainly is. How much more when God has said something and you don't believe it? Either we must say, No, I don't believe the Bible is the word of God.

Then you're okay. Then you're not insulting God because you don't know what God has said. Because supposing you're one of those people who believe that God is, there is no book in the world which is the word of God.

There are people like that. They don't believe the Bible is the word of God. They believe the Bible is written by certain people who express their ideas.

It's not God's word. Well, such people are not insulting God because they don't have any understanding of what God has said. But you, who are a believer, on one hand, you say the Bible is the word of God.

And on the other, you don't believe what God has written there. You're the one who's got an evil heart of unbelief that is insulting God by saying, God said it, but I don't believe it. Do you believe that when God says, I will never leave you nor forsake you, Hebrews 13, verse 5 and 6, that He really means it, that He'll never fail you, never forsake you? Do you believe when it says in Romans 8, verse 28, that every single thing that happens in your life, every single thing, big or small, God makes it all work together for your good? All the evil that other people do to you, God will make it work together for your good.

Do you believe that? If you believed it, it would change your whole attitude towards your life. You wouldn't hate that man for doing something evil to you because that evil worked for your good. Everything depends on faith.

If you have faith, you find that you can overcome many other sins. The Bible says this is the victory that overcomes the world, even our faith. Why is it so many believers are afraid of the devil? I'll tell you.

It's not because the devil is powerful. I know the devil is powerful. He's more powerful than any believer and any human being.

It's because we don't have faith that he was defeated on Calvary's cross. If we believe God's word that when Jesus died on the cross, he made powerless, Hebrews 2, verse 14, he made Satan powerless. He didn't kill the devil.

No. The Bible is very exact. It says he's made powerless.

That means he has no power over a child of God. Now, if you believe that, you'd never be afraid of the devil again. You'd never be afraid of witchcraft.

You'd never be afraid of anything. It all depends on faith. See, faith and fear are opposites.

You cannot have faith and fear living in the same heart. You gotta have one of the two. When faith comes in, fear goes out.

It's like light. When you put on the light, the darkness goes out of the room. How can you have darkness and light coexisting anywhere? It's impossible.

If you switch off the light, then the darkness takes over the room. In the same way, for fear to come in, faith has to go out. Why did the disciples get scared? They thought, hey, we're dying.

The boat is drowning now. And you may find yourself in situations where it looks as if you're really going to sink. And it looks as if Jesus is asleep.

And you wonder, Lord, don't you care? It's a question that can often come from the hearts of many people. Lord, don't you care for us? Don't you understand what we're going through? I want to tell you, He certainly does. In the book of Job, we read in Job chapter 23 and verse 10, it reads like this, He knows the way that I take, or He knows the way it is with me, like the margin says.

And the Living Bible paraphrase of it reads like this, God knows every detail of what is happening to me. He knows every detail of what is happening to me. Do you believe that? Do you believe that all the little details of the problems you're facing in your life, God knows it? He certainly does.

Jesus said in Matthew's gospel, chapter 10, He was trying to stir up faith in His own disciples. And He said, don't be afraid. He said in Matthew 10, verse 31, You are of more value than many sparrows, and not one sparrow falls to the ground anywhere on the earth without your father knowing about it.

And He also said, the very hairs on your head are all numbered. No human being can ever count the number of hairs on his head. That's impossible, even if he's got very little.

It's impossible to count the number of hairs on your head. And the Bible says that your heavenly Father knows the exact number of the hairs on your head. And when you don't trust Him, He's insulted.

That's why unbelief is such a terrible sin. When you think God will harm you, instead of care for you and protect you, that's an insult to God. Supposing you went to your little four-year-old son's room in the middle of the night, say at two o'clock to see if he was sleeping soundly, and he's sitting up in the bed scared.

And you ask him, son, what's wrong with you? And he says, daddy, I was afraid in the middle of the night you would come and kill me or something like that. How would you feel as a father? My son thinks I will harm him when he's asleep. How does God feel as a father when you think that He will harm you, that He won't protect you? Does that son have any fear? Unbelief is an insult to God.

Faith honors God. The Bible says without faith it is impossible to please Him. Unbelief is a sin.

Jesus came to save us from sin. Let's remember these sins. From these sins come many other sins.

But let's remember these five. Hypocrisy, pride, selfishness, hatred and unbelief. And ask Jesus to save us from all five.

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