

Sins Against the Holy Spirit

The Work of the Holy Spirit

By Dr. Jerry Bilkes

sermonaudio.com

Bible Text: Matthew 12:31-32
Preached on: Friday, December 17, 2021

Free Reformed Church of Grand Rapids
950 Ball Ave NE
Grand Rapids, MI 49503

Website: www.frcgr.org
Online Sermons: www.sermonaudio.com/frcgr

Dear congregation, imagine yourself for a moment as part of a group of people hiking in some mountainous territory with a guide leading you. The landscape is treacherous, especially because of a sharp drop-off, a cliff's edge plunging perhaps hundreds of feet down into the depths and it runs along a peak where exactly you are hiking, and if your guide was doing his job, he would make every effort to make sure that no one in the group would carelessly drift towards that drop-off, or even worse, wander toward the edge of it and come to be in danger of losing his or her balance and falling to their ruin. Warnings would be in order, serious warnings about what had happened in the past, what could happen in the present, what might happen to you if you were careless. Well, the text before us uttered by the Lord Jesus Christ contains the spiritual warning about a spiritual drop-off, a sharp cliff from which people in the past have fallen to their eternal ruin, and as I said, these words are spoken by the most loving and faithful guide of souls that you could ever imagine, and how important it is for all of us to heed this warning of the Lord Jesus that comes to us from the words of our text which can be found in Matthew 12:31 and 32 along with other passages that I hope to refer to in the course of this sermon, Acts 7:51; Ephesians 4:30; and 1 Thessalonians 5:19. But let me read now at this time Matthew 12:31 and 32.

31 Wherefore I say unto you, All manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men: but the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost shall not be forgiven unto men. 32 And whosoever speaketh a word against the Son of man, it shall be forgiven him: but whosoever speaketh against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world, neither in the world to come.

Our theme looking to the Lord this night is the "Sins Against the Holy Spirit." We'll speak specifically about the main sin, the blasphemy of the Holy Spirit, but we'll also cover a number of other sins so I've called it the sins against the Holy Spirit: what the sin is, how people slide into the direction of this sin, and how we can and must avoid this sin against the Holy Spirit. What the sin is, how people slide in the direction of this sin, and how to avoid it.

Well, these solemn words of our text, congregation, were spoken after some of the most winning words that ever crossed the lips of the Lord Jesus. He had done many mighty things in this area in Galilee, in fact, he says in the previous chapter in Matthew 11, that if Tyre and Sidon and Sodom had seen his works, they would have repented long ago. And he closed the previous chapter with one of the most beautiful invitations to sinners imaginable, "Come unto me all you who labor and are heavy-laden and I will give you rest." And in this chapter, chapter 12, he's spoken so very tenderly to souls that he will not break the bruised reed nor quench the smoking flax. That's who he is, he's the tender Savior, the meek Savior, who will bind up that which is broken, heal that which is bowed low, and just before our text, he does this amazing miracle in which he takes someone who's both blind and dumb and possessed by a devil, having, you could say, great strokes against him, and he powerfully and mercifully heals this man in a demonstration of mercy and power, evidencing his great authority and ability to save to the uttermost. He truly was the anointed Son of God and worthy of all allegiance, of worship, of submission, of faith.

And as these words and works of the Lord Jesus confront the people's minds and hearts with God's and Christ's majesty and mission, there come the voices of, of all people, the religious leaders, the Pharisees schooled in the scriptures, and they start to lash out, they call into question Jesus' works. They mock, they degrade the Lord Jesus, "This fellow does not cast out devils but by Beelzebub, the prince of the devils." In other words, they are ascribing devilish power to the Lord Jesus. "He's on Satan's side," they're saying. "He's doing what Satan wants and with Satan's power and Satan's help." When we stand back and look at this picture, congregation, it's a most solemn picture. Here is the Lord Jesus, the pure Son of God, the Son of righteousness who's come with healing in his wings, and he radiates glory, beauty, mercy, might and authority.

Never has this been seen in all the world like this, God manifest in the flesh, but as he does his work, here come these religious leaders and they come, as it were, with smokestacks puffing out smoke and smog right over and among these people, suggesting the most heinous thing, the most abominable thing about the Lord Jesus Christ, he does it with the help of Satan. How evil. How spiteful. True are the words of the Lord Jesus in Luke 11:52 when he spoke about the religious leaders and he said, "Woe unto you, lawyers! for ye have taken away the key of knowledge: ye entered not in yourselves, and them that were entering in ye hindered." And it is at this point, congregation, that the Lord Jesus Christ speaks this serious warning. There is, at this point, a spiritual precipice. He doesn't say that these religious leaders have committed the sin against the Holy Spirit but he seriously warns them against this. "You're close. You're stepping towards it. Be so very careful. There is utter ruin step or two away from you."

And this is, congregation, when he speaks of the blasphemy of the Holy Spirit, the blasphemy against the Holy Spirit. What is that? What does it mean to blaspheme the Holy Spirit, a sin that the Lord Jesus says cannot be forgiven either in this life or in the next? It is the unpardonable sin. It is the sin unto death, as John speaks of it later, the one and only sin for which there is no pardon. Well, it's important for us to be biblical about this, to not rely on simply your own hunches, your own feelings, your own fears, your

own anxieties, but to compare scripture with scripture and to be utterly and ruthlessly biblical about what is this sin against the Holy Spirit.

Well, let's say three things about it on the basis of God's word. It's speaking here about blaspheming and so this is something that you do with your words, you speak blasphemy, and the word "blasphemy" literally means "injury." To blaspheme God is with your words to seek to injure God, to speak injuriously of God or of Christ and here specifically of the Holy Spirit, and you need to note that to blaspheme the Holy Spirit as the Lord Jesus is speaking here is not simply a rash thought or a rash word that one person says once or twice but, no, this blasphemy against the Holy Spirit from the word of God is a settled opinion regarding the Spirit of God and what the Spirit of God says about the Christ of God in the scriptures. We know this because if you look at the parallel passage in Mark 3:29 in which we have the exact words of the Lord Jesus that he speaks here in Matthew 12, Mark gives us this explanation because he says because they were saying, "He hath an unclean spirit." They were saying it not just once but they were saying it persistently again and again and again, and this was becoming their settled opinion about the Lord Jesus Christ, "He's doing what he's doing through Satan, through the instrumentality of Satan."

So this sin against the Holy Spirit is an injuring of the Holy Spirit, to seek to injure him. Not that we can, we cannot injure his person, but we seek to injure his person, his works, his attributes, and we do that with words and we do that in a settled way, in a persistent way, in a way that involves determination, perhaps an increasing, perhaps it starts small but it increases in venom and vigor until it becomes your settled opinion regarding the Spirit and what he says about Christ. That first of all. Secondly, the sin against the Holy Spirit, this blasphemy against the Holy Spirit, is something that is never followed by remorse or contrition or repentance or the desire to be reconciled to God in God's own way of saving sinners. No, it becomes this settled opinion from which one never turns back and never seeks repentance like Pharaoh who hardened his heart. Yes, once in a while he would relent but not truly, and he would become more and more obdurate or hardened in his resistance against God and the word of God, and he set himself increasingly against God. As did King Saul who resisted the express word of God until the word of God left him and he needed to consult with the witch at Endor because he had turned away from God. He never repented, never sought even repentance.

J. C. Ryle, who speaks very helpfully about this, he says the sin against the Holy Spirit is ever attended with these two symptoms: an absence of all contrition and of all desire for forgiveness. And he goes on to say, "Now if thou canst truly say that thy sins are a burden to thee, that thou dost desire forgiveness and wouldest give anything to attain it, be of good comfort, thou hast not yet committed this unpardonable offense."

So this settled injurious injury against the Holy Spirit is something that no one pulls back from who commits this sin against the Holy Spirit. It becomes their settled opinion and they have no remorse over it, no contrition, no repentance, no desire for forgiveness, and this brings us to the third thing we want to say about the blasphemy against the Holy Spirit, the reason there is no forgiveness for this blasphemy against the Holy Spirit is

because the one who commits it never seeks for forgiveness, there is no true repentance, and that's why there is a difference in the words of our text between blaspheming God the Father and God the Son which the Lord Jesus Christ says can be forgiven the children of men, but the blasphemy against the Holy Spirit, not to say that that is somehow blaspheming God the Father or God the Son is less of a crime, but the thing with blaspheming the Holy Spirit is the Holy Spirit is the applier of salvation. He is the one who convicts of sin, who convicts of righteousness and of judgment. He is the one who softens the heart and when the Spirit is blasphemed and driven away, then there is no contrition, then there is no conviction, there is no softening, and there is never any seeking for forgiveness, not in truth according to God's own word.

The Apostle Paul says about himself that in his unconverted state, he was a blasphemer, 1 Timothy 1:13. He blasphemed, we might say, against Christ. He didn't believe him to be the Son of God and he spoke in a blaspheming way against Christ but he was pardoned, he was forgiven. He says, "I was a blasphemer, a persecutor and injurious, but I obtained mercy because I did it ignorantly in unbelief." And the Holy Spirit so wrought in Saul of Tarsus that he became a beggar at the throne of mercy and he besought the Lord for forgiveness. And so he did not commit this blasphemy against the Holy Spirit but those who do, congregation, they will never see their need for forgiveness, they will never ask for forgiveness, they will never look for salvation and seek for salvation. They will see salvation as a total waste of time. Now, mind you, they may be very religious, they may be churchgoing people, these Pharisees were very religious people and yet they were not concerned to find a remedy for their sin, to beseech this very Son of God who stood before them for the forgiveness of their crimes, their sins. No, religious but without Christ and fine with it.

Well, congregation, as we wrap up our first point, let us note very well that the sin against the Holy Spirit is not a sin that the world commits in general because they have, for the most part, no light, no preaching of the gospel among them. They have their own sins, to be sure, and all sin when not covered with the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ, all sin is damning ultimately, but the sin of which we're speaking tonight, congregation, the fearful thing is it's committed in churches, it's committed in places like this where the gospel is preached, where Christ is set forth in the gospel for sinners freely by faith alone, no matter what you've done, no matter how you've sinned and departed from God, it is where there is light, the light of the gospel when men, women are most liable to commit this sin against the Holy Spirit.

J. C. Ryle once again says this, that it takes the combination of clear knowledge and deliberate rejection of Christ, the combination of clear knowledge and deliberate rejection of Christ, or as he says, light in the head but hatred of truth in the heart. That's what makes up this dreadful and this damning sin.

So as we close this point, congregation, perhaps you say to yourself, "I've heard the gospel but happily I've never deliberately rejected it, so I'm not in danger of committing this sin against the Holy Spirit." Well, my friend, if that is true, then indeed you may not have committed the sin against the Holy Spirit yet, I'm concerned, my friend, if you're

outside of Christ. Who's to say that you won't head that direction? Who's to say that you won't inch your way closer and closer to that precipice from which you will fall eternally? May God prevent it. And that's when we come now, secondly, to our second point: how people slide towards this sin. You heard, congregation, how I spoke about sins against the Holy Spirit. So far we've dealt with one, the sin, the blasphemy against the Holy Spirit, but the Bible speaks about other sins against this glorious, this divine being, the Holy Spirit. We've been covering the doctrine of the Holy Spirit for 6-7 months from time to time. We've heard about how necessary the work of the Holy Spirit is, how beautiful that work of the Holy Spirit is, that he makes dead sinners alive, that he comes from the glory of heaven based on Christ's work and he indwells sinners like you and like me, he takes up residence in our vile hearts and he sanctifies and he comforts and he gives help in prayer and so on. There's such a glorious gamut to this work of the Holy Spirit. How precious, how necessary it is.

But with it being such a glorious work, sinning against the Spirit, congregation, is a grievous sin and the Bible minces no words about the various sins that we can commit against this Holy Spirit, and it's a trajectory. One person has said this is the pathway that's marked out: it's first grieving the Holy Spirit, then resisting the Holy Spirit, and then finally quenching the Holy Spirit. So let's look at these three sins; there's more that could be mentioned but let's suffice with these three sins.

Grieving the Holy Spirit, what is that? The Bible speaks about it in Ephesians 4, listen, "Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers. And grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption. Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice: And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you." What is Paul saying here? He's saying the Holy Spirit is a tender and sensitive dove. Yes, he is the all-powerful Spirit of God, he is God of God, but he manifests himself in God's people and in the congregation and under the ministry of the word as a tender sensitive dove, and those of you who have worked with doves or know anything about doves, you know how indeed they can be tamed, they can be drawn in very close, some people have made a work of it that they can bring a dove even to eat from their hand. But a dove is sensitive, a dove is tender; if you startle a dove, if you make a dove fearful, they might never come back, they might keep their distance. So, too, the Holy Spirit is a tender and sensitive dove.

It is possible that you experience the striving of the Holy Spirit in the midst of the congregation, that under the preaching of the word the Holy Spirit goes from pew to pew and strives with the souls and the consciences of men, during days in which there is an awakening ministry which the ministry is being blessed by and large, there can be this solemnity over a congregation like this. I've heard of times such as this even in the midst of this congregation decades ago, in which scarcely a sermon went by without one or other being converted and people would leave the assembly and they would wonder who's next, who's being wrought upon, who is the Lord working in? And every heart was solemnized, everyone was under the authority of the word of God. The minister who was

here at that time, he told me that he remembers the exact date that the Spirit left. He said that for 2 ½ years he climbed this pulpit and in another building, and he said his mouth was not his own, the Holy Spirit was speaking, the Holy Spirit was striving with men. He remembers the very service that he said, "My words were once again just my own." And he said, "I knew within six words of preaching that my words were falling like rocks right over the pulpit and nothing was hitting home." What had happened? There had been a congregational meeting that week in which the members had joined together and gathered and harsh words had been spoken across the aisle, this one accusing this one, and this one accusing that one, and there had been bitterness, and there had been clamor, and there had been evil speaking about trivial matters. I think it was a building, what to do with a building. And the next Sunday everyone came to church and everyone was looking for the Holy Spirit to continue his work, and the Holy Spirit had been grieved. Everyone came to church except the Holy Spirit. He'd been grieved by lovelessness, by bitterness, by evil speaking.

That's the sensitivity of the Holy Spirit. Oh, that our consciences, our minds, our hearts, would be sensitized, especially when it concerns our tongues. Notice how Paul when he's speaking about this, he says, "Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers. And grieve not the holy Spirit of God." Bitterness, let it be gone. Wrath, let it be gone.

One of the elders who was there during those days, he made it his custom that if harsh words had been spoken during the week either at consistory or in the congregation, he'd call for a meeting Saturday morning and he'd have the elders together and he'd say, "We need to look each other in the eye. We need to repent. We need to forgive one another if there's been harshness because," he says, "we cannot come into the presence of God and have him grieved, the Holy Spirit of God." Well, congregation, will we hear God's earnest warning to us personally but also as a congregation this night?

But after grieving the Holy Spirit, there's another step and it is the step of resisting the Holy Spirit. Stephen speaks about this in Acts 7:51. He's explained the gospel to these people who have put him on trial and he has earnestly been striving with their consciences, exalting Christ and lifting up the gospel, and these men become mad, literally mad in their mind and in their words and in their actions. They pick up stones and they'll stone him and this is what he says, "Ye stiffnecked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always resist the Holy Ghost: as your fathers did, so do ye."

This word "resist" means "to oppose; to fall upon." The idea of the word in the original is really when someone's opening a door and you press your shoulder against that door so as to close it and to keep it closed. And maybe, children, sometimes you do that; you're with your brother or sister and one of you doesn't want the other one to enter the room and so you press your shoulder against that door to keep it from being opened. And that's the word here, "to resist; to oppose; to press against."

How do we resist the Holy Spirit? Congregation, we resist the Holy Spirit when we know at some level in our minds that what we are hearing is the truth of the word of God and

yet we don't want it and so we push it away, and we close our ears and our hearts to the clear duty that God lays out in his word. Or we brush it off, we push it away, we take the weight of our souls and bodies, as it were, and we push against it, resisting it. And we can do this in all sorts of ways. We can do it as we nitpick with what we hear, "Well, the minister didn't say this exactly right, or he put the emphasis there and he didn't do that, and he didn't do that." And so we quibble and we cavil as opposed to facing what he did say and how it bears on our souls. Or maybe we resist the Holy Spirit more passively when we just simply let ourselves be distracted; when, yes, our conscience is exposed when we feel the weight and the power and the light of God's word and we stand exposed before the holiness of God, but we simply, we let the birds of the air, like in that parable of the Lord Jesus, we let them just pick away the seed. We invite them in. We're happy. We can shift our attention to something else and that slowly on those convicting arrows, they disappear, or at least we're not aware of them anymore. Passive resistance.

You see, these people that Stephen was speaking to, they knew what he was saying was true. They couldn't resist it. They couldn't prove him wrong from the scriptures. Everything he said was true and it was an arrow, an arrow, an arrow at their consciences. And what did they do? Rather than flattening themselves and crying to God for mercy, they took the arrows, cast it from them, built a wall around their hearts and they took up stones to kill this messenger, this one whom the Holy Spirit was speaking through.

I think many of us, including God's people, know of times in which we've sinned against light, in which we've pushed away the force and the claim of God's word. And if we're children of God, we know that that is not right and our conscience is stricken even in these moments and we say, "God, forgive me for doing so, for having the light shine upon my heart and yet I wanted my sin. I couldn't bear in that instance with the pain of having my life and my heart exposed."

Resisting the Holy Spirit when there is, thirdly, quenching the Holy Spirit. You can find this in 1 Thessalonians 5:19. A short verse, four words in the English, "Quench not the Spirit." Quench not the Spirit. What does that mean? Well, to quench means to put out something like a fire. When you've had a campfire, young people or children, and before you leave it at night you want to quench it, you want to put it out so that it doesn't grow overnight and put things on fire. Well, with the Holy Spirit, congregation, there is a quenching of the Holy Spirit when we take water or sand or anything and we throw it on the embers, the light, the heat, of the word of God read or preached, and we say, as it were, "Not now. I don't want that. It's not time now. It's uncomfortable." And you can literally quench that Holy Spirit, the heat and light, the convictions of the Holy Spirit.

Quench not. Thomas Boston in a sermon which you can read online, it's a very convicting sermon on the quenching of the Holy Spirit, he says this, "The willful quenching is when men resolutely set themselves to put out the holy fire, being resolved not to part with their lusts. They go on in opposition to their light and strangle their uneasy consciences and murder their convictions that they may sin without control." And he says we can do this completely, totally, we can do this gradually, we can do this in ourselves, we can do

this in others, in our children. Ministers can do this. Elders can do this. It's a fearful thing to quench the Holy Spirit.

Congregation, do you see these three sins which mark out a pathway for us, and how afraid we should be to sin in any and all of these ways. If you find yourself in these days and in this hour tempted to grieve, resist or quench the Holy Spirit, oh, my friend, hear this as a warning from the lips of God, from the lips of the Lord Jesus Christ, "Be careful, watch out, turn back, lose this fighting spirit against the Lord and against his Christ. Hear the faithful words of the guide of souls, the Lord Jesus Christ. Hear his warnings. Hear his beckonings. Pull back from this path of carelessness, presumption, of coldness, rebellion."

And come with me as hear, finally, the ways by grace that we might avoid all and any of these sins, avoiding the sins against the Holy Spirit. Dear congregation, if this is a message that simply makes you shudder and nothing more, I fear for you. If this message only makes you fear that perhaps you may have committed one or more of these sins or perhaps the sin against the Holy Spirit, my friend, that's wrong. Instead, we have three applications here and then a fourth.

The first is this, the right response to all of this, congregation, is to repent without reserve, without delay, immediately of any sin or tendency to sin in a way so as to grieve, resist or quench the Holy Spirit, or to remain cold under the preaching of the gospel, to push away the calls of the gospel and to fight against the claims that God exerts upon us. Congregation, truth be told, none of us here are innocent of these things, and all of us have reasons to repent but we should do so now and without delay.

We read ominous words in Acts 13:46 when Paul and Barnabas are preaching in Antioch of Pisidia and it says there that people, as he was preaching, they were contradicting and blaspheming what he was saying, injuring what he was saying and Paul says this, "It was necessary that the word of God should first have been spoken to you: but seeing ye put it away from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles." We turn to others. They will hear. They were contradicting, they were blaspheming and Paul says, "That's it. No more gospel. I'm going elsewhere. Time's short. Souls need to be saved. There's no more time to waste. You've counted yourself unworthy of everlasting life."

Imagine that. He's saying of these people, "You've passed sentence on yourself. I'm unworthy of eternal life." Imagine that, children, someone comes, gives you a precious gift, offers you this most valuable gift and says, "Here, it's yours." You push it away. You refuse to accept it. You push it away and this person says, "You're making yourself unworthy. You're counting yourself unworthy." Imagine that. But how often don't we do that with the most precious gift of all, salvation, Christ, God's free gift in Jesus Christ. "No." You judge yourself unworthy of everlasting life.

O congregation, should we not as one man fall on our face before God and say, "God, forgive me. God, forgive me for grieving, for resisting, for quenching thy Holy Spirit to

whatever degree I've done so. O God, hold me back from going lost, hold me back from this path. Draw me and we will run after thee." Congregation, is that our prayer as a congregation, "Draw me. We will run after thee, O sure guide of souls." Secondly, let us never mock with any gospel message or any gospel minister. We may differ from time to time with emphases and with people, professing Christians here and there, but my friend, beware of mocking, mocking the truth, mocking the gospel, mocking with gospel ministers. And especially you young people but it's true of anyone, we live in days when mockers and scoffers abound and where you can walk into many places and they'll scoff with scripture and scoff with Christ and scoff with the people of God. If you're ever in that situation, walk out for the love of your soul. Don't be a partaker of scoffing or mocking concerning the word of God and the gospel of salvation. When once you get used to this, I fear for you. The word "blaspheming" means "injuring," and people around you are injuring the word of God and the grace of God, and they're joking about the word of God, run for your lives. The word of God is serious. It concerns your never-dying soul. Remember those children who mocked Elisha, a man of God, no doubt trained by their parents to do so. The bears came out of the wood and devoured them as if God were saying, "God is not mocked. Whatsoever a man sows, that also he shall reap."

And do not mock with the overtures of salvation. Don't just say, "Well, that man is so free with the gospel. It can be like that." Oh, my friend, be careful. There was that man who stood at the gate of Samaria and he said even if God were to open the windows of heaven there could not be food enough for people, and what happened? This man was trampled underfoot. God is not mocked. We need in our lives to be solemn and serious about the word of God, about truth, about religion, about eternity. Oh, may God give us and this church an undying earnestness regarding truth and Christ and the gospel.

Thirdly, shall we not cherish and nourish every conviction, every call, every entreaty that God gives us, seeking grace and help from God to live in the light of the gospel. Shall we not beware of the birds of the air that pick away at the seed of the word. Shall we not beware of anything and everything that takes away even a little of the power of the message of the word of God. When you've heard a gospel message in which they're striving with your soul, consider it a flame and don't put water on it. Nurture it. Cherish it. Pray to God about it. Meditate on scripture. Speak to others about it.

Be serious about your soul's salvation and do not take these things for granted. Do not push them away. Sometimes people do that, they have convictions and they say, "Well, this is not conversion. Or if it's real, then it will show itself to be real in the end." And people even use this phrase, "Let the winter pass over," and what they mean by that, at least what they do with that is that they just let the chill come over their souls. My friend, these convictions, they ought to be brought before the Lord, "Lord, make it real. Lord, don't leave me alone. Lord, fan the flame, make it real in my life. Lord, grace, grace in my soul. Christ, I need Christ."

And finally and lastly, congregation, the surest and safest way to avoid the sin against the Holy Spirit and any sin against the Holy Spirit is to repent of all sin, to take God at his word, to believe the gospel and to take Christ offered in the gospel as yours as a sinner

and nothing more and nothing less. Did you hear what the Lord Jesus Christ said at the beginning of this warning? Maybe you missed it, "Wherefore I say unto you, All manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men." Did you hear that? All manner of sin, all manner of blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men. Yes, there's one exception, the blasphemy against the Holy Spirit, but all manner of sin can be forgiven. What's the worst sin that you've ever committed? All manner of sin shall be forgiven. Come with all your sin, come with your sin-stained soul. Bring it to God and say, "God, have mercy." The Bible is loud and clear. Manasseh, who made the streets of Jerusalem to run with the blood of the prophets, he was forgiven. He obtained mercy. Saul of Tarsus who breathed out threatenings and slaughter against Christ and against the people of Christ and raged against Christians and couldn't get enough of bringing men, women and children into prison and seeing them put to death, Christ stopped him and he obtained mercy. Peter, who denied Christ with oaths, with cursings, he obtained mercy. He was forgiven.

Do you hear it? All manner of sin can be forgiven. Come to the one who speaks in his word this night and deal with him, lay your sin out in the open before him and say, "Lord, save me, save me entirely, completely. Grant me thy saving help. Purge me with hyssop and I shall be clean, yea, clean indeed. Cover my sin. The righteousness of Jesus Christ, thy blood, Lord Jesus, may it avail for me." And congregation, when so you have dealings with Christ at Calvary with the blood of sprinkling, with this one who speaks and warns right now, right here, you, all of you, be ye reconciled unto God, unto heaven, unto God through Jesus Christ. He can wash away the vilest sin. He can make your life pure through the blood of Christ. He can give you all that you need. He can give you new life through him. He can help you to strive and to struggle all the way to heaven's gate. All out of Christ, out of free grace, through him, through him alone whose presence goes before us. But congregation, don't, don't despise the strivings of the Spirit. Don't sin against light. Don't sin against grace. Beg God to save you tonight. Amen.