

# God is NOT finished with you yet!

*Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.*

Date: 26 July 2015

[0:00] God isn't finished with you yet.

God isn't finished with you yet. I want to address the issue of how God works in us, and He keeps working in us, and He isn't finished with us. He isn't finished with us. We're still an ongoing work. We're a work in progress. And I want to challenge those who aren't backsliding today. I want to encourage you. Encourage you. If you're a backslider today, God isn't finished with you yet. You that are hearing this, that is backsliding, God is not finished with you yet. Backsliding is a term used often in the Old Testament of how Israel turned away from the Lord. It means to turn back, to rebel, to turn away. Again, backsliding can happen as we lack the fear of God, as we fail to obey His voice, as we fail to exalt and honour our Lord.

[1:07] And backsliding can become evident in lots of ways when we fail to study the Word of God, when we fail to walk in the Spirit, when we fail to fellowship with other Christians, when we fail to keep short accounts with God and confess sin to Him right away.

Backsliding. Backsliding speaks of a person declining away from their devotion to the Lord and going back to the world in its self-pleasing ways. Proverbs 14, 14, it says in part, the backslider in heart shall be filled with his own ways.

Backsliding will lead to the Lord withholding His blessings from our life. Jeremiah 25 in part, it says, your sins have withholden good things from you.

If you're a backslider, good things are going to be withheld from you. If you're a backslider, you are missing out big time on God's blessing, on God's highest and best for your life.

And that's not in material sense, but in the sense that really counts, of a life well lived. And you may look back on those years of backsliding, you may look back on those years of your life and live to regret it.

[2:21] As you look back on those years misspent, on what might have been, what might have been. Now, those that get saved later in life, there's many regrets.

And even those that have been so younger in life, we can all look back and think, how can my life have been better spent? As a Christian, when I've, it seems like the days of our lives, like sand through the hourglass.

And you think, where's it gone? What's happened? What have I done with it? And it's just gone. It's like a vapour, isn't it? And friends, if you're a backslider today, you're missing out.

And you're wounded. You're losing out on God's best for you, His plan for you. And you need healing, deep within, deep within the core of you. And I saw, I've testified to me, how they had some, some awful time of backsliding.

And they regret that. Yet the Lord has brought them through, on the other side. Amen? Isn't that right? He brings us through those times. And thank God for that. Amen? By His grace.

[3:24] So the good news here this morning, is there is healing for you. Healing is offered for you, for your backslidings today. In Jeremiah 3, in part it says, verse 22, return ye, backsliding children, and I will heal your backslidings.

God offers a healing balm for you, a healing touch for you, for you that are backsliding, if you will but return. Return, He says, return ye.

It's important we first understand, some biblical truths. So we're just going to, track back over some, really fundamentals, some basic foundational concepts, the basic teachings of the Bible, if you like. And where do you start? Salvation. Salvation. These are some basic definitions, some important concepts, we can review. So let's start right at the beginning, as it were, of the Christian life, of the Christian understanding, at salvation.

So what is salvation? Salvation is a free gift, we've heard a testimony this morning, God's free gift to us. It's not a reward for good people.

[4:39] Some people think that, don't they? If I'm good enough, God will weigh the good and the bad of my life, and if the good outweighs the bad, I'll make it through those pearly gates. No, salvation is not a reward for good people.

Works are mentioned, but the works follow the faith. The works follow the faith. In Ephesians 2, that familiar one, verse 8, For by grace are you saved, through faith, and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God, not of works, lest any man should boast.

Then it goes on, for we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus, unto good works. So, the works follow the faith. The faith, then the works.

Created in Christ Jesus, unto good works, which God hath before ordained, that we should walk in them. Grace is God's gift. God's generous gift.

And we receive his gift, as we believe, as we place our trust, in the Lord Jesus Christ. Ephesians 2, 8 and 9, and 10, tell us quite clearly.

[5:49] So, eternal life is a gift. And, our Lord said such, in John 4, verse 10, as he spoke to the Samaritan woman, it's a gift, eternal life. And by faith, we take the gift.

Our hand is extended, and we receive his gift. And there are no strings attached to that gift. Now, some people, it gets that season of giving, and some people, they give you a gift, and they expect something in return.

God's not like that, is he? With his gift. There are no strings attached to the gift of salvation. There's no requirements for you. There's no work for you to do. Only believe.

Simply believe. Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ. Believe on him. And to know God is to know life. Life eternal. Life real and full.

The Bible says, for in him we live, and move, and have our being. Our true fulfillment is found in him. In him in whom we live, and move, and have our being.

[6:51] And if you are outside of Christ, you're not living the life. You haven't even begun to live yet, if you're outside of Christ. But if you come as a sinner to the Saviour, if you believe, as you embrace him, as you trust him, as you receive his gift, you are saved.

And it's eternally. Your destination is changed forever. In an eye blink, your destination is changed permanently, and forever.

Romans 10, 13, it says, For this whoever shall call upon the name of the Lord, shall be saved.

That's a wonderful promise, isn't it? I do. Call on his name, and you're saved.

Salvation is a new birth. We are regenerated, born again, made a new creation. And our salvation is based on the many promises of the word of God.

Many promises, speaking of everlasting life, through faith, exceeding great and precious promises. Salvation is by God's grace. I like, when I explain it to someone, I say it's a free gift.

[8:01] You don't say, oh, how much do I owe you for that? I've got to work for it, don't I? I've got to do something for God, don't I? No. It's free.

No strings attached. Salvation. Salvation is by God's grace. We see that with Jonah. 2 verse 9. Jonah was just coming off an economy class ride in a whale.

And he's belched out onto the seashore here. In Jonah 2 verse 9. And he says, salvation is of the Lord.

He couldn't do anything to get out of that whale. God had to do it. And salvation is God's doing from beginning to end. He's the author and the finisher of our faith.

It's not salvation by grace through faith plus works. Not, no sir. None of that. It's salvation by grace through faith. It's God's gift.

[9:01] And we can know that we're saved. We can know that we know that we know that we're saved. We can know that we're truly born again. The Bible says we have been saved, past tense, by God.

He declares us saved. In Titus 3 verse 5. Not by works of righteousness that we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us. By the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy

Ghost.

Notice it says, saved. Past tense. There's people saved here today. You're guaranteed. There's an inheritance reserved in heaven for you.

It's incorruptible. It will never pass away. And when we get saved, we become a child of God. We get a new nature, a new creation. In 1 John 3, it says, Beloved, now are we the sons of God.

Now. You can say, now I am a son of God. Women, a daughter of God. I'm His. It's important to grasp this truth of creation.

[10:02] Of salvation. And also to the continuance of it. This is no temporary gift. This is nothing temporary. When He gives you this gift, He gives you eternal life.

Everlasting life. You have it now. And what of our salvation? Presuming today we have people who have caught on the Lord. Presuming you've believed in the Lord Jesus.

And you've received His forgiveness and His saving grace. What then? What then? What happens next? Are we holding on? Or are we eternally held?

Think of that. Some people think, I've got to hold on to my salvation. I've got to maintain my salvation. How? Works.

You've used that bad word again. Nothing to do with your works. You don't hold on to your salvation for dear life as if, oh, if I let go, if something happens, I'm going to lose it.

[11:03] No. You're eternally kept. You're eternally kept. He says, For he hath said, I will never leave thee nor forsake thee.

I will in no wise cast out. He who comes to me. John 6.37. And you that are believers that have trusted Him, you are kept.

1 Peter 1.5. By the power of God. Kept. Kept. By the power of God. Through faith unto salvation. Ready to be revealed in the last time.

If you're saved, you are saved to the uttermost. Saved to the uttermost. Hebrews 7.25. Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him.

Salvation. God's gift. Praise God for it. What about works, you may ask? What about works? That question, what about works? We have to show that we are saved, some will say.

[12:06] Our works have nothing to do with our salvation. Nothing. It says that no flesh shall glory in His presence. As if we're going to get to heaven and some of us are going to be big noting ourselves and I've got more salvation than you've got.

No. We've got the same, haven't we? It's the same grace, isn't it? Amen. Bless God. It's the same glory. And where does the glory go? To God. That no flesh shall glory in His presence.

When we get there, we're all just as unworthy of His grace. And just as rejoicing in His grace. 1 Corinthians 1 verse 29.

That no flesh should glory in His presence. But of Him are ye in Christ Jesus who is made unto us wisdom and righteousness and sanctification and redemption.

That according as it is written, He that glorified, let Him glory in the Lord. He has made our redemption. He is our wisdom. He is our righteousness. Of works.

[13:08] Our works do not make us more worthy of His grace. In the receiving of it or in the continuance of it. It's grace, grace, marvellous grace, wonderful grace.

From beginning to end, it's grace. And we're not to try and add to the slightest of our works of our own self-righteousness to the gospel. We don't add in the works as far as salvation.

The works follow the faith. Faith will be evident. Faith will have an effect. A genuine faith will be living and effective. Works will follow the faith. And we have a wonderful security this morning.

If you're a believer, there is a wonderful security that you can know. It says in John 10, 28, Our shepherd says, My sheep shall never perish. I give unto them eternal life and they shall never perish.

Neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand. Now I could talk about the Greek, but I'm not going to say about the Greek. But I'm talking about the word never here. The word never as it was written in the language that it was originally written in, which was Greek.

[14:21] In that original, that word never, that word never, I'm told, and I'm no scholar here. But it means the strongest doubly emphatic word in

the language possible.

It's even stronger than never. He says never. And you could say never, never, ever. We are kept by the power of God and we shall never perish.

That's what it's saying, isn't it? That's what it says. We shall never perish. The main point I want to stress today in this message is that God is working in us, through us, by us, for us.

He who started the work of salvation, he will perform it. He will perform it. He will complete it in you. What he has started, he will finish.

It may not feel like it sometimes. You might think, well, I don't think, I wonder what God's up to. I know what I'm up to. I know I'm not worthy. But yet, as much as you may feel like it is lacking sometimes, he will never suffer you to perish.

[15:29] We shall never perish. So even when you give up on others, you might think of others in your life and you think, oh, they were such and such a Christian now. It seems like God's given up on them or they've given up on God.

Well, people might look at you sometimes and think that. Or at me. Let's face it. Even when you give up on yourself, he never gives up. He never gives up. He will perform it.

He will perform it. He will perform it. He says he will. He will complete what he has started from beginning to end. He's the author and the finisher. He started it and he will finish his work.

Be encouraged this morning. If you're a struggling Christian, join the club. But he has started it and he will finish it. Philippians 1, it says, being confident of this very thing.

That he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ. Someone will ask, what about our good works? What about my good works? Yes, we are created unto good works.

[16:26] He wants you to be a working Christian. But our works follow the faith. It's sanctification. We do not rest on our own good works or counsel them.

There's some churches that think, well, you've got to do this and you've got to do that. You've got to do the other. You've got to get baptized. You've got to do this. You've got to keep on keeping on. And if you slip and fall, suddenly you've lost it all.

You've got to go right back to the beginning and get saved again. It's error. It's error. Some will ask, what about our good works? Yes, we are created unto good works, but our works follow our faith.

We do not rest on our own good works or counsel them. They are not part of our salvation. Our human effort does not save us. He has begun a good work in us.

That's the good work we need, isn't it? He has begun the good work in us, in you, in you, in you. And he will perform it. So we've seen salvation.

[17:25] We've seen works. Righteousness. What about righteousness? Here's another word that needs some definition, some consideration. We need God's righteousness. And we want to make sure we get the definition right about this word, righteousness.

Consider this word now, what it means. 2 Corinthians 5, 21. He has made him to be sent for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.

His sure righteousness replaces our self-righteousness. We've got to let go of our own self-righteousness and receive his. Our own self-righteousness is woefully inadequate.

The righteousness that we need is imputed. There's another big word for you this morning. It's imputed. It's given to us. It's granted to us. It's a gift to us. It's counted for you.

It's an accounting term. It's credited to your account. You know, you look at your bank book sometimes and it's zero or worse, you know. But he's credited something massive into your account.

[18:35] His riches. It's his righteousness. The riches of his righteousness. So Genesis 15 of Abraham, it says, And he believed in the Lord and it was counted for him as righteousness.

He counted it for him for righteousness. The faith, his trusting in God. His believing in the Lord. And in James, which isn't on the screen, James 2, 23, it's talking again at that time.

It says, Wouldn't that be great if you had a zero bank balance or worse?

Yes. And God credits you his astounding wealth. We're not talking about you're going to be driving around a Rolls Royce next week. But we're talking about that spiritual wealth.

That wealth that really mansions. Treasures in heaven. That's what he gives to us. His righteousness. He imputes it. He counts as righteous. As we trust him. Not of our works. And God clothes us with his own righteousness.

[19:36] In Isaiah 61, it reads of the garments of salvation. Of the robe of righteousness. He wraps it around you when you're saved. He wraps his robe of righteousness around you.

We'll go on. So we've talked about some definitions. We've talked about salvation. We've talked about works. We've talked about righteousness. What about the gospel? The gospel. Another foundational term.

Gospel. We know it needs good news. What is the gospel? Paul said, I've declared it to you. For I've delivered unto you, first of all, that which I also received. How that Christ also died for our sins, according to the scriptures.

And he was buried. And then he rose again the third day, according to the scriptures. Here's how someone has explained the gospel. And this is an old-time preacher called Harry Ironside. An old-time gospel preacher.

He said this about the gospel. How he described the gospel. And I quote, The gospel is not a call to repentance or to amendment of our ways. To make restitution for past sins.

[20:36] Or to promise to do better in the future. I'll just hold it there. I used to know in a country town where we lived, there was a scoutmaster. And he had a transformation.

I think, from what I recall, he used to be a drinker. You know, you name it. Live a wild life. And then he became a Jehovah's Witness. He had a transformation.

He had the good life that he started to live. He did some good things. There was a transformation.

But he wasn't saved. There was good works there. There was a restitution maybe there.

There was some change in his lifestyle. He stopped doing some things. And he started doing some things. But he wasn't a saved man. So it goes on. He didn't have the gospel. That's the point. It goes on and I quote, For these things are proper in their place, but they do not constitute the gospel.

For the gospel is not good advice to be obeyed. It's good news to be believed. Do not make the mistake then of thinking that the gospel is a call to duty or a call to reformation, turning over a new leaf, or a call to better your condition or behave yourself in a more perfect way than you've been doing in the past.

[21:45] Nor is the gospel a demand that you give up the world, that you give up your sins, that you break off bad habits and try to cultivate good ones. You may do all these things and yet never believe the gospel and consequently never be saved at all.

It's not about turning over a new leaf. God transforms you, yes. God makes you a new creation, yes. But it's not breaking off bad habits that makes you a Christian. It's not starting a whole load of good habits.

It's about simply believing, simply believing, simply trusting. But how to complicate things? Sure, we repent in the sense we turn from our own way. There's a change in us inwardly.

But the essential is faith. Believe the gospel. Believe Christ died, rose again, was buried, rose again and is coming again. Believe in the Lord Jesus as your saviour, as the ultimate sacrifice and payment on your part.

Our part is simply to come and believe. There is zero, zero dependence on our own good works.

Now sadly these days there's some preachers such as Ray Comfort and Paul Washer.

[22:50] They say some good stuff. In part. But they get away from this simple gospel. That's the problem. They get away from the simple gospel and they try to add to the gospel with men's works.

And so people can end up mistakenly believing in a works-based salvation. The only works we need is the finished work of the cross.

The finished work of Christ. Where Christ cried, it is finished. Done. That is the good work we need. The finished work.

All the works that are needed to save you have been done at the cross of Calvary. Amen. In Christ. What part then do our own righteousnesses have in the gospel? We lay no credit.

No credit on our own works. Not in the slightest. What does it say of our righteousnesses? Isaiah 64 verse 6. But we are all as an unclean thing. And all our righteousnesses, all our righteousnesses, all of your best things, all of your best righteousnesses are as filthy rags.

[23:54] And we all do fade as a leaf and our iniquities like the wind have taken us away. So we've defined salvation and the gospel. It's not your good works. It's not in any measure.

And we've seen the part that good works play in saving us. What about backsliders? Now I'd like to turn to the question, what about backsliders?

And this is a question some people struggle with is. I mean, I know someone who was a Christian and I don't know where they are. They must be lost now. They've got to get saved again. Some people write people off and they say, God's finished with them.

They've lost their salvation. No. God does not forsake his own. He does not forsake his own. If you're a backslider hearing my words today, I tell you by the authority of God's book that God isn't finished with you yet.

God is not finished with you yet. And I know some dear people in my life who are in that condition. They're backsliding. God is not finished with you yet. I'd like to see things turn around for you.

[24:57] There were a lot of backsliders in Corinth. Yet Paul called these ones, he called them brethren. He called them carnal babes in Christ. Yet they were still saved. They were still brethren. Paul was telling them, God isn't finished with you yet, Corinthians.

Some take a view that a Christian has to be without sin. I'm sorry to burst your bubble today, but that ain't going to happen, this side of glory. It's just not going to happen. I have yet to meet someone like that.

We all struggle with sin. Well, I'm talking about myself. But you put your name there. As you are honest with God. A believer still has to struggle with sin.

Fact is, God isn't finished with us yet. We're still a work in progress, aren't we? Aren't you? Yes, you are. We're still a work under construction. God is still putting those finishing touches to his masterpiece.

That is you, and you, and you, and me. And from John 1, it says, If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he's faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

[26:06] Some will ask, but don't we have to stay holy? Don't we have to stay holy? Hebrews 12, for example, we read, Follow peace with all men, and holiness without which no man shall see the Lord.

Don't we have to stay holy in order to see the Lord? In the context, you'll see that the holiness referred to here is Christ's holiness.

When we receive Christ's holiness, when we are born again, Hebrews 12, 10, that we might be partakers of his holiness. That's what matters.

His holiness. Whose holiness do we need? His holiness. That's not to say we should not seek to please God, and seek to shun sin, and seek striving before God to live a righteous life, and to avoid that which is unworthy of him.

But the point is that the holiness that we essentially and especially need is Christ's holiness. Some will think that some who are saved will be lost, because it's about their works.

[27:14] Wrong. He will finish what he has started. He hasn't finished with them yet. I know good godly people here this morning, they can give you such a testimony, that they wasted their Christian walk big time.

They walked away. But God wasn't finished with them yet. Amen. God is not finished with you yet, backslider here today. God heals the backsliding ones. And if you're hearing my voice and you're saying, I'm one of those backsliders you're talking about, preacher.

He calls you to return. He calls you to return. He beckons you to return. And he will restore. He says, Jeremiah 3, 22, Return you backsliding children. And I'll heal your backslidings.

Behold, we come unto thee, for thou art the Lord our God. Now I was going to say something just now about halfway through the sermon.

You might want to get up and leave now. I'm only about halfway through this sermon, but God isn't finished with this sermon yet. You might go like that, but it doesn't matter.

[28:22] Our Lord has the date marked in his calendar, and he's counting down the days that he will surely return, and we must prepare for that day. And he has a date set and an appointment for you written in his diary.

He has set a time and a place and a date, a hearing for you at the judgment seat of Christ. He set that appointment, and he's counting down the days.

The careless Christian will be ashamed before him at his coming. Wouldn't that be a tragic thing, if God catches you on the hop, and you're careless at his time of his coming.

Yet, if we are his child, he will not forsake us. He isn't finished with us yet. While you have breath to breathe, he isn't finished with you yet. There's hope for the hopeless, even those that seem hopeless, as others would esteem them.

So you might think, well, I know so-and-so, and I don't think they're saved. They're too far gone. What about the testimonies of the men and women of God through Scripture? Think of that.

[29:26] I'll give you a few quick examples of how God isn't finished with us yet. What about Peter? Peter boasted that, I will never forsake you.

I'll go to prison and death for you, Lord. But then later, as he sat and warmed himself around the fire, as he cosied up to those friendly, he made himself friendly and familiar with the enemies of his Lord, he denied his Lord with oaths and cursing and swearing, and he boasted that he would be strong.

But he fell big time. As someone has expressed it, you remember how the Lord turned and looked at Peter, and when the cock crewed, as the Lord had prophesied, that was enough.

That look was enough. And Luke 22, the Lord turned and looked upon Peter, and Peter remembered the word of the Lord, how he'd sat unto him before the cock crewed, thou shalt deny me thrice.

And Peter went out and wept bitterly. And this preacher says, it said a tear glistened in Peter's eye the rest of his life. A tear glistened in Peter's eye the rest of his life.

[30:35] Here is the road to restoration for anywhere away from God, the loving look of our Lord. A look of love, a look of compassion from the one who says, I'll heal their backsliding, I will love them freely.

Return your backsliding children, and I'll heal your backsliding. I have blotted out as a thick cloud thy transgressions, and as a cloud thy sins, return unto me, for I have redeemed thee.

May the look and word of the one who loves us reach our heart. Friends today, Peter, Peter, they'd have written him off, but God wasn't finished with Peter yet. There might be some Peters here, some Peters listening.

God isn't finished with you yet. Judas is a case that is different. Peter was saved, but Judas was never saved. Judas was different.

He was an apostate. In other words, he professed to believe, but he was one who was never saved. He was a mere professor. You might be a professor. I'm not talking PhDs.

[31:34] I'm talking you might profess to be a Christian, but yet you're not really received. That's a big mistake to make. Judas made that mistake. But if you are like Peter, you've believed in the Lord, I can tell you today that God isn't finished with you yet.

Jonah, another example of a believer, straying from God's perfect will. He was rebellious, disobedient, indifferent, asleep in the boat when the storm of God's judgment came. And the Lord told him what to do, but what did he do?

The exact opposite. He said, Arise, go to Nineveh, that great city, cry against it, for their wickedness has come up before me. But Jonah rose up to flee from, unto Tarshish, from the presence of the Lord and went down to Joppa.

And he found a ship going to Joppa, Tarshish. So he paid the fare thereof and went down into it to go with them unto Tarshish from the presence of the Lord. When you backslide, you're going to flee from the presence of the Lord, but he's going to catch up with you.

He's going to catch up with you. He'll track you down. He knows where you live. He knew where Jonah was, right? And Jonah, if you're going to be like Jonah, you will pay for it, just like Jonah did.

[32:42] He paid the fare and then he paid with a lot of discomfort, no doubt. But what about you? Are you a Jonah? Are you a Jonah today? Maybe you are running from God's call.

You are running from God's mission on your life. Like Jonah, you're headed for trouble, but God wasn't finished with Jonah yet. God wasn't finished with Jonah and God isn't finished with you. Brother, sister, God isn't finished with you yet. Consider Noah, called a preacher of righteousness. Yet after the flood, what did he do? He was found drunk and naked in his tent. But God wasn't finished with Noah yet.

Here he was, plastered, drunk, paralytic, a shameful example to his family. But God wasn't finished with Noah yet. God didn't put Noah on the scrap heap. He's still listed as one of God's own. God isn't finished with you yet. God isn't finished with you yet. Our Lord is able to keep us. Paul was one who went through some times of great despair. He wrote of these trials, we're troubled on every side yet not distressed.

[33:43] We are perplexed but not in despair. Persecuted but not forsaken. Cast down but not destroyed. There might have been times Paul might have thought of throwing in the towel. Maybe you're feeling like you're going through the wringer right here and now.

But God isn't finished with you yet. God isn't finished with you yet. For at which cause, Paul says, I suffer these things nevertheless I'm not ashamed for I know whom I have believed and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I've committed unto him against that day.

God is able to see you through. God is able to see you through. God is able to see you through. Whatever the trial is, whatever the situation, whatever your circumstance of finance and health of circumstance, he's able to see you through until that day.

when you see his face and backslide and God will kick you, even you. God isn't giving up on you. Thankfully, God restores people.

If you're off track spiritually, he reaches out to you. Return unto the Lord and he can do the work of making you more like Christ, that work, that sanctifying work, of that spirit's work, of that spirit's control and he can restore you and he is able to perform it until that day.

[35:04] Lot is another example. Look at Lot. What a mess he made of things. His choices. He had to be dragged away from sinful Sodom, from worldly Sodom as the angels came on that day of destruction to save him.

He'd spent 20 years back there in Sodom with no convert. He'd been influential, maybe. He'd become influential, but his unwise decision had caused him much ruin and danger for his family and loss.

Backslider, your backsliding ways will cost you dearly. Lot paid for it, didn't they? You will reap what you sow and your family will be hurt.

The people you love will be dearly hurt. The Bible says the way of the transgressor is hard.

Proverbs 13, 15. But for all his mistakes, look at Job. What did God do?

Did God throw Lot on the scrap heap? He was called just, righteous. It tells us, he was described as just.

[36:07] God's spirit was still at work in Lot. He was vexed with the unlawful deeds of the wicked people. He knew he was out of order. He knew he was out of God's will in Sodom.

He knew he was in the wrong place. Backslider, God will convict you too. You're in the wrong place. He'll convict you to get right with him.

God isn't finished with you. Just as with Lot, living in that compromising situation, God isn't finished with you yet. Another example, Samson. He was another example of a backslider. He was arrogant, boastful, a big macho man.

He could, you know, he ruled the roost. He was arrogant. He married Philistine women against God's command. He visited prostitutes, Judges 16.1.

Yet for all of his woeful backsliding ways, God answered the closing prayer of his life, Judges 16.28.30. Samson called on to the Lord and he said, O Lord, remember me.

[37:07] I pray thee and strengthen me. I pray thee only this once. O God, that I may be at once avenged of the Philistines for my two eyes. He was blinded. They ripped his eyes out of the sockets.

He was a woeful mess of a man. And Samson said, let me die with the Philistines. God answered that backslider's prayer. And Samson is listed in Hebrews 11.

God wasn't finished with Samson yet. He'd made a total mess of it. But God wasn't finished with Samson yet. He lost much. He lost his separation. He lost his strength. He lost his liberty.

He lost his eyesight. And finally he lost his life. All because of his backsliding. But he did not lose his salvation. He did not lose his salvation. David, another example.

He fell into sin. What a woeful example David was. King David, adultery, murder. A terrible example. Yet the Lord, a word speaks of him that he had a man after God's own heart.

[38:05] Our fellowship with God might be broken yet. We are saved. God doesn't throw us on the scrap heap. God wasn't finished with David. King Solomon, regarded as the wisest man to ever live.

A writer of scripture wrote the books of Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Solomon. Peter says it was holy men of God that penned these words in 2 Peter 1. Solomon, a holy man.

He constructed the glorious temple yet at the end of his life he went into idolatry, went to high places and built high places to the false gods. We read of him, he had 700 wives, princesses and 300 concubines, a thousand women and one's hard enough but he had 1,000 of them and it says his wives turned away his heart.

Not that Julie's any word but his wives turned away his heart. That's the point. It says for it came to us when Solomon was old that his wives turned away his heart after other gods.

His heart was not perfect before the Lord his God as was the heart of David his father. So think of Solomon as another example. I know, I'm trying to pack this in.

[39:14] Solomon had serious failings yet he was saved. He was still counted as God's own son. I'm sure Solomon looking back will be ashamed of some of the things that he did.

The sinful things that he did. Yet how much better for you, for me if we are backsliding that we return unto the Lord now. What we've got, breath, return unto the Lord. What we've got, fleeting breath left, turn unto the Lord, return unto the Lord, leave your backsliding ways, flee to Christ. Solomon himself wrote, the backslider in heart shall be filled with his own ways. It's a vain, empty way to live to be filled with your own ways.

A life full of regrets of what might have been, what might have been. A backslider can lose the joy of their salvation and be discouraged. A backslider can pay a heavy price, yet God never forsakes his own.

God is always there standing in the shadows waiting for you, waiting for you. The backslider is still God's child and he's still saved. But backsliding is evil, bitter and a waste.

[40:21] It's a reproach and a shame. Yet the Lord is long-suffering, he's patient with us. Why? Because he isn't finished with us yet. He will finish what he's started.

And the Holy Spirit is very persistent at calling the backslider to right relationship. Backslider, will you return unto the Lord? Return unto the Lord today, this moment, just now.

Jesus paid it all. He is all-sufficient. Place your whole trust on him. Think of the thief of the cross. He could only believe. That was enough.

That was enough. He could only call on the name of the Lord in just a few breaths before he was cursing him. But yet he was saved. Christ was enough.

And Christ is enough this morning. Christ is all-sufficient. The good news, it's not of your good works. It's salvation by faith, by grace, through faith.

[41:17] 2 Corinthians 3.5, it says that our sufficiency is of God. I want to urge you, child of God, today, if you're backsliding, I urge you, God is not finished with you yet.

You can be restored. You can return unto the Lord. You might be ashamed of those works you've done or not done, but your works can't stop. the reach of his hand.

And backslider, you may want to tie a little longer with eternal things. You might want to sit on the fence a little longer and not get serious about your walk with God, but don't boast about tomorrow.

Don't boast about tomorrow. You may not see it. That is your loss. Backslider, I urge you to take action this morning. I warn you that lingering in backsliding, you must face God's discipline.

Psalm 89, it says, if his children forsake my law and walk not in my judgments, if they break my statutes and keep not my commandments, then I will visit their transgression with the rod and their iniquity with stripes.

[42:17] Nevertheless, my loving kindness will I not utterly take from him, nor suffer my faithfulness to fail. My covenant will I not break nor alter the thing that has gone out of my lips.

So what it's saying there is, God deals with us as his children, a little child who's naughty, you give them some discipline. And that's what God will do for us if we're out of his will.

And he'll do it with loving kindness. And his faithfulness will not fail. His faithfulness will not fail. So it's telling us here we're his children, we don't stop being his child when we sin.

But he will discipline. He will chase him. Don't toy with eternal things. Don't toy with the things of God. Don't neglect such things today.

Consider this truth of God's discipline. It's alike to that of a loving Father. Hebrews 12 talks about the chastening of the Lord. Don't despise it. Whom the Lord loves he chastens.

[43:16] He receives, he scourges every son whom he receives. And so I urge you in closing, God will chasten us as backsliders. He's trying to get your attention when he's doing that.

And sin is a bitter fruit of misery and loss. Friends, leave your rebellion. Matthew Henry in Hebrews 6 tells about a true believer falling into sin.

He's commenting on Hebrews 6 which is a controversial passage of sorts. And he says, this is no proof of final apostasy of true saints. These true believers indeed may fall frequently and foully yet they will not totally nor finally from God.

The purpose and power of God, the purchase and the prayer of Christ, the promise of the gospel, the everlasting covenant that God has made with them, ordered in all things and sure, the indwelling of the spirit and the immortal seed of the word, these are their security.

The tree has not these roots, will not stand. But if we have these things, we will stand. So to the backslider, I urge you today, as Jeremiah did, return ye, return ye backsliding children and I will heal your backslidings.

[44:28] There is remedy, there is restoration. Think of the prodigal son, another example. Our God will replace your stinking rags with his robes of righteousness, with his royal robes and with his pardon and compassion.

Return, return unto the Lord and he will abundantly pardon. To close accounting time is coming. It's the end of the financial year. You've got to get your book sorted.

You don't know when this accounting time is going to be. Get ready for it. Get ready for it.

Accounting time is coming. You've got to give account of your stewardship. One day we will all stand before him and we'll all appear before the judgment seat of Christ.

Not for our salvation, but for rewards. And some will suffer loss of rewards. We won't labour it, but 1 Corinthians 3, read that for homework today. Some will have wood, hay, stumbles.

Some will have gold, silver, precious stones. But for those, even those that seem everything's a pile of ashes, he himself shall be saved, yet so is by fire.

[45:32] That's the encouragement. You know, I think I've totally wrecked it. I trusted God with my life and you get to that point where there's many years of regret, wasted years, backsliding years.

seems like you've got a pile of ashes, wood, hay, stubble, burnt up, nothing to show for your life, live. You shall be saved, so as by fire. But I pray you're not in that state.

I pray that might be true of you. I pray that there'll be something, there'll be some gold, there'll be some silver, there'll be some precious stones, as you labour to be accepted of him, as you must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, to receive the things done, whether good or bad.

Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, we persuade men. Dear backslider, stop your trifling ways, stop your sliding and start standing. God's desire is that we abound.

Rather than backslide, keep close to the Lord. It says men will always to pray and not to faint. Keep close to God, keep close to God, press into God, return to God, restore your first love.

[46:40] We'll have to answer to him. The day is coming, trust him now, trust him now, and he will complete what he has started, won't he? He

will complete what he has started, he will perform it, he will keep that which I've committed unto him against that day, and he will for you too. Commit your life to him, give your heart to him, trust him now, truly from your heart. He'll Thank you.