

Walk By the Spirit (Q & A)

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Preacher: Cedric Moss

[0 : 00] All right. We'll take some questions if you have any. Any questions on the sermon?! Questions, anyone?

I do. Good morning. I want you to comment on the concept of backsliding Christians. Yeah, there is no doubt that we see it in Scripture that people who belong to God do slide back at times in a life of sin, a pattern of sin.

And what Scripture calls that is backsliding. There are those who would say, well, when a person backslides, that they've lost their salvation.

Here again, Scripture is very, very clear. Jesus says, those who come to him, he says, I'll never turn you away.

[1 : 08] Those who truly come to him. And Scripture is pretty replete on this. But let me just establish something on this first point. Because to understand backsliding, you have to rid yourself of the false position that it is possible for a Christian to lose his or her salvation.

See, here's a very simple thing. At what point, if you believe a Christian can lose his or her salvation, at what point do they lose it or can they lose it?

Is it one sin or two sins or three sins or ten sins? At what point can they lose it? And when you think about it, sin is more than what we do.

So, for example, a person, let's say that a person were to commit a sin. And they believe that if they don't confess their sins and the Lord would have come, they die, they go to hell.

So they ask the Lord, Lord, forgive me for that sin. And they feel in and of themselves that they are perfect and righteous and ready in God's sight. But what about sins of our hearts and our attitude?

[2 : 23] What about sins that we don't even know about? Our only hope is Jesus Christ. Jesus is who we plead before a holy and righteous God.

So we don't make heaven because we just happen to not be without sin in and of ourselves. We make heaven because we have put our trust in Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, and God brings us into his family and makes us one of his children.

So that is the first thing that we have to accept. If you accept that, then the conclusion is that a person who goes back into a life of sin has not lost her salvation.

But here's what we know. If they truly belong to Christ, they will repent and they will turn away from that life of sin. One example you could think about, a vivid example, is the Apostle Peter.

Peter didn't just deny Christ once in a drop of a hat moment. Peter denied Christ three times in the same night.

[3 : 38] Peter said, in a decisive way. And Scripture says, when he realized a third time when the rooster crowed, he went out and he wept bitterly.

So what I would say, Fay, is that there are times when those who belong to Christ do sin.

They sin grievously and they sin even for an extended period of time. But the one who started their salvation will finish it.

He promised. Whatever he starts, he finishes. Think about it another way in this way. If anyone who was saved ends up in hell, it means that Jesus didn't tell the truth.

He didn't finish what he started because it didn't finish for that person. But he will bring to final salvation all those whom he saves.

[4 : 44] And the tragedy of the Christian life is that there are times when there are some of God's people who sin and they go into protracted patterns of sin.

We can also see the answer to what your question is right from the passage that we looked at this morning. Paul is warning those in the church that it is possible to manifest the works of the flesh.

Now, again, if that marks us, if that marks us, then he says you have no inheritance in the kingdom of God. But at least for the person who is in this backslidden condition, at some point, the only way we say they're backslidden is because they manifested the things of the Spirit and the life of the Spirit at some point.

So we said they ran back. But if they never came forward, then they never could go back. So at some point, they manifested the fruit of the Spirit.

And I think this is where we see the amazing grace of God. The grace of God is amazing because undeserving sinners are recipients of salvation.

[6 : 04] And I imagine that there will be some people who will be surprised that they make heaven because they think, oh, I did this or I did that, and so I'm lost forever.

They'll be surprised to make heaven. Then there'll be some will be shocked they didn't make heaven. There'll be those who Jesus talks about in the Sermon on the Mount who will say, Lord, Lord, didn't we, didn't we, didn't we?

And he says, I never knew you. Not I used to know you and I no longer know you. I never knew you. So that's a long response, but I trust that's helpful. Any other questions?

And I know for some, this may be new hearing it, but I encourage you, this is the witness of Scripture if you look at it. And I'll close that with one human illustration.

You know that all of us who have children, how many of us have children? What can your child do to cease being your child?

[7 : 06] Is there anything they could do to cease being your child? No? Think about the worst thing they could do. They could do something that lands them in Foxville Prison or elsewhere.

That person is still your child. And those who belong to God will always belong to God. Nothing separates us from the love of God in Jesus Christ, Paul tells us in Romans chapter 8.

And he gives this long list. And then he says, nothing. Nothing separates us. When God sets his love on a person, he does so in a determined, fixed, unbroken way.

And he will not let us go. We may let him go. He holds on to us. We sang about it this morning in How Deep the Father's Love for Us.

There's a line in it that says, why should I gain from his reward? I cannot give an answer. But this I know with all my heart, his wounds have paid my ransom.

[8 : 13] I trust that helps. Anyone else? Anyone else? At the back. Brother Kelly? Good morning.

Good morning. Along the question that Faith asked, is there a difference between apostatizing and backsliding? What would you say an apostasy is?

Yeah, that's a very good question. The Bible does talk about apostasy. It's those who turn away from the faith, those who repudiate the faith.

But here's the thing with apostasy. Apostasy is clear to God, not clear to us. So even if a person, and I'll just use an example.

Many of you know of Joshua Harris, who used to be a pastor in Sovereign Grace, made headline news a few months ago where he's repudiated the faith and turned away from it.

[9 : 14] And the term apostasy has been used to describe his turning away from the faith. Here's the question. Is his turning away final?

Only God knows. We don't know. So, yes, there will be people who in the end will prove to have apostatized, to turn away from their faith in a final way.

We have to wait until the last day and the judgment to know that. But God knows it. And so when we see a person who's turned away from the faith, we shouldn't just automatically give up hope on them because we don't know.

The person could return. The person may repent and recant the apostasy and return to Christ. So there is a difference, Brother Kelly, but we are limited in our understanding to know if the person's turning from faith.

[10 : 18] It's final. If it is final, it is apostasy. But we don't know it. Only God knows it. And so we should pray for them.

That's a good question. Anyone else? No? All right. Let's stand for our closing song.