

# The Unforgivable Sin

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[0:00] Good morning, guys. My name is Ed. If I haven't gotten a chance to meet you, I am a pastoral resident here at Trinity Cambridge. It's my joy and honor to preach God's word.

We're going to continue on in our Matthew series as we open up our Bibles. We're in Matthew 12, verses 22 to 37.

Matthew 12, 22 to 37. Let me pray for the reading and preaching of God's word.

Heavenly Father, it is not lost on me that someone who was once your enemy is now seated at your table.

A man that is always running to the far country is always welcomed back. That's your mercy.

[1:12] That's your kindness. And it is your mercy and kindness to give us your word. Lord, and even to give us a passage like this that has such a weighty and serious warning for us that there are consequences to sin.

And you warn us because you love us, Lord. We pray, give us soft hearts, open ears, teach us, address us by your word.

May we not reject your Holy Spirit, but let him move within us today to cut us to the heart, to lead us to repentance for your glory and for our good.

We look to you. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen. If you are able, please rise for the reading of God's word.

starting from verse 22. Then a demon oppressed man who was blind and mute was brought to him and he healed him so that the man spoke and saw.

[2:43] And all the people were amazed and said, can this be the son of David? But when the Pharisees heard it, they said, it is only by Beelzebul, the prince of demons, that this man casts out demons.

Knowing their thoughts, he said to them, every kingdom divided against itself is laid waste and no city or house divided against itself will stand. And if Satan casts out Satan, he is divided against himself.

How then will his kingdom stand? And if I cast out demons by Beelzebul, by whom do your sons cast them out? Therefore they will be your judges.

But if it is by the spirit of God that I cast out demons, then the kingdom of God has come upon you. Or how can someone enter a strong man's house and plunder his goods unless he first binds the strong man then indeed he may plunder his house.

Whoever is not with me is against me and whoever does not gather with me scatters. Therefore I tell you, every sin and blasphemy will be forgiven people.

[4:06] But the blasphemy against the spirit will not be forgiven. And whoever speaks a word against the son of man will be forgiven.

But whoever speaks against the Holy Spirit will not be forgiven. Either in this age or in the age to come. Either make the tree good and its fruit good or make the tree bad and its fruit bad for the tree is known by its fruit.

You brood of vipers, how can you speak good when you are evil? For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks. The good person out of his good treasure brings forth good and the evil person out of his evil treasure brings forth evil.

I tell you, on the day of judgment people will give account for every careless word they speak. For by your words you will be justified and by your words you will be condemned.

This is God's holy and authoritative word. You may be seated. Growing up, one of my favorite things to do was to play video games.

[5:24] As Mario, Sonic, Mega Man, you get lost. You play for hours on end. You can get stuck. You can get lost.

You can die. But rest assured, because of video games unique feature, you can reset. There is a reset button.

But life is not like video games. You don't get a reset button when you make mistakes. And the longer you live, the more instances that you just collect, you amass of times you wish you could hit rewind, times you wish you had that reset button.

We feel that most particularly with our words, don't we? Words are easy to say, but they're hard to hear often. They're light on our tongue, but fall heavy on our hearts.

There are a million things that we wish in our lifetimes that we could take back, but no, those words are out in the open, never to return back to your mouth.

[6:35] We know the power of words, don't we? You've seen this time and time again in the news. You can lose your job, your status, your friendships, your marriage, your ministry, all because of your words, maybe even a single utterance of words.

But what about your state for eternity? Pastor John Piper, he recounts a story about a woman who sought his counsel desperately.

And she recounts the story about when she was a young teenager, she got into a really bad fight with her mom, who was a Christian, and so to try to stick it to her, she locked herself in her room, locked herself in her closet, and tried to come up with every swear word, every oath against the Holy Spirit that she could come up with.

And now, decades later, she's coming before Piper, plagued with that memory. because of this passage that we just read this morning.

Our passage this morning speaks about how blaspheming against the Holy Spirit will not be forgiven either in this age or in the age to come.

[8:03] Has she committed the unforgivable sin before God? Has she doomed herself to eternal hell fire because of this single utterance of words?

How much she wished she could hit that reset button? And this woman's not alone. Many Christians have shuddered from this passage at the thought that your eternal destiny is sealed because you may have committed the unforgivable sin.

Maybe you feared that yourself. but by the grace of God I believe this passage as weighty and serious as it is it contains hope.

Hope for all of us who repent in the name of Jesus Christ by the power of the Holy Spirit. And that's the main point of my sermon today is to respond in repentance when the Holy Spirit points you to Christ.

to understand what the unforgivable sin is and isn't we have to understand it properly in its context. And so we'll break down this passage into the various stages of this conflict that Jesus has with the Pharisees.

[9:22] And first we'll look at the charge where we see the Pharisees charge against Jesus. Then Jesus' counter against them. And finally the pronouncement of the consequence that Jesus makes against the Pharisees.

Let's set the scene. Right before this Jesus withdraws from a synagogue because the Pharisees decide for the first time in the book of Matthew to conspire against him how to destroy him.

That's what verse 12 says. Up to this point in Matthew there's tension there's argument there's debate but never was there an intent to cause bodily harm.

You can see their tension their fighting is only ramping up now and it'll continue to grow and grow until words turn into weapons. And a conflict that just started in mere debate ends up with someone dying.

Verse 22 with not much detail efficiently and effectively explains the setting and the reason for Jesus' next clash with the Pharisees.

[10:41] A man oppressed by a demon is blind and mute. A man he's crippled physically and probably financially relationally.

He's brought before Jesus and we read just when we just read how Jesus gentle and lowly he will never break a bruised reed nor quench a smoldering wick in verse 20.

So holding up to that description Jesus looks upon this poor pitiful man and heals him from his blindness and muteness by exercising by casting out this demon.

And let not the brevity of this account take anything away from its exceptionality. In fact I think the simplicity of the description is to match really the ease at which Jesus casts out this demon.

As we'll read later on the Jews they were familiar with demon exorcisms. They've heard of them they maybe even have witnessed them but compared to these exorcists there's something in particular that the crowd sees in Jesus.

[11:51] Something that sets him apart from the rest. Because Jesus heals this man with great authority. Authority that the Jews have never seen before.

And that's precisely why the reaction to Jesus is that they start to wonder whether Jesus could be the long awaited foretold Messiah.

And you have to understand really the grand lofty prophecy that they think Jesus is fulfilling. The Jews believed that David would usher in eschatological eternal everlasting peace for the nation of Israel.

Only the most exceptional extraordinary man should ever be considered to fit that bill. God But as crazy as it is to think that this Galilean carpenter this nobody could be the next David the Jews they're the ones that are right.

They're the ones that are starting to connect the dots. But then directly compare the crowd's reactions to that of the Pharisees with their new founded resolve to destroy Jesus they start speaking insidious lies into the ears of the people to deceive them and to drive them away from Jesus.

[13:20] Crafty and cunning they know that they can't argue against the power of Jesus. No that's too visible for everyone to see. And so they resort to the only line of attack that's available for them to question what is invisible the origin of that power.

They claim that Jesus only performed this miracle because he is endowed with the power of Beelzebul by the prince of demons. They claim that he is a son and a servant of Satan.

This is an ancient example of fear-mongering. They influence and manipulate the crowd telling them don't be swayed. Jesus is not the son of David but he is the son of Satan himself.

If you follow him he will lead you to eternal hellfire. Now it seems like this line of accusation was a key play for the Pharisees because this is not the first time that you read this in the book of Matthew but in reality the third time but each time before this Jesus didn't address it he let it lie but now with their conflict ramping up knowing their malicious thoughts and their wicked intentions as the beginning of verse 25 says Jesus knows their intentions he addresses their claim head on and he does it without pulling any punches he exposes it for the wicked lie that it is he does so by countering with two specific reasons that we read in verses 25 to 29 first Jesus draws on common sense any kingdom city house divided against itself cannot stand in 1858

Abraham Lincoln before he was president he quoted this passage in a speech to warn that the United States could not stand if it was divided on this issue of slavery between the north and the south and we ourselves know in our history the damage the destruction that the civil war caused how much blood was shed it's common sense this is an obvious argument it is absurd that Satan would sabotage those in his own household his own kingdom Satan isn't dumb it makes no sense that he would shoot himself in the foot like this and then we move on to the second reason verse 27 where Jesus points out that their own sons cast out demons again this was a known part of Jewish life you see an example of this in scripture in

[16:25] Acts 19 with the sons of Sceva who are these itinerant Jewish exorcists and they unsuccessfully try to cast out a demon there we have evidence outside of the Bible in the famous first century Jewish historian Josephus when he testifies himself to witnessing exorcists or exorcisms If these Jewish exorcists cast out demons and they're seen generally as doing good things and if Jesus is performing the exact same thing then what is up with double standard here guys?

why is what they're doing of God and what Jesus is doing of Satan? A recent New York Times article explains how in India though the constitution should allow and give Christians the right to openly practice and preach their religion anti-conversion laws which in name supposedly ban the

conversion efforts of all and every religions in India are specifically prejudiced against Christianity these anti-conversion laws are so loosely written that virtually any church activity could be considered illegal with up to 10 years in prison one Christian said you could get thrown in jail for giving somebody ice cream these laws even allow

Hindu extremists to storm and raid churches and attack Christians meanwhile the double standard in upholding these anti-conversion laws allow Hindu Gar-Wapsi campaigns which translates in Hindu returning home these campaigns to set out to reconvert Christians back to Hinduism and it does so without any hindrance from the gospel or from the government and the article a Christian farmer there questioned I just don't get it what is what we do that makes them hate us so much and Jesus could have been wondering the same exact thing here what is it that he did that is so wrong their accusation makes no sense which is why Jesus says here that their exorcists will be their judge they stand as a reminder that they are operating under a double standard and what they're saying makes absolutely no sense and so if

Jesus is not casting out demons by demonic power then what is actually happening Jesus asked the Pharisees to consider a different possibility by clarifying it is not by Satan but by the spirit himself that he casts out demons again last week we read how Jesus fulfilled this prophecy in Isaiah 42 and specifically verse 18 says I will put my spirit upon him you now read of the evidence of that prophecy and again this should have been self evident what happened when Satan seized this man his health his well being his life suffered dramatically and that's what Satan does he brings ruin destruction to anything and anyone that he touches my personal experience with exorcisms! demonization is limited but in every instance it is clear this afflicted person is seriously struggling it's plain for anyone to see Christian non-Christian that this person needs help their families suffer their life suffers their health suffers they can't hold a job they can't go to school but when the spirit of God moves do you know what he does when he moves he brings recovery restoration renewal that's what the spirit of God is known for this is self evident and the Pharisees should have known this and if it is by the spirit of God that Jesus is performing these miracles then he explains how this is evidence that the kingdom of God has come the kingdom of

[21:10] God has broken in Matthew typically uses the phrase kingdom of heaven throughout his gospel over 30 times he uses that particular phrase but on rare occasions he uses the phrase kingdom of God instead to emphasize God's personal rule over his kingdom and here Matthew is intentionally setting up a contrast between the leaders of these two kingdoms!

that you read about on the one hand you have the kingdom of Satan and the other you have the kingdom of God and it's clear the old has passed and the new has come because the kingdom of God has broken in Jesus explains that the reason he can cast out Satan's servants is that he's already stronger than Satan himself and if you're already stronger than the final boss of a video game it's game over there's nothing left to be played it's an argument really from lesser to greater! in his words we're reminded that we need to think rightly about Satan about this spiritual war that we wage and when it comes to thinking and dealing with Satan Christians today make one or two errors the first one is underestimating Satan Jesus says clearly in verse 26 Satan has a kingdom Ephesians 2:2 calls him the prince of the power of the air to describe his spiritual authority his pervasive influence over the world the entire world we often think that spiritual warfare demonization it only goes on in an overseas context and mission fields but at home in the West it's not something we need to worry about it's not something we need to concern ourselves with but nothing could be further from the truth hear how

Paul describes our enemy in Ephesians 6 we do not wrestle against flesh and blood but against the rulers the authorities the cosmic powers over this present darkness over against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places these are no easy light small descriptors brothers and sisters we have an enemy that is active today and in any battle we would be at a disadvantage if we did not properly size up our enemy in the same way we ought to not flippantly casually think of Satan our adversary the devil is prowling around like a roaring lion looking for anyone to devour but if the first error is to underestimate Satan the second is to over estimate him it's clear that

Satan does have some power some control over the present age even now but it is a limited controlled authority it's like he's on a leash he never does anything apart from the sovereign will of our heavenly father and while he does wage war against the church of Christ we know and believe

that he who is in us is greater than he who is in the world so while we take Satan and his kingdom seriously there is absolutely no reason to fear him because Christians we can put on the full armor of God and wage war against the evil one and have victory if we stand firm against him he will flee from us German theologian Henrik Schleyer is quoted saying Christ has left the devil only whatever power our unbelief allows him so we wage war with the faith and trust in the power of

[26:03] Christ so the 10,000 foot overview we've now seen the charge now the counter we'll look now to the consequence there are consequences because there is no neutral ground when it comes to Jesus it is entirely binary You either are with Jesus or you are against Jesus and if you're not with Jesus the implication is that you are on the other side with Satan himself and this passage in reality is soaked in divine irony the Pharisees who accuse Jesus of being a servant of Satan are actually the ones they're actually the ones who are under the influence of the prince of the power of the air Jesus speaks a scathing rebuke against the Pharisees in John 8 he says you are of your father the devil and your will is to do your father's desires he does not stand in the truth because there is no truth in him when he lies he speaks out of his own character for he is a liar and the father of lies in our passage

Jesus even calls them a brood of vipers and he straight up calls them evil which is the same word that's used to describe Satan as the evil one and if you are truly with Jesus you don't just talk the talk but you walk the walk you work alongside him to gather and to seek the lost just like his chosen disciples are doing but again compare them to the Pharisees see what they're doing right now the crowd they're at a pivotal moment they're beginning to wonder if Jesus is their coming king but right when they're starting to connect the dots you know what the Pharisees are doing they pounce with lies with manipulation with fear mongering not to gather but to scatter the people away from Jesus this is evil satanic work and for their words they will flee and they themselves will be scattered on judgment day with that context set we now come to the difficult verses in verse 31 32 which are about the unforgivable sin in blaspheming!

against the Holy Spirit because of its difficulty some try to soften Jesus' words in saying that this sin is just really hard to forgive or it's really rare to forgive but that's not what Jesus is saying his words are decisive He says this sin will not be forgiven in this age or in the age to come it is eternally unforgivable!

But this passage does unreasonably and unjustifiably strike fear into the hearts of many believers because by and large I believe this passage has been misunderstood and misapplied out of its context the first word the therefore that you read there reminds us to connect these verses to the context that we just read about to look upon this blind mute man to see him see and speak again to see him released from demonic bondage to call the amazing self evident goodness of God in Jesus Christ through the power of the Holy Spirit to call that demonic satanic hellish diabolical vile atrocious there is something extremely wrong here something broken in these Pharisees

[30:27] Isaiah 520 is apt it says woe to those who call evil good and good evil who put darkness for light and light for darkness who put bitter for sweet and sweet for bitter if they are calling evil good and good evil truly what hope is there for them if to them two plus two equals negative four on what basis can you reason with them there is nothing you can do to convince them for if down is up and up is down in their warped distorted minds though their eyes might see good it gets translated into something evil that was the context before now let's look at the context after these verses in verses 33 to 35

Jesus has already drawn the same analogy earlier on in the Sermon on the Mount where he condemned false prophets and this time he uses the same analogy to condemn the Pharisees the holy and the esteemed ones of Israel pointing to the fact that the Pharisees accusation it's not a simple mistake it's not a momentary slip up slip up bad fruit is evidence of being a bad tree there are thrice repeated deliberate and heinous accusations come out of an evil hardened heart for out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks and these trees are consistently persistently bad which only produces bad fruit and bad speech Jesus even switches!

up the analogy in verse 35 to a secret treasure he speaks about a secret treasure there but the idea is the same the words that we speak the visible fruit of our lives bring to light what is hidden inside and from that context I think we have to understand that the blasphemy!

against the Holy Spirit seems not to be the cause but the result the culmination the final fruit demonstrating ultimate persistent hard-heartedness and rebellion against God it's not the cause it's not that you can accidentally slip up and blaspheme against the Holy Spirit and then you're done your eternal fate is sealed it's not like that but it is the final confirmation that you are indeed a bad tree bearing bad fruit that's ultimately why this particular sin won't ever be forgiven because when one blasphemes against the Spirit it's confirmation of his eyes cold frostbitten heart that will never find the place of repentance again so the reason you won't be forgiven is because you won't ever repent for truly a bad tree will never be able to produce the good fruit of repentance that's also key to understanding the next verse in verse 32 why

Jesus says that if you blaspheme against him it will be forgiven but if you blaspheme against the Holy Spirit it won't be forgiven I spent a long time trying to understand this verse it's clearly not because the son is inferior to the Holy Spirit so then what does this verse mean I think the key to understanding this verse lies in the differences in the roles that the Trinity play each person of the triune Godhead and while each person of the Trinity is fully God they do play different functions they play different roles in creation and in salvation for example the father did not die on the cross the son did and the son did not send the father the father sent the son succinctly put the father originates the son accomplishes and the spirit completes it is the spirit's unique role then to apply and to complete the work of the son who is sent by the father to spiritually dead hard hardened people like us to open our eyes and to grant repentance to breathe new life into us so if we blaspheme against the holy spirit who is there left then to save you if we persistently reject all of the spirit's appeals to repent over and over and over again brothers and sisters there is a line in the sand that if you cross there is no point of turning back in extreme cold you will go through four stages of frostbite the first is frostnip where your skin is cold turns red you can get a little tingly the next is superficial frostbite where the skin will turn pale and hard then you progress to deep frostbite where the skin and the underlying tissues turn solid if you still cannot get warm by that point you will progress to fourth degree frostbite where you are frozen down to the bone at every point before this last stage there is at least a chance that you can regain feeling if you can get warm again but if you progress to fourth degree frostbite there is no return there is permanent irreversible damage in the same way it is possible to back slide so long so deeply that you lose the ability to repent if you continually reject the work of the

[37:33] Holy Spirit pointing you to Christ if you reject the warmth that he alone offers you you get closer and closer to that point of no return so putting all that we know together here's my definition of the blasphemy against the Holy Spirit it's taken largely from Jonathan Pennington it is a specific informed malicious irreversible and final rejection of the Holy Spirit in declaring that the work and person of Jesus Christ is demonic in nature so if you are here today and you know you haven't repented of your sins but you feel the Holy Spirit compelling you to turn to Christ to believe on him for the salvation of your souls do not delay today if you hear his voice do not harden your hearts if you feel the pangs of guilt and shame though it is painful praise

God because sin has not numbed you beyond repair medically speaking when you deal with an injury feeling pain is bad but feeling no pain is much much much worse only truly the dead feel nothing so those pangs of guilt they're a sign of life and life always has hope so if you know that there's something you ought to repent of but you've been dragging your feet make no more delay brothers and sisters while the spirit compels you to turn to Christ make no delay for the Puritan preacher Richard Baxter once said the longer your delay the more your sin gets strength and rooting if you cannot bend a twig how will you be able to bend it when it is a tree given our definition this means that the blasphemy of the spirit is not it's not just an instance of swearing using God's name in vain or careless joke about the Holy Spirit nor is it committing a grievous sin like adultery murder or abortion nor is it a sin let me be loud and clear you haven't you have not blasphemed against the Holy Spirit if you have any sense of remorse or desire to repent it is clear that you nor the woman that

John Piper counseled haven't committed this eternal sin for if you commit this sin it is always always always paired with lifelong stubborn rejection of all things good and godly and a refusal to repent forever so we remember the context Jesus is not warning his devoted disciples or the curious crowd but to the fiendish Pharisees to the men who are currently conspiring against him how to destroy him this is what the warning is intended for this is who the warning is intended for it is a warning not primarily for the stumbling believer with a tender conscience but it's for the blind arrogant proud enemies of Christ I wonder if our misapplication and our misunderstanding of this verse is not just because we've ripped this passage out of context and thrown it any which way but it's because we actually wonder that

God is like this he's really this vindictive trifling we read this passage and tremble in fear because we think God is this overly scrupulous all-seeing eye who is all too eager to pounce upon our sin all too eager to find that one small tiny error that leads to damnation and death but that's not the meaning of our passage nor the character of our gracious God while this passage is sobering about what will not be forgiven!

[43:05] and we do want to feel the weight of that warning it is important to pause and to meditate on what is clearly stated of what will be forgiven what is crystal clear in this passage is good news for us repentant sinners very very good news indeed for we have the assurance that if we repent every sin and blasphemy will be forgiven I want you to observe the imbalanced ratio of what will and won't be forgiven Jesus says that every sin but one will be forgiven what will be forgiven is vastly greater than what won't be forgiven Satan will do anything we talked about this Satan will do anything to attack God's people and he does this by manipulating and twisting God's words it's clear that you see it right in the beginning of scripture in the garden

God gave Adam and Eve the freedom to eat of all the trees in the garden all but one and what does Satan do Satan twists that into saying did God actually say you shall not eat of any tree in the garden when in fact God said you may surely eat of every tree all but one in the same way Satan can twist the generosity and the graciousness of Jesus he could twist this passage in saying that every sin and blasphemy except for the one will be forgiven that's what this passage says but he twists it to make us think that God is harsh unforgiven and won't forgive us of any sin we are supposed to walk away with a sobering warning but we'd be remiss not to acknowledge God's radical generous mercy if we walk away thinking that God is so strict so harsh so unforgiving pitying the Pharisees rather than thinking that blaspheming against the spirit is such a wicked and heinous sin then we are missing the point this passage also highlights Christ's radical humility when he says that every word spoken against him will be forgiven he is the son of God God incarnate the preeminent one the alpha and the omega the beginning and the end the lord of heaven and earth but he says that everything spoken against him will be forgiven I have never met nor will I meet a single person so open hearted so loving so secure so strong so patient and so gracious to say to say that

I can take anything that you throw at me any nasty remark any betrayal any repeated offense even up to 70 times 70 times I can and I will forgive you we all have a limit of how much we can forgive and without the spirit supernatural help we'll find that that limit is embarrassingly small but for all who repent the grace of Jesus Christ is a well that we can draw from time and time and time again never to reach the bottom and there is no greater evidence and assurance of that forgiveness that eternal forgiveness that we have in Jesus Christ than the cross because only Jesus suffered bled and died on the cross and he resurrected on the third day do we have the assurance that every sin every blasphemy will be forgiven through the cross

Jesus offers us that seemingly unfair video game like reset button to wipe away all our sins to toss them to the bottom of the sea to remember them no more and throughout our Christian life it's clear that we have the complete finished work of Christ and because of that the forgiveness that we have is absolutely complete we'll never grow in forgiveness we'll never get more forgiveness whether we're saved yesterday or 50 years ago we are completely finally justified and forgiven all to the same degree that objective forgiveness doesn't change or grow but we do grow in the subjective feeling of being forgiven my friends do you feel forgiven today do you feel loved or do you feel like he still holds something against you that

[48:51] God might still be disappointed in you that this was just another week where you didn't do enough you didn't read your Bible you didn't pray you didn't evangelize enough you fell into that same temptation you couldn't control your anger you still can't forgive that person do you question that God has fully completely absolutely forgiven you that he doesn't hold anything against you that there's no long standing grudge that he has against you that if he prays there's nothing in the back of his head that irks him about you there are those who are walking this earth who have committed the unforgivable sin but truly only God knows who they are we are not the final arbiters of that for

I would presume that many would have thought that Paul would have committed this sin when he blasphemed the church and persecuted Christians much like these Hindu extremists today he threw Christians to jail and approved when they were executed he even was a Pharisee like these men but he writes in 1st Timothy 1 of the amazing mercy of Christ Jesus to a former blasphemer like him and we read this passage for the assurance of pardon I'm going to read it again though formerly I was a blasphemer a persecutor an insolent opponent I received mercy because I had acted ignorantly in unbelief and the grace of our Lord overflowed for me with the faith and love that are in Christ Jesus the saying is trustworthy and deserving of full acceptance that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners of whom

I am the foremost but I receive mercy for this reason that in me as the foremost Christ Jesus might display his perfect patience as an example to those who were to believe in him for eternal life Paul's story my my own story displays Jesus perfect patience for all repentant sinners so if you repent no sin is beyond God's mercy so when the spirit points you to Christ make no delay respond in repentance our ending verses teach us that by our words we will be judged on the last day it is a specific final warning against careless empty idle words like blaspheming the Holy Spirit for if one speaks those words from a long standing rebellious hardened heart

God hears and it will result in his condemnation but by our words brothers and sisters by our words we will be justified as Paul says in Romans 10 if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead you will be saved for with the heart one believes and is justified and with the mouth one confesses and is saved thank you Lord for the scripture says everyone everyone who believes in him will not be put to shame for everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved let nothing hinder you from coming to Christ today let's pray Lord we are sobered by our sin by this warning we thank you that it reminds us that we are not our saviors we cannot save ourselves but we turn to you we flee to you we run to you Lord Jesus we confess your name we believe in you and we repent turn to you in all things lead us through breakthrough today for those who haven't repented of their sins bring breakthrough for those who are dragging their feet in repentance help them to know that it is your kindness that leads us to repentance and may we be amazed in the mercy that when we return from the far country that you endow us with the best gifts you throw the biggest party and you wrap us around your arms we turn to you in Jesus name we pray!

[ 54:22 ] Amen!