

Mark 14:54

by Chuck Smith

Chuck Smith teaches on the dangers of backsliding and the importance of maintaining a strong devotional life, warning that it is only one short step back to God.

Scripture: Matthew 26:33, Mark 14:54

Topics: "Spiritual Backsliding", "Return to Fellowship"

Description

Chuck Smith discusses the theme of spiritual backsliding as illustrated by Peter's journey in Mark 14:54. He emphasizes how Peter's strong confession of faith quickly turned into denial, highlighting the dangers of challenging God's word and relying on self-confidence. Smith points out that a decline in one's devotional life is a key indicator of drifting away from Christ, as seen in Peter's actions. He warns against seeking warmth and comfort in worldly distractions instead of returning to true fellowship with Jesus. Ultimately, Smith reassures that no matter how far one has drifted, a return to God is always just one step away.

Transcript

"FOLLOWING AFAR OFF"

Intro: Two vastly contrasting statements. "Thou art the Christ the Son of the living God." (vs. 71. One a strong confession of faith, an equally strong denial. Let us trace the steps of backsliding.

I. THEY BEGAN ALMOST THE MOMENT HE MADE HIS STRONG CONFESSION OF FAITH AS THE LORD SPOKE TO THEM ABOUT HIS DEATH, PETER SAID, "BE THAT FAR FROM THEE LORD."

A . Began with the challenge of the Word of Christ.

1. The Lord is saying things he doesn't understand.
2. Rather than just accepting by faith he challenges.

B. As long as Jesus talked of building His church or establishing the kingdom, Peter with Him.

1. Talk of a cross is foreign to Peter's concept.

C. There began an estrangement.

1. There is no static relationship with Christ. You are growing closer or drifting further.

II. VS. 29 -- "ALTHOUGH ALL SHALL BE OFFENDED, YET WILL NOT I."

A. Again he challenges the Words of Christ.

1. He thinks he knows himself better than the Lord does.

2. If the Lord warns you of a danger you better listen.

3. "Take heed when you think you stand lest you fall."

B. He is boasting in himself.

1. Yet will not I.

2. Comparative boasting, though the rest might, I won't.

3. We are usually not as strong as we think we are.

III. VS. 37 -- "AND HE CAME AND FOUND THEM SLEEPING AND HE SAID UNTO PETER, SIMON, SLEEPEST THOU?"

A. One of the first outward signs of backsliding is a failure in our devotional life.

1. I begin to attend church once on Sunday instead of twice.

2. Then when I wake up I look out to see if it's raining before I decide.

3. My Bible reading slacks off, I don't find it as exciting as I once did.

4. I am sleeping instead of praying.

a. After all I will never deny Him.

IV. VS. 47 --"AND ONE OF THEM THAT STOOD BY DREW A SWORD AND SMOTE A SERVANT OF THE HIGH PRIEST, AND CUT OFF HIS EAR." JOHN TELLS US THAT ONE WAS PETER.

A. Trying to substitute works for true devotion.

1. We often times seek works as a path back to full fellowship.

a. "I've been growing cold lately, maybe I ought to teach a Sunday School class and get back into it."

B. Classic example of zeal without knowledge.

1. Back to basic difference, Peter is still trying to fight idea of cross.

V. VS. 54 --"AND PETER FOLLOWED HIM AFAR OFF."

A. So many endeavoring to do that today.

1. Come, but not regularly.

2. Give, but not much.

3. Pray, in great emergencies and all else has failed.

B. Enough of Jesus to get them in, they hope, but not enough to cramp their style.

1. Jesus is welcome if He will promise not to spoil their fun.

VI. VS. 54--"AND HE WARMED HIMSELF AT THE FIRE."

A. As you grow cold you seek to find warmth.

1. Tragically so many turn to the enemies fire.

a. "I was becoming much too narrow."

1. Stopped going to Vegas.

b. Think I'll head to the disco-tec tonight.

B. Tis never a true fire lust an illusion.

C. What is the enemies fire?

1. The world seems to know; some maiden will usually come up and say, "I thought you were a Christian," What are you doing here?

VII. NO MATTER HOW FAR AWAY YOU HAVE DRIFTED, IT IS ONLY ONE SHORT STEP BACK.

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