

From Won't to Can't

by Jim Cymbala

Jim Cymbala's sermon emphasizes the transformative power of God's forgiveness and the importance of sincere confession in achieving peace with God.

Duration: 28:59

Scripture: Matthew 1:21, Matthew 7:7, John 12:37, John 12:46, Romans 3:23, Romans 6:23, Revelation 3:20

Topics: "Overcoming"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher focuses on the lack of belief in Jesus despite witnessing his miraculous signs. He emphasizes that people choose not to believe rather than being unable to believe. The preacher highlights three reasons why people refuse to believe: pride, reluctance to ask for forgiveness, and unwillingness to surrender their lives to Christ. He then discusses the story of David, who experienced turmoil and lack of peace due to his sins until he confessed and sought forgiveness from God. The preacher emphasizes that God is eager to forgive and offers pardon and joy through Jesus Christ.

Transcript

Blessed is he whose transgressions are forgiven, whose sins are covered. Blessed is the man whose sin the Lord does not count against him, and in whose spirit is no deceit. Happy to be envied, full of spiritual joy that you can't take away, is the person not who's never sinned, but the one whose transgressions have been forgiven.

God has decided to say, I forgive you. I put it away. I forgive you.

What a relief, what a joy to know that your mess ups and your sins have not only been forgiven, but notice this, whose sins are covered. And now the picture in the Hebrew language is that a huge pile of dirt has been put on what we would call our sins, and they've been covered so nobody can see them anymore. Not even God.

How happy is the person who knows my sins have been forgiven. You know when you offend someone, someone you love, it's a bad feeling to be in their presence when you know they've been hurt, until they say, I forgive you. And then, oh man, it's so good, you're back in favor and fellowship.

And then to know your sins are covered, but more than that, it says, blessed is the man whose sin the Lord does not count against him, and in whose spirit is no deceit. That means who's sincere about the

whole thing. Imagine, blessed, how happy is the person that the Lord says, I'm not gonna count your sin against you.

Well this was all a prophecy and a picture of what would happen when Jesus came. In the Old Testament, they only had animal sacrifices, but that was just temporary until God sent his own son. And when Christ died on the cross and shed his blood as a substitutionary death, he was our substitute.

When he died for us, he had no sins to die for. When he died for us, it made it possible for God to say, I'm not counting your sins against you because I punish my own son for your sins. I can let you go.

They can be covered, they can be forgiven. That's the ultimate fulfillment of Psalm 32. And I'm not gonna count your sins against you.

In fact, the word justified means just as if you've never sinned. Is that a good feeling? How many are Christians today and know what it is to be justified? Just as, imagine that, just as if we've never sinned. Sin's covered, transgression's forgiven.

Oh, what a joy. Then you lay in bed at night, it doesn't matter if your finances are high or low, at least you have peace with God. Because if your finances are high and you don't have peace with God, what good are the finances? What good is anything? But at any moment, you could die and face God and now you know things aren't right with God.

That's the joy, that's the I won't go back, can't go back to the way it used to be. Now that I have found the peace and the joy that it is with knowing my sins are God. Brothers and sisters, remember, his name shall be called Jesus, for he shall save his people from their sins.

That's not polite talk in Congress or the White House or in the media, but I wanna tell you that's the most important word after Jesus you have to remember, is he came to forgive us of our sins where we've broken his law. It doesn't matter if you thought it was right. You broke his law, you broke God's holy law.

I've broke God's holy law and now God through Jesus has said, your sins are forgiven. I cover them so that nobody will see them. And guess what? I won't count them ever against you.

No time in the future will God will say, listen, I wanna bring up something that you did back in 1999, we gotta talk. Never. Oh, how many are happy? It's all gone.

Can we put our hands together? So that's the message of the good news of Jesus Christ. That God, listen, holy God legitimately forgives us because someone else pays for our sins. That's the good news.

God can't forgive you and I of our sins just by saying, let's forget it ever happened. No, no, no, no. Sin so serious that he had to send his son to provide this way of pardon and joy and peace in our lives.

Now, this man, David, was an unusual man who wrote this psalm because he knew what it was not to live with that peace and joy because what had happened in his life, and tell me if you can empathize with this, what had happened in his life is he had violated God's law, he has sinned, and he tried to cover it up. He tried to hide it. He tried to keep it so nobody would ever know about it, even God, but that's a joke, right? How are you gonna hide something from God? Now, listen to the other side of the coin because the Bible tells it like it is.

Listen what the same psalmist said. Look, when I kept silent, my bones wasted away through my groaning all day long, for day and night your hand was heavy upon me. My strength was sapped as in the heat of summer.

Sila, and sila could mean possibly there, meditate and think about this. It's a mysterious term, but it probably means something like that. When I kept silent and I covered up my sin and I tried to fool people and I didn't bring it to you, God, and I didn't deal with it honestly, he said, oh man, it was horrible because what God does is he starts to deal with you and chasten you when you're hiding sin.

He doesn't wanna hurt you. If he wanna hurt you, he'd just blow us all up off the earth, no. David said, my bones wasted away as if I lost all my strength.

I had an inward groaning day and night. Your hand, what hand? The invisible hand of God was heavy upon me. My strength was sapped as in the heat of summer.

I had no peace. I had no rest. People could give me the best food.

People could give me a check for \$10,000. Nothing meant anything to me because when God wants to get your attention, life becomes pretty miserable. Does anyone here experience anything like that in your whole life? Oh, I have.

So here he goes from how happy and how blessed is the person whose sin is forgiven and whose sin is covered and God doesn't count that sin against him but he said, man, when I kept silent, when I tried to cover it up and hide it, when I didn't deal with it, when I wasn't sincere about the thing, one of the inmates that I visit in Angola Prison, he has this great sentence that he says, he says, you know, it's hard to find people that are real about the things of God. They're real. They're not phony.

They're not just talking one thing and living another. They not only talk, they talk, but they walk the walk. Not that they're perfect, but they're real, they're sincere.

So here's a great man of God who wrote a lot of Psalms and Jesus is called the Son of David. He tells us his experience and maybe you're having that today. Maybe you're somebody here who doesn't know God, never come into relationship with Christ, you've never been born again.

Somebody says, you know, to me, it's hard being a Christian. Oh yeah, no, to me, it's hard not being a Christian. Oh yeah, it's really hard being a Christian.

Someone says, it's hard to walk and stay close to the Lord. No, let me tell you from my life, it's hard not to walk close with the Lord because when he puts his hand on you and he starts your inward bones and your strength starts being sapped and going away, then that's a bad place to be in because there's no place to hide from God. When God wants to chasten us and correct, where are you gonna hide? You gonna go under the bed, under the cover? He's everywhere.

Here's the end of the story. He said, man, what I went through when I kept silent. Think how close David was from having everything change.

He tells us how close it is. This is how close some of you are from that peace and that joy that God wants you to have or you remain with that inner turmoil and that mess that you carry around inside. Listen, all he had to do, it's as simple as apple pie, simple as ABC, and except you become like a little child, you won't

receive this, but look.

And then he said, then I acknowledge my sin to you. You don't have to talk to a priest. You don't have to tell me.

Then I acknowledge my sin to you and I did not cover up my iniquity. I said, I will confess my transgressions to the Lord. Boom, and you forgave the guilt of my sin.

What an amazing God. David says, what am I knocking myself out for? Why am I trying to run from God? Why am I trying to build a life without God's help? I'm gonna confess what I'm doing is wrong to God. I'm gonna confess that secret thing, that hidden thing, that stuff I look at that I shouldn't be looking at, that those phone calls, those text messages, that relationship, that stealing, that cheating, that lying, that hate, that unforgiveness, it's eating me up and I have no peace and joy.

For what, poor Kay, for what? What am I doing it for? He said, no, I came to my senses. I'm gonna acknowledge my sins. I'm gonna tell God, God, I messed up, God, and the moment he said, God, forgive me, I confess my sin, the minute he did it, God said, come on now, come on, help him now, bless him.

I washed that thing away. Look how God, how anxious God is to forgive us. He doesn't say, now I'm gonna watch you for six months to see if you mean business.

The moment you ask God for forgiveness, it comes in the very same instant. Can we clap our hands and say amen? And I wanna help somebody here. I wanna help somebody.

When you're sincere and you confess your sins, no matter how you feel or don't feel, the devil will come to your mind and say, you're not forgiven, do you feel forgiven? Feel my foot. You don't have to feel anything. You stand on God's word.

You say, God, I confess my sins to you, and right now I claim forgiveness from you. My sins have been washed away. Can we say one last amen by clapping our hands? Not by feeling, by the word of God.

Not by feeling, by the word of God. And think what happened. It all turned.

I've seen this all my life now in the ministry. Things turn on what happens in 60 seconds. David said, I confess my, I said, what am I doing? I'm gonna acknowledge.

I'm not gonna hide this anymore. I'm through justifying myself. Notice, I acknowledge.

That's the hard part for us because we're all born proud. I acknowledge it. I manned up, I womaned up, and I said, it's me.

I'm wrong. And the minute I did that, God said, no, help him. You're forgiven.

Now I'm gonna start to do new things in your life because that obstruction has been removed. So then the Bible says in that passage, look at it again. Therefore, let everyone who is godly pray to you while you may be found.

Surely when the mighty waters rise, they will not reach him. Therefore, wherefore? Whenever you see therefore, you ask wherefore. It goes back to that verse before.

Therefore, I acknowledge my sins. So I acknowledge them, and I ask God for mercy. I said, I will confess, and you forgave the guilt of my sin.

Therefore, let everyone who is godly, who believes in God, devoted to God, pray to you while you may be found. Now what would that mean? There's gonna come a moment where God can't be found? I thought God is everywhere. And here's what I wanna leave you with.

One of the most mysterious things in the Bible is something called judicial blindness. Listen, judicial blindness. It's a solemn thing, and I want everybody to listen, no one to move.

But as a man of God, someone trying to be a pastor, I have to give you the whole counsel of God. God can't be found by some people, not because God is hiding, but there won't change to can't. You know, there's a difference when I say I won't do something to I can't do something.

I can say I won't go down those steps, right? I can say also this, I can't fly around this room and then land back here, I can't do that. Won't means my will won't do it. I don't wanna do it.

Hey, I don't wanna do it. Can't means I'm unable to do it. When Jesus was on earth, he was doing all these miracles, he showed all the people, raised Lazarus from the dead, he was healing people, he was teaching, they knew no one ever spoke like this, evil spirits were being cast out.

Jesus gave a multitude of proofs that he was the son of God. And now comes this mysterious verse. Notice the change of the verb, watch, look.

John chapter 12, even after Jesus had done all these miraculous signs in their presence, they still, what? Would not believe in him. He did all of that, and it wasn't because they couldn't believe, they chose not to believe. They said, no, this is, listen, most of the people all around this church right here and this community and in this country, they won't believe, it's not that they can't believe.

No, no, I can't believe that stuff that you're into. No, no, no, it starts with you won't believe that because to believe it means you have to humble yourself and say that you've sinned and broken God's law and your pride won't let you do that. Number two, you're gonna have to humble yourself and ask for forgiveness, and you don't want to do that.

Number three, and it's the hardest part for some people, maybe in this room, is to really be a Christian means you have to give your life away to Christ. And most people, a lot of people say, no, I'm not giving my life to anyone. I'm gonna run my life, I'm not giving my life to anyone.

But that's what a Christian is. The same blood that pardons also purchases. What pardons us purchases us, and now we belong to Christ.

So after Jesus did all of that, the Bible says, they would not, when you talk to a lot of people and say, I just can't get past all the questions of faith and the proofs of God, I've got so many questions, I just can't believe, most people won't believe, they don't want to believe because the cost is too much for them. They won't humble themselves. So after doing all those signs, it says, they would not believe in him.

And this was to fulfill the word of Isaiah, the prophet. Lord, who has believed our message? Keep that up there. And to whom has the arm of the Lord revealed? Isaiah, hundreds of years before, knew this would happen, that God would send his son, that his son would speak and act in a way to show people, this is no

ordinary guy.

This is no ordinary guy. Even now, people who don't believe in Jesus, look at his words and say, how did he ever come up with those things? So Isaiah said, who's believed our report? He came, he did all that he did, and people did not believe it. And now, look, for this reason, they could not believe because as Isaiah says elsewhere, he has blinded their eyes and deadened their hearts so they can neither see with their eyes nor understand with their hearts nor turn, and I would heal them.

It started with, I won't believe. And when you keep hearing the message some of you hear, you keep hearing and hearing and hearing, and then you don't wanna get right with God, you don't humble yourself, or we tell people and tell people, and we share, and they hear, and they hear again, and they got a mother praying for them, and they hear again, and they hear again, and they say, no, I won't believe. There comes some mysterious moment where God brings judicial blindness and says, you do not want me, then you will not have me, and now you can't hear me.

It's not that God isn't speaking, there's such a callous, they can't hear it anymore. Oh, my goodness, that is one scary thought. It starts with, I won't believe.

No, I'm not giving in to the things of God, I'm not giving in to that inner voice, and some of you know here, you've come to church, you've heard God deal through your conscience, you've heard him whisper in your heart, and he keeps saying, would you come all the way and come into the light? All you have to do is humble yourself and make me Lord of your life, and then you won't, and you won't. I hope it's for no one here, but there is such a moment then where God says, fine, now your ear will be deadened, and your heart will be heavy and thick, and now you can't. That is very mysterious ground to me, but it's found in the Bible, and we know that it's true because in his own hometown, Jesus couldn't do many miracles because they were so hard of heart, they would not believe in him.

And all they have to do, and all you have to do today is say, God, I need you. If he's speaking to you, that means he can still be found. I have one relative and one dear friend.

When you talk to them, and they grew up and were better Christians than me growing up, and now when you talk to them, it's like trying to talk to that stand or to that speaker. Nothing, no response, nothing, no feeling, no conscience, nothing. They're like dead people walking.

I don't want that for my life. I wanna stay tender to God, I wanna stay sensitive to God, and I wanna respond when he calls. How many are with me? Say amen.

I wanna respond when he calls. I know that was heavy on you right there, but I have to tell you, it's in the Bible. They wouldn't believe, and this fulfilled the word.

They couldn't believe because they rejected it so many times. Someone came up to me some months ago here in the church and said, Pastor, do you think I've committed the unpardonable sin? I said, what do you mean? They said, there's a sin in the Bible that says there's no pardon for it. I said, tell me something.

Do you believe in God? Yes. Do you feel convicted about how you're living? Yes. You have not committed the unpardonable sin.

As long as you're alive and you're listening and you wanna respond and you hear his voice, but don't harden your heart, the Bible says, as they did in the wilderness. He kept knocking and talking. They kept

saying no, no, close the door, close the door.

Next thing you know, you can't open the door. Door's jammed. Let's pray together.

Anybody here say, Pastor? That word was for me. God's been dealing with me about some things. Listen, I'll fight for just one tonight.

Lord, give me just one who's sincere and real about the things of God. Your life isn't the way it should be. You walk with the Lord.

You're being in the light. Your trust in God is not complete. He's not the Lord of your life.

You're trying to run your life and then bring him in when you're in trouble. It won't work that way. And you know he's speaking to you tonight.

Just even one of you. Or five of you or 10 or whatever. All you have to do is confess your sins.

Think how easy it is. Then I said, wait a minute, I'm gonna acknowledge my sin. And I said, Lord, it's me.

And you forgave the guilt of my sin. He'll do it tonight. He'll get you a new beginning, a new start.

Anybody here wanna just step out of your seat and say, Pastor, pray for me tonight. Before we hand out food, before I sing a final song, just say a prayer over me. Anybody here? Thank you.

Just come from your seat. Every eye closed. Lord, don't let anybody here harden their heart.

Because every time we harden our heart, a callus forms. Every time we're not sincere and don't get right, it's that much harder to reach him. But you're full of mercy and you're here today.

We're gonna confess our sin. We're gonna come in the light. We're gonna follow Jesus.

Satan, we resist you. The blood of Jesus is against you. See, that's the problem of being religious and not really in relationship with the Lord.

And even after he had done all those things, they would not believe. And this fulfilled the word spoken another place by the prophet Isaiah, who has believed our report. And then they couldn't believe.

They had heard truth so many times and then never let it get in their heart that now they became immune to it. The voice wasn't heard anymore. The knock on the heart wasn't felt anymore.

Does anybody here today that God is dealing with, I speak to you, not down to you, I'm not condescending. I'm telling you, run to the arms of God tonight. Run to Jesus, get mercy, and get a new beginning in your life.

I'm not gonna pray until I give everyone a chance. There's a danger in sitting in services. The Bible says, to whom much is given of the same, to whom much is required.

You can't keep listening and hearing and never get it right. Get it right. Now just the folks in the front, repeat after me and let's pray.

Dear Jesus, thank you for your love. I hear you knocking on the door of my heart. I want things to be right between you and me.

Be my Savior and be my Lord. I acknowledge my sins, I confess them to you. I blame no one else, I am responsible.

But there's mercy with you and that's why I love you. You have not thrown me away but you brought me here tonight. To cleanse me and give me a new beginning I Put my faith in you For I believe in my heart that you are the Son of God You died for me You rose again from the dead You are alive today And you are with me Thank you for pardon Thank you.

I can go home happy Satan The blood of Jesus is against you. I defeat you. I overcome you and all your plans through Jesus Christ my lord Thank you father for sending your son To die for me Amen amen Amen Now look, I don't usually do this everyone just look up here look up here all my friends that are here Turn around face the congregation.

Come on See all these people can we put our hands together and thank God for every single one of them Have any of you have any of you never been baptized in Water as a Christian a Christian baptism lift your hand if you've never been baptized never been baptized Okay, there's about ten of you or more. Okay, you need to fill out that card and write baptism because we're gonna Process you okay? the rest of you I Want you to join me look at me you can be here Tuesday night You can be with can you come here Tuesday night? Yes, you can the doors open at 5 you come Can you come here every one of you come We'll pray together. You'll get stronger together.

Am I right? Are you serious about what we just prayed? Come on. Let's all everybody give God a hand clap of praise Everybody stand everybody stand Father let your blessing be upon your people as We collect hand out the tickets in the lobby for the food. Let there be joy among your people Oh, how blessed is the man whose sin has been forgiven Whose transgressions are covered and who sinned the Lord will not count against him Thank you for mercy and pardon in Jesus name go with us get us home safely We pray for the families of those in Colorado who lost loved ones and there are others that are in the hospital God Be with them and help them today.

Come on. Let's just lift up both our hands for those people Lord Help those families right now. Help those families Lord comfort run to them right now Lord and help them And open their hearts to you.

We pray in Jesus name and everyone said Okay, every man hug about five or six men every lady hug a bunch of ladies

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