

Matt 18:15-17

15 Moreover if thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone: if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother.

16 But if he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established.

17 And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the church: but if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican.

KJV

If you were not saved, your greatest tragedy could not occur before you die. No matter what you would lose before you die, there is nothing you could lose that would be a greater tragedy than losing your own soul.

If you were lost, the greatest tragedy of all would be if you fully expected the rewards of heaven only to find your self a prisoner in eternal hell.

As much as God wants you and I to have assurance of our salvation, He does not want us to have a false assurance. He does not want us to be deceived and believe that we have acquired something that we have not acquired, that we possess something that we do not possess, that we have a guarantee that is not guaranteed.

In His Word, God says that faith in Jesus is the only way to have assurance that you are safe from hell.

In His Word, God He also emphasizes that willfully continuing to be a stumbling block to others is proof that your profession is false.

1 Cor 6:9-10

9 Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind,

10 Nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God.

KJV

Gal 5:19-21

19 Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these; Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness,

20 Idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies,

21 Envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God.

KJV

Matt 7:21-23

21 Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven.

22 Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works?

23 And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity.

KJV

If I love you, if you willfully continue to be a stumbling block to others after I have personally confronted you and then come to you with witnesses, I must be willing to expose you and your sin to the Christian community.

17 And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the church:

KJV

Your refusal to repent for being a stumbling block leaves me no choice for your sake and the sake of the community.

To remain in fellowship you must either confess your guilt and your intentions to repent or we must confess your profession of faith is false by expelling you from our fellowship.

Matt 18:17

17 but if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican.

KJV

This seems very harsh. But it would be a disservice to you and the body of Christ if we contribute to your false assurance.

We have every right based on the Word of God to bind you from heaven if you are such a stumbling block.

Matt 18:18

18 Verily I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.

KJV

It is not only our right but our duty to you and to the body of Christ lest you experience the greatest tragedy of all!

With regards to our salvation the greatest emphasis is not on how we start or when we start but how we finish.

Luke 14:30

30 Saying, This man began to build, and was not able to finish.

KJV

Those who are Christ's finish well. They die as an example of Godliness rather than as a stumbling block.

Have you ever been to a funeral and the church member that died, died as a stumbling block? To comfort the family, the pastor gives the family words of assurance about their loved ones heavenly home.

The preacher would not be in this position with the family if he had loved the stumbling block enough to follow this command.

**17 And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the church: but if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican.**

**KJV**

The stumbling block would have at least considered that his profession was false and that he was headed for hell. If this command was followed, the preacher would then have a sound basis for explaining to the family the gospel of Jesus Christ.

It is true that everyone sins.

**1 John 1:10**

**10 If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us.**

**KJV**

It is not true that everyone sins and lives in an unrepentant state as a stumbling block. These are the goats. These are the tares. These are the workers of iniquity. These are false professors. They do not possess the Holy Spirit. Their name on a church roll and their baptismal certificate will not be a pass into heaven.

I am sorry to say that it has been my experience that too many of these stumbling blocks have been raised by Christian parents and in the church. They were taught the way of salvation. They were taught right from wrong. They were witnesses to the power of God.

Their Christian parents restrained them while they were young and the fear of what others would think. But when those restraints were removed, they went their own way, like the prodigal son. But the greatest tragedy is that they believe that they are safe.

In so many cases, the Pastor and the church do not tell them any differently. The commands of Christ have not been followed. The prodigal is convinced he is safe. The reality is he is not safe at all.

Saving faith in Christ is not just faith in the fact that God loves you and that Jesus died for your sins. Saving faith in Christ includes faith in His resurrection and His return.

**Rom 10:9**

**9 That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved.**

**KJV**

Faith in the resurrection of Christ and His return motivates the children of God to purify themselves.

**1 John 3:2-3**

2 Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.  
3 And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure.

KJV

Those who possess this saving faith are possessed by this faith. They cannot live as a stumbling block.

So you are not safe apart from this faith.

It is the parent's duty to warn their children about the consequences of sin. It is also the parents duty to train them by chastening them for sin. Fulfilling this duty restrains the child and teaches the child right from wrong.

But there is a greater restraint to sin than a Christian parent or the fear of what others think. The greatest restraint on earth is faith in the resurrection of Christ and His return.

He who has this faith, will not continue to live as a stumbling block to others.

Also, He the Holy Spirit living within his or her human heart will not continue to live as a stumbling block. If you can live at peace as a stumbling block I want to assure you that the Holy Spirit is not living within you. He will give no rest to your soul. You have not experienced pressure to repent until you have experienced the inner conviction of the Holy Spirit.

The Holy Spirit is the third person of the trinity. His role is to exercise His power on earth to fulfill the plans of the Godhead.

Gen 1:2

2 And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep.  
And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters.

KJV

It was the Holy Spirit that gave Joseph such power.  
It was the Holy Spirit that gave Moses such power.  
It was the Holy Spirit that gave Joshua such power.  
It was the Holy Spirit that gave all the judges such power.  
It was the Holy Spirit that gave David such power.  
It was the Holy Spirit that gave all of the prophets such power.  
It was the Holy Spirit that gave the Lord Jesus such power.  
It was the Holy Spirit that raised Jesus from the dead.

Rom 8:11

11 But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you.

KJV

Do not mistake a normal conscience for the Holy Spirit! Your normal conscience can become so dull that you have no conscience.

If the Holy Spirit is in you, He amplifies your conscience into a force that is deafening to your mind. He constantly reminds you that Jesus rose from the dead and that He will return. He also reminds you that Jesus paid a great debt for your soul and that you owe Him your life. This pressure is relentless for someone who is saved.

If the Holy Spirit is in you and you will not repent because of His inner chastening, then he will chasten you with circumstances that you will not enjoy. This can mean allowing sin to run its course until you are its slave or a slave to its consequences. Or it may mean causing unusual circumstances to occur that the world would call a string of bad luck. Jesus is not just the perfect lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world. He is also the lion of Judah who pursues His prey. If His Spirit lives within you, He will destroy your flesh to save your soul.

It is possible for even the greatest men of God to make terrible choices they regret in moments of great passion or great despair. But it is not possible to live as a stumbling block if you are the temple of the Holy Spirit. You are compelled to repent by the most powerful force on earth. You are addicted to repentance. It is your nature to repent. You can resist but you will not be able to maintain your resistance and live.

You do not belong to Christ unless the Holy Spirit is living within you.

**Rom 8:9**

**9 But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his.**

**KJV**

Do not make the error of believing other wise.

Is the Holy Spirit alive in you? Would you pursue sin if it were not for the restraint of your parents or your wife or your husband or your church? Or is there a person within you whose force is so powerful that you know that you could never rest or find peace in a sinful state?

The greatest evidence that you are not saved is that you can live in peace as a stumbling block. The greatest evidence that you are saved is the Holy Spirit lives within you, you have faith in the resurrection and return of Christ, and you cannot continue in sin.

The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of Jesus Christ. He will not come to live in anyone who is not willing to yield to Him. To yield means to give up control. To yield means to surrender.

To be saved you must believe that Jesus paid for your sin, He rose from the dead, and He will return. You must invite the Spirit of Jesus to come into you and take control. This is your only hope for salvation from sin both now and forever. Do you have that hope?

To love Jesus and our brother, our church must be committed to the standard that Jesus has set for us in Matthew 18:15-17. If we do not have this standard the blood of many

people could be on our hands. We will contribute to a false sense of assurance for sheep that are standing on the precipice of eternal judgment. God forbid!

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