

The Cost of Going All the Way with God



David Wilkerson June 11, 2006

One of the best ways to lose friends and be rejected is to go all the way with God. Get serious about spiritual matters; forsake all your idols; turn to the Lord with all your heart and become possessed with Jesus; get your eyes off the things of this world — and you have suddenly become a religious fanatic! And you are in for the worst rejection of your lifetime.

When you were lukewarm, having a form of godliness without power — when you were not overly sinful, nor overly holy — you were no trouble to anybody, not even the devil. Things were quiet; you were accepted. You were just another one of the many half-hearted believers.

But you changed. You got hungry for God. You got convicted of your sins and could no longer play church games anymore. You repented and turned to the Lord with all your heart. Down came the idols. You began to dig into God's Word. You stopped going after material things and became obsessed with Jesus. You came into a new realm of discernment and began to see things in the church now that once never bothered you. You hear things now from the pulpit that break your heart. You see other Christians compromising, just as you once did. That is why it hurts you so. You have been awakened, turned around, broken and contrite in spirit. And you now have a God-given burden for the church.

But instead of your friends rejoicing or understanding, they think you are going crazy! You are ridiculed, mocked, called a fanatic.

Moses was wonderfully touched by God's hand and awakened about the bondage of God's people. "It came into his heart to visit his brethren..." Moses was so excited by the great revelation of deliverance he had received that he ran out to share it with the brethren. "For he supposed his brethren would have understood how that God by his hand would deliver them: But they understood not..." (Acts 7:23, 25). Moses was the meekest man on earth; he was consumed with God. He was not being holier-than-thou; he was moving in God, prophetically. He was wanting his brethren to hear and see what God was about to do. Instead, they rejected him, saying, "Who made you a ruler and judge over us?" "Who do you think you are?" One day they would understand — but not now.

When the Holy Spirit woke me up years ago, when I began to see His call to holiness and I got really serious about walking in truth and the Word became life, and when I began to see things I'd never seen before — I wanted to share it with everybody. I'd call preachers on the phone and share what God was saying. With many who came to my office, I'd weep and get out my Bible and point out the glorious truths of full surrender and heart purity. I thought they would see it too. I thought they would love the Word and fall down with me to pray for a new touch of God. Instead, most just blinked at me. They would say things like, "Are you sure you aren't going a little overboard?" Or, "That's a little heavy for me." And the more I sought God, the less I saw of them. It was like cold water thrown back in my face. They didn't want to hear.

If this has been happening to you since God awakened you, you are not alone. I want to show you and warn you from God's Word what to expect if you are set on going all the way with God. You can expect three reactions: (1) You will be rejected. (2) You will be cast out. (3) You will be stoned.
You Will Be Rejected.

Jesus warned, "If ye were of this world, the world would love its own, but because ye are not of this world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you" (John 15:19). Show me a believer who has become both a lover and a doer of the truth, and I'll show you one who will be rejected and persecuted by the entire lukewarm church. Give up on this world and they give up on you. Jesus had many followers, until the word He preached was perceived to be too hard — too demanding. The crowd of miracle-lovers heard His claims and forsook Him, saying, "Too hard! Who can receive it?" Jesus turned to the twelve and asked, "Will ye also go away?" Or, "Is My word too hard for you, too?" Peter answered, "To whom shall we go, for thou hast the words of eternal life." No, Peter and the twelve would not go away because the word that most people said was too hard, too demanding, they loved — because it was producing in them eternal values. They would stay with the truth, no matter what the cost.

This is the issue every Christian must face in these last days: Will you turn aside from truth that convicts you, truth that fingers your sin, truth that removes, corrects and blasts your idols? Truth that calls you to get your eyes off the things of this world, off self and off materialism? Or will you turn aside to ear-tickling, soft, soothing, all-is-well preaching? Will you allow the Holy Spirit to probe you? To expose you?

The truth does set free. Free from dead preaching, free from dead pastors, free from dead tradition, free from doctrines of demons. Free from fellowships that turn aside from the truth because it is "too unloving," as they call it. The lovers and doers of truth desire to come to the light, to have every secret deed exposed. Jesus said, "For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved. But he that doeth truth cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest, that they are wrought in God" (John 3:20, 21). That which is genuine truth always exposes every hidden thing. When Jesus began to throw light on their hidden sins, the religious Jews sought to kill Him. Jesus said, "I know you are Abraham's seed; but ye seek to kill me, because my word hath no place in You" (John 8:37). "You now seek to kill me; a man that hath told you the truth" (verse 40). "He that is of God heareth God's words: you therefore hear them not, because you are not of God" (John 8:47).

The Word of God says, "And then shall that wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming: even him, whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders, and with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie: that they might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness" (2 Thessalonians 2:8–12).

There are multitudes of Christians today who do not love the truth. God says it is because of secret sin — "having pleasure in unrighteousness." These compromising pleasure-lovers are in horrible deception. Like the Jews of Jesus' day, they are convinced they see. They believe they are God's children, and they reject ferociously every word that exposes their deep inner secrets and lusts. There is something other than truth which has their hearts. They are not embracing truth like a priceless pearl. Instead, they cuddle some hidden pleasure, some idol, some pet sin.

Mark it down. Those who reject you, those who forsake you because of truth have a strong reason. They see you as a threat to something dear to them. Your separated life is a rebuke to their compromise and lukewarmness.

Paul wrote to Timothy, "All they which are in Asia be turned away from me" (2 Timothy 1:15). Paul had given his all to these same people, declaring to them the whole counsel of God. He was blameless before them; holy, unrebukable. He was rejected by the churches of Asia and his own spiritual children avoided him. Why?

Paul was now in prison. He was suffering. He was in deep affliction; bound by chains; "a prisoner of the Lord." But a new teacher had become popular — a teacher who brought an ear-tickling message of prosperity. "Alexander the coppersmith did me much evil; the Lord reward him according to his works" (2 Timothy 4:14).

Alexander's name means "man-pleaser." Alexander and Hymenaeus were teaching a false gospel that catered to the flesh. Hymenaeus was named after "the god of weddings." This represents a gospel of love, of celebration, of man-pleasing without holiness. Paul turned them both over to Satan for the destruction of the flesh that they might learn to stop blasphemy (1 Timothy 1:20). Turning them over to Satan was not for the destruction of their bodies — but of the flesh doctrine. It was a learning experience "that they might learn not to blaspheme." How could they learn if they were dead? These doctrines denied all suffering — all hardships.

Paul said they shipwrecked true faith by excusing sin; they had no pure conscience. They shipwrecked faith through man-pleasing teachings. They rejected Paul because of what they perceived to be his loss of freedom. They saw it as a lack of faith. To them, it was the devil who held Paul prisoner. If Paul is so holy — if he preaches God is all-powerful — why is he suffering? They were "ashamed of his bonds." And there are Christians today who will reject you; they will be ashamed of you — because you are in some kind of test or tribulation or sickness. They Will Cast You Out!

Jesus warned, "They shall put you out of the synagogues; yea, the time cometh, that whosoever killeth you will think he doeth God service" (John 16:2). Jesus said, "These things I tell you, so you won't be offended...Don't be surprised when the lukewarm church throws you out — because they don't know Me or the Father..."

Jesus healed a young man who was born blind. He was brought into church to be interrogated by the religious Pharisees. His eyes had been opened — he could see! He said, "One thing I know, that whereas I was blind, now I see" (John 9:34). Did they rejoice over this man's new found vision? No! "They answered, Thou wast altogether born in sins, and dost thou teach us? And they cast him out!" (John 9:34).

That healed blind man represents the holy remnant — those whose eyes are being opened to the holiness of God. Go ahead; testify as he did — "Once I was blind and now I see!" They will cast you out, saying, "Who made you our teacher?"

If you intend to go all the way with Christ, you must be prepared to bear His reproach! "Because for thy sake I have borne reproach; shame hath covered my face. I am become a stranger unto my brethren and an alien unto my mother's children [my brothers and sisters]. For the zeal of thine house hath eaten me up and the reproaches of them that reproached thee are fallen upon me" (Psalm 69:7–9). This speaks primarily of Christ's sufferings — but as He was in this world, so are we! If they persecuted and reproached Him, they will do the same with all who die to self. Who reproached Christ? Who heaped shame upon His head and cast out His name as filthy? The man centered church crowd!

To cast out godly believers is the greatest favor a man-centered church could bestow upon them! I hear Christians say, "My church is dead — I don't like what is happening, but God put me there! I will stay and try to change things." That can be dangerous and unscriptural. We are to come out of everything that is of Babylon! Also, it may be tradition holding you. It may be you are not as ready to go all the way with God as you thought. Your old friends hold you.

Paul went into the synagogue everywhere he went, "as was his manner [practice]" (Acts 17:2). He preached to those blind church goers from Isaiah, saying "For I work a work in your days, a work which ye shall in no wise [no way] believe, though a man declare it unto you" (Acts 13:41). Paul tried so hard to persuade them, hoping they would hear. But finally Paul heard the prophecy of Isaiah thunder in his soul, "In no way will they believe, though you stay with them and declare it!" Heed this warning: Do as Paul did and get out! He "shook off the dust of their feet against them" (Acts 13:51). Paul said to those religious Jews, "It was necessary that the word of God should first be spoken to you: but seeing you put it from you...lo, we turn to the Gentiles" (Acts 13:46).

If you are in a fellowship or church which has heard the truth and turned aside, "Lo, leave it!" Get out — or your children may backslide! Forget about saying "Well, my kids have friends there." Yes, and they may all grow up with no conviction of sin, because of a lack of power or of God's presence. You are not going to change anything — in no way! But they may change you. What fellowship hath light with darkness? "Come out from among them and be separate and clean — then will I receive you" (2 Corinthians 6:17). You Will Be Stoned!

You will be stoned by the majority! "And they stoned Stephen, calling upon God, and saying, Lord Jesus, receive my spirit" (Acts 7:59). Who stoned Stephen? The most prestigious religious council of the day! "They brought him to the council..." (Acts 6:12). It was one man against the crowd!

Here is a man "with his eyes fixed on Jesus!" Yet, he is hated. Listen to the hatred of these men of the cloth, these religious fanatics: "They gnashed on him with their teeth" (Acts 7:54). "They stopped their ears, and ran upon him with one accord" (verse 57). What is it about this righteous man that so angered the religious multitudes? He preached truth that cut them to the heart. "Ye stiffnecked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always resist the Holy Ghost: as your fathers did, so do you" (verse 51). "Ye have received the law...and not kept it" (verse 53).

He had to preach the truth! They had hearts still clinging to the world — bound by lust. They knew what God's law was, but refused to obey. They crucified Christ.

The two-edged sword of truth had cut to the deepest in their hearts. But it was his testimony of an open heaven that brought wrath down upon him. "But he, being full of the Holy Ghost, looked up steadfastly into heaven and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God; and said, Behold I see the heavens opened, and the Son of Man standing on the right hand of God. Then they cried out with a loud voice, and stopped their ears, and ran upon him with one accord, and cast him out and stoned him" (Acts 7:55–58).

Stephen exposed mixture, double-mindedness! "And they made a calf in those days, and offered sacrifice unto the idol, and rejoiced in the works of their own hands. Then God turned, and gave them up to worship the host of heaven; as it is written in the book of the prophets, O ye house of Israel, have ye offered to me slain beasts and sacrifices by the space of forty years in the wilderness? Yea, ye took up the tabernacle of Moloch and the star of your god Remphan, figures which ye made to worship them: and I will carry you away beyond Babylon" (Acts 7:41–43).

In this age of grace, if you look upon a woman with lust, you have committed adultery in God's eyes. If you hate, you are a murderer. And if vicious words are hurled at you for going all the way with God, you are being stoned! "A fool's lips enter into contention, and his mouth calleth for strokes...the words of a talebearer are as wounds, and they go down into the innermost parts of the belly" (Proverbs 18:6, 8). "Who sharpen their tongue like a sword, and bend their bows to shoot their arrows, even bitter words" (Psalm 64:3).

Jesus taught a parable of the householder who owned a vineyard and sent for the fruits in time of harvest. He sent his servants. "And the husbandmen took his servants, and beat one, and killed another, and stoned another" (Matthew 21:35). So it is today! God has sent out his holy watchmen to gather in the fruit in His vineyard. But instead, there is verbal beating, killing with hatred, stoning with sharp words.

We have a "Stephen Company" today who can say, "I see heaven opened!" It is that clear vision of Jesus — that cutting word of truth — which evokes the wrath of those uncircumcised of heart!

The Israelites tried to stone Joshua and Caleb for their call to go all the way. Ten spies discouraged God's people saying "We can't go all the way. There are too many giants! Too many high walls!" "And Caleb said...Let us go up at once, and possess it, for we are well able to overcome it." (Numbers 13:30). But they said, "Let us have a captain, and let us return into Egypt" (Numbers 14:4). "And Joshua the son of Nun, and Caleb the son of Jephunneh, which were of them that searched the land, rent their clothes; and they spake unto all the company of the children of Israel, saying, The land, which we passed through to search it, is an exceeding good land. If the Lord delight in us, then he will bring us into this land, and give it us; a land which floweth with milk and honey. Only rebel not ye against the Lord, neither fear ye the people of the land; for they are bread for us; their defense is departed from them, and the Lord is with us: fear them not. But all the congregation bade stone them with stones. And the glory of the Lord appeared in the tabernacle of the congregation before all the children of Israel" (Numbers 14:6–10).

My concern in this story is not for Joshua and Caleb, for God was with them. My concern is for this people of God gnashing their teeth and picking up stones! Why would a call to obedience bring out of them such a reaction? Look at the call! I am convinced that once the heart is captured by an idol or lust, unbelief takes hold. Compromise and unbelief go hand in hand. Then, all preaching against compromise grates on them and they end up fighting God, while blindly confessing His name.

A Warning

How shall the righteous react when rejected, cast out, stoned? Jesus reacted, as a lamb "and opened not his mouth." Do not call fire down out of heaven upon those who heap abuse on you. "Why do ye not rather suffer yourselves to be defrauded?" (1 Corinthians 6:7). "Being reviled, we bless: being persecuted, we suffer it" (1 Corinthians 4:12). "Pray for those who despitely use you."

I have no time for arrogant, self-styled prophets who fight back or threaten or throw curses about. When Shimei stood on a hill throwing stones at David as he retreated from Jerusalem and from Absalom, the army captain said, "Why should this dead dog curse my Lord?" David answered, "So let him curse...Let him alone...it may be the Lord will reward me for good for his cursing this day" (2 Samuel 16:6,9,10,12).

Moses went all the way — up to the mountain — shut up with God, "And his face did shine." And though all others

could see it, so much so that he had to put a veil over his face, he himself "[knew] not that his face did shine" (see Exodus 34:29). He was not even aware of the reflection of God's holiness upon him. Like Stephen, Moses was not flaunting his touch from God. They did not take on the airs of a prophet. They did not threaten; they did not speak of having "new" or "special" revelations. They did not put on a poker face or a display of false piety. Humility is the mark of a soul totally dependent on Christ. There is absolutely no spiritual pride, no exclusiveness!

The Reward of Going All the Way

What is the reward? Having Christ stand with you! There are many other rewards for going all the way, but I mention just this one, because it is all we will ever need. Paul was incarcerated in a castle in Jerusalem with the whole religious system wanting to kill him. The church was in an uproar. He was accused of "polluting the holy place, of preaching false doctrine." Even the soldiers "feared lest Paul be pulled to pieces;" so they took him by force and imprisoned him in a castle. "And the night following the Lord stood by him, and said, Be of good cheer, Paul: for as thou hast testified of me in Jerusalem, so must thou bear witness also at Rome" (Acts 23:11).

The Lord Himself spoke to Paul — not an angel! And what a word: Cheer up! There's more to come! But you can face anything or anyone if you know the Lord stands by you!

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