

Falling Away

Introduction and Review

- ❑ Perseverance is a firm persistence in an undertaking to hold out or bear up in the face of difficulty.
- ❑ Perseverance is essential in all aspects of the Christian life & is therefore clearly commanded in the scriptures. (prayer, Christian teaching, divine love, Christian freedom, doing good, etc.)
- ❑ The scriptures clearly warn about the danger of falling away from God with real examples: Judas, Demas, Hymenaeus & Philetus.
- ❑ Jesus exhorts & assures the believer that perseverance until the end of life is both possible & plausible (Mt. 10:22).
- ❑ Perseverance until the end of life involves both the sovereignty of God & human responsibility!

I. Falling Away with No Repentance

A. God’s warning (Mt. 26:20-24)

Even when God knows that a sinner & pretender will not repent, He still gives a warning & opportunity – mercy (v. 21; Rev. 2:21). Jesus shows that pretenders enjoy all the benefits of true believers without any true repentance or change (v. 23) – blessings & fellowship. Pretenders fulfill an important role in redemptive history (v. 24; Pr. 16:4).

B. A pretender’s self-assessment (Mt. 26:25)

*Judas had already made plans for the betrayal (v. 14-16). His conscience is not convicted with any guilt or desire to change even after Jesus revealed that He knows Judas’ plan. **Even when his sin is brought into light, he still loves darkness! He loves money & not Christ (Mt. 6:24). Demas loved the world (2Tim. 4:10). Hymenaeus & Philetus loved false teaching (2Tim2:16-18).***

C. A pretender’s destiny (Mt. 27:3-5)

Heb. 3:12 & 6:1-8 warn pretenders & false believers about “falling away” [παραπίπτω] – commit apostasy. Since there is no repentance, guilt drives a pretender to self-destruction (abusive lifestyle, even suicide & eternal condemnation).

II. Falling Away with Repentance

A. God’s warning (Mt. 26:30-32, 34)

*Jesus warns the 11 that they will all fall away. “fall away” (σκανδαλίζω) means to cause someone to stumble or be brought low – scandalize. The disciples would soon see Jesus as a scandal with whom they did not want to associate. He warns them & then gives biblical proof even though He knows they will not take heed or believe Him (v. 31b). Jesus gives them **hope** after the failure (v. 32; Lk. 22:31-32).*

B. A believer’s self-assessment (Mt. 26:33, 35)

*Peter & the rest of the disciples were overly confident about their courage & commitment to Christ. Peter’s failure was more blatant than the other 10 disciples (v. 34). They all had **little** confidence in Christ & in the scriptures, but **arrogant** confidence in themselves (Pr. 16:18; 1Co. 10:12; Rom. 12:3).*

C. A believer’s destiny (Mt. 26:74-75)

The other 10 hid (v. 56), but Peter blatantly & publically denies that He even knows Christ (v. 74). Guilt & conviction come upon him immediately after his sin leading to true repentance (v. 75; Lk. 22:31-32; 2Co. 7:9-10). God is so merciful – spares his life, forgives, restores & establishes Peter (Jn. 21:15-19).

Issue

Sin

Motivation

Circumstances

Response

Outcome

Judas

betrayal

money

pre-meditated

remorse

suicide

Peter

denial

fear

spontaneous

repentance

restoration

CONCLUSION

So then my beloved brother or sister, do you see yourself in any of the scenarios of these disciples? As a true believer you cannot be like Judas so you must be certain that you have been born again (2Pe. 2:10). But you can & you might find yourself like Peter & the other 10 disciples – over confident about your faithfulness, commitment, courage, etc. thinking that nothing like this could ever happen to you! Or maybe you have failed miserably & fallen into some sin; maybe you have allowed yourself to fall away from Christ because of something you think that He will not forgive; you've watch yourself grow cold, inactive... Well I here today as an ambassador for Jesus to offer the same hope to you that He offered to Peter & the rest. You can be forgiven, healed, delivered, restored, established, effective, faithful... again. But you must repent & believe – Jesus Christ is the same yesterday & today & forever.

And if you are not a Christian, you can be forgiven too. You can be healed, delivered, saved & established. But you must repent & believe in Jesus too. Jesus is the same for you too; He is saving today just as has done for generation. Will you trust Him & believe today?

SUBJECT: [Falling Away](#)

TEXT: [Matthew 26:20-25, 30-35](#)

LOCATION: [Trinity Community Church](#)

DATE: [October 7, 2012](#)

OCASSION: [Sunday Morning Worship Svc](#)

SERMON INDEX NUMBER: [1015](#)

FILE LOCATION: [Computer Sermons 4Q12](#)

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