

Unpardonable Sin

Matthew 12:31-32

FOCAL Read Responsively Matthew 12:31-32

Wherefore I say unto you, All manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men: but the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost shall not be forgiven unto men. **(32) And whosoever speaketh a word against the Son of man, it shall be forgiven him: but whosoever speaketh against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world, neither in the world to come.**

Is there an “unpardonable sin”? Is there a sin – a transgression against God – that if it is committed that God will absolutely never forgive it? If there is, then what is that sin?

For instance, a good Christian friend sent me a video recording about a young man named Patrick Henry. This young boy was born crippled and blind. At a very early age his parents discovered that he had a natural ability to play the piano. You could strike a few keys and Patrick could easily duplicate what you played. This child, born crippled and blind, was given amazing talents by the Lord God. The television producers heard of the story and made a stirring documentary about it. The boy's father was applauded for his willingness to work with Patrick, to help Patrick do the things he needed to do to be in the school's marching band. The father said of Patrick, “My son is my hero”. Oh what a beautiful piece, a televised salute to the indomitable human spirit. I watched the video carefully, but at no point did the school, the parents, nor the television producers give God the slightest credit or glory for what Patrick



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accomplished. At one brief moment in the piece Patrick said, and I quote, “God made me crippled and blind, but He gave me this amazing talent”.

As humans we fail to give God glory. We fail to praise Him for His unspeakable gifts. We magnify ourselves, as good humanists should, but have little regard for the God Who made us. Yet He forgives us, and loves us anyway. He strives with us, drawing us to His side.

Is there an unpardonable sin?

Some people define sins according to degree and time. For instance, one group of believers speak of *mortal* and *venal* sins. For instance *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (Paragraph 1035) states: "**Immediately after death the souls of those who die in a state of mortal sin descend into hell**". According to the believers any sin such as murder or blasphemy is particularly evil. If these types of sins are committed and unconfessed before the person dies then that person's soul goes to hell when he dies. Some have taken this belief and extended it to acts of *suicide*. I have often been told by well meaning Christians that people who commit suicide go to hell because it is *self murder*, and they could not confess the sin to God before they died. The Greek word for this is *hogwash*. The Bible says absolutely nothing about suicides going to hell.

There is an unpardonable sin, a sin that cannot be forgiven. What did Jesus say?

FOCAL **Matthew 12:31** **Wherefore I say unto you, All manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven**

unto men: but the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost shall not be forgiven unto men.

Jesus said PAS HAMARTIA KAI BLASPHEMIA APHIEMI, literally “**every sin and every blasphemy shall be put away**”. There is absolutely no sin that cannot be covered, no blasphemy against God that cannot be forgiven, except once. What is this one sin? Jesus said “**the blasphemy against the Holy Spirit shall not be forgiven unto men**”. This is it. This is the unforgivable, unpardonable, unrelenting sin that will follow you, brand you, and assure you of eternal damnation.

1. Who Can Commit Blasphemy Against The Holy Spirit?

All right, this sin is **unpardonable**. So who can commit it? We need to look at the background of the text in order to understand this.

The day that Jesus uttered these words was just like any other day in His ministry. The Bible says:

Acts 10:38 ... God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with power: who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil; for God was with him.

God the Father sent God the Son into the world for our salvation. Jesus **went about doing good**. He didn't just do good, Jesus **did the will of the Father**. Jesus Christ showed Himself to be the Messiah for He worked in

partnership with **God the Holy Spirit healing all that were oppressed of the devil**. Though Jesus clearly was sent of God, empowered by God, and was God Himself, there were a group of men who followed Him not to hear Him, but they followed Jesus to persecute Him. These men were the Pharisees.

The Pharisees were outwardly religious men who inwardly were spiritually dead. Jesus said of these men:

Matthew 23:27-28 "Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You are like whitewashed tombs, which look beautiful on the outside but on the inside are full of dead men's bones and everything unclean. (28) In the same way, on the outside you appear to people as righteous but on the inside you are full of hypocrisy and wickedness.

These men were outwardly religious. They knew many things about the Bible. They counted words, and knew exactly where the middle of the Scripture was. They knew how many of certain letters were certain Books, and were well aware of where every *jot and tittle* of Scriptural writing was. They had a great technical knowledge of the Holy Scripture, but no spiritual knowledge. They twisted Scripture to fit what they wanted, but cared little of giving glory to God.

The Pharisees were outwardly religious, but inwardly unsaved. They were the sworn enemies of Jesus Christ.

As the sworn enemies of Christ the Pharisees watched what Jesus did closely, not to be blessed, but to try and defame Him. On this particular day Jesus and His disciples went through a corn field. As they were hungry they picked a few ears of corn and began to break the raw grain from the cob. This was absolutely permissible according to the Law of God, which stated:

Deuteronomy 23:25 When thou comest into the standing corn of thy neighbor, then thou mayest pluck the ears with thine hand; but thou shalt not move a sickle unto thy neighbor's standing corn.

According to the Law of Moses you could pick enough of your neighbor's corn to satisfy your immediate hunger – but you were not to harvest his field. This is why you were not to **move a sickle to thy neighbor's standing corn**. What Jesus and His disciples were doing was perfectly righteous in the eyes of God. Yet the Pharisees found fault, saying,

CONTEXT Matthew 12:2 But when the Pharisees saw it, they said unto him, Behold, thy disciples do that which is not lawful to do upon the sabbath day.

According to the Pharisees the act of pulling grain from the cob was *work*, and since work was not allowed on the Sabbath the disciples – and Jesus – were breaking God's Law. Jesus easily answered their objections saying:

CONTEXT Matthew 12:3-5 But he said unto them, Have ye not read what David did, when he was hungry, and they that were with him; (4) How he

entered into the house of God, and did eat the shewbread, which was not lawful for him to eat, neither for them which were with him, but only for the priests (5) Or have ye not read in the law, how that on the sabbath days the priests in the temple profane the sabbath, and are blameless

Jesus gave two accounts from the Law showing that the Sabbath wasn't given to starve people. God established the Sabbath – and the Laws of Moses – to lead people to salvation by faith in God. Jesus said:

CONTEXT Matthew 12:7-8 But if ye had known what this meaneth, I will have mercy, and not sacrifice, ye would not have condemned the guiltless. (8) For the Son of man is Lord even of the sabbath day.

God gave us the Sabbath rest so that we could seek God's face, not so that we could starve. God wants mercy, not sacrifice. We were given the Sabbath rest to focus on the Lord our God, to praise Him, to seek the face of Christ – not to be enslaved by Law. Having taught the Pharisees the purpose of the Law Jesus went into the Synagogue. There was a man with a withered hand who was suffering. The Pharisees still hadn't learned their lesson.

CONTEXT Matthew 12:10 And, behold, there was a man which had his hand withered. And they asked him, saying, Is it lawful to heal on the sabbath days? that they might accuse him.

Jesus was ready with an answer. He said:

CONTEXT Matthew 12:11-12 And he said unto them, What man shall there be among you, that shall have one sheep, and if it fall into a pit on the sabbath day, will he not lay hold on it, and lift it out? (12) How much then is a man better than a sheep? Wherefore it is lawful to do well on the sabbath days.

If it is lawful to lift a sheep out of a pit on a Sabbath day, then it is just as lawful to lift a man out of a pit. This man with the withered hand had been in a pit of pain and despair for many years. Jesus could lift this man out of this pit – and would do so – and there is no sin to that!

Once the people saw Jesus heal the man with the withered hand they brought another man to Him for healing. The Bible says:

CONTEXT Matthew 12:22 Then was brought unto him one possessed with a devil, blind, and dumb: and he healed him, insomuch that the blind and dumb both spake and saw.

The people – seeing what Jesus did – *believed in Him*. The Pharisees on the other hand, responded quite differently. They committed the unpardonable sin.

CONTEXT Matthew 12:23-24 And all the people were amazed, and said, Is not this the son of David? (24) But when the Pharisees heard it, they said, This fellow doth not cast out devils, but by Beelzebub the

prince of the devils.

The people believed that Jesus Christ was **the Son of David – the Promised Messiah to come**. The Pharisees, however, because of their pride and unbelief, said “**This person casts out devils by Beelzebub, the prince of devils!**”

Word Study Beelzebub (meaning “**The Lord of the Flies**”) is the name of a demon derived from Baal Zebûb, Baal Zəbûb or Baal Zəvûv (Hebrew בעל זבוב), a false god worshiped by the Philistines, particularly in the city of Ekron (see **2 Kings 1:2-3**)

The Pharisees were saying, in essence, that Jesus was **casting out demons by the prince of demons**. Their statement was not only false, but it was a *sin against reason*. Jesus replied:

CONTEXT Matthew 12:25-26 And Jesus knew their thoughts, and said unto them, **Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation; and every city or house divided against itself shall not stand: (26) And if Satan cast out Satan, he is divided against himself; how shall then his kingdom stand?**

No Kingdom divided against itself can stand. When a Kingdom is divided – at civil war with itself – that Kingdom falls. Satan would never allow one of his demons to cast out demons. That would be counterproductive and foolish! The charge that the Pharisees brought against His ministry was bogus.

Who committed the *unpardonable sin*? It was the Pharisees. Were the Pharisees *believers in Christ*? Absolutely not! They were unbelievers who resisted conversion, so much so that they were willing to declare a clear work of God as a work of Satan. Who can commit the unpardonable sin? Unbelievers *only*.

2. Why Is The Unpardonable Sin Unpardonable?

Why is the unpardonable sin *unpardonable*? The answer is quite simple. The one who commits it will not come to Jesus to be saved.

There was another Sabbath day where Jesus healed a man earlier in His ministry. The Bible tells us that:

John 5:2-5 Now there is at Jerusalem by the sheep market a pool, which is called in the Hebrew tongue Bethesda, having five porches. (3) In these lay a great multitude of impotent folk, of blind, halt, withered, waiting for the moving of the water. (4) For an angel went down at a certain season into the pool, and troubled the water: whosoever then first after the troubling of the water stepped in was made whole of whatsoever disease he had. (5) And a certain man was there, which had an infirmity thirty and eight years.

There was a poor crippled man who **having an infirmity for thirty eight years – lay near the pool of Bethesda.**

There was a tradition among the Jews that – if the pool stirred – whoever was first in the water would be healed. Jesus walked past this man on the Sabbath and, looking at the man, asked:

John 5:6 ... Wilt thou be made whole?

When the man said that he wanted to be healed, Jesus said:

John 5:8 ... Rise, take up thy bed, and walk.

The man was healed that very day. The Pharisees once more condemned Jesus **for telling the man to pick up his bed on the Sabbath**. Jesus told the Pharisees:

John 5:19-24 ... Verily, verily, I say unto you, The Son can do nothing of himself, but what he seeth the Father do: for what things soever he doeth, these also doeth the Son likewise. (20) For the Father loveth the Son, and showeth him all things that himself doeth: and he will show him greater works than these, that ye may marvel. (21) For as the Father raiseth up the dead, and quickeneth them; even so the Son quickeneth whom he will. (22) For the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son: (23) That all men should honor the Son, even as they honor the Father. He that honoreth not the Son honoreth not the Father which hath sent him. (24) Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life.

Jesus Christ **worked with both the Father as well as God the Holy Spirit. He did nothing by Himself.**

Last Sunday we talked about the power of the Holy Spirit and His purpose in salvation. God the Father is the *Planner* of Salvation, and God the Son the *Purchaser* of salvation. What is God the Holy Spirit's function? He is the One Who *Places* salvation. It is the Spirit Who:

John 16:8-9 ... He will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment: (9) Of sin, because they believe not on me;

It is the Holy Spirit's function to **reprove the world of sin**. What sin? Jesus said **of sin, because they believe not on Me**. The Holy Spirit convicts people of sin. He tells them that Jesus Christ came to be their Sin Bearer. The Holy Spirit works with God the Father and God the Son to save the sinner.

Only God can be blasphemed. Blaspheme of the Holy Spirit – a sin committed only by sinners – is unpardonable because such a sin drives a person from Christ.

Jesus told the Pharisees who accused Him:

John 5:40 And ye will not come to me, that ye might have life.

When an unbeliever will not come to Jesus, but stands

back and **blasphemes God the Holy Spirit, making His work out to be the work of a demon**, then that person is too hardened in sin to be saved.

Blaspheme of the Holy Spirit is unpardonable because those who commit it will not come to Christ to be pardoned. Blaspheme of the Holy Spirit is unpardonable because a clearly defined work of God is ascribed to Satan by the unbeliever.

3. The Work Of The Holy Spirit Is Necessary In Healing AND In Salvation

CONTEXT Matthew 12:28-30 But if I cast out devils by the Spirit of God, then the kingdom of God is come unto you. (29) Or else how can one enter into a strong man's house, and spoil his goods, except he first bind the strong man and then he will spoil his house. (30) He that is not with me is against me; and he that gathereth not with me scattereth abroad.

Jesus **cast out devils by the Spirit of God**. The Holy Spirit of God – the Third Person of the Trinity – worked in partnership with Jesus when He walked this earth, and He walks in partnership with Jesus even now.

I want to make it clear – the Holy Spirit is *not a power, but He is a Person*. He is not an “It” but He is a “Him”. You cannot blaspheme a power! The Holy Spirit worked in partnership with Jesus Christ when He walked this earth – and the Holy Spirit works in

partnership with Jesus Christ even now.

When someone came to Jesus to be healed, Jesus spoke the words but the Holy Spirit did the healing. Jesus said **“If I cast out devils BY THE SPIRIT OF GOD”**. The work of the Son and the work of the Holy Spirit are intimately and permanently bound together. Salvation – like the healing that Jesus did while He walked this earth – is a miraculous thing.

Salvation is not something you do, but it is something that God does in response to your plea for salvation.

You call upon the name of Jesus and are saved *because the Holy Spirit makes you alive*. You believe on Jesus Christ and you are saved *because the Spirit moves according to the promise of the Son*.

What does the Holy Spirit do when you call on Jesus? The first thing He does is **quicken** you – He makes you **alive from the spiritually dead**. Jesus told Nicodemus:

John 3:5-7 Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. (6) That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. (7) Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again.

Paul called this New Birth **quicken**ing – making you

alive from the dead. He said:

Colossians 2:13-14 And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath he quickened together with him, having forgiven you all trespasses; (14) Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross;

If you are saved by faith in Christ your sins have been forgiven. But not only that you are no longer dead in trespasses and in sins, but are quickened together with Christ. The Holy Spirit moves and breathes life into the spiritual nostrils of the believer. The Christian is a Spiritual being. The Bible says:

Romans 8:1-6 There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. (2) For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death. (3) For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh: (4) That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. (5) For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit. (6) For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace.

The Christian is Holy Spirit indwelt. God saves us by His Spirit. The Blood of His Son has cleansed us from all sins. You are Holy Spirit endued and empowered.

The Bible says:

Romans 8:9-14 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. (10) And if Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin; but the Spirit is life because of righteousness. (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. (12) Therefore, brethren, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live after the flesh. (13) For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live. (14) For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God.

Blessed be the Name of the Lord.

A Christian is not like other people. He is not like the dead Pharisees who, following the Law, had no understanding of the Author of the Law.

A Christian is a person who is Spiritually alive, for the Spirit of God lives in him. A Christian is a person that

has been radically changed, who knows right from wrong, who is like Christ and growing to be more like Christ every day – because God the Holy Spirit is in him.

4. Have I Committed The Unpardonable Sin?

FOCAL Matthew 12:32 **And whosoever speaketh a word against the Son of man, it shall be forgiven him: but whosoever speaketh against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world, neither in the world to come.**

On question I hear rather often is “Have I committed the unpardonable sin?” I believe if a person can ask that question they probably have not done so. There are, however, many unbelievers who are in danger of committing this very sin. They look at what Christians and what Churches do and have done and judge the perfect Master by imperfect people. They make the statement, “I don't want to be a Christian because I've seen Christians and how they act”. May I say this, never judge the Master – Who alone is perfect – by the imperfection of His followers.

If you had ever seen a counterfeit bill would you swear off using any money at all? Would you burn your money because of one counterfeit bill? Would you swear off all eggs because you found a rotten egg?

Take care that you do not blaspheme the Holy Spirit, unbeliever, for you are the ones who can do this thing. A believer can never do it, but an unbeliever can. You can so harden your hearts that you will not come to Jesus to be saved. You can so harden your hearts that – like the

Pharisees – you die in your sins. You can bring yourselves to the place where the religious but unbelieving Jews were and are even today:

Hebrews 6:4-6 **For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, (5) And have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come, (6) If they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance; seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame.**

Jesus Christ came unto His own, and His own would not receive Him. He came to the Jews first and the Chiefest of Jews, the Pharisees and Scribes, **crucified to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put Him to an open shame.** They rejected Him. They saw His works and the works of God the Holy Spirit and rejected Him. They slipped into hell like a man would slip into a warm bath.

Do not let this happen to you.

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1. Who Can Commit Blasphemy Against The Holy Spirit?

Acts 10:38; Matthew 23:27-28; Deuteronomy 23:25; Matthew 12:2; Matthew 12:3-5; Matthew 12:7-8; Matthew 12:10; Matthew 12:11-12; Matthew 12:22 ; Matthew 12:23-24; Matthew 12:25-26

- The Pharisees were outwardly religious, but _____
- The people – seeing what Jesus did – *believed in Him.*

Word Study Beelzebub (meaning “The Lord of the Flies”) is the name of _____ (see 2 Kings 1:2-3)

2. Why Is The Unpardonable Sin Unpardonable?

John 5:2-5 ; John 5:6; John 5:8; John 5:19-24; John 16:8-9; John 5:40

- Why is the unpardonable sin *unpardonable*? _____
- Only God can be blasphemed. Blaspheme of the Holy Spirit _____

3. The Work Of The Holy Spirit Is Necessary In Healing AND In Salvation

Matthew 12:28-30; John 3:5-7; Colossians 2:13-14; Romans 8:1-6; Romans 8:9-14

4. Have I Committed The Unpardonable Sin?

Matthew 12:32; Hebrews 6:4-6

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