

## CHAPTER 19

### HAVE I COMMITTED THE UNPARDONABLE SIN?<sup>23</sup>

Some people think that they have committed the “Unpardonable Sin,” and that they cannot, therefore, be saved or forgiven. Here is what Jesus said about this sin in Mark 3:28-30. “Verily I say unto you, All sins shall be forgiven unto the sons of men, and blasphemies wherewith soever they shall blaspheme: But he that shall blaspheme against the Holy Ghost hath never forgiveness, but is in danger of eternal damnation: Because they said, He hath an unclean spirit.”

The Jewish religious leaders accused Jesus of using the power of the Devil to cast out demons. That was quite an accusation, coming from the group of people who had Christ crucified! He warned them that one who blasphemed, (spoke disrespectfully of) the Holy Ghost, would never have forgiveness, but be in danger of Hell. This is what we call the Unpardonable Sin.

Some preachers teach that a person who has committed this sin can beg and plead with God for forgiveness, but He will refuse to hear. A friend of mine relayed to me the story of a young woman who was told by her pastor that she could not be saved. She was convinced that what he had said to her was true. Christians at another church tried for a year to convince her that she could simply believe in Jesus Christ and be forgiven. Finally, she realized that they were right, and that she could be saved from her sins. She believed in Jesus Christ as her personal Saviour, and now has the assurance that she is forgiven!

The main purpose of this chapter is to show you that there is hope for people who believe that their sins are unpardonable. There are several reasons why a person who believes that he or she has committed the Unpardonable Sin probably has not.

1. The Bible never teaches that God will refuse to forgive anyone who wants forgiveness.

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23. The contents of this chapter are taken from the author’s book Hope: God’s Shelter in the Storms of Life

“And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely.” (Revelation 22:17)

Salvation is compared, in this verse, to water. It is free. Anyone who wants it can take it. It quenches man's thirst for forgiveness, and eternal life. “Whosoever will” is invited to take salvation freely. God's Word never teaches that a sinner can beg for salvation, but that the Lord will refuse to hear, or to save.

“The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.” (2 Peter 3:9)

God never wants to send sinners to Hell. He is “...not willing that any should perish...” The Lord Jesus Christ wants you to come to repentance and be saved. If you want forgiveness, God wants to give it to you! The idea that God has condemned you to Hell, with no chance to be saved because of your sin, is not Biblical.

“Moreover the law entered, that the offence might abound. But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound.” (Romans 5:20)

The more sin there is, the more grace there is. If you have committed a very great sin, there is greater grace to forgive your sin. “...Where sin abounded, grace did much more abound.”

Some use these verses from Hebrews to prove that God will refuse to save a sinner who desires to repent.

“Looking diligently lest any man fail of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble you, and thereby many be defiled; Lest there be any fornicator, or profane person, as Esau, who for one morsel of meat sold his birthright. For ye know how that afterward, when he would have inherited the blessing, he was rejected: for he found no place of repentance, though he sought it carefully with tears.” (Hebrews 12:15-17)

The problem is that this has nothing to do with salvation. Esau was Jacob's brother. Jacob persuaded Esau to sell his birthright (a special privilege of the first-born son) to him for a bowl of soup. Later, Esau wanted his father to give him the blessing that the first-born son should have received. Jacob tricked their father, Isaac, into giving him the blessing instead of Esau. Esau had lost his birthright and blessing.

He cried and begged for it, but he could not have it. He could not repent, that is, he couldn't go back and undo what had been done. This has nothing to do with Esau's salvation. It has to do with a birthright and a blessing.

2. Why would God give you a desire to be forgiven if He did not want to forgive you?

Matthew Henry, the great Puritan Bible commentator wrote,

“But humble and conscientious believers at times are tempted to think they have committed the Unpardonable Sin, while those who have come the nearest to it, seldom have any fear about it. We may be sure that those who indeed repent and believe the gospel, have not committed this sin, or any other of the same kind; for repentance and faith are the special gifts of God, which he would not bestow on any man, if he were determined never to pardon him; and those who fear they have committed this sin, give a good sign that they have not. The trembling, contrite sinner, has the witness in himself that this is not his case.”

Mr. Henry's argument is excellent here. Repentance and faith are gifts of God. If God did not want to forgive you, why would He give you a desire to repent and believe in Jesus Christ? Does God play games with us? Does He invite men and women to receive Christ as Saviour and then refuse to save them when they come to Christ? Jesus said, “All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out.” (John 6:37) Jesus Christ will not reject you if you will come to Him for salvation. He will not cast you out once you are saved either!

3. If you are saved, then you cannot commit the Unpardonable Sin because all of your sins are already pardoned.

“To him give all the prophets witness, that through his name whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins.” (Acts 10:43)

Because you have believed in Jesus Christ as Saviour, you have received remission, that is, forgiveness, of your sins. This verse leaves no sin out. It does not say that you will receive remission of some of your sins, or all sins but one. It says, plainly, that you will receive remission of sins.

“Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.” (Romans 5:1)

The man, woman, boy or girl, who believes in Jesus Christ as Saviour, is justified in the sight of God. To be justified means that I am declared to be perfectly righteousness in God's eyes. The reason for this is because, when I believe in Jesus Christ, the righteousness of the Lord is put on my account in Heaven, and my sins are taken away. A justified man cannot commit a sin that God will not forgive, because he already has received forgiveness of all sin, and been declared perfectly righteous in the sight of God!

### So, What Is The Unpardonable Sin?

That's a good question. Let me begin by saying that the Bible is very clear that the Unpardonable Sin is blasphemy against the Holy Spirit. It is a sin, directly against the Spirit of God, that involves some sort of irreverence towards Him. There is no doubt about what the Unpardonable Sin is. The question is, what specifically is blasphemy against the Holy Spirit? Here are some of the possibilities:

#### Attributing the works of the Holy Spirit to Satan

Jesus said, “Verily I say unto you, All sins shall be forgiven unto the sons of men, and blasphemies wherewith soever they shall blaspheme: But he that shall blaspheme against the Holy Ghost hath never forgiveness, but is in danger of eternal damnation: Because they said, He hath an unclean spirit.” (Mark 3:28-30) The Bible makes it plain that the reason the Lord Jesus Christ gave this warning about the

Unpardonable Sin was because the scribes accused Him of being possessed with a devil. He had done His works through the power of the Holy Spirit, but they said that He had done them through the power of Satan.

“And the scribes which came down from Jerusalem said, He hath Beelzebub, and by the prince of the devils casteth he out devils. And he called them unto him, and said unto them in parables, How can Satan cast out Satan? And if a kingdom be divided against itself, that kingdom cannot stand. And if a house be divided against itself, that house cannot stand. And if Satan rise up against himself, and be divided, he cannot stand, but hath an end.” (Mark 3:22-26)

Jesus made a very important point here. Their arguments were foolish, because if Satan were to work against himself, his kingdom would collapse. They claimed that Jesus did His miracles through demonic power. Jesus proved that He did them through Divine power. So, the Lord warned these men about blasphemy against the Holy Ghost because of what they said. Since they attributed the work of the Holy Spirit to the Devil, many conclude that the Unpardonable Sin is crediting Satan for the works of the Spirit of God.

Attributing the works of the Holy Spirit to Satan during the time when  
Jesus Christ was on earth

This is a slight variation on the view that we just read about. The Unpardonable Sin could have happened only while Jesus Christ was on earth, according to this view, because the men saw Jesus casting out demons; they attributed His ability to do this to the power of Satan; and this unique situation cannot take place today, because Jesus Christ is not physically here casting out demons.

Resisting the Holy Spirit until He stops convicting

According to this interpretation, the Unpardonable Sin happens when a sinner refuses the Holy Spirit's conviction until God permanently stops convicting. The Bible teaches that the Holy Spirit of God shows unbelieving sinners that they are lost, and that they need to be saved by faith in Jesus Christ. This is called conviction. Without

conviction, a sinner would never realize that he or she needed Jesus Christ as Saviour. According to this view, there may come a time in a person's life when, if they resist the Holy Ghost long enough, He will refuse to attempt to convince them any further. When this happens, a sinner will lose all desire to be saved. No amount of preaching or persuading can get such a person to believe in Jesus Christ. Scriptures that are used to try to support this view include Genesis 6:3 and Hebrews six.

### Can My Sin Be Forgiven?

No sin can be pardoned until the sinner wants forgiveness. Dr. John R. Rice wrote, "Note these truths about the unpardonable sin: (1) It is always committed only by an unsaved person, and always concerns accepting or rejecting Christ. (2) No Christian can commit it. (3) This sin does not change Christ and His offer of mercy. It changes the sinner. One who wants to be saved has not committed this sin. he can be saved."<sup>24</sup>

In conclusion, the Unpardonable Sin is blasphemy against the Holy Spirit. There are different opinions as to what exactly this blasphemy is, but no matter what you believe the Bible teaches about the Unpardonable Sin, one thing is clear. If a person wants to be saved, God will save them. No matter what sins you have committed, or how far you have gone, there is hope for you, if you will believe on the Lord Jesus Christ!

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24. From Dr. Rice's note on Hebrews 6:4, page 1312 in the Rice Reference Bible.