

Lesson Eight: Is there a sin God will not forgive?

Before we get into to that disturbing thought let's see the ground we have already covered.

We have talked about:

- How can we be sure we are saved?
- How can we overcome temptation?
- How can I get off the worry wheel?
- How can I find forgiveness?
- Is Jesus really the only way to God?
- Why Do Christians have so many problems?
- Why doesn't God answer my prayers?

We have a few good questions to answer beyond the 10 basic ones that have been asked and covered in the book by David Jeremiah. A couple are: "Where is Heaven" and "What happens to infants – small children and adults that are without understanding when they die?" We will look at those and others but we have three more to do from the main list.

The question: "Is there a sin that God can't forgive?" is a very disturbing one indeed. I have had many questions about that by people – even church members.

At the outset I want to clear up something. A believer in Jesus can **never** **commit** the unpardonable sin. Also the fact that any person is concerned that they may have committed the unpardonable sin is **proof** that they haven't.

So let's look at it together.

The Sin the God will **never** forgive

The very thought of that is kind of scary. The best place to start is by saying that we are not talking about the seeming severity of some particular sin. Someone might suggest some sins as being sins that are beyond forgiveness.

However, Jesus did say that there is a sin that cannot be forgiven period; never. Look at Mark chapter 3.

In v.20-30 we begin to see hear the three opinions about the identity of Jesus.

- To his family and friends he was **demented**

Mk 3:21 But when His own people heard about this, they went out to lay hold of Him, for they said, "He is out of His mind."

- To his opposition Jesus was **demonic**

Mk 3:22 And the scribes who came down from Jerusalem said, "He has Beelzebub," and, "By the ruler of the demons He casts out demons."

To the disciples He was **divine**

Jesus responded to the Scribes and Pharisees with a question. "How can Satan cast out Satan? (v.23). They had no answer because what they suggested was nonsensical. Jesus gave three reasons: 1) A Kingdom divided against itself cannot stand – eventually civil war will consume it. 2) A house (home) divided cannot stand. We see it every day – families self-destructing through divorce, drug use, alcohol, gambling, physical abuse etc. 3) Satan cannot destroy himself or rise up to fight himself. No his forces are unified, cohesive and powerful.

Jesus gave an illustration about how Satan's strongholds in the life of the sick and demon possessed were being defeated and the prisoners were being set free. *Mk 3:27 No one can enter a strong man's house and plunder his goods, unless he first binds the strong man. And then he will plunder his house.* Here the **strong man** is Satan. He has control over his "house", this world. The **stronger man** is Jesus. He with a word can bind Satan and set the captives free.

Now the shoe drops. V.28 says everyone can be forgiven for all sorts of sin and blasphemy. But - *Mk 3:29 but he who **blasphemes against the Holy Spirit** never has forgiveness, but is subject to eternal condemnation"— 30 because they said, "He has an unclean spirit."*

The unpardonable sin is a sin that only **unbelievers** can commit. It is to hear, see, experience and witness the power of God and to with hardened heart and a seared soul attribute the work God to Satan. This is the unpardonable sin!

Sinning away your day of **grace**

This is another great danger. Let me quote a passage.

Heb 2:1 Therefore we must give the more earnest heed to the things we have heard, lest we drift away. 2 For if the word spoken through angels proved steadfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just reward, 3 how shall we escape if we neglect so great a salvation, which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed to us by those who heard Him, 4 God also bearing witness both with signs and wonders, with various miracles, and gifts of the Holy Spirit, according to His own will?

How shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation?

The example of the **Jews** of the exodus

The example of **Pharaoh**

The example of the **Jews** of Jesus day *Lk 13:34 "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the one who kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to her! How often I wanted to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, but you were not willing!"*

The preaching of Isaiah comes to mind. *Is 55:6 -7* It was never a situation that they **could not**; it was the fact that they **would not**! They had sinned away their day of Grace.

Sinning unto **death**

1 Jn 5:16 If anyone sees his brother sinning a sin which does not lead to death, he will ask, and He will give him life for those who commit sin not leading to death. There is sin leading to death. I do not say that he should pray about that. 17 All unrighteousness is sin, and there is sin not leading to death.

Now we come to "The Sin unto death." Could this be pastor? Can a Christian commit "a" sin that leads to death? First a grammatical clarification is in order. In both verses 16 and 17 there is no article "a" before the word sin. It actually says in Greek – *there is sin leading to death (16) and there is sin not leading to death.* It is doubtful that there is a single act or sin that God will strike us dead on the spot. Yet we cannot just overlook the teaching.

An example from the **Old Testament**: The rebellion of Korah, Dathan and Abiram.

Rebellion against God's **authority** is dangerous.

The example in the **early Church** - In Acts chapter 5 we have the famous story of Ananias and Sapphira.

Conceiving a deception to gain church **recognition** is dangerous.

The example in **Corinth** - In 1 Corinthians the church was rocked with the blatant unrepentant sexual sin of incest. Look how God instructed Paul to handle it. *1 Co 5:4 In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, when you are gathered together, along with my spirit, with the power of our Lord Jesus Christ, 5 deliver such a one to Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that his spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus.* Wow! Just turn them over to the devil.

Blatant, **unrepentant** sin is dangerous.

The example of **ritualistic** religion - In 1 Corinthians 11 the church had become reckless and vile in the observance of the Lord's Supper. *1 Co 11:29 For he who eats and drinks in an unworthy manner eats and drinks judgment to himself, not discerning the Lord's body. 30 For this reason many are weak and sick among you, and many sleep. 31 For if we would judge ourselves, we would not be judged.* To be asleep in the New Testament means they had died.

Some people were sick and others had died because they made a **mockery** of the Lord's Supper.

The example of rejecting **correction** -

1 Ti 1:18 This charge I commit to you, son Timothy, according to the prophecies previously made concerning you, that by them you may wage the good warfare, 19 having faith and a good conscience, which some having rejected, concerning the faith have suffered shipwreck, 20 of whom are Hymenaeus and Alexander, whom I delivered to Satan that they may learn not to blaspheme. These men had sinned against their **conscience** to the point that they blasphemed God. Blasphemy is to **slander** God! It is to falsely accuse God!

It is dangerous to reject **correction** and even **sear** your conscience.

John said there is a time when a person's sin is such that prayer is ineffective; God has made up his mind.

It might be the unpardonable sin of an unbeliever - it might be the unrepentant brazen sin of a professed believer. But at least we know God does not take the **death penalty** off the table in dealing with sinners.

This question today is a disturbing one.

So what are the sins we have talked about?

1. The Unpardonable Sin – the Sin that will never be forgiven
 - a. Who can commit it? Only **unbelievers**
 - b. What is it? To attribute the work of God to Satan. **Blasphemy**
2. Sinning away the day of **grace**
 - a. Who can commit it? Only unbelievers
 - b. What is it? To reject Christ to the point that God **confirms** the decision. Opportunity is lost.
3. Sin unto Death
 - a. Who can commit it? Believers and **perhaps** unbelievers.
 - b. What is it? For believers it is sinning against the urging of a Holy Spirit enlivened conscience and refusing to **repent**.

It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God. [Heb. 10.31]

It is a joyous thing to receive forgiveness by faith. [Ps 32.1-2]