
BIBLE TALK

This week we are discussing this question: **What is the "unpardonable sin"?**

In the New Testament we read of a sin which the Lord said cannot be pardoned:

Mark 3:28-30

28 "Assuredly , I say to you, all sins will be forgiven the sons of men, and whatever blasphemies they may utter;

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."

From this we learn what the "unpardonable" sin is -- it is blasphemy against the Holy Spirit.

Blasphemy, according to the dictionary, means "the act of insulting or showing contempt or lack of reverence" (Webster's New Collegiate).

Matthew 12:32

32 "Anyone who speaks a word against the Son of Man, it will be forgiven him; but whoever speaks against the Holy Spirit, it will not be forgiven him, either in this age or in the age to come.

According to this, men can blaspheme against Jesus, that is, they can speak against Him, treat Him with contempt and reject Him and still receive forgiveness. But a warning is given: If men treat the Holy Spirit like this, if they speak against Him, treat Him with contempt and reject Him like they have Jesus, there is no forgiveness either in this world, nor in the world to come.

HOW DO MEN BLASPHEME

QUESTION: Exactly how do men treat the Holy Spirit with contempt? Exactly how do men reject the Holy Spirit and thus become guilty of this "unforgivable" sin?

Biblically speaking, men reject the Holy Spirit and treat Him with contempt when they reject the words and writings of the apostles and prophets. Notice carefully:

Matthew 10:18-20

18 "You will be brought before governors and kings for My sake, as a testimony to them and to the Gentiles.

19 "But when they deliver you up, do not worry about how or what you should speak. For it will be given to you in that hour what you should speak;

20 "for it is not you who speak, but the Spirit of your Father who speaks in you.

Zero in on verse 20: "It is not ye that speak, but the Spirit." In other words, when governors and kings rejected the words of the apostles, they were rejecting the Holy Spirit, because it was not really the apostles speaking, but the Holy Spirit was doing the speaking thru them.

Again:

Acts 7:51-52

51 "You stiffnecked and uncircumcised in heart and ears! You always resist the Holy Spirit; as your fathers did, so do you.

52 "Which of the prophets did your fathers not persecute? ...

According to verse 51 men were resisting the Holy Spirit. But how did they do this? The answer is found in verse 52. They resisted the Spirit by persecuting the prophets of God.

When God sent His Holy Spirit to inspire a prophet, or apostle with a divine message, it was treating the Spirit of God with contempt to reject that message. It was treating the Holy Spirit with contempt to persecute the prophets who were the mouth-pieces of the Spirit.

WHY IS THIS WORSE?

Now ... do you remember what Jesus said? He said that men could blaspheme Him -- they could treat Him with contempt -- and they could be forgiven for that, but if men treat the Holy Spirit with contempt, there is no forgiveness.

QUESTION: Why is this? Why is it worse to treat the Holy Spirit with contempt? Is it because the Holy Spirit is better than Jesus? No! It is because the Spirit is more important, or holier than Jesus? Not at all.

The reason it's worse is because the Holy Spirit is the last member of the Godhead to warn mankind.

Let me illustrate it like this. Suppose a truck is speeding down a mountain road and at the bottom of the hill is a sharp curve that cannot be seen. As the truck begins down the hill there is a warning sign posted warning motorists to slow down for the unseen curve, but the truck driver ignores the warning. Halfway down the hill is another sign warning about the curve, but still the truck driver ignores the warning. Next there is one last sign posted about a hundred yards from the curve giving a warning, but the truck driver ignores that sign also. Finally, the truck driver comes upon the curve and realizes he is going too fast, but he has waited too late. He slams on the brakes and skids his tires, but it won't keep him from going off the road and crashing.

Now ... let's think about this for a moment.

(1) The truck driver could have ignored the first warning sign and heeded the second and he could have been saved.

(2) He could have even ignored the second warning sign and by giving heed to the third sign he could have been saved.

(3) But when he ignored the third sign, it became too late. There was not to be another warning given.

In a similar way God the Father was the first member of the Godhead to speak to mankind and warn them to turn from sin (Hebrews 1:1). Jesus was the second member of the Godhead to warn men to turn from sin (Hebrews 1:2). Finally, the Holy Spirit was the third and final member of the Godhead to speak to men and warn them about their sins (1 Timothy 4:1).

(1) Just as it was with the truck driver, men that had rejected the first warning given by God the Father could have heeded the second warning given by Jesus and they could still have been saved.

(2) Again, men that rejected the second warning given by Jesus could have heeded the third warning given by the Holy Spirit and they could still have been saved.

(3) BUT, when men reject the third and final warning, there is no other member of the Godhead to warn them.

Men who resist the inspired writings of the Holy Spirit are treating the Spirit of God with contempt. If they continue on in this dangerous course, they will reach a point where they have finally and completely rejected the Holy Spirit and their conscience is so hardened there is no hope of saving them.

Acts 28:27

27 For the hearts of this people have grown dull. Their ears are hard of hearing, And their eyes they have closed, Lest they should see with their eyes and hear with their ears, Lest they should understand with their hearts and turn, So that I should heal them." '

This passage is describing men that are beyond hope. They can never receive forgiveness. They have rejected the inspired message of the Holy Spirit. They themselves have shut their eyes, closed their ears and hardened their hearts and there is nothing that can be done for them.

A WARNING

Let this be a warning to all of us. Let us be careful that we do not resist the Holy Spirit's inspired message so long that eventually we harden our hearts so hard that we cannot be saved.

(1) When the Holy Spirit inspired Peter to preach that men must repent and be immersed for the remission of sins (Acts 2:38), let us be careful that we don't resist that passage until we become guilty of treating the Spirit of God with contempt!

(2) When the Holy Spirit inspired Paul to write that women must remain silent in the assemblies of the church (1 Corinthians 14:34), let us beware lest we resist that passage to the point of treating God's Spirit with contempt!

(3) When the Holy Spirit instructed that there should be a weekly communion in the church (Acts 20:7) and that only one loaf and one cup could be used to commemorate the Lord's death (1 Corinthians 11:24-25), let us beware lest we resist that inspired teaching to the point that we are guilty of treating God's Spirit with contempt!