

Question: What Is The Unpardonable / Unforgivable Sin? (& have I committed it?)



For Christians and non-Christians alike, *forgiveness* is a HUGE need. Part of the appeal of the Christian Faith, in fact, is the promise of complete, total *forgiveness* – a promise that shines like a bright glorious light in passages like *Psalm 103:3, 11-12; 32:1, 2; Exodus 34:6-7; Micah 7:18-19*.

In that Light, however, Jesus Himself cast a dark shadow. In *Mark 3:22-30*, and *Matthew 12:22-37*, Jesus delivers what may be, pound for pound, one of the most guilt-inducing statements in all of Scripture. In fact, it's sort of difficult not to ask the question, "When it comes to this particular sin, is it I?" We need to be clear on this matter!

1st, Consider what the "unforgivable sin" is NOT.

- A. It's not **MURDER**. If so, David's out. David knew forgiveness.
- B. It's not **ADULTERY** or **SEXUAL SIN**. If so, again, David's out. So are the people addressed in *1 Corinthians 6:9-11* ⁹ *Or do you not know that wrongdoers will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: Neither the sexually immoral nor idolaters nor adulterers nor men who have sex with men^[a] ¹⁰ nor thieves nor the greedy nor drunkards nor slanderers nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God. ¹¹ And that is what some of you were. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God.*
- C. It's not **DENYING** Jesus under **PRESSURE** of **PERSECUTION**. Peter did that, big time, but was restored & became a great force of the Gospel of Jesus Christ.
- D. It's not **SUICIDE**. People try to make that so by saying "You cannot go to heaven w/unforgiven sin, and you must ask forgiveness to get it." That denies what forgiveness covers. & who in here has confessed every sin they've committed? Plus, it denies the truth of *Romans 8:38-39* that NOTHING can separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus.
- E. It's not **SWEARING** or taking the **LORD'S NAME** in **VAIN**. Who hasn't? That produces **GUILT**, but **FORGIVENESS** *cancel*s guilt.
- F. It's not speaking against **JESUS**. Even Jesus said that could be forgiven, *Luke 12:13* says, *And everyone who speaks a word against the Son of Man will be forgiven, but anyone who blasphemes against the Holy Spirit will not be forgiven.*
- G. It's not entertaining **DOUBTS** about **Christ and Christianity**. We all do that from time to time. As Luther says, "We can't stop birds from flying around our heads, but we CAN keep them from building a nest in our heads!" Also, remember **DOUBTING THOMAS**?
- H. It's not **CHALLENGING** God. On a warm summer evening in London lines of curiosity-seekers formed, eager to find a seat in the auditorium in order to hear the much anticipated debate between the well-known atheist Robert Ingersoll and the preacher Dr. Joseph Parker. During the course of the debate, Ingersoll ruthlessly attacked the truthfulness of the Holy Scriptures, and in the most blasphemous of terms, denied the deity and the finished work of the Lord Jesus Christ. After some time, as was his manner, he paused, and gazing heavenward he threw out this challenge to the eternal God. 'I have just vilified, assailed and profaned the name of Almighty God; I challenge You, if You exist at all, I call You to strike me dead upon this very spot'. With every fixed eye upon him, he then paused and casually walked to a chair and sat down; and pulling out a stopwatch from his pocket he added, 'I will give You five minutes'. As each minute slowly ticked off, he confidently announced to the crowd . . . four minutes left . . . three minutes . . . two minutes . . . one minute. Then he triumphantly stood up, and returning to the podium, he made his closing remarks to the audience.

After speaking, he motioned to the front row of the vast lecture hall, where Dr. Joseph Parker was sitting, and invited him to respond to his dramatic rebuke of God. Joseph Parker slowly took his place behind the podium, and addressing the audience, he soundly refuted each of his opponent's arguments. As he concluded, he turned to the learned atheist and graciously inquired, 'And did the good gentleman think he could exhaust the patience, frustrate the grace, and thwart the infinite mercy of the eternal God in just five minutes?'

2nd, Consider what the “unforgivable sin” IS.

A. The *historical context* of the passage provides the narrow definition of the unforgivable sin. The religious leaders and teachers of the day (who did NOT like Jesus and actively opposed Him), attributed the works of Jesus to the devil. Jesus shows them the logical fallacy of their thinking, and then makes the statement about THE sin.

It's the SPECIFIC, ACTIVE, and FINAL choice to declare the person and work of Jesus (WHO He is & WHAT He does) as being DEMONIC in origin. It's showing CONTEMPT for the Holy Spirit's work.

- **An observation or two:** 1) Jesus knows what was on their hearts and that from the overflow of the heart the words issue forth. 2) They were religious LEADERS who were leading people astray through DISTORTION, DISTRACTION, and outright DECEPTION. 3) They were PERSISTENT in their attacks.

B. The broader Biblical context of the passage provides the current definition / application of the sin.

In *John 16*, Jesus spells out **the role of the Holy Spirit in our lives.**

- **He is the Spirit of TRUTH, Vs 12...** about Jesus, WHO Jesus is, WHAT Jesus does. This TRUTH about Jesus is given through Holy Spirit-inspired Scripture.
- **Part of the mission of the Holy Spirit is to GLORIFY Jesus, Vs 14.** To make Jesus BIG & REAL & HEAVY (Heaviest Factor) in our lives; to put the SPOTLIGHT on JESUS.
- **The Holy Spirit does the work of CONVICTING people about:**
 - SIN, that there IS such a thing, that it's a debt, a burden, and a part of our nature.
 - RIGHTEOUSNESS, that our righteousness is from CHRIST, and not from ourselves. Self-righteousness is SIN; we are clothed in HIS righteousness alone!
 - JUDGEMENT, which is for those who follow the FATHER of LIES, the DEVIL, who WILL be thrown into the lake of fire and brimstone. Either our sins are judged on the cross (past) or for eternity (future). The difference lies in what you do with CHRIST.

ULTIMATELY, WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO “BLASPHEME” THE HOLY SPIRIT? This definition of the sin implies *why* this sin is unforgivable.

***** It is the ONGOING, CONTINUAL rejection of the work of the Holy Spirit's REVELATION of the GOSPEL of Jesus Christ. It is unwavering DENIAL of who Jesus is and what He has done, as revealed by the Holy Spirit, in Scripture. It is settled UNBELIEF in the Gospel. *****

This sin is unforgivable because to REJECT Jesus as revealed by the Holy Spirit in Scripture is to REJECT the only PERSON Who can forgive sin!

Here's 3 ways you can know you have NOT committed this sin...

- 1) If the thought of having committed this sin bothers you, you have not committed this sin. That shows you are CONVICTED, and CONVICTION is the work of the Holy Spirit. People who are NOT convicted over any kind of denial of Christ in their lives should be VERY afraid!

- 2) If you believe the GOSPEL, you have not committed this sin. ***John 3:16-18*** ¹⁶ ***For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.*** ¹⁷ ***For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him.*** ¹⁸ ***Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe stands condemned already because they have not believed in the name of God's one and only Son.***
Through the Spirit-inspired Words of the Gospels, the Gospel is revealed.

- 3) If you are aware of the ongoing work of the Holy Spirit in your life. If you feel CONVICTION over sin, if in your life you notice an increasing AWARENESS that your righteousness is not something YOU accomplish but something that has been accomplished FOR YOU BY CHRIST, and received BY FAITH ALONE, and if you believe that Jesus bore the PUNISHMENT for ALL your sins on the cross, then the Holy Spirit is doing His work in your life, and you have nothing to worry about!