

## THE UNPARDONABLE SIN

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Matthew 12:22-32

1. Following Jesus can result in opposition from both friend and foe.
2. Matthew's account of this incident focuses on the opposition of the Jewish religious leaders, but Mark's account also points out that His own family was saying, "He has lost His senses," and came to get Him. Mark 3:21, 31-35  
NOTE: G. Campbell Morgan observed, "Men today never seem to think that out-and-out passionate and sacrificial devotion, suggest madness in any realm except the spiritual (particularly where genuine Christianity is concerned)."
3. The scribes and Pharisees were becoming increasingly disturbed by Jesus, His message, His ministry, and His effect upon the multitudes.
4. They sought to discredit Him by attacking His character, His words, and His actions.
5. We see this reality earlier in this chapter in response to Jesus' healing of a man with a withered hand on the Sabbath. Matthew 12:14  
"But the Pharisees went out and conspired against Him, as to how they might destroy Him."
6. In verses 15-21 we are told that Jesus:
  - a. Continued to minister.
  - b. Sought to avoid unnecessary conflict.
  - c. Continued to teach that His ministry was a fulfillment of God's Word through Isaiah the prophet.
7. Jesus came to fulfill God's expectations and not man's, and He did so in accordance with the Word of God, in the power of the Holy Spirit, with humility, and in love.
8. This brings us to the passage we are looking at today which we will look at under three headings.
  - a. A false accusation.
  - b. A forceful reply.
  - c. A fearful warning.

### **I. A false accusation. 22-24**

- A. Jesus healed a man who was demon-possessed, blind, and unable to speak thus demonstrating His power over the spiritual and the physical.
- B. The multitudes were amazed and asked if this man might be the Messiah.  
NOTE: Jesus' ministry raised hopes, but also doubts because He did not do what the people expected the Messiah to do.
- C. The Pharisees took the next step in their opposition to Jesus by moving from attacking His outward actions and words to attributing His power to the Devil.
  1. They could not deny that He possessed spiritual power.
  2. Their opposition to Jesus was so intense that, in spite of all the evidence to the contrary, they attributed the work of the Holy Spirit to the Devil.
- D. We see the same type of opposition manifested against the Spirit-filled Stephen in the book of Acts.
  1. In Acts 6:10 we read that Stephen's opponents were, "unable to cope with the wisdom and **the Spirit** with which he was speaking."

2. Their initial response is described in Acts 6:11-15.

Then they secretly induced men to say, "We have heard him speak blasphemous words against Moses and against God." 12 And they stirred up the people, the elders and the scribes, and they came up to him and dragged him away and brought him before the Council. 13 They put forward false witnesses who said, "This man incessantly speaks against this holy place and the Law; 14 for we have heard him say that this Nazarene, Jesus, will destroy this place and alter the customs which Moses handed down to us." 15 And fixing their gaze on him, all who were sitting in the Council saw his face like the face of an angel.

3. Stephen bluntly told them what their problem was. Acts 7:51-53

"**You** men who are stiff-necked and uncircumcised in heart and ears **are always resisting the Holy Spirit**; you are doing just as your fathers did. 52 "Which one of the prophets did your fathers not persecute? They killed those who had previously announced the coming of the Righteous One, whose betrayers and murderers you have now become; 53 you who received the law as ordained by angels, and yet did not keep it."

4. Their response was predictable. Acts 7:54-60

Now when they heard this, they were cut to the quick, and they began gnashing their teeth at him. 55 **But being full of the Holy Spirit**, he gazed intently into heaven and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God; 56 and he said, "Behold, I see the heavens opened up and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God." 57 But they cried out with a loud voice, and covered their ears and rushed at him with one impulse. 58 When they had driven him out of the city, they began stoning him; and the witnesses laid aside their robes at the feet of a young man named Saul. 59 They went on stoning Stephen as he called on the Lord and said, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit!" 60 Then falling on his knees, he cried out with a loud voice, "Lord, do not hold this sin against them!" Having said this, he fell asleep.

## II. A forceful reply. 25-30

A. Their accusation was not only wrong; it was ridiculous.

1. If it was true that Satan was opposing himself, and his kingdom would self-destruct.
2. Satan does resort to lying wonders and miracles, but he does not actually fight against himself.

B. Since their accusations were without merit the only other explanation was that the Kingdom of God had come upon them.

C. Jesus went on to state, "He who is not with Me is against Me; and he who does not gather with Me scatters."

NOTE: In other words Jesus was saying, "Where I am concerned there is no middle ground; anyone who is not actively seeking to advance the kingdom I represent is against me."

## III. A fearful warning. 31-32

A. Jesus declared that any sin and blasphemy can be forgiven regardless of:

1. The severity of sin up to, and including, speaking against the Lord Jesus.

NOTE: Even Christians are capable of committing blasphemy against God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, and we do so when we question God's goodness, wisdom, fairness, truthfulness, love and faithfulness.

2. The volume of sin.
3. The kind of sin.

B. However, to blaspheme and speak against the Holy Spirit will not be forgiven in this age, or in the age to come.

NOTE: To reject, deny, and blaspheme the Holy Spirit demonstrates an attitude of mind, heart and will that is totally unwilling to accept or respond to God's clear and overwhelming revelation of Himself.

C. The Holy Spirit is the Lord of the Harvest, and His evident activity must not be attributed to any other spirit or being.

### **APPLICATION**

1. I believe that the "Unpardonable Sin" can only be committed by those who are the determined enemies of God, His Christ, and His Kingdom.
2. They are the tools of the Devil who actively and persistently work against, and slander, the Holy Spirit by misrepresenting Him and His work.
3. That said, all of us are capable of resisting, grieving, and quenching the Holy Spirit.
4. As Christians we must worship, welcome, rely on, obey, and respond to the Holy Spirit.
5. To be saved a person must respond to the Holy Spirit as He convicts them of sin, the necessity of righteousness and the certainty of judgment.
6. May the Holy Spirit know that He has His rightful place in our lives and church.