

- What exactly is the unforgivable sin?
 - One of the most common questions
 - 3:28-29 “Truly, I say to you, all sins will be forgiven the children of man, and whatever blasphemies they utter, ²⁹but whoever blasphemes against the Holy Spirit never has forgiveness, but is guilty of an eternal sin”—
 - Rightly concerned.
 - A time when the door to grace closes?
 - You’ve wondered “have I done it?”
 - For many it’s like emotional doubt.
 - Not justified... but still there.
 - Frequently pastoral concerns take over and careful Bible study takes a back seat.
 - Otherd really want to understand it
- But first... a summary view “what is the unforgivable sin”
 - It’s not any sin you’re probably thinking of.
 - Murder
 - abortion
 - sexual sin
 - a repetitive sin you’ve committed
 - it’s not even rejecting the gospel (though it’s related)
 - it’s not persecuting the church
 - or saying a blasphemous thing about the Holy Spirit
 - Where a person has hardened their OWN heart so much that they not only reject the gospel but in the face of overwhelming miraculous proof they call it “satanic”. Overwhelming, uncommon proof, such as Jesus present with you performing miracles and exorcisms right in front of you. And you know these miracles prove who He is, and you know they are REALLY happening but you say it’s by Satan’s power He does it.
 - This is the height of the rejection of the truth of Christ.
 - It seems to be a point of no return
 - A self-willed one-way trip into the land of denial and the rejection of God. A final rejection of the gospel.
 - The fact that you trust in Christ is evidence that you haven’t done this.
 - Anyone who chooses Christ in the future shows that they haven’t done this.
- You probably have questions.
 - Why do I think this?
 - Can I show my work?
- Pt 12 in the Mark series.
 - Going deep (theo, apolo)
 - Vs by vs through Mark
 - This week
 - The unforgivable sin
 - Then 13 questions
- I’ve heard...
 - It’s any blasphemous phrase specifically directed against the Holy Spirit.
 - Father – ok. Son – ok. Spirit – never forgiven.
 - This implies anyone can do it at any time.
 - No security
 - Or – non-answers with pastoral help.
 - Whatever it is, it doesn’t apply to you.
 - Generally, I think many of us are left wishing we had more info.
- Starts with context.

Mark 3:21 (NASB95)
²¹**When His own people heard of this, they went out to take custody of Him; for they were saying, “He has lost His senses.”**

 - This is the beginning.
 - Starts and ends with this. (31-35)
 - Why?
- Markan sandwiches –
 - 9 of them
 - Mk 5
 - Jairus’ daughter
 - Woman with hemorrhage
 - Jairus’ daughter
 - Tying two events together to give us context so we can better understand
 - If we ignore this context, it will hurt us

1. 3:20-35 A Jesus' companions try to seize him, vv 20-21 B The religious leaders accuse Jesus of being in league with Beelzeboul, vv 22-30 A Jesus' family seeks him, vv 31-35
 2. 4:1-20 A Parable of the Sower, vv 1-9 B Purpose of parables, vv 10-13 A Explanation of the Parable of the Sower, vv 14-20
 3. 5:21-43 A Jairus pleads with Jesus to save his daughter, vv 21-24 B Woman with a hemorrhage touches Jesus, vv 25-34 A Jesus raises Jairus's daughter, vv 35-43
 4. 6:7-30 A Mission of the Twelve, vv 7-13 B Martyrdom of John the Baptist, vv 14-29 A Return of the Twelve, v 30
 5. 11:12-21 A Cursing of the fig tree, vv 12-14 B Clearing of the temple, vv 15-19 A Withering of the fig tree, vv 20-21
 6. 14:1-11 A Plot to kill Jesus, vv 1-2 B Anointing of Jesus at Bethany, vv 3-9 A Judas's agreement to betray Jesus, vv 10-11
 7. 14:17-31 A Jesus predicts his betrayal, vv 17-21 B Institution of the Lord's Supper, vv 22-26 A Jesus predicts Peter's betrayal, vv 27-31
 8. 14:53-72 A Peter follows Jesus to the courtyard of the high priest, vv 53-54 B Jesus' inquisition before the Sanhedrin, vv 55-65 A Peter's denial of Jesus, vv 66-72
 9. 15:40-16:8 A Women at the cross, vv 15:40-41 B Joseph of Arimathea requests Jesus' body, vv 15:42-46 A Women at the empty tomb, vv 15:47-16:8

- Keep this in mind.
 - His family thinking he's insane.
 - That's a rejection of Jesus and a blasphemy against Him.
 - It's not over.. it's interrupted.

²²And the scribes who came down from Jerusalem were saying, "He is possessed by Beelzebub," and "by the prince of demons he casts out the demons."

- From Jerusalem
 - authority
- First thing to notice
 - A different and much more extreme rejection of Jesus.
- Beelzebub
 - Beelzebub or Beelzebub
 - Two names, one false god
 - And the OT has Beelzebub
 - 2 Kings 1:2, 1:6
 - A philistine deity
 - "Lord of the flies"
 - Latin translations often have Beelzebub
 - KJV
 - Intentional?
 - Beelzebub – lord of filth (maybe)
 - Jewish slander?
 - Names get messy
 - What do they mean?
 - Satan
 - Mt 12:24 "the prince of demons"
 - Not the Canaanite understanding
 - Also, Jesus simply calls him Satan.

- Note
 - This means they knew Jesus was actually casting out demons.
 - It was meant to be proof.
 - **Matthew 12:28 (NASB95)** ²⁸*"But if I cast out demons by the Spirit of God, then the kingdom of God has come upon you."*
 - THEY (in that culture) would have known it as proof.
 - Overwhelming proof
- "were saying" (ἔλεγον) is in the imperfect here and in v. 30 suggests not a passing comment but a sustained campaign of vilification¹
- This context helps us understand Blasph of the Holy Spirit
 - They know it's proof... they choose to call it Satan
 - Next level self-hardened hearts

²³And he called them to him and said to them in parables, "How can Satan cast out Satan?"

- Called them to him.
 - They weren't saying it to him.

²⁴If a kingdom is divided against itself, that kingdom cannot stand.

²⁵And if a house is divided against itself, that house will not be able to stand.

²⁶And if Satan has risen up against himself and is divided, he cannot stand, but is coming to an end. (good reminder for marriages, businesses, ministries)

²⁷But no one can enter a strong man's house and plunder his goods, unless he first binds the strong man. Then indeed he may plunder his house.

- Two parables
- Point
 - What you're saying makes no sense.
 - And they know it
 - Stupid on purpose.

¹ France, R. T. (2002). *The Gospel of Mark: a commentary on the Greek text* (p. 169). Grand Rapids, MI; Carlisle: W.B. Eerdmans; Paternoster Press.

- Why is their “stupid on purpose” so much worse and more dangerous than others?
 - Increased light –
 - Vss.
 - **Matthew 11:20–24 (NASB95)** ²⁰*Then He began to denounce the cities in which most of His miracles were done, because they did not repent. ²¹“Woe to you, Chorazin! Woe to you, Bethsaida! For if the miracles had occurred in Tyre and Sidon which occurred in you, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes. ²²“Nevertheless I say to you, it will be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon in the day of judgment than for you. ²³“And you, Capernaum, will not be exalted to heaven, will you? You will descend to Hades; for if the miracles had occurred in Sodom which occurred in you, it would have remained to this day. ²⁴“Nevertheless I say to you that it will be more tolerable for the land of Sodom in the day of judgment, than for you.”*
 - Not just the preaching...
 - The miracles.
 - **John 15:22–25 (NASB95)** ²²*“If I had not come and spoken to them, they would not have sin, but now they have no excuse for their sin. ²³“He who hates Me hates My Father also. ²⁴“If I had not done among them the works which no one else did, they would not have sin; but now they have both seen and hated Me and My Father as well.*
 - Rejection of greater revelation = greater consequences
- What they had
 - The OT – which spoke of Christ
 - The works of Jesus – which confirmed who He was
 - They also acknowledge He was doing these things!!
 - Exorcisms and miracles
 - When John B doubted
 - Go tell them

- **Luke 7:18–23 (NASB95)** ¹⁸*The disciples of John reported to him about all these things. ¹⁹Summoning two of his disciples, John sent them to the Lord, saying, “Are You the Expected One, or do we look for someone else?” ²⁰When the men came to Him, they said, “John the Baptist has sent us to You, to ask, ‘Are You the Expected One, or do we look for someone else?’ ” ²¹At that very time He cured many people of diseases and afflictions and evil spirits; and He gave sight to many who were blind. ²²And He answered and said to them, “Go and report to John what you have seen and heard: the blind receive sight, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, the poor have the gospel preached to them. ²³“Blessed is he who does not take offense at Me.”*
 - Jesus may not be who you expect.
 - But He is the One.

- Rom 1 –
 - Foolish hearts and debased minds result when we reject God’s revelation
 - What happens when you reject the ultimate revelation... full light?

- ²⁸“Truly, I say to you, all sins will be forgiven the children of man, and whatever blasphemies they utter,
²⁹but whoever blasphemes against the Holy Spirit never has forgiveness, but is guilty of an eternal sin”—
³⁰for they were saying, “He has an unclean spirit.”
- Introduced by “truly I say to you”
 - Jesus’ unique teaching style
 - “truly (amen) I say to you”
 - “truly truly” – Luke (amen amen)
 - They didn’t talk this way.

will make with the house of Israel after those days," declares the Lord, "I will put My law within them and on their heart I will write it; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people. ³⁴"They will not teach again, each man his neighbor and each man his brother, saying, 'Know the Lord,' for they will all know Me, from the least of them to the greatest of them," declares the Lord, **"for I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin I will remember no more."**

- This is how David found forgiveness for adultery and murder.

Psalm 51:title–19 (NASB95)

For the choir director. A Psalm of David, when Nathan the prophet came to him, after he had gone in to Bathsheba.

¹Be gracious to me, O God, according to Your lovingkindness; According to the greatness of Your compassion blot out my transgressions. ²Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity And cleanse me from my sin. ³For I know my transgressions, And my sin is ever before me... ... ¹⁴Deliver me from bloodguiltiness, O God, the God of my salvation; Then my tongue will joyfully sing of Your righteousness. ¹⁵O Lord, open my lips, That my mouth may declare Your praise. ¹⁶For You do not delight in sacrifice, otherwise I would give it; You are not pleased with burnt offering. ¹⁷The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; A broken and a contrite heart, O God, You will not despise. ¹⁸By Your favor do good to Zion; Build the walls of Jerusalem. ¹⁹Then You will delight in righteous sacrifices, In burnt offering and whole burnt offering; Then young bulls will be offered on Your altar.

- There's some forgiveness available apart from the Law (thought pictured by it)
- That grace and mercy is found in Christ, in full measure.
 - Not an extension of OT Law, a superior, new covenant.
 - Take that in!
 - ***Romans 3:25 (NASB95) ²⁵whom God displayed publicly as a propitiation in His blood through faith. This was to demonstrate His righteousness, because in the forbearance of***

- OT – 23 times as a response or at the end of some praise of God.
 - Mk 15:39 "alythos, this was the Son of God"
- R.T. France's commentary on Mark
 - "...there is no parallel to Jesus' introductory use of ἀμήν in pre-Christian Jewish literature. Still less is there any instance of a Jewish teacher using the phrase ἀμήν λέγω ὑμῖν."²
- They END with amen... Jesus starts with it.
 - Not affirming.... Dispensing
- Only 1 OT time it's not used in response.
 - Isaiah 65:16 (ESV) ¹⁶so that he who blesses himself in the land shall bless himself by the God of **truth**, and he who takes an oath in the land shall swear by the God of **truth**; because the former troubles are forgotten and are hidden from my eyes.
 - Because what God says is true.
 - Rev. "the Amen"
- "teaches with authority"
- Two contrasted things
 - All sins and whatever blasphemies they utter
 - First, we need to take this in full strength
 - Total forgiveness.
 - Unlike the OT Law.
 - Blasphemy is specifically not forgivable under the OT Law.
 - Jesus offers more...
 - Jeremiah 31:31–34 (NASB95) ³¹"Behold, days are coming," declares the Lord, "when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah, ³²not like the covenant which I made with their fathers in the day I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt, My covenant which they broke, although I was a husband to them," declares the Lord. ³³But this is the covenant which I

² France, R. T. (2002). [*The Gospel of Mark: a commentary on the Greek text*](#) (p. 175). Grand Rapids, MI; Carlisle: W.B. Eerdmans; Paternoster Press.

God He passed over the sins previously committed;

- But, under this New Covenant, there is one sin which is not forgiven.
 - Whoever “blasphemes against the Holy Spirit”
 - It’s called an “eternal sin”
 - **Matthew 12:32 (NASB95)** ³²“Whoever speaks a word against the Son of Man, it shall be forgiven him; but whoever speaks against the Holy Spirit, it shall not be forgiven him, either in this age or in the age to come.”
 - Law brought death penalty... this is worse.
 - **Hebrews 10:28–30 (NASB95)** ²⁸Anyone who has set aside the Law of Moses dies without mercy on the testimony of two or three witnesses. ²⁹How much severer punishment do you think he will deserve who has trampled under foot the Son of God, and has regarded as unclean the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified, and has insulted the Spirit of grace? ³⁰For we know Him who said, “Vengeance is Mine, I will repay.” And again, “The Lord will judge His people.”
 - A knowing rejection of the truth of Christ.
 - Point of no return?
 - For: how it’s contrasted with forgiveness for all other issues.
 - if so, it is accompanied by a permanence “they WON’T repent”

Hebrews 6:4–6 (NASB95) ⁴For in the case of those who have once been enlightened and have tasted of the heavenly gift and have been made

partakers of the Holy Spirit, ⁵and have tasted the good word of God and the powers of the age to come, ⁶and then have fallen away, it is impossible to renew them again to repentance, since they again crucify to themselves the Son of God and put Him to open shame.

- There’s no truly repentant person who is rejected!
 - Important.
- This seems to rule out just about everyone who is afraid they already committed this sin.

Finish the sandwich

Mark 3:31–35 (NASB95)

³¹Then His mother and His brothers arrived, and standing outside they sent word to Him and called Him.

³²A crowd was sitting around Him, and they said to Him, “Behold, Your mother and Your brothers are outside looking for You.”

³³Answering them, He said, “Who are My mother and My brothers?”

³⁴Looking about at those who were sitting around Him, He said, “Behold My mother and My brothers!

³⁵“For whoever does the will of God, he is My brother and sister and mother.”

- [SKIP] A rejection of family?
 - He doesn’t respond to their call.
 - They are calling Him away from serving God.
 - Some use it that way
 - No
 - they took prominent rolls in the early church
 - On the cross, Jesus entrusted care of His mother to John
 - Something wonderful about the kingdom of God
 - We are the eternal family of Jesus
 - This is greater than blood
 - This kingdom is more important than family approval
- The rest of the sandwich
 - Family said he was crazy.
 - Certainly a blasphemy against Jesus
 - “word against the Son of Man”
 - This is not the blasphemy against the Holy Spirit.
 - Rejection without full revelation
 - Paul

- **1 Timothy 1:13 (NASB95) ¹³even though I was formerly a blasphemer and a persecutor and a violent aggressor. Yet I was shown mercy because I acted ignorantly in unbelief;**
 - An active persecutor. Blasphemer!
 - FOUGHT against Christ.
- It's connected with what they did right then. Not just a generic "blasphemy"
 - To answer "what is the blasphemy against the Holy Spirit?" I must ask "what did the scribes from Jerusalem DO?"
- What did they do?
 - They saw the proof.
 - They SOOO rejected it that they labeled the obvious work of God's power in Christ as Satanic.
 - Called God's kingdom Satan's kingdom.
- So, it's not against just the person of the Holy Spirit
 - It's against the manifest work of the Spirit proving who Jesus is.
- We saw that Paul didn't do this..
 - Neither did MOST
 - **1 Acts 3:17 (NASB95) ¹⁷"And now, brethren, I know that you acted in ignorance, just as your rulers did also.**
- The scribes did (or were near it)
 - Mt 12 – after this they ask for a sign

Matthew 12:22–50 (ESV)

³⁸Then some of the scribes and Pharisees answered him, saying, "Teacher, we wish to see a sign from you."

³⁹But he answered them, "An evil and adulterous generation seeks for a sign, but no sign will be given to it except the sign of the prophet Jonah.

⁴⁰For just as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the great fish, so will the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.

- Questions to answer

1. Is it a technical term already in use?
 - i. no
2. Is it a technical term in Jesus' usage?
 - i. No, nor in the NT later.
3. What examples of it do we have?
 - i. OT?
 1. Pharaoh
 2. Flood
 - a. "my Spirit will not strive with man forever"
4. Is it the same as apostasy?
 - i. No,
 1. NT suggests you can return
 2. but could be
 3. Heb 6 – no return? Why –degree of light/rejection
5. Can believers do it?
 - i. Apparent believers, yes
 - ii. True believers, not sure.
 1. If so, they are forever lost.
 - a. And not because they won't be received back but because they won't come back. Hardness of heart.
6. What if I've done it?
 - i. Beware the excuse to sin
7. Can it be done today?
 - i. Some say NO WAY!
 - ii. Hmmmm, tough. Those doing it had a greater revelation than we do generally
 1. BUT
8. Can it be undone?
 - i. I think not. Nor would that person WANT it to be undone.
9. Is it simply a rejection of the gospel?
 - i. No, Paul
10. How do I know I haven't done it?

i. You trust in Christ.

11. Are Cessationists in danger?

i. No

1. 1- not rejecting Christ
2. 2- discerning of spirits is required
3. 3- you can wrongly say “it’s demonic” without committing this sin.

12. Continuationists are doing this?

i. Calling the work of Satan the work of God

1. So they are forever lost?
2. We’ve seen many come out!

ii. Plus, I’m opposed to saying its all the work of Satan.

1. In that case I’ve done it

○ Bad app – I have to figure out who has done this.

- I take a posture of hope.
 - Remember James
 - Remember Paul
- Hebrews 7:25 (NASB95)²⁵Therefore He is able also to save forever those who draw near to God through Him, since He always lives to make intercession for them.
- Romans 10:13 (NASB95)^{13f}for “Whoever will call on the name of the Lord will be saved.”

○ App –

- Beware rejecting what you know. There’s a point of no return.
 - A gradual slide

• Examples of far gone people who came to grace

- Paul
- Churches in revelation

• Psychological/pastoral issues

- You can’t shake the fear.
 - Are you trusting in Christ? End of discussion.