

# The Sin That is Never Forgiven

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[ 0 : 01 ] Mark chapter 3, I want to ask you a question, is all sin forgivable?! I'm not asking if people will forgive all sin because people won't.

! They hold against you. There's a lot of lack of forgiveness among people, but I'm asking does the Lord forgive all? Is there anything that you and I can do that the Lord will not forgive?

Murder. Does God forgive murder? Lying in church. Is it worse to lie in church than it is to lie in a parking lot?

Or how about at the house? I've always been curious about that. Sleeping in church. Does God forgive that? There is a sin that God will not forgive.

I want to talk about that this morning. It's found in Mark chapter 3, beginning in verse 22. And the scribes who came down from Jerusalem were saying, he is possessed by, speaking of Christ, he is possessed by Beelzebub.

[ 1 : 18 ] And by the prince of demons, he cast out the demons. And he called them to him. And he said to them in parables, how can Satan cast out Satan?

If a kingdom is divided against itself, that kingdom cannot stand. And if a house is divided against itself, that house will not be able to stand. And if Satan has risen up against himself and is divided, he cannot stand, but is coming to an end.

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

Truly, I say to you, all sins will be forgiven, the children of man, and whatever blasphemies they utter. But whoever blasphemes against the Holy Spirit never has forgiveness, but is guilty of an eternal sin.

For they were saying, and this is a key verse, for they were saying, he has an unclean spirit. Now, Mark loves to tell stories in layers or give accounts or narratives in layers.

[ 2 : 32 ] He used a technique in Mark chapter 3 that I referred to a couple weeks ago called a Markin, theologians call it a Markin sandwich, in the sense that he gives one narrative and then pauses to deal with another narrative and then goes back to the previous narrative.

And he does that intentionally, and he does it several times, at least five, possibly up to seven times in the Gospel of Mark.

It's a trait. There's interconnected narratives. And in this section, the passage I covered a couple of weeks ago was about his family, that his family think he's out of his mind.

Then he deals with the passage we're dealing with today. And then his family's waiting outside, wanting him to come out there so they can get rid of him and take him away. And he talks about who, in fact, is a part of his true spiritual family.

That's the bread of the matter, I guess. Today I want to deal with the passages in between, which is the meat of the matter. And what's happened here is there's been several conflicts with these scribes.

[ 3 : 47 ] Jesus has traveled throughout Galilee. He's traveled through the surrounding areas. He's gathered many people around him. He's healed many. He's taught.

He's taught. He's gave powerful lessons. He's cast out demons. And local scribes have seen this, and they've reported back to Jerusalem.

And now from Jerusalem, an official delegation has traveled over 100 miles to see and hear Jesus for themselves, to confront him, to shut him down.

And they're trying to pin him down with just about anything that they can. They don't like him because he gets better crowds than they do. They don't like him because he teaches better than they do. They don't like him because he's casting demons out of folks.

They went after him about forgiving sins. I mean, who can forgive sins except God himself? Is he claiming to be God himself? Scribes didn't like that. They went after him for ministering to known sinners.

[ 4 : 50 ] He led Matthew to himself and then went home and ate with him. And Matthew brought all his pagan friends with him, and they met Jesus. And the scribes didn't like that. They got mad at him about not fasting on their schedule because beyond what Scripture says about fasting, the scribes came up with a different schedule that is beyond that, and they expect everybody to follow it.

And when he didn't follow it, they didn't like that either. He didn't follow Sabbath laws. They didn't like that either. He healed somebody on the Sabbath, and that's considered work in their opinion. So they didn't like that part of it either. They're looking for anything. And so now they accuse him of being demon-possessed. And they speak of him that he's possessed of Beelzebub. And Beelzebub is a Philistine god. Baal, the first part of that, is a very generalized reference to God, period, a pagan god.

And then the last part of that, Zebul, means high place or exalted abode. So in other words, the god of the high place. But the Israelites twisted that name, and instead of saying Beelzebub, they said Beelzebub, which means the lord of the flies.

[ 6 : 11 ] Now, what flies, what do flies gather to? Trash, yeah, but they also gathered other stuff.

And so it's another way of saying your exalted lord is the lord of dung. That's what they're basically saying, to put it nicely. That's not too nice, but anyway, it's truth.

The word in the Greek, Beelzebub, the original word, is similar to the first one, but the meaning of it in translation means the lord of the dwelling or the lord of the house.

And the thought is that Satan's influence is within our sphere. Satan's influence is around us. Ephesians chapter 2, verse 2 says, he's the prince of the power of the air, meaning that he's working in our midst.

John tells us he's the ruler of the world. So this is his domain. This is where he messes with people of sorts. And so this term, Beelzebel, becomes synonymous with Satan.

[ 7 : 13 ] And they accuse Jesus because they know that his power is real. They can't deny that. They've seen it or at least heard of his exorcisms.

And when the demons come out of the people, they often reference Jesus like he's the holy one of God or he's the son of God. And the scribes have to admit that Jesus has power.

So how do you deal with that? Well, they're saying, okay, apparently the demons are saying that he's their God. They're calling him his God.

So he must be of Satan. And so we can twist that and say that he's demon-possessed. And the scribes have to admit that he's got power, but they said, I know what we can say.

They're calling him a demonic God. They're aligning him with, aha, we got him. Now let's nail him. And as the great Lee Corso would say, not so fast, my friend.

[ 8 : 15 ] Because Jesus uses a parable to tell them how that's nonsense. Why would Satan want to defeat satanic power? Why would he, that would just divide and weaken the satanic kingdom.

That's like a household being divided. There's nothing advantageous about a household being divided. Instead, you're trying to defeat or overpower an enemy. College football's almost gone, so let me use a couple more football illustrations before it's gone.

I mean, in football, if a team is a throwing team, you better aim with the quarterback. You've got to do something about the quarterback. And if their defensive line is strong, then you work with the offensive line to better man the defense.

The O-line has to be strong. Well, listen, if you're invading an ancient city, and there's a wall around it, and they have watchtowers that alert not only the citizens, but also the armies of when the enemy is coming, then you better find the strong towers and take them out.

That's the strategy. If you're invading a home, you take the strong one in the home, and you bind him and contain him, and then you're at greater ease.

[ 9 : 29 ] And that's the illustration that Jesus used. And he mentions in verse 27, he talks about the strong man. He's talking about Satan. He's talking about the house. That's his domain. That's the earth.

This is where he roams. The plundering of the house speaks of the sway of the people that have been under his influence. The binding is the authority that Jesus has over Satan that they've

witnessed.

And so he explains that. Then he explains what real blasphemy is. Now, I want to be clear. What they're doing was blasphemy. They were speaking against God when they spoke against Christ. Don't take such as that lightly, folks. When you hook a four-letter word onto the name of God, that's not harmless frustration. That's defamation of God, and it's serious. When someone makes God the butt of a joke or makes his name a punchline, that's not just being crude.

That reveals a heart that has no reverence for God. It speaks of a lack of a real relationship with God. When you use his name as an expression of disgust or slang, that's blasphemy.

[10:36] When you joke about his power or his presence, that's blasphemy. Are those sins, are those things forgiven? Are they forgivable?

Yes, they're forgivable. Is what the Jerusalem scribe said about Jesus forgivable? Yes. However, and this is the warning that he gives them, that they're headed down a road that leads somewhere far more dangerous.

They're on a trajectory toward being guilty of an eternal sin, an unpardonable sin, and that is what Christ calls the sin of blaspheming the Holy Spirit.

Now, what is blaspheming the Holy Spirit? Well, to understand it, let's talk about what's not blaspheming the Holy Spirit first.

Let me tell you what it's not. What it's not, it's not horrible profanity. It's not using the Lord's name in vain.

[11:39] That's blasphemy. But it's not what God calls, what Christ calls blasphemy of the Holy Spirit. There is forgiveness for saying dumb things. I'm not making light of it.

It's serious. It's sinful. It's irreverent. It's foolish. It's dishonoring. Frankly, it gives evidence that you don't even know Christ. However, God forgives us for dumb things that we say.

God gives grace for careless, flippant tongues that repent of what they've done. The second thing that blasphemy of the Holy Spirit is not.

It's not a foolish statement. Okay? It's not just saying something foolish or disrespectful about Jesus. That's ignorant, but it's forgivable.

I made the mistake of reading a comment on Facebook the other day from a lady whose personal description was, I am stardust.

[12:43] That spoke volumes to me. She was responding to another uneducated comment, and she said this, and I quote, I'm not a follower of the Bible except for the very beautiful teachings of Jesus Christ, which Southern religions have rejected as not fitting in with their ideologies.

End of quote. I wanted to respond really bad. I did. I did really want to.

Now listen, I didn't respond. Not on Facebook. And you need to be proud of me. Now some of you are smarter like I am, and so you'll say you should have said something. I'm just telling you I shouldn't have said anything.

And I didn't. I withheld my keyboard for just a few moments, okay? Let me encourage you to do the same, okay? Take a pause, 30-second pause at least.

Some of you need 30 minutes. Some of you need 30 days, you know. I'll tell you what I should have said or what I wanted to say.

[13:58] I wanted to say I trust the whole Bible just like Jesus did, and he quoted it. Stardust.

Listen, that lady's ignorant, and she's foolish, and she's disrespectful, and I don't know her, and I believe she's probably lost.

But all of that's forgivable. All of it. Third thing that's not blasphemy of the Holy Spirit, and that's a weak moment. It's not a moment of anger.

It's not a moment of fear. It's not a moment of doubt. It's not a moment of frustration. When pressure is put on us and things come out, that reveals our character. It does. It shows cracks in our spiritual armor.

It exposes more than we want other people to be able to see. However, an outburst, a moment of panic, a wave of fear, a sense of discouragement, a doubt about what we've always believed, these are not sins that God refuses to forgive.

They're not. They're moments of weakness. They're not permanent rejection. They're human struggles. They're not eternal condemnation. They're not. Tell you what else blasphemy of the Holy Spirit's not.

[ 15 : 20 ] It's not inappropriate humor. There are things that are said sometimes in an effort to be funny that go way too far. A line gets crossed.

The joke falls like a lead balloon. And instead of people laughing at everything, everybody grows silent and just kind of looks at you like. It leaves an impression on people that they'll remember you by.

Even though you wish they don't remember it, you wish you hadn't said it, but it's already been said, it's shameful, never should have been said, and it marks you, and it leaves a scar. It does. It may scar a relationship, but it's forgivable.

Let me tell you, and some of you need to hear this. I'm not going to tell you who. Dumb statements and inappropriate puns are forgivable. Thank God. They're forgivable. They are.

I'll tell you what else blasphemy of the Holy Spirit is not. It's not deliberate sin. Sin is often described as a mess up, or as a slip up, or as an accident.

[ 16 : 24 ] That's not sin. We don't slip into sin. That's an inappropriate way to address sin. We don't slip into sin.

We walk into sin. Now, we may be enticed into sin. We may be encouraged into sin. We may be accompanied into sin, but sin is still a choice for us, and the fault lies, hear me, the fault lies with the sinner.

Sometimes, even a Christian will deliberately sin, and sometimes they'll deliberately sin big. Now, let me explain, because we like to categorize sins in certain ways.

We like to categorize sins as little sins. Little sins is the stuff that you think that you don't need to be thinking about. Little sins are the things you listen to you don't need to be listening to.

Little sins are the things you glance at that you don't need to be glancing at. Little things are the things you say, sometimes even under your breath. That needs to stay under your breath.

[ 17 : 32 ] That's because it needs to stay out of your mouth. You know, it's those little sins, you know. Then there's medium sins, okay? And that's the stuff that that you glare at.

That's the stuff that you say and somebody else hears you, and they go, hmm. That's the stuff that you're with other people and you listen to stuff you don't need to be listening to.

That's the more exposed stuff. Not huge. Not life-defining, but stuff you need to stop doing.

Then there's the big sins. Big sins are the ones that light up the prayer list, you know. The prayer chain gets going with the big sins, you know. They never say what it is, it's unspoken.

You can't mention it. But it's those type sins. It's the big ones. Now, I want to be clear about something. Big sins are the ones that blow up your life.

[ 18 : 34 ] Changes things. Be clear, though. These are our categories. They're not God's categories. If you've got a sin in your life that you think is a little sin, that you, you know, you just got to nurture that thing and bring it along and it's just your little buddy.

Christ went to the cross and died for that sin. It's serious. So this judging of little, big, medium, that's our doings, okay.

We do that because the ramifications are different with different sins. But the reality is, the little sins just snowball into medium sins and the medium sins just grow into big sins. Then all of a sudden, we really messed up and there's a paper trail there in our lives that we never acknowledged along the way.

But even if it don't do that, the little sins are still big sins because Christ went to the cross for that.

So what happens to somebody who commits a scandalous sin and they do it deliberately?

Well, let me tell you what it does. It'll strain relationships with other people. It may ruin relationships with other people. It breaks trust with other people.

[ 19 : 44 ] It breaks consequences that may have, it brings consequences that may last a lifetime. It may be prison.

I mean, it may be being ostracized. It may, it could be being alienated.

The fallout, and hear me, the fallout is almost always worse than you think it's going to be because the devil loves to tell us our sin's not that big a deal.

But I want you to listen to me. All of that, it is not unforgivable to God. It might be to everybody else, but not to God.

The consequences are deliberate. Scandalous sin are huge. But that's not blasphemy of the Holy Spirit. Not the way Christ speaks of it.

[ 20 : 48 ] It's not. Let me tell you what else. It's not. It's not. I want you to hear me today. It's not a fatal failure.

Blasphemy of the Holy Spirit, the unpardonable sin, is not a fatal failure. And what I mean by that is sadly the biggest mistake that a person makes in his or her life sometimes ends their life. It could be a single collapse. It could be a confused moment. It could be a dark hour of weakness. It could leave all the living mystified and shattered.

I want those who've walked through tragic loss to hear me clearly. Your eternity and your loved one's eternity is not determined by the final moment of their lives. It's not.

It's not. A believer may be discouraged. They may be confused. They may be held in the grip of a stronghold. And all of that is horrible and it's heartbreaking and it's selfish and it's of the devil because Jesus said in John 10, 10, the thief comes but to steal, to kill, and to destroy.

[ 22 : 01 ] However, that final moment does not determine your salvation. Your salvation's based on the finished work of Christ. That's what determines your salvation. And God's grace is sufficient to cover and remove all the sins of a confessing believer including the last one that took their life.

Years ago, a young Christian who was not walking with the Lord at the time died in a horrible accident. It's tragic. It was horrible.

It sticks out in ministry. There's like two handfuls of times in ministry where something happens and you walk through that with a family and you walk away with a limp and you never get over it.

You never forget it. And it was one of those type deals. It's tough. And around the time of the funeral, a relative of the young one that died, a relative that believes a Christian can lose their salvation, came to that grieving mother and said, I'm sorry that your boy's in hell today.

What a statement. How dumb.

[ 23 : 34 ] If I was God and I heard somebody saying something that dumb, it would be unpardonable. I'd just zap and they'd be gone. But thank God I'm not God. And his grace is greater than even such a stupid statement.

But for one, based on his testimony, it's not true because he was a professed believer. He was a struggling believer. He was not where he needed to be.

But even if what she said was true, even if he wasn't a believer, why do you say that? Why do you say that?

Cruel. It's idiotic. Don't do it. Don't do it. I'm just telling you don't do it. Our final moment, our final hour, our final week, our final year does not determine our salvation.

I want you to hear me. A personal decision to trust Christ determines our salvation. And once we are in Christ, he never lets go.

[ 24 : 42 ] His blood covers all of our sins. A fatal failure. Don't take that away. Lastly, what's not blasphemy of the Holy Spirit is a lifetime, lifelong struggle.

A lifelong struggle. There are particular besetting sins that are lifelong battles. And it shouldn't be. As believers, we have the power of the Holy Spirit to overcome any sin in our lives.

Thank God the old is gone. The new has come. Oh, if it was always that simple. But sometimes there's a stronghold that will resurface in your life.

Sometimes there's a weakness that just keeps nagging. A temptation that will continue to show up. And it's not that the Christian isn't fighting it.

On the contrary, if you're not fighting against it, that speaks of not having salvation. Does that make sense? However, repentance sometimes don't always stick.

[ 25 : 53 ] Maybe I'm not supposed to say that, but it's just the truth. Sometimes repentance don't stick. And some sins don't ever seem to be conquered. And lifelong battles sometimes take a lifetime. And that don't have to be because there's hope in the Lord and he gives you the strength to rise above it.

And your sin is not justified and it's not excused and it's not minimized. But if you die in that struggle, yet you die in Christ, that besetting sin is not an unforgivable sin.

It's not. If we hate our sin and we grieve over our sin and we battle with our sin and we fight to overcome our sin, we're not rejecting the Holy Spirit. We're responding to the Holy Spirit.

We're doing it imperfectly. We're not doing it the way we need to. But we're responding to the conviction of the Holy Spirit. And the struggle itself is evidence of our desire to please the Lord. So I want you to hear me again.

Your salvation is secured by Christ's righteousness, not your perfection. Because you're not going to get it right. Of a believer, may fall often, but never out of God's hand.

[ 27 : 03 ] Never will fall out of God's hand. So that's what eternal sin is not. That's what is not the unpardonable sin.

That's what is not blasphemy of the Holy Spirit. So what is the unpardonable sin? What is blasphemy of the Holy Spirit? I'll put it simply. It's the rejection of Christ.

That's what it is. The blasphemy of the Holy Spirit is to ignore the eye-opening, Christ-exalting conviction and calling of the Holy Spirit of God upon your life for salvation.

God loved you enough to send his son to live as an example, to die in your place, to rise again, proclaiming eternal life, and to ascend into heaven to pray for you and make a home for you, and then sent the Holy Spirit to open your eyes, to convict your heart, to draw you to Christ, to show you the opportunity of salvation.

And if you ignore that, even though he speaks again and again to your heart, and you push him aside and delay him and die without him, you will never be forgiven.

[ 28 : 14 ] There is no forgiveness after death. There's none. You have committed a sin in rejecting Christ that will last for eternity.

You spent your whole life refusing the greatest offer, an eternal offer, by the Lord that loves you so. You blasphemed, ignored, made light of the very Holy Spirit that came to bring you to Christ.

And you'll have hell to pay for all of eternity for it. And by the way, about those red words of Jesus, you don't want to know who talks about hell more than anybody else in Scripture? Jesus.

And the pictures that we paint of heaven that are scripturally based, of hell that are scripturally based, because a lot of people come up with other stuff, but the things that we paint that are scripturally based come from the words of Christ.

if I come to your house, take you to a banquet in the honor of the one who loves you more than anyone else and you refuse to come, and I ask you again, and I ask you again, and I ask you again, and it don't matter how many times I ask, eventually I'm going to stop asking because it's going to come.

[ 29 : 37 ] The banquet's going to come, and if you don't make it to the banquet, you didn't make it, and you get left behind. You miss your opportunity, and once that opportunity is gone, it's gone.

You missed out. I don't mean this as a threat. It's just the truth. We're one rogue cell away from our life changing drastically, possibly very quickly.

One distracted driver away from going into eternity immediately. immediately. And that's exactly why the Holy Spirit speaks to your heart today.

If you ignore him in this life, you'll regret it for all eternity. I'm not trying to threaten you, and I'll be honest with you, I'm not trying to scare you because when somebody makes decisions out of fear, they really don't mean them a lot of times, you know?

You can promise the world to God if he'll get you out of this situation, and you don't mean a lick of it. But I want to be honest with you.

[ 31 : 11 ] The reality is, if there's any inkling within you at all that you need the Lord Jesus in your life, and there's any pulling at all in your life to pull you towards the Lord, I'm going to tell you, you didn't come up with that on your own.

Scripture says that you're dead in your transgressions and sins. That means you cannot respond unless the Holy Spirit awakens you and gives you that opportunity. But I'll be just as clear to say you must respond to that awakening.

You have responsibility in that. And if you ignore that and the opportunities are up, it is a sin that will not be forgiven.

That's what he was saying to the scribes. He's saying, you're not taking me seriously.

And what you're leading to is blaspheming, denying the Holy Spirit. So wait no longer, is what I'm saying.

[ 32 : 29 ] Come to Jesus. He's the one that's calling you to himself. He's the one that initiates that. He's the one that receives you, and he knows all the stuff to go along with it.

He does. I don't and don't need to know it, but he knows it all. And yet loves you enough to come to you and give you the opportunity to be pardoned, and you can be pardoned.

But the offer is only good for a time. And so I encourage you to respond. If you've never given your heart and life to the Lord Jesus Christ, today's the day of salvation for you.

If you'll respond to him in obedience, he'll change your life forever. He'll nail it down and rest in it. If you've done that privately but never acknowledged it publicly, part of the evidence of it being real is that you make it, you make it public.

Jesus said, if you're ashamed of me before others, I'll be ashamed of you before my Father. In other words, it never really took. Or maybe God's leading you to First Baptist Church.

[ 33 : 47 ] Maybe it's that you've been around these folks enough to know and God's worked in your life enough to know that this is the place where he'd have you to serve. Or maybe it's something else in your life.

Maybe there's a besetting sin that when I talked about that, it just came up and you've just been labored by it. Give that to God today. You can repent of that where you stand in just a moment. You can repent of it at this altar. I will pray with you. Let's take the warning of the Lord seriously and respond to it in obedience, whatever that means to us as individuals.

Let's honor God by just simply being obedient. With every head bowed, every eye closed. Lord Jesus, I ask today that you'll move and work in lives.

Help us to not be so arrogant as to think it's not important enough for us to respond to. Help us not be so ignorant as to ignore your warning and your invitation.

[ 35 : 11 ] Help us not be so stubborn as to continue in a pattern of disobedience. Help us, God, be wise enough, loving enough, faithful enough to follow your direction as you speak to us right now.

In Jesus' precious name, amen. Stand where you are.