



THE UNPARDONABLE SIN

Preaching and Teaching Resources

ADRIAN ROGERS





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The Unpardonable Sin

SERMON REFERENCE: Matthew 12:22-32

LWF SERMON NUMBER: #2219

Each of us faces a spiritual deadline that, if crossed, will result in the commission of unpardonable sin. This is not a moral, intellectual, or verbal sin; it is blaspheming the Holy Spirit.

Blasphemy against the Holy Spirit is a sin against light; it is attributing to Satan the work of the Holy Spirit when one knows better.

Though we can commit this sin without saying a word, it is not accidental; we would do it knowingly and willfully, with our eyes wide open.

In Matthew 12, Jesus heals a demon-possessed man and opens his eyes and mouth to see and speak. Full of pride, the Pharisees claimed Jesus performed this miracle by the power of Satan.

In verse 31, Jesus says, “Therefore I say to you, every sin and blasphemy will be forgiven men, but the blasphemy against the Spirit will not be forgiven men.”

Blaspheming the Holy Spirit is a sin against redemption; Jesus was healing this man out of His love. It is a sin against reason; Jesus explained He couldn't have cast out Satan if he worked for him. A kingdom divided will fall—even the devil's. (See Matthew 12:25-29.) It is a sin against revelation; the pride in the hearts of the Pharisees prevented them from being able to see the legitimacy of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, performing miracles right in front of them.

Adrian Rogers says, “When men and women stand before God to be judged, they're not going to be judged primarily by the sin they committed, but by the light they rejected.”

A person who commits blasphemy against the Holy Spirit opens himself up to deception. We cannot have our sin and God's truth at the same time.

This sin also has a deadening power; if we reject the truth of Jesus Christ, something dies within us. Little by little, we'll stop feeling the conviction of the Holy Spirit.

And if the Spirit's presence in our lives fades out, we'll see the magnitude of its destruction. This sin puts our hearts in a place where it is impossible to be saved.

This is why we must honor even the slightest desire or conviction to follow Jesus now, before it is too late.

Life Application

Don't sin against redemption, reason, or revelation. Come to Jesus, following the conviction of the Holy Spirit, before you cross a line you can't uncross.



The Unpardonable Sin

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1) INTRODUCTION

- a) What a joy it is to think about God's amazing, incredible, and indescribable grace and love that He has poured out on each of us!
- b) The sad truth is that many people are not going to experience the grace of God unless they turn from their sin and receive Jesus Christ as their personal Lord and Savior.
- c) Many people are very close to a deadline.
 - i) If they cross that deadline, then they will have committed an unpardonable sin.
 - (1) They will be just as bound and destined for Hell in this life before they die, with no chance of redemption, as if the gates of Hell had already closed shut behind them.
- d) What is the unpardonable sin?
 - i) It is not a moral sin.
 - (1) It is not rape.
 - (2) It is not murder.
 - (a) As horrible and wicked as those are, anyone who has committed those can still be saved.
 - (i) They can be saved by the grace of Almighty God.
 - (3) Every blur, every blot, every blemish, and every stain that has come across the human soul, the blood of Jesus Christ cleanses from all sin.
 - ii) It is not an intellectual sin.
 - (1) A person may be an atheist, agnostic, or a God-hater.
 - (a) He may have declared that there is no God.
 - (i) That sin can be forgiven.
 - (2) Many who have been atheists or blasphemers have repented of that sin and come to the Lord Jesus Christ.
 - iii) It is not a verbal sin.
 - (1) It is not some blood-curdling oath where a person curses God to His face.
 - (a) Even that sin can be forgiven.
 - (b) God forgives blasphemy, if someone blasphemes God the Father and God the Son.
 - (2) A person can commit the unpardonable sin without saying a word.
 - (1) The word "blaspheme" means "to speak hurtfully against."
 - (2) We can speak to God in prayer without saying words, and we can blaspheme God by not saying words.
 - (a) Luke 6:45
 - (b) One may so live that if his life were translated into words, it would be blasphemous.
 - i) Blasphemy of the Holy Spirit is the unpardonable sin.
 - e) In today's message, we will discuss blasphemy of the Holy Spirit and the consequences of this unpardonable sin.

2) BLASPHEMY OF THE HOLY SPIRIT (MATTHEW 12:22-32)

- a) Blasphemy of the Holy Spirit is attributing to the devil the work of the Spirit of Almighty God.



- b) Blasphemy against the Holy Spirit is the sin that can never be forgiven.
 - i) It is a sin that one will commit knowingly and willfully with his eyes wide open and then forever shut.
- c) Here is the background for the warning that Jesus Christ has given:
 - i) Matthew 12:22-32
 - (1) In verse 22, "Him" refers to the Lord Jesus.
 - (2) "One possessed with a devil" may be translated "demon."
 - (3) A man who could not see and could not speak was now able to speak, and he was able to see.
 - (4) "Is He not the Son of David?" means "Is He not the Messiah?"
 - (5) The Pharisees were the religious leaders of that day.
 - (a) They were very religious, but they hated Christ and His ministry.
 - (6) "Jesus knew their thoughts."
 - (a) This is the reason why one can blaspheme in his mind.
 - (7) In verse 32, "Son of Man" is the phrase that Jesus used for Himself.
 - ii) Jesus was in His public ministry, and a man who was afflicted with a demon was brought to Him.
 - (1) It was a demon of blindness and a demon of dumbness.
 - (a) "Dumbness" means the inability to speak and articulate.
 - (b) Not all people who are blind are demon-possessed.
 - (c) Not all people who are mute are demon-possessed.
 - (d) This man, though, was demon-possessed.
 - (i) He was bound with this spirit.
 - iii) When Jesus saw the man, Jesus supernaturally, miraculously, and wondrously healed him.
 - (1) His eyes were opened, and he could speak.
 - iv) Those who witnessed this miracle said that Jesus was the Son of David, the Messiah.
 - (1) The Pharisees saw their own power and influence slipping away and going to Jesus.
 - v) The Pharisees could not deny the miracle because it was obvious.
 - (1) They determined to explain it away.
 - (a) They said that Jesus performed a miracle, but He did it in the power of Satan.
 - (i) They said that He did this by Beelzebub.
 - 1. This was the most diabolical, wicked, dirty, and hateful thing that they could possibly have said.
 - 2. Beelzebub was a Phoenician god.
 - a. The Phoenicians were a wayfaring people who were very superstitious.
 - b. This was a god of filth and putrefaction.
 - 3. The Pharisees had the audacity to say that Jesus was casting out devils by this god of filth.
 - (ii) It was then that Jesus gave this teaching to show the great wickedness of their sin.
- d) It is a sin against redemption.
 - i) Jesus was working against the devil.
 - (1) Jesus took a man who had been afflicted by demons and delivered him.
 - (a) This was redeeming love.
 - (2) Jesus opened blind eyes.



- (3) Jesus loosed dumb tongues.
 - (a) His great love and mastery over Satan was poured out.
- ii) The same hands that blessed the demon-possessed man would have blessed any of the Pharisees.
 - (1) The same love that delivered that man would have delivered them.
 - (a) Luke 19:10
- iii) The Pharisees sinned against redeeming love and against our Redeemer.
 - (1) Later on, they were the ones who did the following:
 - (a) They slapped the face of Jesus Christ.
 - (b) They plucked the beard from His face.
 - (c) They helped to crucify Jesus.
 - (d) They cried out for His blood.
 - (i) Matthew 26:57 - 27:50
- iv) If you don't give your heart to Jesus Christ, then you are sinning against redemption.
 - (1) You are sinning against the One who loves you and wants to save you.
 - (2) You are trampling beneath your feet the precious blood of Jesus Christ.
 - (a) You are crucifying Him afresh.
- e) It is a sin against reason.
 - i) They knew better.
 - ii) Matthew 12:24-26
 - (1) What they said didn't make sense.
 - (2) Common sense tells us that this was not true.
 - (a) A house divided against itself cannot stand.
 - (b) How does Satan cast out Satan?
 - (3) Jesus was not in collusion with the devil; He was in collision with the devil.
 - (a) Nobody works for the devil by casting out demons, opening blind eyes, loosing dumb tongues, and giving peace and joy.
 - (b) John 10:10
 - iii) These men were intellectuals, but they crucified their reason in order to crucify Jesus Christ.
 - iv) There are many people who trample reason to death in order to have their own way.
 - (1) Some people are not Christians because they say that there are hypocrites in the church.
 - (a) That is a sin against reason.
 - (b) Some lawyers may be shysters; but if you need legal advice, you will find a lawyer.
 - (c) Some money may be counterfeit; but if you saw a counterfeit bill, would you burn the rest of your money?
 - (i) Fifty-dollar bills are counterfeited because of the worth of fifty-dollar bills.
 - 1. Every counterfeit is a testimony to the validity and the worthwhileness of the real.
 - (d) Don't let a hypocrite keep you out of Heaven, or you will spend eternity with them in Hell.
 - (2) Some people believe that they have to give up too much in order to become a Christian.
 - (a) The only thing God asks you to give up is anything that would harm you or hurt you.
 - (i) Psalm 84:11
 - v) Isaiah 1:18
 - vi) Sinning against redemption and reason is not the unpardonable sin.



- (1) It only sets the stage for it.
- f) It is a sin against revelation.
 - i) Matthew 12:28
 - (1) The King, Jesus Christ, stood in their midst.
 - (a) The Holy Spirit of God worked through Him and testified by those very works that He is indeed the Son of God.
 - (i) The Spirit of God was in action in this episode.
 - ii) The Pharisees' real struggle was with the Holy Spirit.
 - (1) Jesus did what He did by the Spirit of God.
 - (2) Someone may blaspheme God the Father and say that there is no God.
 - (3) Someone may blaspheme Jesus Christ and say that He is a false prophet or a fictitious person.
 - (a) But when the Holy Spirit of God comes, He demolishes those things.
 - (4) The Holy Spirit of God pulls away the veil of darkness.
 - (a) The Holy Spirit of God opens the eyes of the spirit so that people can see and understand.
 - iii) The Pharisees did not sin against ignorance; they sinned against light.
 - (1) When Jesus was on the cross, He could say to those who were crucifying Him, "Father forgive them. They don't know what they are doing."
 - (a) Luke 23:34
 - (b) But these men, the Pharisees, knew what they were doing.
 - (2) The ministry of the Father is to rule the universe.
 - (3) The ministry of the Son, in conjunction with the Father, is to save.
 - (4) But the ministry of the Holy Spirit is to open our eyes to give light and to help us to understand.
 - iv) When men and women stand before God to be judged, they will not be judged primarily by the sin they committed but by the light they rejected.
 - (1) Matthew 11:23-24
 - (a) Capernaum was the city where Jesus preached, taught, and performed many miracles.
 - (b) Sodom was the most morally wicked city upon the face of the Earth.
 - (c) At the judgment, it will be better for Sodom than it will be for Capernaum.
 - (i) Because Capernaum had so much light.
 - (2) What is the judgment that comes into the world?
 - (a) John 3:19
- g) The unpardonable sin is sin against light.
 - i) It is attributing to Satan the work of the Holy Spirit when one knows better.

3) CONSEQUENCES OF THE UNPARDONABLE SIN (2 THESSALONIANS 2:11-12)

- a) The deceiving power of this sin:
 - i) A person who commits this sin opens himself up to deception.
 - ii) One of the most terrifying verses in the Bible is found in 2 Thessalonians 2:11.
 - (1) God sends delusion that they might believe a lie.
 - iii) 2 Thessalonians 2:12
 - (1) They had the truth, but they would not believe the truth.



- (2) They did not believe the truth because “they had pleasure in unrighteousness.”
- (3) In this passage, the opposite of truth is not error.
 - (a) The opposite of truth is sin.
- (4) They wanted their sin.
- (5) It is not that they never heard the truth, but they did not believe the truth.
 - (a) It was not because of intellectual problems but moral problems.
- (6) They had pleasure in unrighteousness, and for this cause, God sent them strong delusion.
 - (a) They could not have their sin and have God’s truth at the same time.
- iv) When we choose sin, the baggage that comes with that sin is error, and God will send us strong delusion.
 - (1) It is part of the righteous judgment of God.
 - (2) There are people who, willingly and with eyes wide open, sin not only against redemption and reason but also against revelation.
 - (a) When this happens, there is the deceiving power of that sin.
- v) Romans 11:8
- b) The deadening power of this sin:
 - i) When a person commits this sin, something dies within him.
 - ii) If you have rejected Jesus Christ and crossed the deadline, then you may be the one who says that preachers don’t preach like they used to.
 - (1) Some of them do, you just don’t hear like you used to.
 - iii) There is the deadening power of this sin, and someone who has crossed the deadline doesn’t feel the work of the Holy Spirit of God speaking to him.
 - (1) Hebrews 3:7-8
 - (2) They can sit in a service where others are being blessed and saved, and they will not feel a thing.
 - (3) They may say that they are not afraid to die.
 - (a) They probably are not.
 - (i) Their heart is so hard.
- c) The damning power of this sin:
 - i) It is the sin that puts you beyond the pale of redemption.
 - ii) Hebrews 6:4-6
 - (1) When God says that something is impossible, we should pay attention.
 - (2) In the Greek language, this means that they have gone along with the Holy Spirit.
 - (a) They have not ingested and digested the “good Word of God” but only tasted it.
 - iii) We can come to a place where it is impossible for us to be saved because, with eyes wide open, we crucify Jesus afresh.
 - (1) Some who nailed Him to the cross did not know what they were doing.
 - (2) But when we reject Jesus and are fully aware of what we are doing, we commit a greater sin than those who nailed Him to the cross.
 - (a) We have tasted; we have gone along with the Holy Spirit.
 - (3) Suppose you are at a supermarket, and someone has a tray with samples of cheese.
 - (a) You take a piece and taste it.
 - (i) It’s good; and you take some, not asking the price.
 - (b) When you see that it costs almost thirty dollars, you put it back.
 - (i) You are not willing to pay thirty dollars for it.



- (ii) Here is a person with eyes wide open saying that he will not pay the price.
 - 1. This is what happens if a person who has been a partaker of the Holy Ghost and has tasted the good Word of God falls away and turns their back.
 - a. Then, it is impossible to renew them to repentance.
- iv) No one can be saved unless the Holy Spirit of God opens their eyes.
 - (1) But when someone says no to the Holy Spirit of God, he puts out his own eyes.
 - (a) The Holy Spirit of God ceases to strive with that person.
 - (i) Genesis 6:3
 - (ii) We can sin against light, and that is when light goes out on the road to Hell.

4) CONCLUSION

- a) If you feel the slightest desire to come to Jesus Christ, then come to Him.
 - i) Don't let God send you strong delusion.
 - ii) Don't cross the deadline.
 - iii) Don't sin against such light.
- b) Revelation 22:17
- c) If you think that you have committed the unpardonable sin and you want to be saved, then you have not committed that sin.
 - i) Jesus said that if anyone will come unto Him, He will never turn him away.
- d) The Holy Spirit says, "Come."
- e) The Word of God says, "Come."
- f) Jesus, with open arms, says, "Come."
- g) Isaiah 1:18
- h) Acts 16:31
 - i) Believe that the Lord Jesus died for you, was buried for you, rose for you, ascended for you, and invites you today.
- i) Do you know Jesus personally? If not, you can pray to Him today by asking Him to come into your life.
- j) Call upon Jesus today. Repent (turn) from your sins, and turn to Jesus. Ask Him to forgive you of your sins, and acknowledge Him as Lord of your life.
 - i) Romans 3:23
 - ii) Romans 10:9-10
 - iii) Romans 10:13
 - iv) Acts 16:31
 - v) John 3:16



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Now, would you open your Bibles and find your place in the Word of God in Matthew chapter 12. And in a moment, we're going to begin reading in verse 31. What a joy to think of God's amazing, incredible, indescribable grace and love that He's poured out on each of us. But the sad, sad, sad truth is that many are not going to get into the grace of God unless they turn from their sin and receive Jesus Christ as their personal Lord and Savior. And many are very close to a deadline. And if they cross that deadline, they will have committed an unpardonable sin and they will be just as bound, just as destined for Hell in this life before they die, with no chance whatsoever of redemption, just as much bound for Hell as if the iron gates of Hell had already closed shut behind them. They will have crossed a deadline. They will have committed an unpardonable sin.

"There's a time, I know not when. There is a place, I know not where, which marks the destiny of men, to Heaven or despair. There's a line, by us not seen, that crosses every path. 'Tis the hidden boundary between God's mercy and God's wrath." And if you step over that deadline, you will have committed an unpardonable sin.

Now, **what is the unpardonable sin?** It is **not some moral sin**. It is not rape. It is not murder. It is not child molestation, bad as those are, horrible, wicked as those are. Anyone who has done that can still be saved. Do you believe that? I believe that. They can be saved by the grace of Almighty God. Every blur, every blot, every blemish, every stain that has ever come across some human soul, the blood of Jesus Christ, God's Son, cleanses from all sin. It's not some moral sin.

It's **not some intellectual sin**. A person may be an atheist, an agnostic, a God-hater. He may have declared there is no God. He may have said that Jesus Christ is the illegitimate son of Mary, born of some foreign soldier. But, no, that sin can be forgiven. Many who've been atheists, who've been blasphemers, have repented of that sin and come to the Lord Jesus Christ.

Well somebody says, "Well, it's some word that you say then. **It's a verbal sin**, some blood-curdling oath where a person curses God to His face." Don't do that if you have one modicum of intelligence. But even that sin can be forgiven. God forgives blasphemy; if you blaspheme God the Father, blaspheme God the Son. As a matter of fact, you can commit the unpardonable sin without saying a word. Now, the word blaspheme means to speak hurtfully against. But, you see, we can speak to God in prayer without saying words, and we can blaspheme God by not saying words. Luke 6 verse 45, "For out of the abundance of the heart, the mouth speaks." One may so live that if his life were translated into words, it would be blasphemous.

What is **the blasphemy of the Holy Spirit?** That's the unpardonable sin. And we're going to see in a moment that it is attributing to the devil the work of the Spirit of Almighty God. Now, this sin, the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost, the sin that can never, never, never, never, never be forgiven, is a sin that one may commit, and will commit knowingly, willfully, with his eyes wide open, and then forever shut.



Let's look at the background for the warning that Jesus Christ has given. Matthew chapter 12. As we look at this passage of Scripture, I believe it will become much more clear to us. Matthew chapter 12 verse 22 through verse 32, "Then was brought unto Him," now, the Him here is the Lord Jesus, "one possessed with a devil," that's what the King James says; that may be translated demon, "blind, and dumb; and He healed him, insomuch that the blind and the dumb both spake and saw." A man that could not see and a man that could not speak now is able to speak and he's able to see. "And all the people were amazed, and said, 'Is not this the Son of David?'" That is, Jesus, is He not the son of David? "The Son of David" means "is He not the Messiah?"

"But when the Pharisees heard it," now the Pharisees were the religious leaders of that day. They were very religious, but in the Pharisees the milk of human kindness had curdled. They hated Christ and His ministry. "When the Pharisees heard it, they said, 'This fellow doth not cast out devils, but by Beelzebub, the prince of the devils.' And Jesus knew their thoughts." That's the reason I said you can blaspheme in your mind. "And Jesus knew their thoughts, and said unto them, 'Every kingdom divided against itself is brought into desolation; and every city or house divided against itself shall not stand. And if Satan cast out Satan, he is divided against himself; how then shall his kingdom stand? And if I, by Beelzebub, cast out devils, by whom do your children cast them out? Therefore, they shall be your judges. But if I cast out devils by the Spirit of God,'" underscore the phrase, "Spirit of God," "then the kingdom of God is come unto you. Or else how can one enter into a strong man's house, and spoil his goods, except he first bind the strong man? Then shall he spoil his house. He that is not with Me is against Me; and he that gathereth not with Me scattereth abroad."

And now, notice the wherefore in verse 31, "Wherefore, I say unto you, All manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men; but the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost shall not be forgiven unto men. And whosoever speaketh a word against the Son of Man," that's the phrase that Jesus used for Himself, "it shall be forgiven him; but whosoever speaketh against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world, nor in the world to come." Not in this age or in the age to come.

Now I want you to notice the story. Jesus is in His public ministry. There comes a man who is afflicted with a demon. It is a demon of blindness and a demon of dumbness. Dumbness means the inability to speak and to articulate. Not all people who are blind are demon-possessed; not all people who are dumb are demon-possessed, but this man was. And this was his problem. He was bound with this spirit.

When Jesus saw this man, Jesus supernaturally, miraculously, wondrously healed him. His eyes were opened. He could speak. People standing around said, "Look! This is the Son of David. This is the Messiah." Now the Pharisees saw their own power and their own influence now slipping away and going to Jesus. And, they could not deny the miracle because it's obvious. Everybody knew him; before he couldn't see and now he can see. Before the man could not speak, and now he can speak. So since they cannot deny the miracle, they determine to explain it away. And here's what they say, "Oh yes, sure, yes, He performed a miracle, but let us tell you how He did it. He did it in the power of Satan. In the power of Satan He did this, by Beelzebub."

And when they said "Beelzebub," that was the most diabolical, wicked, dirty, lasciviously hateful thing that could possibly have said. For who was Beelzebub? Well, he was the Phoenician god. Well, who were the Phoenicians? They were a wayfaring people, and they're very intelligent people. They were the ones who gave us the first alphabet, we believe. But they were very superstitious, and they worshipped a god



of filth, a god of dirt, a god of putrification, the god of carrion and feces. They worshipped that god. Well, why would they worship a god like that? Because they had noticed that when on the ground there would be some rottenness, some stench, some putrification, before long there'd be little white worms in it. Now you know what they were. They were maggots. And the flies had lain their microscopic eggs that nobody could see.

And the Phoenicians looked at that and they said, "Look at that. Out of filth and dirt and putrification and stench there comes life. So this is some sort of a god." And they named their god "Beelzebub." You can hear the, kind of the sound of flies, Beelzebub, bzzzzzz. That was their god. The lord of the flies, the god of filth. And they had the unmitigated gall, the audacity to say, "Yes, He's casting out devils, but He's doing it by the god of filth, by the god of filth." That's what they said about the Lord Jesus, and it was then that Jesus gave the teaching that He gave, to show the great wickedness of their sin.

Now, it was sort of **a three-fold sin**, and I want you to notice it because it builds to a climax. First of all, **they sinned against redemption**. Here was Jesus working against the devil. Here was Jesus taking a man who'd been afflicted by demons and delivering him. Here was redeeming love. Here Jesus is opening blinded eyes. Here Jesus is loosing dumb tongues. His great love and His great mastery over Satan is being poured out. Redeeming love.

Now, the sad thing is this: that the same hands that blessed that demon-possessed man would have blessed any of those Pharisees. The same love that delivered that man would have delivered them. Luke 19:10, "Jesus came to seek and to save that which was lost." And they sinned against redemption. They sinned against redeeming love. They sinned against our Redeemer. And how did they, how did they do later on? They were the ones who slapped the face of Jesus Christ. They were the ones who, along with others, plucked the beard from His face. They are the ones who helped to crucify Jesus and cried out for His blood. They sinned against redemption.

Now, friend, if you don't give your heart to Jesus Christ, may I tell you, you are sinning against redemption. You're sinning against the One who loves you and wants to save you, but you're trampling beneath your feet the precious blood of Jesus Christ, and you are crucifying Him afresh.

But not only did they sin against redemption. Secondly, I want you to notice, **they sinned against reason**. They knew better. Look if you will in Matthew 12 verses 24 through 26, "But when the Pharisees heard it, they said, 'This fellow doth not cast out devils, but by Beelzebub, the prince of the devils.' And Jesus knew their thoughts, and said unto them, 'Every kingdom divided against itself is brought into desolation, and every city or house divided against itself shall not stand. And if Satan cast out Satan, he is divided against himself; how shall then his kingdom stand?'" Now what is Jesus saying? Jesus is saying, "What you are saying doesn't make sense. You're saying that I, by Satan, are casting out Satan." Jesus said, "Common sense tells you that is not true. A house divided against itself cannot stand. How does Satan cast out Satan?" Jesus is saying, "I am not in collusion with the devil; I am in collision with the devil. Nobody works for the devil by casting our demons and opening blind eyes and loosing dumb tongues and giving peace and joy. John 10:10, "The thief comes but to steal and to kill and to destroy." Jesus said, "I have come that they might have life, and have it abundantly."

Now the thing is this: they knew better. You don't get to be a Pharisee by being stupid. These men were intellectuals, but they crucified their reason in order to crucify Jesus Christ. They sinned not only



against redemption, they sinned against reason. And, I'm speaking to some here today. You may be a banker or lawyer. You may be a professor. You may be an entrepreneurial businessman or woman, but yet you're going to crucify your reason and say no to Jesus Christ.

I've been a pastor too long not to understand this. That there are many who trample reason to death in order to have their own way. For example, have you ever heard anybody say, "I'm not a Christian because there are hypocrites in the church"? We've all heard that. Now, that's a sin against reason. Anybody with a modicum of intelligence knows that is not reasonable. There may be some Christians who are hypocrites. Judas was a hypocrite. Sometimes people tell me, "Pastor, did you know there are hypocrites in the church?" "Oh, no. Man, don't tell me that." Do you think I could be a pastor for these years and not know that? Of course there are hypocrites in the church.

But be reasonable. Some doctors are quacks, but if you get sick, you still seek a doctor. Some lawyers may be shysters, but if you need legal advice, you'll find a lawyer. Some eggs may be rotten, but you probably had some for breakfast this morning, not the rotten kind. Some money may be counterfeit. If you saw a counterfeit bill, would you burn all the rest of your money? "I just don't believe in hypocrite bills; I'm going to get rid of my money." You know better than that. It is the hypocrite that proves the worthwhile-ness and the validity of the real. Why do men counterfeit \$50 dollar bills? Because of the worth of \$50 dollar bills. Every counterfeit is a testimony to the validity and the worthwhileness of the real. Men don't counterfeit gum wrappers. Think about it. No, you know better.

When you say that the church is full of hypocrites, I'm going to tell you, my friend, that you know better. I've been preaching long enough to know the best people on the face of God's green Earth meet on Sunday morning to give Him glory and praise. And I thank God for the company I'm in today. And I'm not going to let some hypocrite keep me out of Heaven where I'll spend eternity with them forever in Hell. They sinned against reason.

Have you ever heard anybody say something like this, "Well, I'm just not going to go down to that church. When I was a kid, my mother made me go every Sunday. I've just had enough of it. I'm not going down there." I wonder if your mother made you take a bath when you were a little boy, so now you don't take a bath anymore. "My momma made me take baths when I was a little boy, and now I'm not going to take a bath anymore." You know better than that kind of stuff. The silly reasons that people give for not coming to Jesus. "Well, I don't want to be a Christian. There's just so much to give up." Oh? What is God asking you to give up? The only thing God Almighty asks you to give up is anything that would harm you or hurt you. Psalm 84:11, "The Lord thy God is a sun and a shield. No good thing will He withhold from them that walk uprightly." Just doesn't make sense. Be like saying, "Well, I'd like to be healed, but I hate to give up my cancer." Think about it.

What is God asking you to give up but that which would harm you and hurt you, and steal from you the fulfillment that He wants you to have? No, what was wrong with these people is that they sinned not only against redemption, a Lord who wanted to love them, but they were sinning against reason. Isaiah 1 verse 18 says, "'Come now, and let us reason together,' saith the Lord. 'Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow. And though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool.'" But sinning against redemption and sinning against reason is not the unpardonable sin. It only set the stage for it.



Now let me tighten the focus a little bit. Not only did they sin against redemption, and not only did they sin against reason, but, friend, **they sinned against revelation.** They sinned against revelation, and there is the problem. Look if you will in Matthew verse 28 of this same chapter and see what the Lord Jesus said. "But if I cast out devils by the Spirit of God," underscore that, "then the kingdom of God is come unto you." There was the king, standing in their midst, Jesus Christ, and there was the Holy Spirit of God working through Him and testifying by those very works that He was indeed the Son of God. The Spirit of God was in action in that episode. And their real struggle was with the Holy Spirit. Jesus did what He did by the Spirit of God. You know, a man may blaspheme God the Father, and he could say, "There is no God." He may blaspheme Jesus Christ and say, "He's a false prophet or a fictitious person." But, oh, when the Holy Spirit of God comes, He demolishes those things.

The Holy Spirit of God pulls away the veil of darkness. The Holy Spirit of God, that opened that blind man's eyes, opens the eyes of the spirit so that people can see, so that they can understand. And here what these were doing is this: they were sinning against light. They were not sinning against ignorance; they were sinning against light. When Jesus was on the cross, He could say to those who were crucifying them, Him, "Father, forgive them. They don't know what they're doing." But these men knew what they were doing.

You see, the ministry of the Father is to rule the universe. The ministry of the Son, in conjunction with the Father, is to save. But the ministry of the Holy Spirit is to open our eyes to give light, to help us to understand. That's the reason, before I preach, I get on my knees and say, "Oh, Holy Spirit of God, open eyes. Help people to understand. Help them to know today," because it's the Holy Spirit that opens understanding. And when men and women stand before God to be judged, they're not going to be judged primarily by the sin they committed, listen, but by the light they rejected. It's very important you understand this.

You're in Matthew 12. Go back to Matthew 11 and look, if you will, beginning about verse 23. Jesus is speaking about Capernaum. Capernaum was His headquarters city. That's the city where Jesus preached and taught and performed many miracles. Now listen to what Jesus said to Capernaum, "And thou, Capernaum, which art exalted unto Heaven, shall be brought down to Hell; for if the mighty works, which have been done in thee had been done in Sodom, it would have remained until this day." Sodom was, perhaps, the most wicked, morally wicked city upon the face of the Earth. And then Jesus says in verse 24, "But I say unto you, that it shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom in the day of judgment, than for thee."

Here was one city, beautifully situated, I've been to the ruins of Capernaum many times, sitting there by the beautiful Sea of Galilee where Jesus walked in their midst, talked, preached, loved, did miracles. Over here is Sodom, down by the Dead Sea, living in unspeakable immorality. But Jesus said, "At the judgment, it will be better for Sodom than it would be for Capernaum." Why? Because Capernaum had so much light. And at the judgment, men are judged not primarily by the sin they have committed, but by the light they have rejected. I'm telling you, if you went to Hell, it would be better for you to go to Hell from Sodom than from Memphis, Tennessee, because the Gospel of Jesus Christ is preached in this place and in this city, not only by this particular preacher, but by other preachers.

What is the judgment that comes into the world? John 3 verse 19, "And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, but men loved darkness rather than light because their deeds are evil."



What is the unpardonable sin? It is the sin against light. It is attributing to Satan the work of the Holy Spirit when one knows better. And what are the consequences of this sin? Why did Jesus say this sin is an unpardonable sin? Well, there's **the deceiving power of this sin.** A person who commits this sin opens himself up to deception.

One of the most terrifying verses in all of the Bible is found in Second Thessalonians the second chapter, beginning in verse 11 and verse 12, "And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion." "Oh, wait a minute, Adrian. Read it right. You didn't read it right. God doesn't send people delusion; the devil does that." No, I'm reading it right. "For this cause God shall send them strong delusion." Well, why would God do that? "That they should believe a lie." Wait, it's getting worse. God is sending delusion that people would believe a lie? That's what it says. Well, why would God send delusion that they might believe a lie? Well, let's continue to read, "That they all might be damned." We're sinking fast, aren't we? God is sending people delusion that they would believe a lie, that they all might be damned. Why? I'll tell you why. He goes on to say, "Who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness." They had the truth. They wouldn't believe the truth. Why would they not believe the truth? Did they have intellectual problems? No. They believed not the truth because they had pleasure in unrighteousness.

Now look up here and let me tell you something. In this passage, the opposite of truth is not error. The opposite of truth is sin. They believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness. They wanted their sin. And so when they say, "I don't want the truth," there is the light, God speaks to them, they have the truth, they believe not the truth. It's not that they've never heard the truth. They believed not the truth. Why? Intellectual problems? No, moral problems. They had pleasure in unrighteousness, and for this cause God will send them strong delusion. They cannot have their sin and have God's truth at the same time.

You see, when you hear truth, you don't just say, "How interesting. I'll put that in my pocket and spend it if I ever need it, but in the meanwhile I'm going to live it up in sin." No, no. When you choose sin, the baggage that comes with that sin is error, and God will send you strong delusion. When you have seen, when you've known, when you understand, and you willfully sin against the light.

Let me give you an example how that works. I'm preaching here at Bellevue Baptist Church and a man decides, for whatever reason, he's going to come to Bellevue. Maybe his wife has begged him. Maybe he comes that one Sunday when I preach on stewardship and giving, that Christ is the Lord of all, that men ought to give. I hope you agree with that, that who owns the sheep owns the wool. Isn't that correct? And so, He owns us. And so I might be preaching on that.

Now, that man comes. He's sitting over there somewhere. His head is down like this and he begins to mutter to himself, and he says, "Money, money, money. That's all that bunch of money-grubbing Baptists and Baptist preachers preach about. I knew I shouldn't have come here. They, all they want to do is just fleece me. I can hardly wait to get out of here. All they're interested in is my money." Well, number one, that's a lie. That's not true, that's a lie. And in his heart he really knows it, he knows it. But you see this man has an idol in his heart. Do you know what his idol is? Money. His god is gold, his creed is greed, and his motto is "get all you can, and can all you get, sit on the lid and poison the rest." I mean, this man has an idol in his heart and so he attributes to what the preacher might do that day when he's preaching what the Bible has to say about stewardship, he attributes that to the work of the devil. And he turns around and walks out and says, "I'll never be back."



So his wife and kids are down here one Sunday, he's sitting at home, reading the sports page, got whiskers grown out, he hasn't shaved yet. Got a carton of cancer on one side and a six-pack of embalming fluid on the other side, sitting there smoking and drinking, watching the sports. Somebody comes and knocks at his door. "Now who could that be?" Goes to the door and opens it. And there stands a false witness. And so after a little talk they, they say to him, "We're here to tell you there is no Hell." He says, "Come in. Come in." And his mind now is twisted and he begins to believe a lie. Why? Because he "received not the love of the truth but had pleasure in unrighteousness," his rotten greed. And with that comes strong delusion and he'll believe a lie.

And it's a part of the righteous judgment of God, when a man willingly says, "This is the way I'm going," God says, "I'll give you a shove." When a man says, "I want God," God says, "I'll give you a shove." What happens is this: That there are people who, with eyes wide open, knowing better, sin not only against redemption and reason, but they sin against revelation. They sin against light. And what happens is this: there is the deceiving power of that sin. And when you talk to one of these people, he'll say to you, who's committed the unpardonable sin, he'll say, "Well, I just don't see it." He's not lying. He doesn't see it. Romans 11 verse 8, "According as it is written, God hath given them the spirit of slumber, eyes that they should not see, and ears that they should not hear until this day."

And then, not only is there the deceiving power of their sin; friend, there is **the deadening power of their sin**. When a person commits this sin, something dies within him. If you have rejected Jesus Christ and crossed the deadline, you may be one who's saying, "Well, you know, preachers don't preach like they used to when I was a boy." Some of them do, you just don't hear like you used to.

Have you ever been out in the woods and you've seen a stump from a pine tree, blackened and charred, and yet there's green all around it, but the stump is blackened and charred. Why would that be? Well, because in years past there was a forest fire. And the fire came snapping and crackling and roaring and burning and consuming, and all of the foliage and all of the bushes and trees were ablaze. And this stump was there, fat with rosin. And it began to burn brightly. And the fire went past and the stump burned, the outward part, but it never really caught fire, and the fire goes out, and it's blackened. Another year, the underbrush grows up. Another fire comes along and that stump that was blackened and charred, if the fire is hot enough, intense enough, it will begin to blaze again, not as bright as the first time. And it will go out more quickly this time. But, if that happens several times, when there comes a fire and it comes to that old blackened, charred, burned-over stump, the fire that is roaring and burning and consuming everything will just jump over that stump. It won't even glow.

They'll be people like that in this congregation this morning. Some will be brought under conviction and the fire of God's Holy Spirit will touch your heart. But when He comes to you this morning in this service, He'll just jump over you. There's the deadening power of that sin, and you don't feel the work of the Holy Spirit of God speaking to you. Hebrews chapter 3 verses 7 and 8, "Wherefore, as the Holy Ghost saith, 'Today if you will hear His voice, Harden not your heart.'" You can sit in a service like this with a hard heart, and while others are being blessed and saved, you won't feel a thing. You say, "Well, I'm not afraid to die." You're probably not. You're probably not. Your heart is so hard.

There is the deceiving power. There is the deadening power. And, therefore, there is **the damning power of this sin**. It's the sin that puts you beyond the pale of redemption. Hebrews chapter 6 warns about this sin, beginning in verse 4 through verse 6. God says, "For it is impossible." Well, when God says



something is impossible, we ought to pay attention. Listen to it, "For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened," remember now that the sin against the Holy Spirit is a sin against light, "who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the Heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost," the Greek means they have gone along with the Holy Ghost, "and have tasted the good Word of God," not ingested and digested, but tasted, "and the powers of the world to come. If they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance." Shorten the sentence: it is impossible to renew them to repentance. Why? Because, "They crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put Him to an open shame."

You can come to a place where it is impossible for you to be saved. Why? Because with eyes wide open you crucify Jesus afresh. Some who nailed Him to the cross did not know what they were doing. But you can walk out of here without Jesus, full aware of what you're doing, and when you do, you're committing a greater sin, a greater sin, a greater sin than those who literally nailed Him to the cross. You are crucifying the Son of God afresh. They've tasted; they've gone along with the Holy Ghost.

An illustration I use is like this. Suppose you're in the back of the supermarket. Have you ever been back there where they have a little tray and a lady back there, and they'll have some cheese with toothpicks stuck in it? And say, "Try this." And you taste it. Maybe you're a cheese hound. That's gourmet cheese. "Boy," you say, "that's good." "Would you like some, sir?" "Yes, give me two pounds of that." And so you wrap it, not asking the price. When you get up to the front, you see it's almost \$30. "What! Humph, that's just cheese!" "Well, yes, but it's gourmet cheese. It's special. Don't you like it?" "I loved it. But put it back. I'm not going to pay \$30 for that. Put it back."

Now here's a person with eyes wide open saying, "I will not pay the price, I will not." That's what happens when a person who has been partaker of the Holy Ghost, has tasted the good Word of God. If they fall away, if they turn their back, it is impossible to renew them to repentance. Why? Because of the deceiving, deadening power of their sin! Nobody can be saved unless the Holy Spirit of God opens his eyes. But when you say no to the Holy Spirit of God, you put out your own eyes. And the Holy Spirit of God ceases to strive. Genesis chapter 6 and verse 3. The Bible, God said in the days of Noah, "My Spirit will not always strive with a man." You can sin against light, and that's when light goes out on the road to Hell.

Now look up here and let me tell you a story. Over here in Arkansas there was a preacher, gifted man of God. He's in Heaven now. His name was Joe Henry Hankins. He preached like Jeremiah; he wept when he preached. Joe Henry Hankins told this story I shall never forget; I think I shall never forget it. He said, "I was preaching in a service and I tore my heart out preaching the Gospel of Jesus Christ." He said, "I gave an invitation and God's Spirit was moving," just like that fire I was talking about.

He said, "I saw a young man sitting up in the balcony and I could tell he was under conviction. He was gripping the back of the pew with one hand, holding the hymnal with the other. And so as others were coming, I just tried to catch his eye, and I said, 'Young man, come to Jesus.'" Hankins said, "It looked like he was going to step out, but then he stepped back and started to sing again. Again we sang another stanza and I said, 'Young man! Come to Jesus!'" Said, "The young man closed his hymnal and turned and started moving. I said, 'Thank God, hallelujah, he's coming to Christ, he's coming to Christ.' But rather than coming down the aisle, he turned and went out the back, out the door, and was gone from the service."

In just a matter of days, Hankins was called to that young man's bedside because the man had been diagnosed with a disease he did not know he had when he was in that service. And the doctor said, "He's dying." Hankins went to see him. He said, "Son, have they told you the nature of your sickness?" He said,



“Yes, preacher. You don’t have to be delicate about it. I know I’m dying.” “Well, son, I want to ask you a question. Were you in the services on thus and such a day?” “Yes, preacher, I was.” “Well, I was watching you, son, and it seemed to me that during the invitation you were under conviction that you felt your need of Jesus. Is that right?” He said, “Preacher, when you were preaching and you gave that invitation, I wanted to get down there where you were so badly I felt I could jump over the balcony rail to come down there to where you were.” “Well, son, why didn’t you come?” He said, “Every time I started out, I remembered my favorite sin and I wrestled and I made up my mind I wanted my sin.”

The preacher said he felt a chill go over him. And he tried to reason with the young man. He said, “But now, son, if you’re going to die, you can’t have that sin anyway. Don’t you think you better give your heart to Jesus Christ?” Joe Henry Hankins said, “That young man looked at me and he said this. Said, ‘Preacher, you don’t understand. When I closed my hymnal and willingly and deliberately walked out of that service, something died within me. I can’t believe.’ He said, ‘Son, God will save you. He wants to save you.’ He said, ‘No, I’m telling you I can’t do it. Something died within me.’” Hankins said he wept and prayed and cried for that boy until he died without Jesus and slipped into Hell.

If you’re here today and you feel the slightest desire to come to Jesus Christ, I beg you, come to Him. Don’t be like that old stump. Don’t let God send you strong delusion. Don’t cross the deadline. Don’t sin against such light. There are millions of people in this world who would shout for joy to hear what you’re hearing today, that God loves you, that Christ died for you, that He invites you, and that the Bible says, “Whosoever will may come.”

If you think that you’ve committed the unpardonable sin, I’ll tell you this. If you want to be saved, you haven’t. Hallelujah. Anybody who wants to come, will. And Jesus said, “If any man will come unto Me, I will never turn him away.”

Would you bow your heads in prayer? Heads are bowed and eyes are closed. If you’re not certain that you’re saved, would you like to be saved, would you? Would you like to know that you really do have life? Jesus said, “I’ve come that you might have life.” Could I lead you in a prayer? We’ll call this prayer the sinner’s prayer. And you can pray and accept Christ as your personal Lord and Savior. You can do it right now. Would you pray this prayer? “Dear God, I know that You love me. Thank You for loving me. And I know that You want to save me. Jesus, You died to save me and You promised to save me if I would trust You. Jesus, I do trust You. I believe You’re the Son of God. I believe you paid for my sin with Your blood on the cross. I believe that God raised You from the dead. And now I receive You as my Lord and Savior. Forgive my sin. Cleanse me. Come into my life. Take control of my life and begin today to make me the person You want me to be. And Jesus, give me the courage to make it public. Help me never to be ashamed of You. In Your name I pray, Amen.”



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