

The Unforgivable Sin

That the Bible describes one sin as “unforgiveable” sparks fear in the hearts of those who worry that perhaps they have committed it. Although the [gospel](#) freely offers forgiveness to all who repent of their sins, there is a limit reached at the door of this one crime. The unforgiveable or unpardonable sin of which Jesus warned is identified as blasphemy against the Holy Spirit. Jesus declared that this sin cannot be forgiven either in the present or in the future:

Therefore I say to you, every sin and blasphemy will be forgiven men, but the blasphemy against the Spirit will not be forgiven men. Anyone who speaks a word against the Son of Man, it will be forgiven him; but whoever speaks against the Holy Spirit, it will not be forgiven him, either in this age or in the age to come. (Matthew 12:31-32)

Various attempts have been made to identify the specific crime that is unforgiveable. It has been assigned to such grievous crimes as murder or adultery. However, though both of these sins are clearly heinous sins against God, the [Scripture](#) makes it clear that they may be forgiven if earnest repentance is made. David, for example, was guilty of both of them, yet he was restored to grace.

Frequently the unforgiveable sin is identified with persistent and final unbelief in Christ. Since death brings the end of a person’s opportunity to repent of sin and embrace Christ, the finality of unbelief brings the consequence of the termination of hope of forgiveness.

Though persistent and final unbelief does bring about such consequences it does not adequately explain Jesus’ warning concerning blasphemy against the Holy Spirit. Blasphemy is something one does with the mouth or the pen. It involves words.

Though any form of blasphemy is a serious assault on the character of

God, it is usually regarded as forgiveable. When Jesus warned of the unforgiveable sin, it was in the context of His accusers declaring that He was in league with Satan. His warning was sober and frightening. Yet, on the cross Jesus prayed for the forgiveness of those who blasphemed against Him on the grounds of their ignorance, “Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they do” (Luke 23:34).

If, however, people are *enlightened* by the Holy Spirit to the degree that they know Jesus is truly the Christ, and then they accuse Him of being satanic, they have committed a sin for which there is no pardon. Christians left to their own devices are capable of committing the unpardonable sin, but we are [confident](#) that God in His preserving grace will restrain His elect from ever committing such a sin. When earnest Christians are fearful that perhaps they have actually committed this sin, it is probably an indication that they haven't. Those who do commit such a sin would be so hardened of heart and abandoned in their sin as to feel no remorse for it.

Even in a pagan, secularized culture like our own, people seem to be reluctant to go too far in their blasphemy against God and Christ. Though the name of Christ is dragged through the mud as a common curse word and the [gospel](#) is ridiculed by irreverent jokes and comments, people still seem constrained to avoid linking Jesus with Satan.

Though the occult and Satanism provide a context of perilous danger for the commission of the unpardonable sin, if radical blasphemy occurs here it may still be forgiven because it is committed in ignorance by those unenlightened by the Holy Spirit.

Summary

1. Blasphemy against the Holy Spirit is not to be equated with murder or adultery.
2. Blasphemy is an offense against God involving words.

3. Christ's original warning was against attributing the works of God the Holy Spirit to Satan.
4. Jesus prayed for the forgiveness of blasphemers who were ignorant of His true identity.
5. Christians will never commit this sin because of the restraining grace of God.

Tags: [Theology](#)