

Is There An Unpardonable Sin?

Is there a sin so terrible even God will **not** forgive?

This fear of committing the unpardonable sin grips some Christians today, so let us explore this subject and see what the Word of God, The Christian Bible, actually says.

The idea of an unpardonable sin comes from something that Jesus Christ said.

This, to start with, is a little odd, because Jesus Christ is the One who died so that our sins can be forgiven and we can be saved from the penalty of eternal death that our sins earn us, [**Romans 3:23; Romans 6:23; 1 Corinthians 15:3-4; John 3:16**].

Let us examine exactly what Jesus Christ said as recorded in Matthew, Mark and Luke.

Luke 12:10 [NIV] *“And everyone who speaks a word against the Son of Man will be forgiven, but anyone who blasphemes against the Holy Spirit will not be forgiven.”*

This particular “*eternal sin*” is unique, unlike all other sins it will **not** be forgiven.

What is this sin and why will it **not** be forgiven?

The historical situation helps us to understand why Jesus mentioned blasphemy against the Holy Spirit.

Mark 3:28-30 [NIV] *“I tell you the truth, all the sins and blasphemies of men will be forgiven them. But whoever blasphemes against the Holy Spirit will never be forgiven; he is guilty of an eternal sin.’ He said this because they were saying, ‘He has an evil spirit.’”*

Some Jewish religious leaders had accused Jesus Christ of being demon possessed, [verse 22].

Matthew 12:22-23 [NIV] *“Then they brought him a demon-possessed man who was blind and mute, and Jesus healed him, so that he could both talk and see. All the people were astonished and said, ‘Could this be the Son of David?’”*

Matthew records more background information to this incident. **Most of the people who witnessed this miracle were amazed and they wondered if this miraculous healing power meant that Jesus was the Son of David, the promised Messiah.**

Matthew 12:24 [NIV] *“But when the Pharisees heard this, they said, ‘It is only by Beelzebub, the prince of demons, that this fellow drives out demons.’”*

But the Pharisees ridiculed that idea.

They suggested that Jesus could order demons around only because He was working with the ruler of demons, Beelzebub, one of the names given to Satan.

This response by the Pharisees was out of jealousy of Jesus’ power and popularity. Jesus was a threat to their status as religious leaders.

So they claimed Jesus was an agent of Satan, **not** of the Creator God.

Matthew 12:25-27 [NIV] *“Jesus knew their thoughts and said to them, ‘Every kingdom divided against itself will be ruined, and every city or household divided against itself will not stand. If Satan drives out Satan, he is divided against himself. How then can his kingdom stand? And if I drive out demons by Beelzebub, by whom do your people drive them out? So then, they will be your judges.’”*

Jesus showed that their claim was ridiculous and hypocritical.

Matthew 12:28 [NIV] *“But if I drive out demons by the Spirit of God, then the kingdom of God has come upon you.”*

The power to cast out demons comes from God and Jesus was implying that this is what He had done.

God’s power and authority were at work in the life and ministry of Jesus Christ, the Son of God as well as the Son of Man.

Jesus as God in the flesh was performing miracles.

But some of the Pharisees were refusing to accept the evidence as to whom Jesus was. They were not just sceptical, they were working against the Kingdom of God, Jesus Christ the Son of God being the King of that Kingdom, [**Revelation 19:11-16**].

Those Pharisees were rejecting the Triune God, even though some of them understood Jesus to be a teacher from God, [**John 3:2**].

The Pharisees did not want to admit they were wrong.

In self-imposed blindness, they were rejecting not only Jesus, but also the dramatic evidence they had personally seen.

Some of them were knowingly denying the power of God and the Kingdom of God.

So Jesus warned them about this sin that would not be forgiven.

John 16:5-8 [NIV] *“Now I am going to him who sent me, yet none of you asks me, ‘Where are you going?’ Because I have said these things, you are filled with grief. But I tell you the truth: It is for your good that I am going away. Unless I go away, the Counsellor will not come to you; but if I go, I will send him to you. When he comes, he will convict the world of guilt in regard to sin and righteousness and judgment:”*

The Holy Spirit is the way the Triune God works in our hearts and minds through the human spirit, [Job 32:8], to transform us, by convicting us of sin, showing where true righteousness is to be found and reminding us there will be a time of judgement.

This is the only way we can be saved from eternal death.

How then could God help these Pharisees if some of them were knowingly rejecting the way the Triune God works to bring about our salvation from eternal death?

God is always willing to forgive.

God loved the Pharisees, just as He loves all human beings, [**John 3:16-17**], without any favouritism, [**Acts 10:34**], God is merciful [**Luke 6:36**] and will always forgive.

God is always able to forgive any sin, no matter how great. But He obviously **cannot** forgive if the person who has sinned does **not** want Him to forgive them if they are **not** willing to admit doing anything sinful.

God will not force anyone to live with Him forever in His Kingdom if that person does not want to do so.

But few people ever reach that extreme of knowingly fighting against God.

Jesus was demonstrating benefits of God's Kingdom, freedom from the influence of evil spirits, freedom from disabilities.

The Pharisees were calling this satanic, they seemed to be knowingly speaking against a miracle done by the Holy Spirit.

Jesus was warning them about how serious their accusation was, a warning but not condemning.

There was still hope, for the Pharisees had time to think about what Jesus had said, time to change their attitude.

Some of the Pharisees did, some tried to help Jesus escape, [Luke 13:31]. Some helped to bury Jesus, [Luke 23:50-53]. Some Pharisees became disciples after Jesus was resurrected, [Acts 15:5].

1 John 1:9 [NIV] *“If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.”*

Confession of our sins is one condition that God demands before forgiveness.

Luke 23:34 [NIV] *“Jesus said, ‘Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing.’ And they divided up his clothes by casting lots.”*

Even people who helped murder Jesus Christ could be forgiven of their sins, [Acts 2:36-38].

1 Timothy 1:13-14 [NIV] *“Even though I was once a blasphemer and a persecutor and a violent man, I was shown mercy because I acted in ignorance and unbelief. The grace of our Lord was poured out on me abundantly, along with the faith and love that are in Christ Jesus.”*

Paul persecuted the Christian Church, yet that was also forgiven.

Any person and sin can be forgiven, but God will **not** forgive people who refuse to admit sin and repent.

Few people knowingly reach the extreme stubbornness that they can deliberately set themselves to oppose God and the work He does through the Holy Spirit.

2 Corinthians 4:4 [NIV] *“The god of this age has blinded the minds of unbelievers, so that they cannot see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.”*

What about the vast majority of human beings who have been blinded to the good news of forgiveness of their sins through Jesus Christ, by the god of the present world, Satan, [Revelation 12:9]?

All these people who are sinning without any knowledge of the true Creator God and His laws, His code of conduct; have they committed unpardonable sins?

Romans 4:15 [NIV] *“because law brings wrath. And where there is no law there is no transgression.”*

Where there is **no** knowledge of the laws there is **no** transgression of the law.

All these people will have their chance to know and obey the laws of the Creator God in the future.

Revelation 20:11-13 [NIV] *“Then I saw a great white throne and him who was seated on it. Earth and sky fled from his presence, and there was no place for them. And I saw the dead, great and small, standing before the throne, and books were opened. Another book was opened, which is the book of life. The dead were judged according to what they had done as recorded in the books. The sea gave*

up the dead that were in it, and death and Hades gave up the dead that were in them, and each person was judged according to what he had done.”

Note the “*books were opened*” to these people. For the first time the books of the Christian Bible are made available to them, and the Holy Spirit will guide them into all truth, [**John 16:13**].

Joel 2:28-29 [NIV] *“And afterwards, I will pour out my Spirit on all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy, your old men will dream dreams, your young men will see visions. Even on my servants, both men and women, I will pour out my Spirit in those days.”*

This is the time of the resurrection of all who have never known of Jesus Christ and the opening up of the Christian Bible to them. All people will have available to them the power of the Holy Spirit.

God is a fair and just Creator God.

If you are worried about the unpardonable sin, thinking you may have committed it, stop worrying, your worry is proof that you have not committed such a sin.

We can have not only hope but confidence through Jesus Christ our Saviour.

Romans 8:1, 38-39 [NIV] *“Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus,” ... “For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.”*

Nothing can separate us from the love that God has for each of us individually.

Romans 11:33-36 [NIV] *“Oh, the depth of the riches of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable his judgments, and his paths beyond tracing out! ‘Who has known the mind of the Lord? Or who has been his counsellor?’ ‘Who has ever given to God, that God should repay him?’ For from him and through him and to him are all things. To him be the glory for ever! Amen.”*

How thankful are you for the love and wisdom of the Triune God?

We should praise and worship Him forever.

Our need to forgive others is imperative.

Matthew 6:14-15 [NIV] *“For if you forgive men when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive men their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins.”*

This is another sin that the Triune God will **not** forgive.

A sin that is rarely mentioned in discussions of the unpardonable sin.

Nevertheless, the Biblical terminology is almost the same.

This teaching is repeated for emphasis in **Matthew 18:21-35; Mark 11:25; Luke 6:37**.

If we hold a grudge, if we hold on to a desire for revenge, we are in danger of committing a sin that God will not forgive.

If we are not willing to forgive others, then we will not enjoy eternal life with a God of mercy.

Like blasphemy against the Holy Spirit, this sin will not be forgiven, unless of course we change our attitude.

1 John 4:20-21 [NIV] *“If anyone says, ‘I love God,’ yet hates his brother, he is a liar. For anyone who does not love his brother, whom he has seen, cannot love God, whom he has not seen. And he has given us this command: Whoever loves God must also love his brother.”*

Our relationships with other human beings in many ways reflect our relationship with the Creator God, we must get them right.

1 Peter 3:7 [NIV] *“Husbands, in the same way be considerate as you live with your wives, and treat them with respect as the weaker partner and as heirs with you of the gracious gift of life, so that nothing will hinder your prayers.”*

Wrong family relationships can interfere with our prayers.

1 Timothy 5:8 [NIV] *“If anyone does not provide for his relatives, and especially for his immediate family, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever.”*

Loving, interpersonal relationships are an essential part of Christian living.

Refusing to forgive another is failing to recognise how much God has forgiven us.

It is a refusal to live God’s way, to express the love that the Holy Spirit wants to produce in us, [**Galatians 5:22-23**].

John 7:37-39 [NIV] *“On the last and greatest day of the Feast, Jesus stood and said in a loud voice, ‘If anyone is thirsty, let him come to me and drink. Whoever believes in me, as the Scripture has said, streams of living water will flow from within him.’ By this he meant the Spirit, whom those who believed in him were later to receive. Up to that time the Spirit had not been given, since Jesus had not yet been glorified.”*

The Holy Spirit **cannot** remain stagnant in us. He must flow through us in loving acts towards other human beings.

Failing to understand this is to fail to understand what Christianity is all about.

God has been extremely generous to us as human beings.

God has given us His only Son’s life, [**John 3:16**].

God offers us forgiveness of our sins, [**Acts 5:30-31; Ephesians 1:7-8; Colossians 1:13-14**].

God offers us the Holy Spirit to make it possible for us to live with Him for evermore, [**Luke 11:13; Ephesians 1:13-14**].

Romans 12:1-2 [NIV] *“Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God’s mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God, this is your spiritual act of worship. Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God’s will is, his good, pleasing and perfect will.”*

Out of gratitude for all this, we should surrender our lives for the Creator God to use, and allow the Holy Spirit to re-educate our lives so that we become more like His Son Jesus Christ.

Ephesians 4:30-32 [NIV] *“And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, with whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. Get rid of all bitterness, rage and anger, brawling and slander, along with every form of malice. Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you.”*

This is how we avoid stopping the desired work of the Holy Spirit in our lives.

Matthew 5:48 [NIV] *“Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect.”*

Not one of us is perfect, but we all can have tremendous hope.

God can make us more forgiving.

God wants us to become more merciful.

Psalms 139:1-17 [NIV] *“O LORD, you have searched me and you know me. You know when I sit and when I rise; you perceive my thoughts from afar. You discern my going out and my lying down; you are familiar with all my ways. Before a word is on my tongue you know it completely, O LORD. You hem me in, behind and before; you have laid your hand upon me. Such knowledge is too wonderful for me, too lofty for me to attain. Where can I go from your Spirit? Where can I flee from your presence? If I go up to the heavens, you are there; if I make my bed in the depths, you are there. If I rise on the wings of the dawn, if I settle on the far side of the sea, even there your hand will guide me, your right hand will hold me fast. If I say, ‘Surely the darkness will hide me and the light become night around me,’ even the darkness will not be dark to you; the night will shine like the day, for darkness is as light to you. For you created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother’s womb. I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; your works are wonderful, I know that full well. My frame was not hidden from you when I was made in the secret place. When I was woven together in the depths of the earth, your eyes saw my unformed body. All the days ordained for me were written in your book before one of them came to be. How precious to me are your thoughts, O God! How vast is the sum of them!”*

God knows us individually far more than we even know ourselves.

God knows our weaknesses and our need for His help and He is always available to us.

God’s love for us endures forever, [**Psalms 136:1-26**].

Hebrews 4:14-16 [NIV] *“Therefore, since we have a great high priest who has gone through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold firmly to the faith we profess. For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathise with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are, yet was without sin. Let us then approach the throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need.”*

We can go to the throne of God, where Jesus Christ sits, not only to be forgiven but to receive the Holy Spirit, the help we need to forgive others.

As long as we are willing to come humbly to God and ask for help and forgiveness, He is willing and able to grant our request.