

The Unforgivable Sin

By Olin Hudson

Jesus says in Matthew 12:31, "Therefore I say to you, any sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven men, but blasphemy against the Spirit shall not be forgiven." Is there a sin of which we cannot be forgiven? If there is, have we committed it? Is it possible for there to be a sin that God cannot forgive?

There are two other parallel passages dealing with this same subject: Hebrews 6:4-8 and Hebrews 10:26-31, each of which mention an impossibility of forgiveness. Let's examine all three passages and see the similarities and determine what Jesus is talking about and its implications to us.

First, in each of the passages there is a complete display of the power of the Holy Spirit. In Matthew 12 the Pharisees attributed a miracle of Jesus (performed by the power of the Holy Spirit) to the work of Satan. They saw the undeniable power of the Holy Spirit yet denied it. Note the similar context in Hebrews 6. The description of the individual in verses 4-5 indicates someone who has experienced everything the Holy Spirit has for us to experience in our relationship with Christ. The undeniable work of the Holy Spirit in the life of this individual is known and experienced yet rejected. The result is that it is impossible to bring them to repentance. Again it is the same context in Hebrews 10. The writer says here, "For if we go on sinning willfully after receiving the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins." (vs 26). The term "knowledge" in the original language refers to a full and complete knowledge gained through experience. If we choose a life of sin after experiencing completely what the Holy Spirit offers us in Christ then there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins, we will not have forgiveness.

Each of the three passages mentions the complete rejection of God's gift after having a clear picture and experience of what God offers. Each of the three passages also mentions an impossibility of forgiveness, repentance, or the cleansing effect of Christ's blood on the individual when this gift is rejected. There is a good illustration in Hebrews 6:7-8 of what is being taught here. "For ground that drinks the rain which often falls upon it and brings forth vegetation useful to those for whose sake it is also tilled, receives a blessing from God; but if it yields thorns and thistles, it is worthless and close to being cursed, and it ends up being burned." The ones discussed here have been given rain and every blessing imaginable for them to grow closer to God, instead they choose to reject the blessing and produce thorns and every sort of sin. What more can be done for soil that is tilled, watered, and labored over that produces only thorns, it is useless. The same is true for us. When we've experienced all that God has for us in Christ and decide we would rather live in sin, what more can God do to bring us back?

God gives us all freedom of choice. Never does He force us to follow Him and never can Satan force us to follow him, the choice is ours. If ever we turn to God from following Satan we will be forgiven. The point of the above passages is that if we choose to reject God after experiencing all the blessings He offers us in Christ, then there will be nothing that will persuade us to return to Him, it will therefore be impossible to obtain forgiveness because we will not choose to seek it.

If you are worried that you may be in this condition then you definitely are not. Someone with the above attitude will not care if he has rejected Christ, he will be in open defiance. What we have to be careful of is developing a heart that becomes seared to the point that we eventually do not care at all what God wants us to do.