

“THE SIN AGAINST THE HOLY SPIRIT”

Hebrews 6:4-8, Luke 12:1-12

March 29 & 30, 2025

“An atheist was walking through the woods admiring all the ‘accidents’ that evolution had created. ‘What majestic trees! What powerful rivers! What beautiful animals!’ he said to himself.

“As he was walking alongside the river, he heard a rustling in the bushes behind him. Turning to look, he saw a 7-foot grizzly bear charge towards him. He ran away as fast as he could up the path.

“He looked over his shoulder and saw the grizzly was closing. Somehow he ran even faster, so scared that tears came to his eyes. He looked again, and the bear was even closer. His heart was pounding, and he tried to run faster. He tripped and fell to the ground. He rolled over to pick himself up, but the bear was right over him, reaching for him with its left paw and raising its right paw to strike him.

“At that instant the atheist cried, ‘Oh my God!’

“Time stopped. The bear froze. The forest was silent. Even the river stopped moving.

“As a bright light shone upon the man, a voice came out of the sky, ‘You deny My existence for all these years, teach others that I don't exist, and even credit creation to a cosmic accident. Do you expect Me to help you out of this predicament? Am I to count you as a believer?’

“The atheist looked directly into the light and said, ‘I would feel like a hypocrite to become a Christian after all these years, but perhaps you could make the bear a Christian?’

“Very well,’ said the voice.

“The light went out. The river ran. The sounds of the forest resumed. Then the bear

dropped his right paw, brought both paws together, bowed its head, and spoke: ‘Lord, for this food which I am about to receive, I am truly thankful.’”¹

I know, right? This man who had denied God’s presence all of his life was finally enlightened about the reality of God’s existence, but still refused to accept God! It’s a somewhat humorous example that has a totally serious point to it. God is not pleased with those who come to know about Him, experience His glory and radiance, feel His power and walk in His miraculous supremacy, but ultimately turn away from Him. God is not pleased with those who come to believe in Jesus Christ, receive the Holy Spirit in their lives, do great work for the Lord, only at a later time in their lives to forsake and disown that faith, only to proclaim that they no longer believe that God is who He says He is.

Likewise, God is not pleased with those who come to a point in their lives when they experience the Salvation of Jesus, find their sins forgiven and their lives changed, only to go back into the sinful lifestyle they were living before they found forgiveness.

The Old Testament is full of examples of God’s displeasure with people who see Him work in their lives, yet they either fail to follow Him, or they deny that God is the One who did the wonderful things they have experienced.

Take for example, the people of Israel as they were on their way from Egypt to the land that God had promised. They had seen the plagues God sent to the Egyptians before they were released (Exodus 7-12). They had seen the mighty hand of God in the pillar of fire and cloud that lead them toward the Red Sea, protecting them from the army of Egypt (Exodus 13:21-14:20). They had walked through the Red Sea as God opened up a path for them through it, with walls of water on the left and on the right (Exodus 14:21-31). Yet, the people continued to doubt God’s provision and complained (Exodus 15:24 & 16:2-3). Even when God brought victory to

¹ (PreachingToday.com, *More Perfect Illustrations*, [Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, 2003] pg. 12)

Israel against her enemies, the people were forgetful of His power and might. Even after experiencing God on Mt. Sinai where Moses received the 10 Commandments and the laws of God (Ex. 19-31), the people continuously doubted, so that when Moses was on the mountain for 40 days, they turned from the Lord and made an idol in the form of a golden calf to worship and give credit for all their deliverances (Ex. 32-32).

So, when they refused to enter into the Promised Land for fear of those living in it (Numbers 13-14), God drove them out into the wilderness, where that whole generation died, save for a few who had remained faithful. Once they rebelled against the greatness of God, having experienced His wonders and power, there was no hope for them. They would never find His promises fulfilled in their lives because of their apostasy, their denial of God's work in their lives.

Even now, God is not pleased with those who experience His majesty in their lives, commit their lives to following Jesus, and then later abandon that faith. So there is only one unforgiveable sin for us to be aware of and be warned against. And that is our "Hard Saying of Jesus" today. Listen to Luke 12:1-12. (READ Luke 12:1-12)

God desires our faithfulness as we claim Jesus into our lives as Savior and Lord. Though we may have said unkind and misleading things about Jesus before we come to faith in Him, though we might even have persecuted the faithful followers of Jesus before our conversion to Christianity, these are all forgivable because we did them prior to our coming to faith in Jesus Christ as the son of God, the Messiah and Savior of the World. That's where Jesus says, "*And anyone who speaks a word against the Son of Man will be forgiven...*" (Luke 12:10a). But the danger is that we speak out against the Holy Spirit, and then Jesus tells us, "*...but anyone who blasphemes against the Holy Spirit will not be forgiven*" (12:10b).

The Interpreters Dictionary of the Bible describes it this way. “The unforgivable sin does not describe a single act that merits eternal judgment. Certainly it does not refer to an inadvertent word or deed which might be the result of thoughtlessness. And it does not concern the unevangelized heathen who have never heard the Word.

“The unforgivable sin applies to those who, after knowledge, deliberately and persistently reject Christ and refuse to recognize His work as the work of God. In its extreme and radical character the term points up the life-and-death claims of Jesus in His words and work as a Revealer of God. To reject Him after knowledge is to shut oneself from the Gospel truth and to condemn oneself to utter loss ... For (people) to deny what the Spirit attests is to make God a liar (I John 5:10). It is to pervert the whole spiritual order and to disqualify oneself from the kingdom of righteousness. In this perversion (people) lose the capacity to accept God’s free offer of grace.”²

Though there is nothing in all this world that can separate us from the love of Christ Jesus from the outside (Romans 8, esp. 37-39), we can find ourselves outside of God’s mercy and grace if we give up our faith in Jesus and deny any of His salvation work in us, and claim that Holy Spirit is no longer in us. It is a complete turning away from Christianity once we have experienced Jesus’ forgiveness and grace. That is the one thing that can remove us from the presence of the Lord.

Some argue that the person turning away from the Lord never had Jesus in their life in the first place, and that is a valid argument. But the warning comes to us that once we have experienced Jesus’ love and forgiveness, and we claim Him as our Savior, and the Holy Spirit works in and through us, we are hopeless if we reject it all and return to a secular, unrepentant lifestyle. We may know about the love of God, and say that we are His follower in Jesus, but

² (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1985, Vol. 4, R-Z, pg. 733).

that might not be true if there never was a conversion experience, OR if we consistently go against the laws and commandments of the Lord in His Word, the Bible.

So the writer of the Book of Hebrews is correct when he says, *“It is impossible for those who have once been enlightened, who have tasted the heavenly gift, who have shared in the Holy Spirit, who have tasted the goodness of the Word of God and the powers of the coming age and who have fallen away, to be brought back to repentance”* (Hebrews 6:4-6).

It would have been like the Pharisee Saul, having been knocked off his horse, seen the Risen Christ Jesus, heard His questions and experienced His full presence, and to have found forgiveness and healing at the hands of Ananias through the work of the Holy Spirit, to only have gone on persecuting the Christians. Coming to understand the Salvation of Jesus, and then to go right back to rounding up and killing the followers of Jesus would have seared his heart to the point of no return. There would have been no apostle Paul to take the love and mercy and grace of Jesus Christ to the Jews and the Gentiles. So, too, we would not have had most of the New Testament written in favor of the great work of God in Paul’s life. It would have had to have been another person God moved to do that great work for Jesus.

But because Saul received Jesus Christ as his Savior, because he gave up persecuting the Church and became a great advocate for the Gospel of Jesus Christ as the apostle Paul, God was able to use him in a mighty way to bring many to know and love Jesus Christ as their Savior, too.

But as we’ve been hearing throughout this series of Hard Sayings of Jesus, we have an enemy that hates us and desires nothing more than to separate us from the love and grace of God so that we join him in God’s absence when he and his followers are thrown into the lake of fire at the last judgment. So if he can entice us to leave our faith in Jesus, he’ll do his very best to do it.

And that was Jesus' concern in this discourse recorded by Luke. As Jesus talks with the disciples, He warns them of following the example of the Pharisees, ones who are in positions of religious leadership, yet who spoke and acted contemptuously of God and His sacred things. That's called blasphemy. Since the Pharisees and the other leaders of the Temple did not recognize or credit Jesus as being the Son of God, the Messiah of the world, they were verging on committing the unforgivable sin of rejecting God's Salvation. By stating that Jesus was casting out demons by the power of the prince of demons, Satan (11:14-26), they were very close to denying the work of the Holy Spirit of God done through Jesus.

And then Jesus warns the disciples, "*there is nothing concealed that will not be disclosed, or hidden that will not be made known. What you have said in the dark will be heard in the daylight, and what you have whispered in the ear in the inner rooms will be proclaimed from the roofs*" (12:2-3). The contriving and scheming of those against God's servants will be made known and they will have to suffer the consequences of it. Anyone's constant denial of the work of God grows stronger and stronger until that person is no longer able to see or hear the work of the Lord. Their hearts are seared hard enough that they would not be able to hear God if He spoke to them verbally.

"In his book *The Magician's Nephew*, C. S. Lewis writes of the creation of fictitious Narnia through the song of Aslan (the lion who represents Jesus in the book). The Creation Song is clearly intended to reveal the majesty and glory of Aslan. As in Genesis 1, it is a grand call to worship.

"But there was one (Uncle Andrew) who would not hear it. The consequences were staggering: When the great moment came and the Beasts spoke, he missed the whole point, for a rather interesting reason. When the Lion had first begun singing, long ago when it was still quite

dark, he had realized that the noise was a song. And he had disliked the song very much. It made him think and feel things he did not want to think and feel.

“Then, when the sun rose and he saw that the singer was a Lion (‘only a lion,’ as he said to himself) he tried his hardest to make himself believe that it wasn’t singing and never had been singing--only roaring as any lion might do in a zoo in our own world. *Of course it can’t really have been singing*, he thought. *I must have imagined it. I’ve been letting my nerves get out of order. Who ever heard of a lion singing?*

“And the longer and more beautifully the Lion sang, the harder Uncle Andrew tried to make himself believe that he could hear nothing but roaring. Now the trouble about trying to make yourself stupider than you really are is that you very often succeed. Uncle Andrew did. He soon did hear nothing but roaring in Aslan’s song. Soon he couldn’t have heard anything else even if he had wanted to.

“And when at last the Lion spoke and said, ‘Narnia awake,’ he didn’t hear any words: he heard only a snarl. And when the beasts spoke in answer, he heard only barkings, growlings, bayings, and howlings.”³

Jesus told His disciples, “...*whoever publicly acknowledges Me before others, the Son of Man will also acknowledge before the angels of God. But whoever disowns Me before others will be disowned before the angels of God*” (Luke 12:8-9). As we speak well of those who represent the Lord Jesus Christ, He is pleased to promote us before the hosts of heaven. But if we speak evil against those who represent the Lord Jesus, He will disown us as if we were never a believer in Him. Our thoughts and words and actions determine the separation from the Lord Jesus, and if we succumb to Satan’s influence with criticism and complaint, we are warned, we

³ (PreachingToday.com, *More Perfect Illustrations*, [Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, 2003] pg. 295-296)

may be on the fast track toward losing our Salvation because our hearts will lead us away from Him.

So Jesus warns us of letting our hearts sway us toward blasphemy and speaking against the work of the Holy Spirit. It is a slippery slope, and unless we catch ourselves quickly, we may find ourselves forever at a distance away from Jesus, destined only for destruction. For once we begin to deny the work of Jesus, we begin to reject His guidance and any influence that the Holy Spirit could give to us. And once that begins, the road to separation from the Lord is a strong pull, and we find ourselves no longer under the grace and mercy of the Lord Jesus.

Instead of rejecting the work of the Lord Jesus, we are encouraged to trust in Him, listen to the Holy Spirit teaching us what we should say and what we should do to bring honor and glory to the Lord God Almighty (Luke 12:11-12).

Friends, we live in a dangerous world that is actively calling for us to forsake our faith in the Lord Jesus. We are invited to become more and more critical of others, especially in the life of the Church. We are tempted to minimize and reject the work of Jesus in our world. And we are called to conform to the beliefs and mindset of the world, thereby letting the world dominate the life of the Church rather than the Church working to guide the world back to the Lord God Almighty. The warning is ours to hear. Let's listen to it and repent, only to remain true to Jesus.

Let's pray. Father, thank You for Your call in our lives to be followers of Jesus, Your Son, our Lord and Savior. Give us the tenacity, the resolve and the persistence to keep our faith and trust in Him, and to be open to following the Holy Spirit's guidance in order that we may do Your work here on the earth. Give us humble hearts to remember that we are Your servants, not the other way around. Enable us to boldly witness our faith in Jesus Christ, each day of our life, so that we honor and glorify You as we follow Him. This we pray in Jesus' Name. Amen.