

Hard Sayings Of Jesus

Lesson 3

I. This Week's Hard Saying

Matt 12:31-32 And so I tell you, every sin and blasphemy will be forgiven men, but the blasphemy against the Spirit will not be forgiven. 32 Anyone who speaks a word against the Son of Man will be forgiven, but anyone who speaks against the Holy Spirit will not be forgiven, either in this age or in the age to come. NIV

Mark 3:28-30 I tell you the truth, all the sins and blasphemies of men will be forgiven them. 29 But whoever blasphemes against the Holy Spirit will never be forgiven; he is guilty of an eternal sin." 30 He said this because they were saying, "He has an evil spirit." NIV

Luke 12:8-10 "I tell you, whoever acknowledges me before men, the Son of Man will also acknowledge him before the angels of God. 9 But he who disowns me before men will be disowned before the angels of God. 10 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. NIV

II. Why It Is Considered Hard

- a. This is particularly hard in that it prescribes a **final state** of eternal separation from God in a burning hell; with no possibility of forgiveness.
- b. Few Bible passages cause more distress than this one for people who **believe** they have committed this sin.

III. Different Interpretations of This Passage

- a. One of the primary views one will encounter is that blasphemy of the Spirit is entirely a **verbal sin**, much like profanity.
- b. In other words, one does not commit "blasphemy" of the Holy Spirit until one actually **speaks out loud** some injurious statement against the Spirit of God.
- c. Another view championed by **Augustine** explains blasphemy against the Holy Ghost to be final impenitence, persevering in it till death.
- d. This means that impenitence against the Holy Ghost, frustrates and is absolutely opposed to the remission of sins, and this remission is **only appropriated** from the Holy Ghost.
- e. The third most common interpretation is that the sin of blasphemy of the Holy Spirit is linked inseparably with the **earthly ministry** of Jesus. "This specific sin against the Holy Spirit cannot be committed today since the Lord is not personally present on the earth" (Wycliffe Bible Encyclopedia, vol. 1, p. 807).
- f. Thus the only persons who could commit this sin were those who had personally witnessed the miraculous power of Jesus and **attributed that power** to Satan.
- g. This sin, according to this theory, forever **ceased** to exist when the Lord Jesus ascended from earth into heaven.

IV. Sorting Out The Truth

- a. The theory of the "verbal sin" by itself **does not** withstand scrutiny since it is not Scriptural. By asking: Can a sin be committed without actually performing it? the answer becomes readily apparent.
 1. Sins of the **heart** are described by Jesus as being just as deadly as overt outward sins. Matt. 5:21-22, 27-28
- b. Augustine's view of the nature of blasphemy against the Holy Spirit says that those who commit it will not repent of it even if given an opportunity to do so because they do **not care** that they are sinning.
- c. This was the sin of the Pharisees, who spoke against **"the Son of Man"**, criticizing the works and ways of Jesus, accusing Him of loving good cheer and wine, of associating with the publicans and sinners.
- d. They did not understand the person of Jesus to be Divine, hence they were **fatally ignorant**. However, ignorance is not always fatal. Num 15:28 And the priest shall make an atonement for the soul that sinneth ignorantly, when he sinneth by ignorance before the Lord, to make an atonement for him; and it shall be forgiven him. KJV
- e. So, what is the **difference** between fatal ignorance and just plain ignorance? Num 15:30 sheds some light on the question.
 1. But the soul that doeth aught presumptuously. This type of ignorance is a bold daring act of transgression against the fullest evidence, and in despite of the Divine authority, it is **willful** and presumptuous.

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2. This heart attitude will not be atoned for since there is **no repentance**. This person was to be cut off-to be excluded from God's people, and from all their privileges and blessings.
3. The Pharisee's were willfully presumptuous, blaspheming in the heart, whereas Paul was **ignorantly** blasphemous. 1 Tim 1:13 13 Who was before a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious: but I obtained mercy, because I did it ignorantly in unbelief. KJV
4. The presumption of the Pharisees implied an utter **contempt** of the word and authority of God, springing from a mind which despises God. This was the condition of the Pharisees which Jesus recognized.
 - a. Aquinas said it this way, "presumption consist, not in disbelieving in God's justice and mercy, but in contemning them."
5. In such a case all repentance was **precluded**, because of the denial of the word and being of God. Num 15:30-31 But the soul that doeth ought presumptuously, whether he be born in the land, or a stranger, the same reproacheth the Lord; and that soul shall be cut off from among his people. 31 Because he hath despised the word of the Lord, and hath broken his commandment, that soul shall utterly be cut off; his iniquity shall be upon him. KJV
 - f. The Pharisees could have known and **should have known** that Messiah would come and perform the public miracles that Jesus was doing just as prophecy about Him declares. Isa 35:5-6
 - g. During the earthly ministry of Jesus, to fail to recognize Him as God was **excusable** but to fail to recognize the work of the Holy Spirit as prophesied was unpardonable. 10 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
 - h. Those who would limit the sin of blasphemy against the Holy Spirit to the time of the earthly ministry of Jesus are **probably** not accurate.
 - i. Given the nature of the heart attitude of one who would commit this sin, it is **evident** that there still exists any number of persons who are decidedly unrepentant and who will go unpardoned into eternity.
 - j. The bottom line is that without repentance there can be no **just forgiveness** in the judicial sense. 2 Cor 7:10 For godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of: but the sorrow of the world worketh death. KJV
 - k. So, if you remove the **work** of the Holy Spirit in bringing about such repentance by presumptuous unbelief there is no atonement possible. Hence, the blasphemy of the Holy Spirit.
 - l. The Theological Dictionary of the NT, says, "It denotes the conscious and wicked rejection of the saving power and grace of God towards man. Only the man who sets himself against forgiveness is excluded from it" (vol. 1, p. 624).

V. Conclusion

- a. Blasphemy of the Spirit is far more than any **one specific sin** committed at any one specific time.
- b. It is not some mysterious, unknowable error into which one may **stumble** suddenly and irremediably. Acts 7:51-52 51 Ye stiffnecked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always resist the Holy Ghost: as your fathers did, so do ye. 52 Which of the prophets have not your fathers persecuted? and they have slain them which shewed before of the coming of the Just One; of whom ye have been now the betrayers and murderers: KJV
- c. Those who are so irreversibly hardened by lives given over to sin that even when the end comes they are **beyond** repentance, and continue to blaspheme -- Rev. 16:9,11 "And men were scorched with fierce heat; and they blasphemed the name of God who has the power over these plagues; and they did not repent, so as to give Him glory" (Rev. 16:9). "And they blasphemed the God of heaven because of their pains and their sores; and they did not repent of their deeds" (vs. 11).

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II. Why It Is Considered Hard

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4. The presumption of the Pharisees implied an utter _____ of the word and authority of God, springing from a mind which despises God. This was the condition of the Pharisees which Jesus recognized.
Aquinas said it this way, "presumption consist, not in disbelieving in God's justice and mercy, but in contemning them."
5. In such a case all repentance was _____, because of the denial of the word and being of God. Num 15:30-31
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