

GracePoint: A Weekly Sermon Discussion

35 - The Unforgiveable Sin

Announcements:

8/3 @7:00 -

Corporate

Prayer

8/4 @6:30 -

Grace Group

8/7 @8:30 -

Sunday School

8/7 @After Service -

Congregational

Meeting

8/14 @5:30 -

Joint Service with

La Luz Bible Church

ICE BREAKER: What is the most trouble you were ever in as a child?

READ: Matthew 12:30-32

I learned very quickly that there are a few questions that, as a youth pastor, you need to be ready with a quick answer. Many of those questions center around what we just read about -- the unforgivable sin. What is it? Is it possible that I have committed it? How will I know it when I see it? It turns out, it is not just youth that struggle with these types of questions, even adults with sensitive consciences may struggle from time to time with these or similar thoughts. So today we will be looking at the unforgivable sin, try to use this passage, and what theologians have said, to try and get comfort for our souls and answers for our hearts and minds.

So the first, and probably most important, question is: "what is the unforgivable sin"? Simply put it is "blasphemy of the Holy Spirit". But that is not super helpful, mostly because we are not super familiar with what blasphemy is in the first place. According to Merriam-Websters blasphemy is "the act of insulting or showing contempt or lack of reverence for God ". The key thoughts are (1) contempt and (2) lack of reverence. Whatever the particular action for blasphemy of the Holy Spirit is (we will get to that later) it includes at its heart a contempt and lack of reverence. It is a deep hatred of the things of the Spirit and a lack of reverence for his work. But we should note that, as always, the heart matters. Above all else we should start with this thought: this is not a sin that one "accidentally" does. Secondly we should also note that "every sin and blasphemy will be forgiven people" (Matthew 12:31). The power of the cross, and the hope of the Gospel is huge, and it even offers hope to rebels and blasphemous sinners such as us. We focus so much on the blasphemy of the Holy Spirit that we seem to forget this first part, and it is critical!

DISCUSS: In what ways are we guilty of blasphemy (think particularly contempt and lack of reverence)?

So now we can ask what is the particular sin of blasphemy of the Holy Spirit. In this there are two main camps worth our time and attention (In reality there are tons of takes, but these are the best). The first is to assert that it is a sin that could only be done by people in the first century. Some say that it is to see the work of the Holy Spirit in the person and work of Jesus Christ and decry it as the work of the devil. The benefit of this view is it locks this passage directly into the context that we find it. Put simply, what is blasphemy of the Holy Spirit, it is exactly what the Pharisees did. It is to claim that the work of the Holy Spirit in healing this blind mute man was done "in the power of Beelzebub." Another benefit is that it can alleviate our frightful souls, we don't have to worry because we can't do it. But this is a weakness in my opinion, for if we don't have to worry about it, why would Jesus share this thought. So what then is it? Without getting into the details of how this all works, it is dying without responding to the hope of the Gospel. Paul tells us that "what can be known about God is plain" and we are "without excuse". So to blaspheme the Holy Spirit is to live your whole life refusing to admit these truths that he reveals. It is to "exchange the truth of God for a lie" thereby showing both your contempt and lack of reverence for God and what he has done. But this then becomes why we need to hear this - if there is breath in your lungs there is still hope - turn and hear the Life Giving call of the Gospel!

DISCUSS: What do you think is the particular sin of Blasphemy of the Holy Spirit? How does this help motivate us in our sanctification?

I want to end by sharing what Matthew Henry wrote on this topic: *We may be sure that those who indeed repent and believe the gospel, have not committed this sin, or any other of the same kind; for repentance and faith are the special gifts of God, which he would not bestow on any man, if he were determined never to pardon him; and those who fear they have committed this sin, give a good sign that they have not. The trembling, contrite sinner, has the witness in himself that this is not his case.*