

Matthew ch12 vs. 31-

We pick up this morning right in the middle of a little discourse whereby Jesus is once again mowing down the Pharisees and their self-righteous, hypocritical, double standards. And to set the scene for those of you who maybe weren't here, Jesus has just cast out this demon from a man who was blind and mute; apparently as a result of this demon having taken possession of him. And though we're not told how; Jesus cast out this demon and as a result he was made whole and both his sight, and his ability to speak were restored back to him.

Now needless to say this absolutely staggered the multitudes, it says in vs. 23 that they were all amazed, or beside themselves. In other words all their minds were just absolutely blown because they had never seen anything like what they were seeing. And so they're all buzzing about in the crowds like "could this be the Son of David?" Is this the Messiah we've been looking for and waiting so long to see. And it doesn't say it but I imagine they all are sort of looking at the Pharisees to see what they are going to say, will they affirm the fact that this is indeed the Messiah? They're all like (well is this Him), and since the Pharisees have already voiced their disapproval of Him and stood in opposition to Him, they aren't about to recant their opinions now. I mean that would involve things like humbling themselves and confessing their errors, and since these guys propagated themselves like they were perfect that wasn't about to happen. But there was no denying the miraculous so what do we do?

So under constraint they confidently blurt out, this guy is in league w/Satan and He gets His powers from ruler of demons himself. So w/a few choice words of logic, Jesus shot down their whole entire philosophy. And He told them that if He were casting out demons by the power of Satan, then by whom were their own disciples casting them out by? You see their philosophy didn't add up if you just thought about it for a second, because if God cast out demons on their behalf and Satan is casting out demons on His behalf then Satan is doing the work of God and defeating himself! And if you think that Satan is going to do anything that is of benefit to the Kingdom of God than you've got another thing coming and you are not only deceived you're also sadly mistaken.

Jesus told them they either needed to condemn their own disciples or admit that the kingdom of God has come upon them in and through Himself and the works that He was doing. And so He forced them into a corner really and forced them into a position whereby they had to make a choice about who He was. He provided for them conclusive evidence that the Spirit of God was moving through Him and then He said He who is not w/me is against Me, if you're not gathering w/Me you're scattering against Me. And Jesus leaves us all w/that same choice "What do you think about the Christ? Whose Son is He?" That's the question we're all faced w/and there's no escaping that choice that has to be made.

Who is Jesus Christ? and What you determine concerning who He is will decide your eternal destiny. Every knee *will* bow and every tongue *will* confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of the Father; it's now, or later. Now, from a sincere heart will ensure everlasting life, later (that being after you die) only to your own demise as you're sentenced to outer darkness and eternal isolation and loneliness. And after today as you stand before the Father you won't be able to say "but God I never knew."

Because God has preordained before the foundations of the earth that each and every one of us would be here this morning. So that if you never have another chance to receive Jesus Christ or come into the accountability that Jesus is the way the truth and the life and that no one comes to the Father but by Him, you'd have your chance this morning. and Now you have 2 choices; to receive Jesus Christ into your heart and into your life, or to reject His love and His Grace and His mercy. And there is no in between, Jesus will only allow 1 of 2 absolutes; for Him or against Him, you're either walking in the light, or you're in darkness, you either believe the truth, or you've swallowed a lie. Well what is truth? What did Jesus say, I am the way and the what, the truth. You see there's no room for compromise, you're either for Jesus or you're not, and that choice God has left up to you.

This kind of leads us into this morning's text because God has created only one means through which yours and my sin can be atoned for. and To reject that is to reject all opportunity to ever receive everlasting life. You can come to a point, to where all hope is lost for you and there is absolutely no chance for forgiveness. And this morning we'll talk about that as we look into what we so often hear referred to as the "unpardonable sin", the blasphemy of the Holy Spirit.

Vs 31-32

A few things I want to briefly draw to your attention before we get to far into this and I have to back track to point them out. #1 When Jesus says that every sin and blasphemy, or a word spoken against the Son of Man will be forgiven men, except for the blasphemy against the Holy Spirit. He's not saying that you can go through life living whatever kind of hellish lifestyle you want too and as long as you don't blaspheme verbally the Holy Spirit, or speak out against the Holy Spirit you'll be forgiven everything else. Or that all your other sins will be automatically set aside and you'll be welcomed right on into the kingdom.

Forgiveness of any sin only comes through thing, and that's repentance. Repenting of your sin by turning from those sins unto the Savior and receiving Jesus Christ into your heart. After you've received Jesus Christ the way we maintain that clean slate is through humbling ourselves and confessing our sin to God asking Him to wash and cleanse our hearts and forgive our short comings. John tells us *"If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."* So understand that the given here is that Matt is assuming that we as the readers of his gospel aren't going to pervert and twist his writings to mean anything other than what they're intended to say. But that we will rightly divide the word of truth understanding that we are only forgiven any sin by being covered in the shed blood of Jesus Christ Heb 9:22 *"without shedding of blood there is no remission."* So that's the 1st thing that we want to point out, that the forgiveness that will be appropriated to man will be by the normal means that the word of God teaches us, through faith in Jesus Christ

The 2nd thing that I want you to be aware of is that neither is Jesus saying that any other sin isn't really of serious offense, therefore it can sort of be swept under the rug, or overlooked. Sin is sin and even the smallest offense in our estimation warranted the shed blood and death of God's only begotten Son. The bible says that sin brings forth death, and our sin brought forth the death of Jesus Christ

Rom 5:8 *"God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us."* As soon as Eve partook of the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil in rebellion to Gods word, the death of Christ was eminent. Now we know that the cross was apart of God's plan since before the foundations of the earth as Peter said, *"He indeed was foreordained before the foundation of the world."* But we can say that if nothing else Eve confirmed that through her sin and then Adam joined in that sin w/her. So all sin is utterly serious before God and even a "little white lie" is enough to necessitate the shedding of the blood of Jesus. Because the bible teaches us that sin separates us from God, so how am I to be restored back into a right relationship w/God if w/out the shedding of blood their can be no remission. But the blood of bulls and goats isn't sufficient, and it won't do any good for my blood to be shed because my blood is polluted w/sin. So how can sinful man atone for sin? It can't be done, so the world is w/out hope because the bible tells us that all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God. God alone is perfect so how can we be atoned for apart from Him? We can't; and that's the message of the Gospel, God became a man in the person of Jesus Christ and was in all ways tempted as we are tempted yet w/out sin. So He shed His blood in our place as the Lamb of God without blemish and without spot. *Therefore, as through one man's offense judgment came to all men, resulting in condemnation, even so through one Man's righteous act the free gift came to all men, resulting in justification of life. For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so also by one Man's obedience many will be made righteous."* Rom ch 5vs 18-19

So as we place our trust and our faith in Jesus God credits His righteousness to your account, don't try to figure out how it works just rejoice in it. So, all sin is serious before God. You might say that as far as He's concerned it's a matter of life and death. Finally I don't want anyone to be misled concerning the words of Jesus as though He were ascribing some peculiar sacredness to the 3rd person of the trinity that's not possessed by the Father or the Son. Because there is only one God and though He's represented in 3 persons (which is a topic for another day) they don't differ in holiness or sacredness. God is Holy and Sacred and absolutely sinless, it makes no difference what part of the trinity He is, if He's part of the Godhead He's pure and holy and that's it. It's not, well the Father is holy and the Son of course is holy as well, but the Holy Spirit, hey He's *really holy* so watch out what you say. No they're all coequal in holiness and righteousness. So, you might ask, "why then the special warning when it comes to the Holy Spirit?" If they're all equally as holy and sacred why is this particular violation unforgivable? And if that sin is unforgivable does that mean that the blood of Christ is of limited atonement?

Those are all really good questions, and we're going to attempt to answer those questions this morning. And there is a lot in this particular subject when it comes to the blasphemy of the Holy Spirit so just bear w/me as we sort of peel back some of the various layers 1 by 1. 1st of all we need to look at the direct context of the scriptures here in order to determine what Jesus is in reference to in this particular passage. That's why I began by reminding you of the event that has just taken place. Because even though we're breaking this ch. up into various studies as the weeks go by, what's just happened w/the casting out of the demon, the Pharisees attributing that to Satan, and then Jesus issuing this warning is all happening sort of simultaneously as 1 event.

So contextually we can conclude that the direct application of what Jesus is in reference to is the attributing the works, and the power of the Holy Spirit to Satan. Refusing to acknowledge the witness and the works of the Holy Spirit and willfully, directly, and spitefully, calling what is good evil, and what is evil good. When you see obvious evidence of the power of God, people's lives changing, people receiving that healing touch of God. and You say, man I don't know if these people are drinking their bath water, or they've gotten involved in some cult or what but one thing for certain they're under some form of mental delusion. and Then in your heart you hear that still small voice of the Holy Spirit bearing witness that, no; this is real, and their lives have changed as a testimony to the glory of Jesus Christ

And you ignore that and continue on w/your theories of how they've been brainwashed or something instead of submitting to the witness of the Holy Spirit. and Allowing Him to draw you into that same forgiveness and you're calling what's good evil and what's evil good, be careful. Don't resist the witness of the Holy Spirit. Isa 5:20 *"Woe to those who call evil good, and good evil; Who put darkness for light, and light for darkness; Who put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter!"*

Why, because the Spirit is striving w/you, trying to woo you to Jesus Christ But you can get to the point where you say no 1 to many times and finally the Holy Spirit will say fine I'll leave you alone, and when you reach that point there's no hope for you, you've gone too far down the path and now there's no turning back. In Gen 6:3 we read where the Lord said, "My spirit shall not always strive with man" what does that mean?

It means He's not always going to speak to you about your need for salvation, if you just continually reject the conviction of the Holy Spirit, saying man those people are being emotional, or they've created this God in their own minds because they need a crutch. Eventually God will say OK; if you refuse to acknowledge Me, have it your way, My Spirit is finished speaking to you or acknowledging you. And the reason I'm camping on this for so long is because if the Spirit is speaking to your heart today, I beseech you; respond. Because you're not always going to be afforded that opportunity. In Jer 7:16 we read where God told Jer *"Therefore do not pray for this people, nor lift up a cry or prayer for them, nor make intercession to Me; for I will not hear you."* They had gone too far, God was finished striving w/them, where is that cut off point? I have no idea, I believe it's different for each person, God alone searches and knows the heart. I say why take the chance; turn to Heb ch 3 vs12-19

So w/this I've kind of entered into the 2nd phase of what all the blasphemy of the Holy Spirit entails. The direct application being calling evil good and good evil; and don't misunderstand me or the text it's not that there's any one form of verbal utterance that can't be forgiven, it's that what comes out of your mouth is only symptomatic of a deeper issue and that's what's in you're heart. What's in the heart surfaces through the mouth. It always goes back to the heart.

Now the broader application is what we've sort of already talked about and that's the refusal to hearken to the work of the Spirit w/in your life. Be it because of religious pride or maybe you're a little bit older so you think you know it all and don't need God, or just through blatant unbelief. But for whatever reason you refuse to submit to the conviction and the witness or testimony of the Holy Spirit w/in your life. And what is the work, or the testimony of the Holy Spirit? Jesus said *"But when the Helper comes, whom I shall send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth who proceeds from the Father, He will testify of Me."*

He also said, *“And when He has come, He will convict the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment; of sin, because they do not believe in Me.”* The work of the Holy Spirit is to convict mankind of sin, by revealing to man the answer for his sin, that being Jesus Christ God has made only 1 provision for your forgiveness, only 1 provision for the putting away of you sin and your guilt. And that provision is through faith in His only begotten Son.

The Holy Spirit comes to bear witness to us of that fact; that there is only one way we can experience the forgiveness of sin and that's by receiving Jesus Christ as our personal Lord and Savior. And if you continually refuse that work of the Holy Spirit in your heart (Him revealing Jesus Christ to you) convicting you of your sin, because you don't believe in Him.

Then there is no forgiveness because God has provided no other means by which you might experience His forgiveness and be saved from that eternal separation from Him. As I said last week quoting Peter *“Nor is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved.”* So for you to reject God's provision for your sins through the death of His Son leaves God no other choice. There is no other alternative; so there's no forgiveness for you not in this world nor in the world to come because God has only made 1 way for you to escape the penalty of your sin and that's through Jesus Christ The Holy Spirit bears witness of that truth on your heart; and if you reject Him then there is no forgiveness. So to refuse to accept the witness of the Spirit through unbelief, is ultimately to blaspheme against the Spirit. And here's the catch; and this is where these 2 points begin to tie together.

As you're progressing in that position against Jesus Christ having been faced w/obvious evidence that Jesus is all that He said is, and your faced w/this evidence that you can't deny, the Spirit bearing witness to your heart. And yet you refuse to give in to testimony of the Holy Spirit, (because of pride or whatever.) Now you have to some how rationalize, or explain away this obvious evidence for the fact that He is indeed the Messiah and why you refuse to accept Him. And these Pharisees, having adopted this mode of rejection of Jesus were coming dangerously close to the point of no return when they attributed the obvious work of the Holy Spirit to the power of Satan. They're denying obvious evidence (You see how this all sort of ties together?) And when a person comes to that place in his rejection of Jesus Christ Whereby he begins to deny obvious evidence that God puts in His path. And he begins to try and explain away that evidence that God is placing before him; (oh they're all brain washed, or whatever) that person is coming dangerously close to that place where like the Pharisees in John 12:39 *they could not believe.*

Why, because it says that He had done so many signs before them, and yet they did not believe in Him. A continual rejection of the evidence as testified by the Holy Spirit taken too far. You've established the path and there's no turning back because God's Spirit has quit striving w/you. The denial of obvious evidence; you can only hear about the hope found in Jesus Christ so many times or sit through an alter call so many times w/out eventually becoming so hardened and callused. Because w/each rejection the heart grows a little bit harder and a little bit harder. Until eventually, like Samson who had rejected the conviction of the Spirit so long that he came to a point where we read those tragic words, "*But he did not know that the LORD had departed from him.*" The Spirit left him and he didn't even know it.

Now he is a little bit different case then what we're in direct reference to, but the point remains if you continually reject the conviction of the Holy Spirit, eventually He will quit striving w/you. I do want to point out the fact that it is a process, not a one time word or deed. These guys were continually rejecting the evidence that pointed out Jesus as the Messiah as provided by the power of the Holy Spirit. God is a God of grace and not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance. So He is long suffering towards us, but again; don't take the chance.

A lot of young people think, well I'll just repent when I get older. There's no guarantee you'll have the chance when you get older. You don't know if you'll even live to get older much less be granted the opportunity to repent having rejected Christ for all those years. Some people receive Christ on their death beds in their 70's or 80's God has said "I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion." That's the sovereign right of God but I wouldn't encourage taking that chance. But rather today, if you will hear His voice, do not harden your hearts; today is the day of salvation. And if you're wondering if maybe you've done this, then that alone serves as sufficient proof that you haven't. By the time you reach that point you won't give it a 2nd thought because your conscience will have been seared as w/ a hot iron, like Paul told Timothy. And you'll fall prey to the Romans ch 1 tragedy "*because, although they knew God, they did not glorify Him as God, nor were thankful, but became futile in their thoughts, and their foolish hearts were darkened.* Exchanging the truth of God for the lie.

So back to our original questions, why the special warning when it comes to the Holy Spirit? And if all 3 parts of the God head are equally as holy, then why is this particular sin unforgivable, and does that mean that the blood of Christ is of limited atonement? And if you reason this through w/me you'll see that these mysteries aren't too hard to unravel. We do note that Jesus did make a distinction between a sin against Himself vs sin against the Holy Spirit. You recall Peter sinned against Jesus, denied Him 3x yet was forgiven and restored. Why, because the Holy Spirit was able to lead him back to Jesus for that forgiveness and restoration. It's the Holy Spirit that leads us to repentance.

Yet forgiveness takes place through the Son, so it's reasonable to know that if I sin against the Father or the Son, the Spirit can still lead me to repentance. So the special warning goes out because to reject the conviction of the Holy Spirit is to reject the leading of the Holy Spirit. If I reject the leading of the Holy Spirit I can never be lead to the Son for forgiveness. For that same reason the blasphemy of the Holy Spirit can't be forgiven because if the Spirit is no longer striving w/me wooing me to repentance, then there is no forgiveness because w/out the Spirit I'll never find the Son. It *can't* be pardoned because I've rejected the only means to be pardoned. Now if I just keep that same thought flowing I can know that the blood of Jesus Christ equals unlimited atonement. There is no sin that the blood of Jesus Christ can't atone for, but if the only way I can get to that cleansing flow is by means of the Holy Spirit whom I've completely rejected, it's not that His blood isn't sufficient to cover me, it's that I'll never be covered in His blood.

So I've taken the time to go somewhat in depth into this issue because I want you all to be thoroughly aware of the fact that your eternal destiny is nothing to toy around w/and so that you might know what the bible says about this issue. If the Holy Spirit is dealing w/you this morning; pointing you to Jesus, showing you that your sins are like scarlet, but if you'll only turn to Jesus you can be made white as snow, don't harden your heart against the conviction of the Holy Spirit. I'll close w/this story.