

The Book of Mark

Sermon Series: Who is this man? [Sermon #14]

Sermon Title: The Unpardonable Sin of a Pardoning GOD.

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Introduction:

In one of my favorite classes in Seminary, our professor made us get into groups and debate a question. The question was ‘Do people who commit suicide go to hell’? Is it the unpardonable sin? We had to discuss it and we could only use the Bible. We had to back everything up with actual scriptural references. It was an interesting exercise that taught me to find the answers for myself and not just believe what I was told. Because I had been told as a kid that suicide was the unpardonable sin.

No doubt most of us have heard of **the Unpardonable Sin**.

What is it?

You may ask, “Have I done it?”

Can I do it?

A sin that is so bad that there won’t be any forgiveness for it.

Is it suicide? Is it Murder? Is it Adultery?

Saying God’s name in vain..saying OMG?

What is the unpardonable sin?

Let’s turn in our Bibles to **Mark 3:22-30**

22 And the scribes who came down from Jerusalem were saying, “He is possessed by Beelzebul,” and “by the prince of demons he casts out the demons.” 23 And he called them to him and said to them in parables, “How can Satan cast out Satan? 24 If a kingdom is divided against itself, that kingdom cannot stand. 25 And if a house is divided against itself, that house will not be able to stand. 26 And if Satan has risen up against himself and is divided, he cannot stand, but is coming to an end. 27 But no one can enter a strong man's house and plunder his goods, unless he first binds the strong man. Then indeed he may plunder his house. 28 “Truly, I say to you, all sins will be forgiven the children of man, and whatever blasphemies they utter, 29 but whoever blasphemes against the Holy Spirit never has forgiveness, but is guilty of an eternal sin” — 30 for they were saying, “He has an unclean spirit.”

I. What the Jewish scribes think is going on.

There's no denying that Jesus has some power.

He's cast out many demons and even in Matthew's version of this passage in Matthew 12...Jesus has JUST cast out a demon from a man.

So, it's not a show. It's real.

He IS casting these creatures called 'demons' out of people.

Jewish historical documents in the 1st century state that Jesus was a real man and did great miracles.

These are not from Christians, not believers in Jesus.

For example, **TB Sanhedrin 43a** “**Yeshua of Nazareth was hanged on the day of preparation for the Passover because he practiced sorcery and led the people astray.**”

They say he did miracles by sorcery and magic.

But nonetheless, they DO record that the things **actually** happened.

The debate is **HOW**...it is happening.

There are only 2 options.

It's either God or it's the devil.

It's happening from the inside or from the outside.

A house divided against itself cannot stand.

If mom and dad don't get along....

there's trouble, trouble from within.

Sometimes, someone from the outside tears a home apart by stealing someone away.

An invasion of sorts.

Kingdoms are the same way.

They fall by one of two ways:
either from division on the inside or invasion from the outside.

A good example right now would be my country, America. It is a very divided place. It doesn't take an idiot to see that the country won't stand if it continues to be divided. It's fact.

A government divided against itself will be in real trouble. This is an eternal principle that pertains to all of life. Churches. Kingdoms. Marriages. Families.

So, they bring these 2 accusations against Jesus:

He is possessed.

He's casting out demons by the power of the devil.

The scribes {religious experts in the law of God} came downhill from Jerusalem, probably on behalf of the ruling religious body... to inspect what was going on and to see if they needed to declare Capernaum a "seduced city"....seduced by a false teacher.

They say that he is possessed by Beelzebul, or the Prince of demons, or Satan.

All the same thing.

This name Beelzebul can mean Lord of the Flies or prince of demons.

But Jesus tells us plainly in his answer what they're really saying.

They're saying he's in partnership with Satan.

They routinely accused Jesus of being demon possessed.

This was not a one time thing.

The Greek verb tense means that they were ‘continually’ doing it.

We find this accusation in the other gospels as well.

-Matthew 9:34

-Matthew 12:22

-Luke 11:14

-John 7:20, 8:48, 8:52, 10:20

Jesus tells them some parables to illustrate that they weren’t even thinking straight.

-How can Satan cast out Satan?

-Why would Satan try to divide his own kingdom?

-Why would Satan tear down his own house?

No one willingly tries to destroy their own kingdom or house.

*This is what they THOUGHT was going on.

II. **What’s really going on.**

There **IS** a strong man named Satan. He is real.

He has **‘Blinded the minds of unbelievers to keep them from seeing the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God’.**

{2 Corinthians 4:4}

This 'strong man' has the '**power of death and holds people through fear of death in lifelong slavery**'. {Hebrews 2:14-15}

But one STRONGER than the strongman has arrived.

He is binding up the strong man and is plundering his house and his goods.

His goods are people.

Jesus is on a rescue mission to bind Satan and rob him of his possessions.

The kingdom of Satan is being overrun by the Kingdom of God. Unclean spirits are being cast out by the Holy Spirit.

The scribes think it's a COUP from the inside.

It's an invasion.

Interesting phrases appear in Matthew and Luke's gospels that aren't here in Mark.

In **Matthew 12:28**, Jesus says, "**But if it is by the Spirit of God that I cast out demons, then the kingdom of God has come upon you.**"

In **Luke 11:20**, Jesus says, "**But if it is by the finger of God that I cast out demons, then the kingdom of God has come upon you.**"

The Spirit of God is the same thing as the finger of God.

We might say something today is by the 'hand of God' meaning....God is doing it.

This figurative phrase 'the finger of God' exists only in one other place in scripture and it is in **Exodus 8:19**.

This is where God is sending the plagues down on Egypt.

The magicians of Egypt were able to replicate in some way the staff that became a snake, the water turning to blood and making frogs come up on the land. BUT....when God, through Moses made the dust become gnats, the magicians couldn't do it.

They said to Pharaoh, **"This is the finger of God."**

You see the similarities?

The Jewish scribes were saying that Jesus is like the wizards of Egypt. Jesus said it wasn't like that. **It was by God.**

The Spirit of God. The finger of God.

* They willingly...in their hardness of heart slander Jesus and accuse him of being possessed.

* Jesus is not in partnership with the devil or crazy but is invading and overthrowing Satan's house and setting the captives free.

So, we come to verses 28-30 where I will attempt to help us understand the **UNPARDONABLE SIN**.

28 “Truly, I say to you, all sins will be forgiven the children of man, and whatever blasphemies they utter, 29 but whoever blasphemes against the Holy Spirit never has forgiveness, but is guilty of an eternal sin” —30 for they were saying, “He has an unclean spirit.”

Jesus is warning them and he's warning us.

He tells them that there is a sin that can be committed that is not forgivable.

A person can do THIS and will not be able to repent and be forgiven.

Very simply: What were they doing that was unforgivable?

They **BLASPHEMED THE HOLY SPIRIT**.

What does this mean?

Blasphemy: {to curse}

An expression of defiant hostility toward God.

Many people blaspheme today. They are hostile toward God.
They may say something like G...D.

That's a kind of blasphemy.

No. It should not be done, but it's not the unpardonable sin.

We must keep this sin in the context of the scriptures.

We can't take it out of context and make it mean what we want.

The Unpardonable Sin is.....blasphemy against the Holy Spirit.

***The Holy Spirit is working, through Christ, to deliver people from sin and reveal truth to their minds. Yet, the scribes rejected it and said it was the work of the devil.**

William Lane says that it's a "perversion of spirit which, in defiance of truth, chooses to call light... darkness."

John Piper summarizes it by saying it is, "an act of resistance which belittles the Holy Spirit so grievously, that he withdraws forever with his convicting power so that we are never able to repent and be forgiven."

These scribes were close to the edge.

They were belittling the work of the Holy Spirit so much by calling it the devil's work.

They were in danger of being beyond conviction and beyond repentance. Maybe they were already there. Maybe just close.

This is the same as REPROBATION in Romans 1:28, where God has given people over to a shameful mind.

Let's close with 2 words of encouragement and a warning.

1. If you are concerned that you think you have committed the unpardonable sin, then you haven't done it. If you still have a conscience, then you're not guilty of it.
2. **"All sins will be forgiven the children of man and whatever blasphemies they utter"**. We should pause and think about that phrase. That's **GREAT NEWS**. Jesus says to all of us today that we can be forgiven of all and any sins we have committed. Even the most gross stuff, he forgives if we will repent and turn to Jesus. He is the only one who is stronger than the devil. He can set you free. He WILL set you free.

3. A word of caution and concern.

When does God stop drawing people to himself?

How many chances will he give people to turn and believe?

Unlimited?

We aren't sure.

This we know....God's last chance may come at anytime. He may stop 'pulling'.

He may stop calling any hour.

He may take a life at any moment.

We don't know.

We should think soberly about these things and weigh them.

Life is a vapor.

We should pray harder for the lost.

We should live with urgency in a world of triviality

because.....millions live close to passing into eternity without ever accepting our pardoning God.