

Blasphemy Against the Holy Spirit

A Preacher's Workshop

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TEXTS: Matthew 12; Mark 13; Luke 11; 12.

INTRODUCTION

The Holy Spirit came to glorify Christ, to reveal all truth, and to empower Christians for holy living and fruitful service. Brethren make two mistakes: They fear that if they yield to the Holy Spirit, they will become fanatics or heretics, or they do not believe the Holy Spirit is important in their lives. Remember: It is easier to tame a fanatic than to give life to a corpse.

Every virtue we possess
And every victory won
And every thought of holiness
Are His alone.

The blasphemy against the Holy Spirit provokes curiosity, debate, and controversy. Tragically, some would rather know the answer to "the unpardonable sin" than to walk and live in the Holy Spirit! Buildings are crammed to the rafters when this is announced; there are empty pews when you simply study Christian living.

Up front, an observation or two. This lesson will not satisfy or answer all questions. It will not leave the matter resolved. Yes, you will perhaps be disappointed. But this is okay. When I was a young preacher, all of life was black or white with every Scripture explained dogmatically. As an old preacher, much of life is not black or white, and the longer some Scriptures are studied, the more perplexing they are! But this is okay too! Study and admit you do not know. With all their learning, scientists daily still are overwhelmed with many of life's basics. The more one knows the more he realizes how little he knows.

This is the agony issue. Too many faithful brethren believe they have committed it. This bothers! This means we have preached guilt not grace. This means we have abused Scripture. Can Christians commit this sin? This is the issue. However, it must be emphasized if one thinks he

has and is penitent he probably has not! This sin is couched in the soil of hardheartedness and blindness.

Study. Re-read. Think. Do not come with a preconceived solution. There must not be more of a curiosity about this sin than a real quest for the Holy Spirit. Familiar Scripture must be read more closely. What is the context? Who are the addressed? What did they do? Did they commit this sin? If not, when was it committed and by whom? What can we learn?

I. BASIC STUDY

A. Reread the texts. Put them all together.

1. There are many "sins" against the Holy Spirit.
2. What would the sin not be?
 - a. It would not be murder (Acts 2:30-41). The Jews murdered the Son of God.
 - b. It would not be suicide. The unpardonable sin is committed while alive.
 - c. It would not be profanity. Peter was forgiven of this sin (Matthew 26:69-75; John 21).
 - d. It would not be backsliding per se (Hebrews 6:4-6; Acts 8, Simon the Sorcerer).
 - e. It would not be delay in obeying the gospel. Rejection per se is not blasphemy.
 - f. It would not be blasphemy itself. Paul was forgiven of this sin (1 Timothy 1:13-15).
3. How else can we sin against the Holy Spirit?
 - a. We can resist Him (Acts 7:51, Stephen's history lesson).
 - b. We can grieve Him (Acts 4:30).
 - c. We can quench Him (1 Thessalonians 5:19).
 - d. We can tempt Him (Acts 5:3, Ananias and Sapphira).
 - e. We can defile Him (1 Corinthians 3:16, 17; 6:19, 20).
 - f. We can despise Him (Hebrews 10:25-31).
 - g. None of these, per se, are the unpardonable sin.

- B. It is a definite statement, act, or deed! It is not merely refusal or rejection. Read John 12. Those who “would not” fell into the state of “could not.” But the world was condemned already (John 3:16-18).
- C. We have a definite statement by Jesus that it is not unforgiven but unforgivable! It is an eternal sin. The language is harsh! What could have been in the past could not be in the future! It is not merely the unpardoned sin.
1. However, is there a sin greater than the cross? *No!* Is there a sin too big for God to forgive? *No!*
 2. What was being done against Christ would not be tolerated with the Holy Spirit! This is a dire warning to man.
 3. One who is dead to truth cannot repent.
- D. What is the context?
1. The Jews demanded a sign and then had a fit when they got one.
 2. A triple or quadruple miracle. *Miracles!* The credentials of the King were demonstrated before the eyes of the Israelites. The rulers did not *deny the miracle!* The rulers refused to admit what the people already knew. The addressed were leaders. Theirs was a willful, presumptuous rejection of obvious fact. It was not impulsive. It was not spur-of-the-moment emotionalism. It was not thoughtless.
 3. Further, they did not stop. They attributed the obvious miracle to Satan! They gave to Satan glory belonging to God. What they were doing to Jesus they had better not do to the Holy Spirit! This was rebellion against privileged knowledge. God drew the line; man crossed it! These stood at a point of no return in their self-made blindness. God’s healing is given to the sinister “god of the flies.” They did not deny; they belittled.
 4. Blasphemy is defamation, irreverence in speech, “to sin with a high hand.” Another sermon idea is this: Study the eleven times presumptuous sin is in Scripture. Blasphemy was a sin punishable by death.
 5. The Holy Spirit is the “regeneration” member of the Trinity. While in the miraculous days the Holy Spirit came with His credentials. His dispensation is final, the last, the redemptive.
 6. Our tests reveal a process at first, not a crisis, but it ended in a crisis. Here was no mere act of sin without any sin leading up to it. It was a state of willful, determined opposition to the Holy Spirit that finally

ended in bitter blasphemy. This was a judgment which could be said was self-imposed. Their hardness of heart was produced by their rebellion against better knowledge.

- E. Crucial observation! *Think!* The blasphemy was not against the *Word!* The blasphemy was against the Holy Spirit—the very person of the Holy Spirit! It was not a rejection of Holy Spirit teaching! The blasphemy is against the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is not in the miracle business today. He is in the *Word* business. *Think this over!* The action then was not mere “spot action” but a life decision. The Bible is the Word of God! But some would guard the Bible who are negligent and careless about the Holy Spirit! The Holy Spirit is God! The Bible is not God! This must be constantly emphasized.

II. THE SIN UNTO DEATH (1 John 5:16-18)

- A. This is not synonymous with blasphemy. The language or reality is frightening! This is to brethren. It can be committed today.
1. Some under “guilt complexes” are superstitious about having committed the “unpardonable sin” but are careless about apostasy.
 2. Read Hebrews 4, 6, and 10! Brethren, superstitious about blasphemy, are indifferent about apostasy!
- B. Consider Hebrews.
1. A stratagem for survival, Hebrews says, “It is always too soon to quit.”
 2. Hebrews 4: Harden not your heart.
 3. Hebrews 6: They were partakers of the Holy Spirit then fell away!
 4. Hebrews 10: They had done despite to the Holy Spirit and there was no more sacrifice.
 5. This is frightening, sobering language! This must be preached. They “had it and blew it.” They were sin-hardened and conscience-seared; the cross could not touch and the Holy Spirit could not convict. To cast aside God’s convicting power (John 16:7-13) is spiritual damnation. The first gift in Christianity is the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:38½). Use Him; do not abuse Him!

CONCLUSION

A city full of churches
Great preacher, lettered men,
Grand music, choirs, and organs;

If all these fail, what then?
Good workers, eager, earnest,
Who labor hour by hour;
But where, O where, my brother,
Is God's Almighty Power?

Refinement: education!

They want the very best.
Their plans and schemes are perfect,
They give themselves no rest;
They get the best of talent,
They try their uttermost,
But what they need, brother,
Is God the Holy Ghost!

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