

Jesus and the Unforgivable Sin

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[0 : 00] We'll keep that passage open in front of you and there should be an outline as well for you to follow on what we're about to say. So let's pray. Our Father in heaven, thanks for your word and we pray this morning that you would plant it deep in us and give us hearts to hear and understand and obey and to be encouraged by your glorious truths.

Please speak to us, we pray in Jesus' name. Amen. Well, I wonder if you've been maligned, been considered crazy by your family for the things that you believe, by your workmates, by your spouse, by your children.

Some things are a little bit more crazy than others, you know, and some things are quite humorous, some things are quite funny. There's the nutty professor, for instance, you know, the crazy, well, my hair's a bit, not quite nutty enough, but there you go.

But as we come to Mark 3 this morning, we come to a passage about the unforgivable sin. But before we get there, the context is that people think Jesus is mad, or if not just that, they actually come to think that he's worse than that, demon possessed.

And they will never submit to him as Lord. That's how the attitude people have towards Jesus is. So as we come to chapter 3 here, look at it with me here, picking up at verse 7. Jesus is at the peak of his popularity here.

[1 : 20] Consider the scope of the towns that are mentioned, the places that are mentioned. Galilee is a region that he's in, that's where he is. Judea is a region down south, that's where Jerusalem is.

The capital of Judea is there, that's where Jerusalem is. Idumea is further south, it's further south than Judea. Judea is further south, beyond the Jordan is all the area over to the right-hand side there, across the river, and so the wilderness part of the world over there.

And then Tyre and Sidon are up the north, that's as far as Israel goes north. So basically, the whole nation of Israel, north to south, east to west, is coming to where Jesus is in Galilee.

That's where they're coming. The whole country is knocking at Jesus' front door. And they're coming because, well verse 10, he's healed many.

So that all of her diseases pressed around him to touch him. It's sort of like Taylor Swift, but bigger, isn't it? The whole of Australia, to see her in places, but the whole of Israel went to see Jesus.

[2 : 30] He's got a 100% cure rate of healing people with diseases, wherever they were, whatever they were. Now if I had something wrong with me, I'd want to get to Jesus as well.

People still do anything they can these days to get specialist medical attention. If they can afford it, they'll travel across the world to find some cure.

And now, notice when the unclean spirits, though, see Jesus, something different happens. They fall down, and they fell down before him.

They couldn't stand in his presence. And they recognised that he is, not just a healer, but he is the Son of God.

Now the Son of God is not just God's Son, right? That's nice, yes, which it is. But it's also the title, right? For God's anointed King of the Kingdom of God.

[3 : 34] That's what the idea is. They recognise him as Son of God. Psalm 2 picks up that idea. And Jesus again tells them to be silent. People are coming to him with all kinds of expectations, potential revolutions in the air.

And now, at the peak of his popularity, he goes up on the mountain peak and makes some appointments in verse 13. He goes up on the mountain, called those to him who he desired, and they came to him, and he appointed 12 whom he also named apostles.

Here is the Kingdom of God beginning to form. Can you see it? 12 disciples, 12 apostles, 12 tribes of Israel reconstituting.

Apostle means someone who's sent with authority, men commissioned by Jesus to act for him. And so he takes them aside and equips them to preach and to cast out demons.

They're the two things he equips them in to do. With the authority of Jesus to preach and with the authority of Jesus to cast out demons. And notice it's an interesting crowd of people he calls to himself.

[4 : 43] We don't know much about most of them, but we know enough about some of them. A tax collector, Matthew. One of the most reviled people in the world. A zealot named Simon.

That's what Canaanite means. A zealot. Someone who may have been a freedom fighter. You know, a terrorist almost. A subversive opponent to the Roman rule. And fishermen.

Ordinary blokes. I like fishermen. But they are Jesus' chosen apostles. And then after they come on the mountain, after some time they come back to Capernaum.

And the crowd quickly regathers at the house where he's staying. It's pandemonium. There's no way they can get to the kitchen to cook dinner. To cook a meal. So many people there.

They can't move. They can't even eat. And then some people have some perspectives about Jesus. Jesus is mad. There you go. News gets to his family in Nazareth.

[5 : 40] Verse 21. News gets to his family in Nazareth about this problem with their son down there in Canaan. Who's too stressed to eat by the amount of work on his plate.

And they set out for Capernaum to sort Jesus out. For they think he's out of his mind. They think he's mad. Because he's under so much pressure that he can't even eat.

But not only has worded out to his parents about the crowd. But the leaders in Jerusalem have sent some scribes down as well to see what's going on.

And they say that Jesus is not necessarily mad. They say that he's demon possessed. The experts in the law of God, students of the Old Testament, denounced Jesus of being in league with the devil.

Verse 22. By the prince of demons, he drives out demons. Beelzebul equals Satan. You can see the equation there. Verse 26 there. Satan is Satan. He's the prince of the hostile spirits opposed to God.

[6 : 51] Satan is the deceiver, the accuser, the opponent of God and his gospel. And Jesus basically has been accused of witchcraft. Sorcery.

Like the magicians in Pharaoh's court. Something seen as wicked and which brought condemnation upon Israel. You read about it in 2 Chronicles chapter 33. If the accusation is true, then Jesus is a wicked man, a dangerous person that should be opposed if the accusations are true.

And so Jesus then sets them straight. A house divided can't stand. He calls the scribes himself and asks them a question and makes a statement. A divided kingdom cannot stand.

And to reinforce the saying, he says a divided house cannot stand. I mean, you divide a political party, it won't win the election. And if Satan's already divided against Satan, he's already defeated.

However, notice what Jesus says next. Verse 27. No one can enter a strong man's house and plunder his goods unless he first binds a strong man.

[8 : 04] Jesus is actually plundering Satan's territory. Casting out demons. Jesus is binding up the strong man.

He's not in league with Satan. He's opposed to Satan. And Satan is opposed to him. Jesus is far, far greater in power than the devil. He's binding him up.

Plundering his town. And so, dear scribes, be careful about what you say about Jesus. And he moved into two really, really important truths.

First, all sins are forgivable. See verse 28. Verse 28. Truly, I say to you, all sins will be forgiven the children of men, whatever blasphemies they utter.

Jesus is speaking on his own authority. He's not quoting other rabbis, other scribes. He's speaking on his own authority. And these two great truths are given to us.

[9 : 12] All sins will be forgiven the children of men and whatever blasphemies they utter. But whoever blasphemes against the Holy Spirit never has forgiveness, but is guilty of an eternal sin.

For they were saying he has an unclean spirit. So here's the wonderful truth. Let's hear this wonderful truth loud and clear. All sins will be forgiven except one.

Jesus has demonstrated that he has the authority to forgive sins. In chapter 2, he's already done it. The Son of Man himself, the King of the Kingdom, has authority to forgive sins. To forgive all sins.

The murderer. The tax collector. The adulterer. The slave trader. The pedophile. You name the sin.

Jesus is able and has authority to forgive every sin. Jesus says, all sins will be forgiven.

[10 : 15] Now I've got to add here, right? Just to be clear, that forgiveness is not automatic. It will never be just... It will never be the experience of all people.

It will never be the experience of all people. It's not true to say that everyone will be forgiven in the end. This is not all that Jesus has to say on forgiveness.

There's a mechanism by which forgiveness comes. It comes by repentance and faith. Let's get that clear. The very things he's been calling people to do.

Chapter 1 verse 15. The time is fulfilled. The Kingdom of God is at hand. Repent and believe the Gospel. Repentance and faith are required. Repentance and faith in the Lord Jesus is required to receive forgiveness.

Remember this for Romans chapter 3. For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God. And are justified by his grace as a gift. Through the redemption that comes through Jesus Christ.

[11 : 21] Whom God put forward as a propitiation by his blood. And his sacrifice is one that turns aside God's wrath from us onto Jesus.

By his sacrificial death. And how do you receive it? By faith. That's how it comes. Being forgiven and so justified.

Comes by faith. Justified never sinned. Comes as a gift. Only through Jesus. Sacrificial death. And faith in that sacrifice. We receive it by repentance and faith.

Luke chapter 24 verse 47. And that repentance for the forgiveness of sins. Should be proclaimed in his name to all nations. Beginning from Jerusalem. That's how it comes. Acts chapter 2 verse 37.

I'll read it out to you. When they'd heard this they were cut to the heart. And said to Peter and the rest of the apostles. Brothers what shall we do? And Peter said to them. Repent. And be baptised.

[12 : 20] Every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ. For the forgiveness of your sins. And you'll receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. And you'll receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. Repentance. Now we've got a nice bird that wants to hear about the gospel.

It might actually start flying. If it does. We'll see what it does. I don't think it's an agent of Satan. Hello bird. You're going to sing to us now.

All right. We'll keep pressing on. Repentance involves confession. All right.

That we have been sinning and that we need to change. And when we confess our sins to Jesus. His promise is. That his sacrificial death. Brings forgiveness.

And then 1 John chapter 1. Verse 7 to 9. Speaks about it. If we confess our sins. God is faithful and just. And will forgive us our sins. And cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

[13 : 22] And this offer of forgiveness. Let me tell you. Is a once. In this life. Opportunity. Only available in this life.

There are no second chances. For it's destined for all to die once. And after that to face a judgment. Have a look at Hebrews chapter 9 with me.

But as it is. He appointed once for all. At the end of the ages. To put away sin. By the sacrifice himself. And just as it's appointed for man. To die once.

And after that comes judgment. So Christ having been offered once. To bear the sins of many. Will appear a second time. Not to deal with sin.

But to save those who are eagerly waiting for him. A couple of things here. The ages have come to an end. The old age is coming to an end.

[14 : 19] Is going to be as good as finished and done. And there's only one age to come. The new age. The kingdom of heaven. The kingdom of God. Which goes on for all eternity.

Here's that slide again. We've been seeing. Starts there. Before time began. Was an age. Then we have the fall. And we now into this last.

This present evil age. As Galatians will talk about. And then there's an overlap of the age now. When Jesus comes into the world. Lives in the world. Dies and rises again.

The kingdom of God is established. And this current evil age. Will come to an end. At his return. When he judges finally. On that last day. And the kingdom of God.

Will go on forever. And ever. And ever. That is. The end of the age. And the age to come. He's appeared.

[15 : 15] Once for all. At the end. Of the ages. The old age. Is over. As good as over. Verse 29.

There is one sin. That will never be forgiven. Whoever blasphemes. The Holy Spirit.

Never has forgiveness. Literally. It goes like this. Does not have forgiveness. In the time to come. The word is.

The word is. I own. That's a Greek word. Just. I don't want to throw these kind of words in often. But I need to. It's a long tier of time. Without reference to beginning or end.

Or. It's a time to come. And if it has no end. It's also known as eternity. It's a period of unending duration.

[16 : 14] In the time to come without end. Is best understood. As eternity. Forever. Forever. And so there's Jesus saying.

If you. Do this sin. There is. No forgiveness. Forgiveness. Verse 29. Whoever blasphemes against the Holy Spirit.

Never has forgiveness. But has. Is guilty of an eternal sin. Why are they. Why are they guilty of an eternal sin? We told. Why? See the word for. It gives you the reason why.

For they were saying. He has. An unclean spirit. Which is blasphemy. I mean. Claiming that Jesus. Has an unclean spirit. Saying that the Holy Spirit.

That resides within Jesus. The Son of God. From his baptism. Is not holy. But is actually demonic. Saying that the true and living God.

[17 : 10] Is a demon. Is evil. Is wicked. That's the height of blasphemy. Saying that the Holy Spirit. That resides in the very word of God.

Is deceptive. Untrue. And a liar. That's blasphemy. That's making someone. Not to be who they are.

And speaking poorly. Absolutely poorly of them. Isn't it? See the work of the Holy Spirit. Through the word of God. Is to reveal the holiness of Jesus to us.

And the sinfulness of our human hearts. And lead us to repentance and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. Now while everyone rejects Jesus.

While anyone ever rejects the Holy Spirit. There is no forgiveness. No forgiveness possible. To call God the devil.

[18 : 06] Is an eternal sin. For it's rejecting the only one. Who offers forgiveness. For forgiveness. And through whom. Forgiveness comes.

So while ever someone calls God the devil. They will not be forgiven. That is an eternal sin. It's a sin that has eternal consequences. Being shut out.

Of the kingdom of God. Being shut out. From the presence of God. And there is no forgiveness. For the one who rejects. The only means of forgiveness.

And if we die. Having rejected the only way of forgiveness. Well that is an eternal sin. For there is no repentance possible.

Once this life is over. I'll say it again. There is no repentance possible. Once this life is over. Now.

[19 : 08] You needn't worry. If you've committed this sin. This morning. If you're worried about it. You might speak badly of God.

And so blaspheme. You might speak badly of others. And so blaspheme. But if you're worried about it. That you've committed this sin. Well you haven't. Right. The very fact that you're concerned.

Is evidence that the Holy Spirit's at work in us. And bringing us. To confess that sin. If you believe that Jesus is Lord and God. That is evidence.

That the Holy Spirit's at work in us. And you're not saying. That Jesus is the devil. And the glorious news of the gospel is this.

Whatever sin. Acceptable in the eyes of the world. Unacceptable in the eyes of the world. Whoever you are.

[20 : 03] Prince or pauper. Forgiveness is available to each and everyone. Who calls on the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. Let me take you to Romans chapter 10 verses 9 to 13.

If you confess with your mouth. That Jesus is Lord. And believe in your heart. That God raised him from the dead. You will be saved.

For it's with the heart one believes and is justified. And with the mouth one confesses and is saved. For the scripture says. Everyone who believes in him will not be put to shame.

For there's no distinction between Jew and Greek. For the same Lord is Lord of all. Bestowing his riches on all who call on him. Verse 13.

For everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved. God's heart is not to condemn. But to forgive.

[21 : 00] To save. To rescue. All who repent. And believe that Jesus is Lord. And the good news is this. Even Saul. Even Saul. Who was the worst of sinners.

A Pharisee of Pharisees. An expert in the law. Persecuted Jesus. By persecuting those who followed Jesus. Didn't commit the unforgivable sin.

The eternal sin. Well we see then. Those who are in the family. The last little section here.

The mothers and brothers finally turn up. In Capernaum. And. They've come down from Nazareth. To check out their crazy son.

There's mothers. And brothers mentioned. But no mention of a father. Possibly Joseph has died. Not sure. Nothing to affirm that. We don't see Jesus. Have his father.

[21 : 59] Joseph at the cross. When Jesus asked John. To take care of his mother Mary. But notice incidentally. We see that Jesus. Has some biological brothers. Mary had normal relationships.

With her husband. After Jesus was born. And the crowd is there. The family can't get to Jesus. And so they. Let him know. That they're outside. Hey. Can you go and get Jesus.

And tell him. His mother and brothers are here. And then we see. The response. In verse 33 and 35. Of what Jesus says. Who are my mother and brothers?

Looking around at those. Who sat around him. He said. Here are my mother and my brothers. Whoever does the will of God. He is my brother. And sister. And mother. Looking around.

Just like he did in the synagogue. Previously. He looked around at the crowd. Who were looking out for a reason. To accuse him. For healing the man with his hand. He's teaching.

[23 : 00] This is a powerful teaching moment. For the crowd. Including the scribes. Who think he's got a demon. The people.

Who are in. The kingdom of God. The people. Who are Jesus's family. Those who are. His brothers. Sister.

And mother. Are those who do the will of God. Those who do the will of God. Are standing. As Jesus's. Biological family.

They are family. Mary herself. Has no greater status. Than any woman. Who does the will of God. The question is then.

What is the will of God? That's a massive question. What is the will of God? I've found John Piper's.

[23 : 58] Got a good summary. Which goes something like this. There's a sovereign will of God. God. And there is a command will of God. Which means that under his sovereign will.

Everything we do. Will end up bringing about. His ultimate plans and purposes. You can't thwart God's plans. It certainly will happen. It even overturns. The wickedness of mankind.

For the good of God's plans and purposes. His will happens. But it doesn't excuse sin. And then there is the command will of God. God. Doing what God commands.

Obedying him. And you remember that there are the two great commands of God. Love the Lord your God. With all your heart, soul and mind and strength.

And love your neighbour as yourself. There's a summary of the two. But what has Jesus been commanding? What has Jesus been teaching so far primarily? He's been teaching about the kingdom of God.

- [24 : 59] The rule of God. The kingdom of God is near. Repent and believe the good news. Repenting from a wrong way of life. Repenting from a wrong attitude towards Jesus. And believing the kingdom of God is near.

Nearer today than it was yesterday. There is the will of God. To repent and believe. And the Pharisees will come after Jesus in Mark chapter 12. And ask him that most important question.

And he gives them the answer. Love the Lord your God. And the second is like it. Love your neighbour as yourself. Loving God will mean that you love Jesus. That's what it will mean. Not call him Satan.

Honour and respect him. Loving God will mean living in submission to him as king. Who is the son of God. It's these people who are the family.

Now let me pull a few threads together. First of all. A practical truth. There is fracture. Division is one of the greatest causes of weaknesses in God's kingdom.

- [26 : 02] Fracturing the fabric of unity. Is a sure way to bring about the demise of any kingdom. Fracturing leads to failure. When rulers are opposed.

When civil unrest is unleashed. No one wins. And the casualties are guaranteed. They're inevitable. A kingdom divided cannot stand. And amongst Christians.

When a husband opposes a wife. Children despise parents. Brother curses brother. Wrongs are not confessed. Forgiveness is not given. When one drives out another.

Then the enemy rejoices. And Satan grins. And God groans. The unbelievers dismayed. And the saints are scattered.

The devil knows best of all. That to divide. Is to conquer. And James the Lord's brother tells us. What causes fights and quarrels of this.

- [26 : 57] The sinful passions that are at war within us. James chapter 4 verse 1. Which is why Jesus says. Blessed are the peacemakers. For they shall be called.

Sons of God. And forgiveness. Here the great hope. There is forgiveness for all. For being forgiven.

Is the greatest blessing. That anyone. Can ever receive. Forgiven. And being in the kingdom of God. Is the greatest blessing. Anyone can receive.

Being the brothers. And sisters. And mother. Mothers of Jesus. That's what Jesus promises. To everyone who comes to him. It is Jesus's joy.

This is what the Puritans talk about. It is Jesus's joy. To forgive. That's his great heart. And great joy. To do that. Summarised in a book.

- [27 : 51] Gentle and lowly. Puts it this way. That it's his greatest joy. To forgive. That is what Jesus promises to do. When we come to him. Jesus came to call.

The sinner to himself. Last week we saw that. In chapter 2 verse 17. And when we hear the call. And when we come to him. For forgiveness. Then we bring joy.

To Jesus. For that honours. The very reason. Why he came into the world. As we run to him. He runs towards us. And forgives us.

That is his greatest desire. According to the Puritans. There is no sin too great. That he won't forgive. No sin too great.

That he won't forgive. And when convicted of sin. Don't despair. Don't despair. Rejoice. Because God's Holy Spirit.

[28 : 52] Is at work. Within me. And then we can be fearless. Can't we? Jesus was considered mad. Because of his labours.

For the kingdom of God. His devotion. To bring about the kingdom of God. And those in the kingdom. Can face the future. With fearlessness. John the Baptist.

Was arrested. And killed. Because of his faithful. Preaching of the kingdom of God. In the face of opposition. Paul preached the kingdom of God.

To Festus. And was accused of being. Out of his mind. In Acts chapter 26. The Fox's book of martyrs. Martyrs. Records that all the apostles.

Ended up being killed. For the devotion. To the kingdom of God. People may consider us crazy. When we do the will of God.

[29 : 49] When we're honest. When we're faithful. When we hold to the things. And thinking which are at odds. With the society we live in. Or the religious trends.

And winds of doctrine. That false doctrines. That blow through the churches. When we hold to things. And thinking which are at odds. When we uphold God's word.

In our lives. When we demonstrate. That the Lord. Is Lord and master of all. When we don't give in. To the pressure around about us. The brothers.

And sisters. And mothers. Of Jesus. Will not be ashamed. Of doing the will of God. No matter the opposition. No matter the stigma.

No matter the cost. We can fearlessly. And confidently. Face the future. Opposition. And rejection.

[30 : 46] Even from our own families. Be prepared for it. To be your experience in the world. And take heart. Take heart.

When this is. Your experience. In the world. Let's pray. Our father in heaven. You remind us in your word.

That to be followers of the Lord Jesus Christ. Is to be those who have been forgiven. And in your kingdom. And if we're like our saviour. We misunderstood. We are maligned.

And call all kinds of different things. And strange. And even mad. In the eyes of the world. We do pray. That your Holy Spirit. Be at work in us. Continue to convict us.

And change us. To grow into more and more. Delighting us with Jesus. And so more and more. At odds. With the things around about us. We pray in Jesus name. Amen.