

Unleashing God's Truth, One Verse at a Time



The Unforgivable Sin

Mark 3:20–35

Code: 41-16

Now for this morning, we want you to turn to Mark chapter 3 in your Scripture. We're a little behind, and I've got an awful lot to say. So, be patient, and we're going to try to unpack a really critical portion of Scripture.

Mark chapter 3, and our text for this morning starts in verse 20 and goes down to the end of the chapter. We did part one last time, and we'll comment on that in a little bit, and then we're going to do part two and kind of wrap it up this morning. The theme of this particular section is the unforgivable sin. The unforgivable sin.

Now, drop down to verse 28 for a moment, and let's at least identify this as the core of our study this morning. Jesus is speaking here, and He says, "Truly I say to you" – by the way, that little formula "truly I say to you" never appears in the book of Acts, never appears in the epistles of the New Testament; it only appears in the lips of Jesus. It seems to have been a phrase that He used to identify something that had very significant meaning and was in fact a representation of divine truth that needed to be heard. "Truly I say to you, all sins shall be forgiven the sons of men, and whatever blasphemies they utter; but whoever blasphemes against the Holy Spirit never has forgiveness, but is guilty of an eternal sin."

Now, that might strike you as strange that there would be a sin that would not be forgivable. Don't we say that God offers forgiveness to sinners? Doesn't the Gospel promise that the Lord will forgive all our sins? That He'll pass by all our iniquities? Isn't He a pardoning God who overlooks sin? Doesn't He bury it in the depths of the sea, remove it as far as the East is from the West and remember it no more? Isn't God gracious and merciful? As the prophet says, "Who is a pardoning God like You?" When we preach the Gospel, don't we say that God will forgive all your trespasses, all your sins? Doesn't this sort of contradict that?

It doesn't contradict that, and I'll show you why. But it is a very serious passage to take to heart. It is, in one sense, a passage that ought to frighten the comfortable and comfort the frightened. Because on the one hand, there are people who have no idea that they have committed the unforgivable sin. They have no idea that they have committed the unforgivable sin. They're comfortable, and they ought to be frightened because they're headed for eternal hell. There are

other people who think they've committed the unforgivable sin and haven't, and need to be comforted.

Through the years of my ministry, of course, I've met both kinds of people: the comfortable who ought to be frightened, and the frightened who ought to be comfortable.

Perhaps in our congregation today there are some of you who have the notion in your mind that somewhere along the line you blasphemed the Holy Spirit, and it lingers in your thinking that you may never be able to be forgiven for that. Now, understanding, in a simplistic way, that you said something against the Holy Spirit, you are somehow beyond the hope of salvation. There are people who believe that; there are people who propagate that; there are people who espouse that. There are people who've accused me of that.

Many people, through the years, have accused me of having committed the blasphemous sin against the Holy Spirit by denying healings and miracles and tongues and wonders supposedly that are going on today in the Church, and thus I have blasphemed against the Holy Spirit and put myself in a position of never being forgiven, having committed an eternal sin.

Maybe there are some of you who feel that somebody has told you that and laid that burden upon you. And there are others who think that maybe they've blasphemed the name of Jesus Christ, and in blaspheming the name of Jesus Christ and speaking against Him in some reviling way, with calumny and evil thinking and evil speaking they are thus beyond the hope of forgiveness.

Well, this morning the message has two objectives. One would be to frighten the comfortable, and other would be to comfort the frightened.

And let's look at it together. We remember last week, the four Gospels are written – all four of them: Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John – to leave irrefutable, historical evidence that Jesus was God. While He was 100 percent a man, He was 100 percent God. He is God in human flesh. He is the Messiah of Israel. He's the Savior of the world. But all of that comes from the reality that He is the Lord God.

He is God the Son, and that is important; that is critical because believing that and committing your life to Christ is the only way to escape hell and enter heaven. There's only one way to escape eternal hell and enter eternal heaven, and that is by believing in Jesus Christ. There's no other way to be saved. The Bible makes that absolutely clear. The Gospel is exclusive; it alone is the means of salvation; there is no other way.

So, it's pretty important, then, that you believe in Christ. And in order for you to believe in Christ savingly, and entrust your time and eternity to Him, you have to have the evidence that He is who He claimed to be, and that evidence is presented to us not once, not twice, not three times, but four times in the Gospels. And then that evidence is interpreted for us in the rest of the New Testament all the way through to the book of Revelation.

The evidence is powerful. It is powerful when it is inscripturated. And those of us who have come to believe, have come to believe because of the power of the inscripturated record of the life and ministry of Christ. The evidence is laid down by the power and inspiration of the Holy Spirit in the pages of the New Testament, and we have read it, and we understand the truthfulness of it, and we embrace it as true, and thus we embrace Christ.

The evidence is powerful, I say, even when inscripturated, but the evidence was powerful as well even when it was demonstrated, when it was lived out in the life and ministry of Jesus for three years. Jesus traversed the land of Israel, starting his ministry down in Judea with the cleansing of the temple and doing teaching and miracles and wonders for the beginning year of His ministry in Judea. Then He moved to the north to Galilee. And the bulk of His ministry was in Galilee and - all across Galilee and even outside of Galilee into some of the surrounding regions. And then the final portion of His ministry in the last months came back into Judea and went from town to town and village to village.

Those three years He blanketed the land of Israel and gave evidence of who He was. More evidence than we have on the pages of the Gospel, because John ends His Gospel by saying, "If everything that He said and did were to be written down, the books of the world couldn't contain it." We have stories of healings and stories of deliverances from demons, and stories of raising the dead. And we have them scattered throughout the Gospel record, but they don't begin to come close to the thousands upon thousands if not tens of thousands of miracles that were being done by Jesus.

And so, periodically through the Gospel record, you have statements that are general. Like He went on from village to village, doing signs, and wonders, and miracles, and delivering people from demons. And there's just no way to count it all up.

And so, the people who were living at that time were exposed to that. And He had a massive crowd of people following Him everywhere He went, sprinkled, of course, you remember, with the leaders of Israel, the Pharisees and the scribes who collectively were responsible for basically the existent Judaism that was reigning over the minds and hearts of the people at the time. And they were following Jesus doggedly not because they believed in Him, because they wanted to rather find ways to discredit Him in order that they might kill Him.

But the only reasonable conclusion that an eyewitness should have to what he saw and what he heard would be that Jesus is God. The testimony was so clear and so obvious. However, in spite of what was reasonable, in spite of what was manifestly clear, in spite of the fact that people saw the miracles day after day after day after day, the human heart, the human mind is hard and blind and dead to the truth.

And so, here we are already at the end of the third chapter of Mark, and we haven't heard a human testimony that Jesus is God. The Father said it at His baptism, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased."

The demon said it in chapter 1, “We know who You are,” on behalf of the rest of the demons, “You’re the Holy One of God.”

So, testimony has been affirmed, but it is testimony from before, testimony from demons, testimony from the eternal Father. So, all the evidence is being mounted up. People have not made the right response. Some have. Jesus now has disciples, and out of the disciples He has 12 apostles more intimately, close to Him, who will be trained to preach the message of who He is.

But most people haven’t come to the right conclusion in spite of what they’ve seen. And they’ve seen it. They’ve seen it. They’ve experienced it. Most people would say, “He’s a good teacher.” That’s what they said, “He’s a man from God, because only a man from God could do these things.” That pretty much is what they said, “He’s a good teacher. He’s a humble man. He’s wise. He’s compassionate. He delivers people from the horrendous oppression of disease. He delivers them from the terrible possession of demons. This is a good man. This is a model of virtue. This is a powerful man. He must be – He must be tapping into divine power.” That’s what they said, but they stopped there.

Now, that would be pretty much the way it’s been ever since. People say about Jesus, “He’s a good man. He’s a wise man. He’s a noble teacher. He’s a model of virtue. He’s a righteous man.” That’s pretty much what you hear.

Even critics of Christianity, even enemies of Christianity, even atheists tend to put Jesus interest the category of a – sort of a misguided spiritual revolutionary who came to help the poor and the oppressed and deliver people from their burdens. And even though they deny the miracles, they think He was making a noble effort to help people, and thus He’s a good man.

But that’s not an option. That is one option no one has, because good people, wise people, sensible people don’t say they are God. As soon as you say you are God, you have just eliminated yourself from the category of the normal, certainly from the category of the wise, and sensible, and reasonable, and good, because that is such an outlandish claim. When you say you are God, you have just eliminated the possibility for us to say you’re a good teacher, because that – that just doesn’t fit into the category of good teaching.

I told you that in the last century, C. S. Lewis, the great English writer, said, “When Jesus claimed to be God, there were only three options: either He is God, or He is a lunatic, or He is a liar pulling off a very, very grand scheme of deception.” Those are the options.

But you can’t really come to Jesus with some patronizing nonsense about Him being a good teacher. As soon as somebody says they’re God, they have left that category permanently. So, we have some options: He is God, which would be the right option, since He had power over disease, He had power over demons, and He had power over death. He raised dead people. He healed sick people, and He delivered people from demonic oppression. That’s all an evidence of divine power which gives testimony to the fact that He is God.

But if you're still fighting that in your heart, you have two other options: He is a lunatic; He's a crazy person like other people who say they're God. Or He is a liar who really pulled off a very deceptive scheme. In fact, so deceptive that we have Christianity today, 2,000 years later, still flourishing. So, those are the options that C. S. Lewis put before us, and I kind of think he probably got them out of this passage.

Now, last week we looked at option number one, that Jesus is a lunatic, and we saw it verses 20 and 21. Let's look at it. "He came to a house" – literally - in Capernaum probably, which was the headquarters of his Galilean ministry, maybe Peter's house – "and the crowd gathered again to such an extent that they couldn't even eat a meal."

He is now collecting a massive crowd, a swelling crowd, because they're bringing to Him all the sick and all the demon possessed, everybody with issues. And they're – the people who are well are coming because they've never seen anything like this. Nothing has ever happened like this in the history of the world, and it's just collecting a massive crowd, so great that Jesus is crushed; He can't even eat a meal. This is then dangerous to Him.

And His family has gotten word about this. "They heard about it." They're not there. They don't believe in Him. John 7:5 says His family didn't believe in Him. His mother did, of course. Mary, she knew who He was from the time the angel gave Her the announcement. And she knew she had never known a man and had a child by the Holy Spirit. So, she knew who He was, believed in Him. He was clearly Her Savior and Her Lord.

Joseph believed in Him because it was announced to Him, who He would be, as well. And Joseph probably is dead, because he doesn't appear anywhere in the record of the New Testament Gospels. But the brothers and sisters and aunts and uncles and cousins did not. And it says here, in verse 20, that they – or verse 21, that when they heard about it – what did they hear? They had heard about Jesus' exploits. They had heard that He was just collecting a massive crowd, numbering in the tens or twenties of thousands of people; they were crushing Him. And their determination was this, "They went out to take custody of Him, for they were saying, 'He's lost His senses.'"

They conclude that He's a lunatic. They conclude that He's lost His mind, that He's insane. Now remember, they're in Nazareth; that's not a very far distance from Capernaum, but they aren't – they aren't following Jesus. They don't believe in His claims. And keep in mind, the New Testament says He did no miracles in Nazareth because of their unbelief. He'd been there, but they tried to kill Him after one visit.

So, these people are operating with only hearsay. And they're hearing information about the fact that supposed healings and deliverances are happening, and miracles are being done. They're not buying into it. They are not eyewitnesses to it; they haven't experienced it. Their conclusion is that this is the final expression of a very odd child.

Now, remember, He had brothers and sisters clearly indicated to us in the New Testament. Their names are even given: James, and Jude, and Joses. And He had sisters also. Now, they were born

to Joseph and Mary. So, Joseph lived a while during those 30 years – the silent years of Jesus; they were having a family, and there were brothers and sisters. And they grew up with Jesus. And Jesus is God in human flesh.

So, this little boy, this kid, this junior higher, this high schooler, this adult man is God in human flesh, which while He didn't show His deity, He didn't do miracles, didn't teach as far as we know, He was still sinless and perfect, and that would come across as very odd – would it not? – in a family full of wretched sinners. It's tough enough to get along with your brothers and sisters without being perfect. That would rankle them endlessly. They would never be able to comprehend Him. They would never be able to understand Him. They would be blown away by every response that He had, which would be a perfect response measured against their imperfect reactions to everything.

And so, the conclusion they had was, "This is a very bizarre child, and now He's gone totally off the deep end. So, for the sake of the poor guy, we got to go rescue Him. We need to go get Him." So, they made that determination. The word there "to take custody" means to seize, like in an arrest. It's used a number of times in – I think eight times in Mark for arresting someone, including John the Baptist and Jesus. And so, they decide they're going to do that because He's lost His senses.

Go down to verse 31 They come, they arrive. And Mary comes because I think she knew the truth, and she's there as a protective influence. "And His brothers arrive, and they're standing outside the house. They sent word to Him and called Him. A crowd was sitting around Him, and they said to Him, 'Behold, Your mother and Your brothers are outside looking for You.'

"Answering them, He said, 'Who are My mother and My brothers?'" Wow. Is He ignorant? No, of course He knows who they are. And not only that, He loves them. In fact, later on, they will come to believe in Him. Acts 1:14 says they'll believe in Him after the resurrection. They'll be a part of the first church. They'll be there on the Day of Pentecost. So, He loved them right into the kingdom, and He loved His mother because He committed Her to John to care for her when He died on the cross.

Well, it's not about that. What He is saying there is, "Look, the time for all human relationships to end has come. The only relationship to Me that matters is the spiritual one." So, in a sense, He keeps them at a distance. "It doesn't matter that you're related to Me through My mother. That carries no weight in the kingdom. That's not going to get you into the kingdom."

"Looking about those who were sitting around Him, He said, 'Behold My mother and My brothers!'" - these are the people who are – have a true relationship to Me, because they're the disciples and the followers who have committed themselves to Me in faith as their Lord and Messiah – "For whoever does the will of God, he's My brother and sister and mother."

There's no advantage in having a relationship to Jesus that is merely human. It gains you nothing. The only relationship to Jesus that matters, He says, is the one that is spiritual. Listen to what He

said in John 6:40 about that. Here He says, “Whoever does the will of God, He’s My brother, sister, and mother; he has a relationship to Me.”

But in John 6:40, “This is the will of My Father, that everyone who beholds the Son and believes in Him will have eternal life.” What is the will of the Father? “To behold the Son” - that is to assess Him, to look at Him carefully, thoughtfully – “believe in Him and receive eternal life.” Jesus says, “The people sitting around Me, some of them have done that. They have a relationship to Me.”

If your conclusion about Jesus is that He’s a lunatic, you don’t have a relationship to Him. You don’t have a relationship to Him. The plus in this is that they were ignorant. They were ignorant. They were not firsthand eyewitnesses. They hadn’t been there following, watching. So, they were making their conclusion out of ignorance. They rejected Him as insane, taking all the things that were coming back to them as hearsay. And later on, they came to faith in Him. They came to believe in Him, because when they got the full information, the full revelation, they embraced Him; they did the right thing.

So, there are many people who might conclude that Jesus was insane, crazy, out of His mind, over the top, had a Messiah complex, thought He was the Savior of the world when He wasn’t. That’s forgivable, because that might come from ignorance of the truth.

The second possibility is that He’s a liar, and that’s the one we see in verse 22, and I want you to look at it. Verses 22 and following, “The scribes” – now we move from His family to the scribes; they’re the ones who decide that He’s a liar – “The scribes who came down from Jerusalem” – now that’s very important, because now we got the big boys coming down from the center of authority in Israel, the city of Jerusalem. These are the elite; they start to show up.

Now, there have been – there are Pharisees and scribes. Those are the theological brains, the brain trust of Judaism at the time, the ones responsible for designing it and propagating it. They’re after Jesus. They don’t like His message; they don’t like what He says; they don’t like what He does; they want Him dead. They’ve already concluded that back in chapter 3. Just go back to verse 6. The Pharisees had already begun conspiring with the Herodians, another power group, as to how they might destroy Him. So, they’ve made their conclusion; they want Him dead; they want Him out of the way.

But He keeps going from town to town to town. We saw that back early in the Gospel of Mark. He’s just ubiquitous. He’s going everywhere, all the time. In fact, in 1:28 it says, “News about Him spread everywhere, into all the surrounding district of Galilee. And everywhere He went - every village, every location, out in the countryside - everywhere He went He was doing these miracles, making these claims, teaching this Gospel of the kingdom, Gospel of salvation, and the leaders were there listening and reacting negatively.

So, finally the word gets to Jerusalem. Jerusalem sends some delegates. This shows that the brain trust, the elite, have weighed in on the fate of Jesus. Over in chapter 7, verse 1, “The Pharisees and some of the scribes gathered around Him when they had come from Jerusalem,” chapter 7.

Finally they get Him back to Jerusalem, and that's where the same people come together and seal His fate, as it were, and have Him crucified by the Romans. So, the heavyweights come down. They're coming with the party line, folks. This is not their personal opinion; this is the line that the Pharisees and the scribes have come to. They didn't just confront Him with this once. Matthew has a parallel passage to this, Matthew 12:24 to 32, the same account. But Luke gives this account, in Luke 11:14 to 23, of a different occasion. This was in Galilee. The account in Luke was in Judea at a later time, where the same accusation comes, and the same conversation takes place.

If you go back to Matthew 9:34, they said He did what He did by the power of Satan. Back to Matthew 10:25, He reflects on the fact that they had said, "What He does, He does by the power of Satan." This is their mantra now, and they're propagating this with the people. So, this is one of those occasions. We have at least two of them described, one by Matthew and Mark – the same one – and one by Luke.

Now, this conclusion can be far more sinister and spiritually fatal than the first one. Let's see what they said. They said this; they summed it up, "He's possessed by Beelzebul." That's their final judgment, the final verdict on the evidence. The verdict on His teaching and the verdict on His miracles? "He's possessed by Beelzebul."

Now, why don't they conclude that He's just insane? Because they have to explain the supernatural. Insanity doesn't explain the supernatural. It doesn't tell you anything. You only say that if you don't know that there's a supernatural element.

Look, they knew that He had this massive power over demons. Demons were running amok out of the people that He'd commanded them to leave. They knew He had power over disease. They had to explain the supernatural power. No getting around it. And it was either God or Satan, because those are the only two supernatural persons who have that kind of power: God and His angels, Satan and his unholy angels. And they're unwilling to say it's the power of God, which was the logical thing to say, which is what the sort of popular opinion was, and they had to change that, "No man could do this except God be with Him." But they had to make people think it was satanic, so that was their mantra, "He's possessed by Beelzebul."

Now, Beelzebul had become a name for Satan. There was another one the Jews used, Baal. Remember that? Beelzebul was a name for Satan. It was basically a name that meant what Mark says they said, in the second statement, verse 22, "He casts out the demons by the ruler of the demons." Beelzebul was a name to designate the ruler of the demons. And Luke says Beelzebul means the ruler of the demons in Luke 11:15. By the way, that word "Beelzebul" is used five times in the Old Testament. So, it had been around a long time. The Jews were familiar with it and used it.

Now, where did it come from? Probably from Beelzebub which came from Baal - Baal means Lord - and the Ekronites. Ekron was a city in Philistia. And according to 1 Kings – or rather 2 Kings, chapter 1, the Ekronites had a God named Beelzebub, which means the Baal of the high place or the – Baal meaning lord – lord of the high place, lord of the dwelling, lord of the temple. That was Beelzebub; that was the Ekronite god.

Well, the Jews purposefully corrupted Beelzebub into Beelzebul, because when you change it from the B to the L, it goes from being the lord of the high place to being the lord of the manure, a very purposeful corruption showing Jewish disdain for the false Canaanitish god. So, through the years, this Beelzebul, lord of the dung, or lord of the flies that collect on the dung, had become the name for Satan.

So, what is the conclusion of the elite religious leadership of Israel? Jesus is not the holy Lord of heaven; they use the vilest possible slander and blasphemy and say the Son of God is nothing but a servant of Beelzebul. Most people wouldn't say that. I don't think most people in Israel would say that. I think it was a hard sell for them to convince the people that this was actually who He was.

I don't think there are very many people who would say that today. Some would. Some would say that Jesus was satanic, but it's pretty rare. If you reject Jesus, you probably don't want to say that. You probably never have said that. You might never have thought that. There are atheists who reject Christianity who don't go that far. But really, you certainly can't say that He's just a good man. If He's not a lunatic, He is a very bad man. He is a great liar; He is a massive deceiver. He's trying to convince people that He's God, and He's got supernatural power. And if He's not God, that supernatural power has to be satanic. There was reason in their conclusion. Really, because of their unbelief, they were stuck with it. They couldn't just say He was crazy, because crazy people can't do that. He had supernatural power. So, that's what they said.

I love the next verse, verse 23, "He called them to Himself" – guys, come here; come here – I love that – come over here. He knew who they were. He knew where they'd come from, and He knew exactly what He needed to say in front of all the people. "He began speaking to them in parables" – or analogies; parabolē means to lay something alongside. If you've got something you don't understand, you lay something you do understand, and it makes it clear.

It's not an actual parable in the technical sense, but an illustration or an analogy. And He gives them a negative one and a positive. And they're just logical statements. He starts with a logical absurdity, and then goes to a logical reality. Here's the absurdity: He called them to Himself and began speaking to them in these kinds of parables. Number one, "How can Satan cast out Satan?" Good teachers ask questions, don't they? Ask questions the students have to answer. Even better, ask questions that put students on the horns of a dilemma. Even better, ask questions that make students' comments absurd.

"How can Satan cast out Satan?" How can he do that? I mean that is an absurdity. While there might be inconsistency in His kingdom, and there certainly is, because he's not omnipresent, and he's not omnipotent, therefore he can't run everything all the time everywhere among all the demons. And while there's a certain amount of freedom in the chaos of evil to express itself in different ways, he is certainly not, by design, going around tearing up his own kingdom. He's not going around exposing people with demons who were sitting comfortably in synagogues, doing His damning work. He wants them clandestine and unknown, not exposed.

But every time Jesus goes into a synagogue, the demons scream and, “Oops, there goes our cover.” He’s not designing to destroy himself and is enterprise. Listen, this is a being that was created originally as a holy angel and lived in the presence of God and is extremely magnificent and wise. Been around a long time. Satan is no fool; he is cunning; he is deceptive; he is wily; he is conniving. It’s absurd to think that Satan would be running around dismantling his kingdom.

And then He makes some truisms, some axioms, self-evident statements, “If a kingdom is divided against itself, the kingdom can’t stand. If a house is divided against itself, the house will not be able to stand.” House being some entity, any entity. That’s obvious; that’s a truism. So, verse 26, “If Satan has risen up against himself and is divided, he cannot stand; he is telos echei.” It’s over; he’s just brought an end to himself. He just brought the whole thing down on his own head.

So, He says, “You’ve got to be kidding. I mean that is a logical absurdity. Satan’s not going to do that. Satan wants to destroy the work of God; he doesn’t want to destroy his own work.” From that logical absurdity, He goes to a positive reality that they can’t deny in verse 27. Let’s go positive on this one, “On the other hand, no one can enter the strong man’s house and plunder his property unless he first binds the strong man, and then he will plunder his house.” Is that obvious? That’s another truism. That’s axiomatic; that’s a positive kind of axiom.

Look, if you want to go in and get the property of somebody, you have to overpower the guy. You’ve got to be stronger than he is to get his property. So, Jesus is saying, “The only logical conclusion here is that I am stronger than Satan, and there is only one who is stronger than Satan” – and who is that? – it’s God. You can’t enter the strong man’s house. The strong man is Satan.

What about his property? His property? If you’re going to enter the strong man’s house and plunder his property – well, what property does Satan have? Well, Satan is a spirit. Right? He doesn’t wear a red suit, and pitchfork, and a pointed tail, and horns, and all that. Satan is a spirit. So, he doesn’t possess anything material. So, he doesn’t have a warehouse with a lot of Halloween costumes. Satan doesn’t possess anything material. His whole world is immaterial. All his demons are spirits. They’re called unclean spirits.

So, you have a spirit world with nothing material. So, when He goes into Satan’s domain and plunders his property, what’s his property? His property would be the demons and the people that they have commandeered.

If you’re going to go in, and you’re going to take power over the demons and scatter the demons and deliver the people that they have possessed, then you have to bind the strong man to pull it off. Right? But that’s exactly what Jesus did. He exposed the demons; He dismissed the demons, and He rescued the people who had been possessed by the demons. He plundered the strong man’s house. You have to bind the strong man to do that. He’s not going to pull that off if Satan’s stopping Him.

Therefore, whoever Jesus is, He’s stronger than Satan. They’ve set themselves up for this one, because they said He did what He did by the power of Satan. The probably with that is, that’s a

logical absurdity for Satan to cast out Satan. And if He's not Satan casting out Satan, then He's greater than Satan, and greater than Satan is God. And He's able to crush the kingdom of darkness.

No, this is not a lunatic; that doesn't work. And Jesus is not some satanic, deceptive liar who represents hell and wants everybody to think He represents heaven. You know, there have been a lot of religious leaders like that, but they don't heal diseases, cast out demons, and raise dead people.

Who is He? We are left with one final option, and that is that He is God. He's Lord. And we see that kind of played out in the final verses, verses 28 to 30. I'm going to say this very fast, so hang on. "Truly I say to you, all sins shall be forgiven the sons of men, and whatever blasphemies they utter; but whoever blasphemes against the Holy Spirit never has forgiveness, but is guilty of an eternal sin" – what's that eternal sin? – "because they were saying, 'He has an unclean spirit.'"

The eternal sin for them was this, "Jesus is demonic." They went to hell for that.

You say, "Wait a minute. What if I said that? Would I go to hell for that?"

Not necessarily if you said that without full information. That's a blasphemy that's forgivable. Right? But if that's your final conclusion with full revelation, if that's your response to the full understanding of the Gospel, the full revelation of Christ contained on the pages of Scripture, if that's your final conclusion, you could never be forgiven, because you've had full revelation; you've had full light. What else is there? You can't get anymore. If that's your final conclusion, that's an eternal sin. That's what He's saying.

Now, this is what is called apostasy. This is an apostate. Now, I have to say, these are unusual people here; this is a very unusual circumstance. This is – you can't just catapult this into some universal category here. You'll please notice that it is blasphemy against the Holy Spirit, but it's not denying tongues or denying a healing or denying some power display – supposed power display of the Holy Spirit. It is – it is blaspheming the Holy Spirit by saying, "Jesus is demonic."

How does that blaspheme the Holy Spirit? Because when Jesus came into the world, the New Testament says, He set aside the prerogatives of His own power. He said, "I only do what the Father shows Me to do, tells Me to do." And He did it by the power of the Spirit. That's what the incarnation meant. When He laid aside His glory, became a man, He restricted the independent use of His divine attributes, and He left Himself to the will of the Father and the power of the Spirit. Whatever He did was the Father's will and was done through the Spirit's power.

So, if you say, "Jesus is satanic," you have just blasphemed the Holy Spirit, because it's the Holy Spirit doing His work through Him. The Holy Spirit came upon Him at His baptism. The Holy Spirit led Him from there into the wilderness to be tempted, was with Him through his temptation. The Holy Spirit then anointed Him to preach. And away He went, preaching and doing all His ministry.

If you were there, and you saw it, and you heard it, and your final conclusion was, “He’s demonic,” you’re damned; you can’t be saved, because that’s your ultimate conclusion with full revelation.

So, this is unique to those people who had that full revelation. What about today? Could somebody commit this? Right, they could. Look, we’ve all been forgiven for rejecting Christ, haven’t we? We’ve all been forgiven for rejecting Christ because we weren’t born saved. So, we’ve all been forgiven for that. But the one that won’t be forgiven is the one called the apostate who gets full exposure to the truth, full exposure to the Gospel, full revelation, and makes the final conclusion, “It’s not true; I reject Christ. It’s a deception.” That’s where you end up after full exposure; that’s what’s called apostasy. That’s unforgivable.

The Holy Spirit’s testimony is that He is Lord. The Holy Spirit did this mighty work through Him to demonstrate that He is – He is Lord.

Now, look; there’s a commentary on this that I want to show you just briefly. Turn to the book of Hebrews. Written to Jews, written to those Jews in the first century who were well aware of the ministry of Jesus; the miracles of Jesus; the teaching of Jesus; the power over demons, disease, death; but they hadn’t come to Christ; they weren’t believing. They knew the truth; they knew the Gospel, and they were holding back.

So, in Hebrews 2:3 comes the first of several warnings in this book written to, obviously, Hebrews, Jews, “How shall we escape if we neglect so great a salvation?” If you come all the way to the full understanding of the greatness of this salvation, and you walk away, how are you going to escape judgment? Because, “After it was at the first spoken through the Lord and confirmed to us by those who heard” – namely the apostles – “who testified both by signs and wonders and miracles and gifts of the Holy Spirit according to His own will.”

He says, “Look, you knew about Christ. You knew about Christ’s life and ministry. You knew about it from the eyewitnesses, namely the apostles who had the signs and wonders and gifts of an apostle and affirmation of all that they said. If you neglect, after that kind of evidence, how are you going to escape judgment?”

Look at chapter 6, here’s another warning to the same people. Chapter 6, verse 4, “In the case of those who have once been enlightened” – that’s knowledge, mental; you were enlightened; you had information, revelation – “you tasted the heavenly gift” – heavenly gift being the kingdom, Christ, the message of salvation, the Gospel; you tasted it; you didn’t eat and drink of it, but you tasted it – “and you were partaker of the Holy Spirit” – maybe you got healed; maybe somebody you know was healed; you were there when the miracles were poured out by the power of the Holy Spirit – “and you tasted the good Word of God” - when Jesus taught it – “and you tasted the powers of the age to come” – miracles; in other words, you were exposed to all of it – “and you’ve now fallen away” – turn away, walk away – “it’s impossible to renew you to repentance, because you crucify to yourself the Son of God and put Him to open shame.”

You say, “I reject full revelation, enlightenment.” You tasted it; you touched it; you were there; you were exposed to it. Your decision is to walk away. You join the crucifiers. You conclude He’s not God and with those supernatural powers must be satanic. You’re left with that. You say, “He has an unclean spirit,” after full revelation, you can’t be saved. Verse 6, “It’s impossible to renew them again to repentance.”

One final warning that I want to show you is in chapter 10, verse 26, “If we go on sinning willfully after receiving the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins.” Look, if you just go on living your life of sin, after receiving the knowledge of the truth, there’s nothing else. There’s no other sacrifice. If you reject Christ and His sacrifice, there’s nothing waiting for you, “but” – verse 2 – “a terrifying expectation of judgment and the fury of a fire which will consume the adversaries.”

And then verse 29, “How much severer punishment do you think he will deserve who is trampled under foot the Son of God, and regarded as unclean the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified, and has insulted” – whom? – “the Spirit of grace” who was the power behind the life and ministry of Jesus?

Look, all that’s left for you, if your final decision is with full knowledge to reject, fearful judgment, terrifying judgment, severer punishment, the hottest hell is for those who rejected with the most knowledge. And there are perhaps some of you who have rejected Christ. Your knowledge is increased today. You are in danger of greater judgment if you conclude that He is not the Lord He claimed to be. You need to be frightened by this. Some of you perhaps have thought that you were guilty of some blasphemy that could never be forgiven. May I remind you, in final comments, that the apostle Paul, in 1 Timothy – and I love this – said this, chapter 1, verse 12, “I thank Christ Jesus or Lord, who strengthened me, because He considered me faithful, putting me into ministry, even though I was formerly a” – what? – “blasphemer.” All manner of blasphemy can be forgiven except that final blasphemy that says with full revelation, “I reject Christ,” and you’re left with the fact of explaining His supernatural power as satanic. And you stand, then, with the crucifiers, crucifying Him again, and putting Him to open shame.

Much better to remember that Matthew 12:32 says, “You can speak a word against the Son of Man and be forgiven.” We were all blasphemers of a sort who have been forgiven, if we’ve come to faith in Christ. Don’t turn away. Get the full revelation and respond in full trust.

Father, again your Word is clear to us, and it is convincing and convicting and converting. May it do all those things even today we pray, to Your glory, in Christ’s name, amen.

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