



MESSAGE

STUDY GUIDE

GROUP MATERIAL

SONGS

Community Group Material:

Bible Reading: Luke 12:1-21

Questions for discussion

What does hypocrisy look like in our lives today?

What are some of the difficulties you've found in your life (right now or in the past) to acknowledge who Jesus is before others?

What helps you to acknowledge Jesus when it is hard?

Jesus is knocking on your heart, what does it mean to let him in and eat with him?

What is the 'Blasphemy of the Holy Spirit, & the "Unforgiveable Sin"?'

"Everyone who speaks a word against the Son of Man will be forgiven, but the person who blasphemes against the Holy Spirit will not be forgiven." (Luke 12:10 NET)

What Bible Scholars Say:

"Luke 12:10 is one of the most enigmatic in Luke. The sin of denying the Son of Man can be forgiven, but to the person who blasphemes the Spirit there will be no forgiveness. There are four choices as plausible definitions for this blasphemy:

- 1) claiming that Jesus has come from Satan (11:14-20),
- 2) renouncing Jesus because of persecution (that is, apostasy),
- 3) rejecting the preaching of the apostles, or
- 4) persistently rejecting the message of the gospel.

The final choice is the most likely, since it fits the warning about being thrown into hell & the warnings in Acts about what is at stake for rejecting the apostles' message (Acts 3:22-26; 13:38-41). Speaking a word against the Son of Man refers to a specific act of rejection, while rejecting the testimony of the Spirit refers to a permanent rejection of that message of salvation. The best example of this principle is Saul, who stood at Stephen's execution in Acts 7, but who later came to faith & thus received forgiveness for his previous acts against preaching about Jesus. He had spoken against the Son of Man, but ended up not rejecting the Spirit's call to believe in Jesus. This decision about the testimony

the Spirit gives is the key issue for Jesus.” (Darrell Bock, Luke, NIV Application Commentary, p. 338)

Luke 12: “Verse 10 is related to the preceding passage by catchword ‘the Son of Man’ & by motif (speaking, forgiving), & it introduces the Holy Spirit, thereby providing a link with 12:12. The distinction between speaking against the Son of Man & speaking against the Holy Spirit has long puzzled interpreters. This saying regarding the ‘unpardonable sin’ has parallels in Mk. 3:28-30 & Matt. 12:31-32, but it is important to consider each version of this saying in its own narrative context. ... Some commentators have suggested that Luke is distinguishing between those who reject Jesus during his earthly ministry & those who rejected the preaching of the gospel by the early church. Alternatively, it has been suggested that the saying distinguishes between those who reject the gospel never having professed faith & those who, having embraced the gospel, later commit apostasy. More to the point is the view of those who distinguish here an impulsive, momentary rejection of Jesus, such as Peter’s denial of Jesus in the courtyard (Lk. 22:54-62), from a persistent, [obstinate] rejection of God’s saving grace through the work of the Holy Spirit. The Lukan context of this saying suggests that it is concerned with those who deny Jesus when faced with persecution. Again, the example of Peter indicates that such denial is forgivable, & he is to be distinguished from those who resist and persistently reject the appeals of the Holy Spirit. Blasphemy is distinguished from merely ‘speaking a word against.’” (Alan Culpepper, New Interpreter’s Bible Commentary, Vol. VIII Luke, John, p. 209)

What Preachers/ Pastors Say:

Can a Christian, a true believer in Christ...still be guilty of blasphemy against the Holy Spirit?

Let’s put a couple of key passages in front of us... Here is Jesus in Mark 3:28-30: “Truly, I say to you, all sins will be forgiven the children of man, & 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 [Jesus] has an unclean spirit.’” In other words, they were attributing Jesus’ deeds to the devil instead of God. [Context in Matt. & Mark]

One more text, Luke 12:10: “Everyone who speaks a word against the Son of Man will be forgiven, but the one who blasphemes against the Holy Spirit will not be forgiven.” ...

Sure Salvation

Now, it seems to me that...we need to put the statement “blaspheming the Spirit cannot be forgiven” alongside the many statements like “whosoever believes on the Lord Jesus will be saved” — not “whosoever believes, if they haven’t done a few other things.”

For example, [Paul told the jailer in] Acts 16:31: “Believe in the Lord Jesus, & you will be saved.” Paul didn’t ask the jailer, “Now, have you ever blasphemed against the Spirit of God?” He just said, “If you believe, you will be saved.” In John 6:40, Jesus said, “This is the will of my Father, that everyone who looks on the Son & believes in him should have eternal life, & will raise him up on the last day.”

It ...seem[s]...that there is something about blaspheming the Spirit, as Jesus intended us to understand it, that has brought a person to the point where they are sinning in such a way that they are unwilling and unable to repent and believe. That is the way I am putting the two together. So, here [is] my answer... Can a true believer, whose salvation is eternally secure in Christ, still be guilty of blaspheming the Holy Spirit? No. Because I think the meaning of the blasphemy of the Holy Spirit...is a willful, determined opposition to the present power of the Holy Spirit. And Christians cannot commit that kind of sin. They don’t settle in...with a settled, determined, willful opposition [against the Holy Spirit].

Christians can commit all kinds of sin, but what marks a Christian is that they don’t settle in long term [with a settled, determined, willful opposition to the Holy Spirit].. They hate it & they repent of it. They feel bad about it. They turn to God for fresh forgiveness. So no, a Christian cannot commit what Jesus calls blasphemy against the Holy Spirit.” —John Piper

What is the “Unpardonable Sin” or “Unforgivable Sin”?

What is the “unpardonable sin” or “unforgivable sin” Jesus warns against in these same verses? Those who commit the “unpardonable sin”...decisively reject clear Spirit-revealed truth about Jesus by attributing his mighty works to Satan. They decisively reject Jesus because they never repent. They continue to rebel against Jesus until they die. Instead of submitting to who Jesus is & recognizing that the Spirit empowered Jesus’ mighty works, they rebel against Jesus by declaring that Satan empowered his mighty works.

The ‘unpardonable sin’ is not an accidental, impulsive, or unguarded slip of the tongue. It is deliberately repudiating the truth about Jesus. God responds to such rebellion by hardening the rebel’s heart & not giving that person a desire to repent and believe [Perhaps like Pharaoh: “the LORD hardened Pharaoh’s heart” (Exo. 11:10)]. The sin is unforgivable because God never enables that person to repent and believe. So, this [‘unforgivable sin’] is a sin that only unbelievers can commit.

Only God knows who is guilty of this sin. It is impossible for a mere human to know with certainty that a fellow human has committed the unpardonable sin and is thus beyond repentance. Many people who appear to have committed this sin later repent & believe...

Those who have committed the unpardonable sin are not worried about it. They are hardened in their unbelief. So, if you are worried that you’ve committed the unpardonable sin, that’s a reliable sign that you have not committed it. If you are ashamed of your sin against God, then you have not committed the unpardonable sin. So instead of feeling hopelessly condemned, keep turning from your sins, and keep trusting Jesus. If you are in Jesus the Messiah, then there is “no condemnation” for you (Rom. 8:1) –Andrew David Naselli, TGC

The Sin That Will Not Be Forgiven

“Jesus [concluded] His...teaching session with [the] words: “Everyone who speaks a word against the Son of Man will be forgiven, but the one who blasphemes against the Holy Spirit will not be forgiven” Lk. (12:10).

So, what...does this blasphemy against the Spirit entail? It’s often said, quite helpfully, that if we’re anxious we’ve committed blasphemy against the Holy Spirit, then we don’t need to fear that we have—for the act of blasphemy is always accompanied by indifference to it.

To get to the heart of the matter, we need to recognize that this particular sin consists of a rejection of God and His lordship which is conscious, deliberate, & willful. To blaspheme is to recognize that God has revealed Himself in His Son by the Holy Spirit but respond in unyielding hostility & persistent unbelief. Rather than say, “Jesus is Lord,” the blasphemer lives as if Jesus is a demon, even the Devil himself. For this reason, Matthew & Mark’s accounts frame this sin as ascribing to Satan that which is clearly from God. ...This particular sin...is of such a nature that it excludes all pathways to repentance, cauterizes the conscience, and hardens the sinner once for all. In this sense, blasphemy against the Holy Spirit is unpardonable. –**Alistair Begg**.