

Matthew 12:22-32: Then a demon-oppressed man who was blind & mute was brought to him, and he healed him, so that the man spoke and saw. ²³ And all the people were amazed, & said, "Can this be the Son of David?" ²⁴ But when the Pharisees heard it, they said, "It is only by Beelzebul, the prince of demons, that this man casts out demons." ²⁵ Knowing their thoughts, he said to them, "Every kingdom divided against itself is laid waste, & no city or house divided against itself will stand. ²⁶ And if Satan casts out Satan, he is divided against himself. How then will his kingdom stand? ²⁷ And if I cast out demons by Beelzebul, by whom do your sons cast them out? Therefore they will be your judges. ²⁸ But if it is by the Spirit of God that I cast out demons, then the kingdom of God has come upon you. ²⁹ Or how can someone enter a strong man's house & plunder his goods, unless he first binds the strong man? Then indeed he may plunder his house. ³⁰ Whoever is not with me is against me, & whoever does not gather with me scatters. ³¹ Therefore I tell you, every sin & blasphemy will be forgiven people, but the blasphemy against the Spirit will not be forgiven. ³² And whoever speaks a word against the Son of Man will be forgiven, but whoever speaks against the Holy Spirit will not be forgiven, either in this age or in the age to come.

Intro: Last Lord's Day, we saw Jesus show who He is by loving, serving, healing, & fulfilling all the Scriptures about Himself: He's God's Chosen Servant; He's God's Beloved in Whom God is well pleased; He has God's Spirit without measure; He proclaims justice to the Gentiles; He's gentle & lowly & did not come with shouting & arguing (He does not break a bruised reed or quench a smoldering wick); He brings justice to victory; & in Him Gentiles hope. Today we see Him keep loving & healing & He warns about a terrifying sin: an unforgivable sin.

1. We See An Amazing Healing

Matthew 12:22: Then a demon-oppressed man who was blind & mute was brought to him, and he healed him, so that the man spoke and saw.

a. Some, but not all, sicknesses and diseases are caused by demonic oppression: This man was blind and mute and demon-oppressed. And verses 24 and following make clear Jesus healed this man by casting out the demon.

Another example: Luke 13:11-12, 16: there was a woman who had had a disabling spirit for eighteen years. She was bent over and could not fully straighten herself. ¹² When Jesus saw her, he called her over and said to her, "Woman, you are freed from your disability . . . ¹⁶ "And ought not this woman, a daughter of Abraham whom Satan bound for eighteen years, be loosed from this bond on the Sabbath day?"

b. Jesus heals the man: Jesus again loves; Jesus again shows compassion; Jesus again heals; Jesus again destroys the works of the devil by casting this demon out & setting this man free! He's binding & plundering the strong man

2. Jesus Is The Amazing Son Of David

Matthew 12:23: And all the people were amazed, & said, "Can this be the Son of David?"

- **2 Samuel 7:12-13:** When your days are fulfilled and you lie down with your fathers, I will raise up your offspring after you, who shall come from your body, and I will establish his kingdom. ¹³ He shall build a house for my name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever.

- **1 Samuel 16:23:** And whenever the evil spirit from God was upon Saul, David took the lyre and played it with his hand. So Saul was refreshed and was well, and the evil spirit departed from him.

3. The Pharisees Make An Evil, False Accusation

Matthew 12:24: But when the Pharisees heard it, they said, "It is only by Beelzebul, the prince of demons, that this man casts out demons."

a. Beelzebul: "Lord of dung" – "Lord of the heights" – "Head of the House" - Another name for Satan.

b. The Pharisees are saying Jesus casts out demons by the power of Satan: This is unbelievably evil!

Ligon Duncan: It would be as if God spoke to the children of Israel at Mt. Sinai and said, "I am the Lord your

God who brought you out of the land of Egypt. I am the Lord your God who brought you out of the house of slavery,” and then gave to them the Ten Commandments, and there were a group of Israelites who stood at the base of the mountain who said, “You know, I don’t think that was the voice of the Lord God of Israel. I think that was the voice of Satan.” The Lord Jesus is saying, “You have called the greatest work of the Spirit, a greater work than the giving of the Ten Commandments, the work of Satan.” And that reveals the stubbornness and the wickedness of your hearts. Jesus’ power over the demons was a manifestation of the fact that God’s kingdom had come, that the Lord was coming with power.

4. Jesus Teaches About Division

Matthew 12:25-27: Knowing their thoughts, he said to them, "Every kingdom divided against itself is laid waste, & no city or house divided against itself will stand. ²⁶ And if Satan casts out Satan, he is divided against himself. How then will his kingdom stand? ²⁷ And if I cast out demons by Beelzebul, by whom do your sons cast them out? Therefore they will be your judges.

a. Jesus knows their thoughts: Jesus is God! Jesus knows!

b. Jesus gives them the images of civil war, city turmoil, & house division: Divided kingdoms don't survive. The United States could not remain the United States if they did not remain united! Divided cities; Divided homes

c. Satan wouldn’t fight against himself: Satan is too shrewd for that.

d. The sons (disciples) of the Pharisees will judge them: The Pharisees knew casting out demons was a supernatural act. They concluded Jesus could only have done it by Satan’s power. Jesus asks what about your disciples that cast out demons? You wouldn’t say they do it by Satan’s power, so why not me, by God’s Spirit?

e. A secondary application: J. C. Ryle: We ought to notice, in the first place, how great is the evil of dissensions and divisions. Satan indeed is the chief promoter of religious divisions. If he cannot extinguish Christianity, he labors to make Christians quarrel with one another, and to set every man's hand against his neighbor. None knows better than the devil, that “to divide is to conquer.”

- **Division is contrary to the will of God: Galatians 5:19-21:** Now the works of the flesh are evident . . . rivalries, dissensions, divisions . . . and things like these. I warn you, as I warned you before, that those who do such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.

- **1 Corinthians 1:10:** I appeal to you, brothers, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you agree and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be united in the same mind and the same judgment.

- **Pray for unity!** Unity in the church! Unity in our homes!

5. The Kingdom Of God Has Come In Jesus Christ

Matthew 12:28-30: But if it is by the Spirit of God that I cast out demons, then the kingdom of God has come upon you. ²⁹ Or how can someone enter a strong man's house & plunder his goods, unless he first binds the strong man? Then indeed he may plunder his house. ³⁰ Whoever is not with me is against me, & whoever does not gather with me scatters.

a. Jesus cast out demons by the Spirit of God – the King has come!: V. 28: But if it is by the Spirit of God that I cast out demons, then the kingdom of God has come upon you.

b. Jesus came to bind the strong man and plunder his goods: The strong man is Satan:

- **Ephesians 2:2:** the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience . . .

- **1 Peter 5:8:** Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour.

William Lane: Satan is the strong man whose strength is evidenced in the enslavement of men through sin, possession, disease, & death; the demons are his servants in this destructive work. He is like a champion who

exercises his sovereignty in the sphere of death. Only one who is stronger than he can enter into his realm, bind him & plunder his goods. This Jesus has done. The expulsion of demons is nothing less than a forceful attack on the lordship of Satan. Jesus' ability to cast out demons means that one stronger than Satan has come to restrain his activity & to release the enslaved. The heart of Jesus' mission is to confront Satan & to crush him on all fields, & in the fulfillment of his task he is conscious of being the agent of irresistible power . . . Jesus' works are accomplished through the power of the Holy Spirit. It is as the Bearer of the Spirit that he stands as the Champion of God in the battle with Satan.

c. Jesus came to bind Satan: John 16:8-11: And when he comes, he will convict the world concerning sin and righteousness and judgment: concerning sin, because they do not believe in me; concerning righteousness, because I go to the Father, and you will see me no longer; concerning judgment, because the ruler of this world is judged.

- **Acts 14:16:** In past generations he allowed all the nations to walk in their own ways.

- **Revelation 20:2-3:** And he seized the dragon, that ancient serpent, who is the devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years, ³ and threw him into the pit, and shut it and sealed it over him, so that he might not deceive the nations any longer . . .

d. Jesus came to take us back for Himself from the power, slavery, & bondage to Satan & all his wicked ways: V. 29: Or how can someone enter a strong man's house & plunder his goods, unless he first binds the strong man? Then indeed he may plunder his house.

God binds and plunders: Isaiah 49:24-25: Can the prey be taken from the mighty, or the captives of a tyrant be rescued? ²⁵ For thus says the LORD: "Even the captives of the mighty shall be taken, and the prey of the tyrant be rescued, for I will contend with those who contend with you, and I will save your children." **(Jesus is God!)**

e. There is no neutrality with Jesus: V. 30: Whoever is not with me is against me, & whoever does not gather with me scatters. **(Those who are with Jesus will gather with Him: we will seek to win lost souls!)**

f. God gathers in the Old Testament, Jesus gathers in the New: Isaiah 56:8: The Lord GOD, who gathers the outcasts of Israel, declares, "I will gather yet others to him besides those already gathered."

D. A. Carson: Jesus is the one who will harvest in the last days, a function the OT regularly assigns to God.

6. The Unforgivable Sin

Matthew 12:31-32: Therefore I tell you, every sin & blasphemy will be forgiven people, but the blasphemy against the Spirit will not be forgiven. ³² And whoever speaks a word against the Son of Man will be forgiven, but whoever speaks against the Holy Spirit will not be forgiven, either in this age or in the age to come.

a. Every sin & blasphemy will be forgiven people: This is good news! There is forgiveness! **GOSPEL!**

Charles Spurgeon: Be not astonished when I tell you that you are much worse than you think you are! Even though you have a very terrible idea of yourself, that idea does not come up to the truth. But, notwithstanding this, if you were 10,000 times worse than you are, still God, the infinitely merciful, is able, for Christ's sake, to forgive you all trespasses and to blot out, as a thick cloud, your transgressions and, as a cloud, your sins!

b. What is blasphemy against the Holy Spirit?: 1) It's done with some measure of knowledge & understanding: The Pharisees (religious leaders) (seem to come close to committing this sin with knowledge & understanding, **D. A. Carson:** thoughtfully, willfully, & self-consciously) mentioned up in verse 24 have accused Jesus of casting out demons by the power of Satan himself. They were calling the Holy Spirit of God, Whom Jesus had without measure, an unclean spirit. They were calling the Holy Spirit of the Clean of cleans, unclean!

- **1 Timothy 1:13:** though formerly I was a blasphemer, persecutor, and insolent opponent. But I received mercy

because I had acted ignorantly in unbelief . . .

2) It's a particularly wicked sin: Bruce Demarast: Blasphemy – a word or deed that directs [great disrespect and insult] to the character of God, Christian truth, or sacred things.

- **Isaiah 63:10:** But they rebelled and grieved his Holy Spirit; therefore he turned to be their enemy, and himself fought against them.

DeYoung: A conscious, clear, consistent, [hate-filled rejection] of Jesus Christ by those who should know better.

3) It's a sin you will not want to repent of: All sin is forgivable if you repent. This sin is unforgivable because you don't repent of it! You don't want to repent of it! And you can't repent of it!

- **Matt Smethurst:** The unpardonable sin is not about a God who is incapable of forgiving, but a heart that has become incapable of repenting.

- **Graham Cole:** Jesus warned the Pharisees and scribes that they were in danger of committing the sin, not that they had committed it. They had attributed Jesus' work to the devil, but that mere attribution was dangerous, not yet deadly. More than a specific deed appears to be in mind as Jesus spoke. Persistent willful rejection of Jesus and thus of the Spirit's revelatory work through him, together with depicting such work as an evil, results in no forgiveness in this life, or in the world to come.

- **O. E. Evans:** To call good evil in this way is to deliberately pervert all moral values, and to persist in such an attitude can only result in a progressive blunting of moral sensibility, the ultimate conclusion of which will be to become so hardened in sin as to lose for ever the capacity to recognize the value of goodness and to be attracted to it. To reach such a state is to be incapable of repentance; the sinner has shut himself out, [unchangeably] and eternally, from the forgiving mercy of God.

- **Mark Dever:** A knowing, enduring opposition to the work of God.

(If you are concerned that you committed this sin, then you probably have not committed it!)

c. My own experience with the unforgivable sin: 1) Nineveh: Jonah 4:3: Forty more days & Nineveh will be overturned; **Jonah 4:2:** I know that You *are* a gracious and merciful God, slow to anger and abundant in lovingkindness, One who relents from doing harm.

2) Matthew 15:22-28: And behold, a Canaanite woman from that region came out and was crying, "Have mercy on me, O Lord, Son of David; my daughter is severely oppressed by a demon." ²³ But he did not answer her a word. And his disciples came and begged him, saying, "Send her away, for she is crying out after us." ²⁴ He answered, "I was sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel." ²⁵ But she came and knelt before him, saying, "Lord, help me." ²⁶ And he answered, "It is not right to take the children's bread and throw it to the dogs." ²⁷ She said, "Yes, Lord, yet even the dogs eat the crumbs that fall from their masters' table." ²⁸ Then Jesus answered her, "O woman, great is your faith! Be it done for you as you desire." And her daughter was healed instantly.

3) Other examples: a) Peter's denial of Jesus; b) The thief on the cross

- **Ezek. 33:11:** As surely as I live, declares the Sovereign LORD, I take no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but rather that they turn from their ways & live. Turn! Turn from your evil ways! Why will you die, O house of Israel?

- **Psalms 34:22:** The LORD redeems his servants; no one will be condemned who takes refuge in him.

- **John 6:37:** All that the Father gives me will come to me, and whoever comes to me I will never drive away.

- **Psalms 147:11:** The LORD takes pleasure in those who fear Him, In those who hope in His mercy.

- **Romans 10:13:** Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved. (Jesus was not saved!: Cross; Rose!)

The Christ Is David's Greater Son
Though Pharisees Would Hate And Shun
And Call His Work What Satan's Done
The Kingdom's Come, His Reign's Begun
His Spirit Makes The Demons Run
He'd Die And Rise The Righteous Sun
And Bind The Strong Man, Chains Are Spun

All Words You Speak Against The Son
He Will Forgive, Salvation's Done
Don't Speak Against The Spirit None
For If You Do God's Hell Will Stun
So Flee From Sin, To Jesus Run
He's Life And Joy Second To None!