

The Unpardonable Sin

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[0 : 01] And we are going to start in the book of Mark. Well, we're not starting in the book of Mark. We're going to jump back in. We're in chapter 3. Last week, we talked about the choosing of the 12, the 12 disciples.

And we went through each one, and some of the 12 disciples we're more familiar with than others, but we tried to at least touch on each one.

And really talked about, at the end there, the important job that those 12 had. Their primary job as witnesses to the life, the death, the burial, and the resurrection of Christ were to be witnesses of his life and of his death.

And then ultimately, that he rose from the dead. And most of them gave their lives as a witness to that, which is a testimony.

Their blood continues to confirm their testimony that what they saw was true. Today, we're continuing on.

[1 : 17] We're going to finish up chapter 3 here. And the big topic is this thing called the blasphemy of the Holy Spirit. And what we sometimes call the unpardonable sin, which has caused some people no small amount of consternation.

But what we're going to see here is that some people thought that Jesus was crazy. He was a nut. Some people today still think Jesus was a nut.

And then there were other people who considered Jesus basically a Satanist. That's what they basically called him. And Jesus had a response to that.

So if you've got your Bibles, open up to Mark chapter 3. We're going to start here in verse 20. We're just going to read through and then we'll go back. Then the multitude came together again so that they could not so much as eat bread.

There were lots of crowds gathered around Jesus. And it was so bad that it was hard for them to even get a meal in. But when his own people heard about this, they went out to lay hold of him.

[2 : 25] For they said, he is out of his mind. And the scribes who came down from Jerusalem said, he has Beelzebub. And by the ruler of the demons, he casts out demons.

So he called them to himself and he said to them in parables, how can Satan cast out Satan? If a kingdom is divided against itself, that kingdom cannot stand.

And if a house is divided against itself, that house cannot stand. And if Satan has risen up against himself and is divided, he cannot stand. But he has an end.

No one can enter a strong man's house and plunder his goods unless he first binds the strong man. And then he will plunder his house. Now assuredly, I say to you, all sins will be forgiven the sons of men.

And whatever blasphemies they may utter. But he who blasphemes against the Holy Spirit never has forgiveness, but is subject to eternal condemnation. Because, they said, he has an unclean spirit.

[3 : 29] Then his brothers and his mother came. And standing outside, they sent to him, calling him. And a multitude was sitting around him. And they said to him, look, your mother and your brothers are outside seeking you.

But he answered them saying, well, who is my mother or my brothers? And he looked around in a circle at those who sat about him and said, here are my mother and my brothers.

For whoever does the will of God is my brother and my sister and my mother. So, I think this whole passage is tied together.

And it may not seem like it. The first part of what we read seems a little bit odd. It doesn't read. It doesn't come across, at least to me, as very clear. But we'll read this again, back to verse 20.

Then the multitude came together again so that they could not so much as eat. Jesus and his 12 disciples are just trying to have a meal. And there are so many people gathered around. They're trying to either get a miracle or watch a miracle or hear what Jesus has to say.

[4 : 30] So, these huge crowds built up around him. This says this, but when his own people heard about this, they went out to lay hold of him. For they said, he is out of his mind.

Now, who is his own people? Well, it seems, and again, it's not necessarily clear. It doesn't say specifically who it was. But it sounds like these are people that knew him.

People from his own town. Likely, even, his family. And as we read at the end of this chapter here, we see that his family is there and they want to see him.

And so, it's likely that that's what this is talking about. Now, why would his family think that he's a nut? That he's out of his mind?

That he's insane? Well, Jesus was doing and saying some pretty incredible things. Some pretty fantastical things, if you will.

[5 : 34] And so, you can imagine, somebody is going about claiming to be the Messiah. And it wasn't like that was something that was unheard of.

That was something that many people did throughout history. They claimed to be the Messiah. And Jesus was making these kinds of claims.

There's a passage in John 7, verse 5. You don't have to turn there. But it mentions how when Jesus interacted with his family, it says this, For even his brothers did not believe in him.

So, during the time of Jesus' earthly ministry, which was three years, from the time that he was baptized by John the Baptist till the time that he was killed, was a three-year ministry. And during that time, his own family didn't really believe who he said he was.

And I'm sure they were confused. And you can imagine, if you grow up with somebody, especially your brother, you know, your brother, and you can imagine with Jesus, well, Jesus, I mean, he was a goody two-shoes.

[6 : 45] Right? Right? But the Messiah? Maybe he's a prophet. But I don't know about anything beyond that.

So, whoever this was, his family, or maybe people from Galilee that he knew, Nazareth, came, was like, we've got to do something about this.

This guy's going to start riots. He's just out of his mind. He's a nut. So, that was one response to Jesus' ministry. If we go to verse 22, here was another view of Jesus' ministry.

And the scribes who came down from Jerusalem, so these scribes were teachers of the law, and they had come down from Jerusalem to see Jesus. And this is what they said about him.

He has Beelzebub, and by the ruler of the demons, he casts out demons. So, Jesus was doing all kinds of things. He was doing miracles, healing people.

[7 : 46] He was casting out demons. And it says here in, let's see, where in Matthew 12, verse 22, is a parallel to this and Mark, the same account.

But sometimes you look at the different account in one of the other Gospels, and there's a little bit more information. In Matthew 12, verse 22, it says this, Then one was brought to him who was demon-possessed, blind and mute, and he healed him so that the blind and mute man both spoke and saw.

And so, there wasn't just a casting out of a demon, but there was also a healing of this man who was blind and mute. He couldn't see. He couldn't talk. And that would be incredible, right?

For somebody who cannot see and who cannot talk, it's hard to communicate if you can't see and you can't talk. To all of a sudden have the ability to speak and have the ability to see.

And so, their accusation was, well, Jesus, this man Jesus, these miracles aren't really from God.

[8 : 55] They're from Satan. They're from this particular idol or demon that they called Beelzebub.

Beelzebub is a word that literally means Lord of the Flies. In fact, there's a reference in the Old Testament to a god, the god of the, who is it?

The god of Ekron. And this is in 2 Kings, verse 1, chapter 2. 2 Kings, verse 1, chapter 2. It just says this, Now Ahiza fell through the lattice of his upper room in Samaria and was injured.

So he sent messengers and said to them, Go inquire of Beelzebub, the god of Ekron, whether I shall recover from this injury.

This was one of the kings of Israel. And he was not following the Lord. And so he had some kind of injury. He fell. He wanted to see, am I going to die?

[9 : 59] Am I going to make it? Instead of asking one of the prophets of the Lord, he said, Well, let's go ask the Lord of the Flies to see if he'll tell me. Beel just means a master or a lord.

And Zebub is a reference to flies. And so this was a specific idol, Beelzebub, back during the time of the kings.

But also, like we see actually throughout the Old Testament, there were these idols represented real evil spirits that had some kind of sway or control over the people that served them.

And so Jesus is being accused by the Pharisees of healing and casting out spirits, not by the power of God, but by the power of the devil, by the power of Satan.

You're working witchcraft. That's how you're doing these things. And why was that? Do you think that maybe Jesus was cursing God when he cast out the demon spirit?

[11 : 18] Or maybe he was, before he cast out the evil spirit, maybe he said, Hail Satan! Do you think that that's why they're accusing him of that? Was there some kind of good reason why they would accuse him?

No, there wasn't. Not at all. They accused him because he challenged their power.

Because he exposed their own hypocrisy and evil deeds. In another place, in the book of Matthew, Matthew chapter 10, Jesus actually kind of speaks to this accusation of him being controlled or in some way related to Beelzebub or serving basically Satan.

He says this in Matthew chapter 10, verse 24, in addressing his own disciples. He says, A disciple is not above his teacher, nor a servant above his master.

It is enough for a disciple that he be like his teacher and a servant like his master. If they have called the master of the house Beelzebub, how much more will they call those of his household?

[12 : 33] So Jesus said, This is my household. They're calling me Beelzebub, basically.

They're calling me a servant of Beelzebub. How much more, for those of you who are following me, my own disciples, how much more will they call you the same? And so he was just warning them.

He says, Listen, I know here's the idea you might get.

As a servant of the Messiah who Israel has been expecting for so many years, you might think that you're going to go out into Israel and you're going to tell them that the Messiah is here.

And I'm going to give you power and authority to heal the sick and to do miracles and to cast out demons. And the idea as a disciple that you might get is, I'm going to get really popular.

People are going to come and swarm and they're going to love us and it's just going to be great.

We're going to be so popular. But that's not what happened. That's not what happened with Jesus.

[13 : 40] It's not what happened with his disciples. And so he was warning them. You know, the same thing happens to disciples or followers of Jesus today. Maybe not to the same degree.

Depends. Depends on where you live. Depends on the circumstances of your life. Depends on where you live. But I see the same thing happening with God's people today.

One of the things we've talked about the last few weeks is that there's this battle against abortion violence here in the state of Ohio. And we're doing everything that we can to try to prevent the legalization of, or really not just the legalization, but the codifying in our Constitution here in Ohio of violence against little baby boys and girls.

And so you might think, well, hey, if we're going to stand up for the right to life of little baby boys and girls, just precious, in their mother's womb, sucking their thumb, playing with their toes, just waiting to see the sunshine, waiting to see their mom and dad, and we're fighting to prevent violence done against them, that that would be a popular idea.

But what are people, pro-lifers, anti-abortionists, whatever, called by those who are on the other side?

[15 : 11] Well, we're accused of violence against women. Just like Jesus was called a Satanist for casting out demons, those who will fight for the right to life of little baby boys and girls will be called violent.

You know, being a Christian has, there's an occupational hazard that comes along with being a Christian, especially an active Christian, who takes their faith seriously. Another one I can think about is, you know, you want to try to prevent, criminalize even, hospitals who would mutilate little, who would mutilate children.

Because that's, I guess, something that's become popular today. Changing genders. But if you fight against something like that, you're accused of being hateful, bigotry, all kinds of different names.

And then, as Christians, we want to proclaim the best news in all the world. We proclaim to the whole world that God has offered a free gift to anyone who's willing to receive it. The free gift is not money. It's not power. The free gift is to live forever. You can have eternal life with God. And all you have to do is trust in Jesus Christ, and that's it.

[16:47] You don't have to do any religious rituals. You don't have to try to be a better person. You don't have to try to keep all the commandments or all these different things. You just have to trust in Jesus Christ.

You don't have to go to church. You don't have to pay tithes. None of that. Just trust in Him. And there are those who, because of that message, would call you an intolerant bigot.

Do the other religions out there offer that same kind of thing? They don't even offer it. These kinds of false accusations are just an occupational hazard of being a Christian.

And so there might be a temptation, right, when these kinds of accusations come, and they will and they do. It's a stream of them. To think, well, I don't want to be seen as a bigot.

I don't want to be seen as, you know, somebody who's intolerant or oppressing women or whatever it might be. So I'm just going to take a step back.

[18:06] I won't get involved in any of these things. I'm not going to share my faith. I'm not going to get involved in these battles for the right to life of little baby boys and girls or other matters of justice.

And so there's that temptation to take a step back. And I think, like Jesus, did Jesus take a step back when He was accused of being a Satanist? And He said, listen, here, and we'll continue on and read what He has to say.

And He uses an apologetic. He uses a logical argument here. It says in verse 23, so He called them to Himself. Now, I'm not sure who He's talking about.

Was He calling the 12 disciples to Himself or was He calling the scribes to Himself? It's not clear.

And He said to them in parables, how can Satan cast out Satan?

It's like, this does not make any logical sense, guys. If a kingdom is divided against itself, that kingdom cannot stand. And if a house is divided against itself, that house cannot stand.

[19:10] Whether it's a house, a family, if the family is in constant division, attacking one another, can that house have any kind of success? Can it go anywhere?

Can a kingdom, where the king and all of his servants and maybe his dukes and nobles or whatever it might be, are all fighting with each other and against each other, can that kingdom stand?

And if Satan has risen up against himself and is divided, he cannot stand, but he has an end. It's over. If Satan's kingdom is divided against itself, if he's just fighting against himself, then his whole enterprise comes to an end.

It can't have any fruit. No one can enter a strong man's house and plunder his goods unless he first binds the strong man and then he will plunder his house.

And so Jesus just makes a logical argument. This is something that we can do as Christians, right? Just say, hey, folks, listen. Just think about it. Just think it through. Whatever it might be.

[20:19] And this is what we call apologetics. And there's all kinds of great ministries out there that can teach how to defend the faith, how to defend our viewpoint, whether it be a viewpoint on a matter of justice or whether it be a viewpoint based on the deity of Christ or just the existence of God.

You just walk people through the logic of what we believe. Then we get to the next part.

And he says, Assuredly, I say to you, all sins will be forgiven the sons of men and whatever blasphemies they may utter.

But he who blasphemes against the Holy Spirit never has forgiveness but is subject to eternal condemnation because, they said, he has an unclean spirit.

So at the very end here, he explains, or the author here explains why he said that. What was he referring to? So it was because they accused him, Jesus himself, of having an unclean spirit that he said this.

[21:28] What is blasphemy anyway? Blasphemy. Blasphemy, all it means is to revile or slander or speak evil, defame someone.

And so when you speak against any individual, you can blaspheme against them. And it's one thing to do that with, you know, somebody, another person, but to do that against God or Jesus himself is quite another thing.

And so he talks about how serious this is to blaspheme against him. And then he talks about this blasphemy against the Holy Spirit. You know, it's interesting, he talks about this blasphemy, this sin of speaking against the Holy Spirit is not something that will be forgiven.

And that has given many people the world over who have read the Bible great pause to consider. The Bible is a book of, it seems, unlimited forgiveness.

God has been willing since the very beginning of the creation to forgive all kinds of sins. So when it says here that there's this kind of, certain kind of sin that won't be forgiven, boy, we probably better figure out what that is.

[22 : 56] in Matthew 12, verse 32, the same parallel, the passage in the parallel portion here in Matthew, he uses the phrase, he says, it won't be forgiven either in this age or in the age to come.

So not in this age nor in the age to come. And so lots of people worry, have I committed that unpardonable sin? How do I know? You know, it has been the case that in mental institutions, if you go to a mental institution, people who are committed with severe mental illness, this is something that you will hear over and over and over again.

People who are convinced that they have committed the unpardonable sin. So what exactly does it mean to blaspheme against the Holy Spirit?

Because that's what this unpardonable sin is, right? Let's see if we can try to figure out what it is.

Or, at the very least, what it isn't. Sometimes you have to kind of lower your, when it comes to difficult passages, maybe go for a smaller goal.

But first, I want to talk about this in the culture. I remember about 15 years ago, and I looked this up, this is in 2007, there was a group, an atheist group, called the Rational Response Squad, and they were out there to squash religion and specifically Christianity.

[24 : 37] And so, as part of their outreach, they got on YouTube, the early days of YouTube, and challenged people, fellow atheists, especially young people, to be bold about their atheism.

And they put out a challenge, and they called it the blasphemy challenge. This is what they said.

This was part of what they put out there. It's simple. You record a short message, damning yourself to hell, and upload it to YouTube, and then the Rational Response Squad will send you a free The God Who Wasn't There DVD.

It's that easy. You may damn yourself to hell however you would like, but somewhere in your video, you must say this phrase, I deny the Holy Spirit. Why? Because according to Mark 3.29 in the Holy Bible, whoever blasphemes against the Holy Spirit will never be forgiven.

He is guilty of an eternal sin. Jesus will forgive you for just about anything, but He won't forgive you for denying the existence of the Holy Spirit ever. This is a one-way road you're taking here.

So this was a challenge put out, and they got hundreds and hundreds and hundreds of videos of people who are willing to boldly, according to them anyway, speak blasphemies against the Holy Spirit.

[25 : 53] But is what they say here, is that accurate? Because what did they say? It's blasphemy against the Holy Spirit, according to them, was denying the existence of the Holy Spirit. Is that what's going on here?

Let's talk about it. I want to actually talk about two different views. and we'll see if you think one is more compelling or the other. And the first one is that this idea of blaspheming the Holy Spirit, what specifically was targeted at the Pharisees and accusing them of actually committing this sin.

So were the Pharisees doing this sin that Jesus was warning about? The other one that we're going to look at is more about a warning about something in the future.

So this first kind of perspective is Jesus is accusing the Pharisees of doing something right then and there. That their accusation of Him basically being a servant of Satan, that is the blasphemy of the Holy Spirit.

And it's basically accusing or attributing the power of God to the devil. rejecting the Messiah, rejecting God, based against all knowledge, against miraculous witness to the truth of it.

[27 : 26] And so this view is that if you have so much light, so much clear evidence that God is who He says He is, that Jesus is who He says He is, and even with all that clear light, you still reject God, then that is the blasphemy against the Holy Spirit.

It's the Holy Spirit that's giving witness to Jesus through the miracles and a lot of times the Bible will reference that the miracles of Jesus and the disciples are all through the power of the Holy Spirit.

And so this rejection of the Holy Spirit is a rejection of the evidence, the power, the witness that the Holy Spirit is giving through these miracles that are being done.

And so if you are like these scribes and you accuse Jesus of being a Satanist or a demoniac of some kind, even in light of all this evidence, then that is an unforgivable sin.

I'm not sure I would land there. And the primary reason, and we're going to actually look at Acts here in a second, so if you want to turn over to Acts and we're going to be looking more in the book of Acts.

[29 : 01] In Acts chapter 3, it's later on. This is after Jesus had been killed, crucified, and rose from the dead and he had ascended into heaven.

And he's preaching at Solomon's porch after a lame man was healed. And he's telling them about Jesus.

This is part of his, this is Peter, he's one of the disciples, he is a witness to the resurrection of Christ. And he's speaking to the Jewish people. And he says this in verse 16, And his name through faith in his name has made this man strong whom you see and know.

Yes, the faith which comes through him has given him this perfect soundness in the presence of you all. But these things which God, oh excuse me, verse 17, Yet now brethren, I know that you did it in ignorance as did also your rulers.

So there's this opportunity that's being provided to the Jewish people. And it's not just the Jewish people, but it's the leaders, which includes the scribes and the Pharisees.

[30 : 18] And he's saying, hey listen, you all rejected Jesus, you were part of him being crucified, but here's another opportunity. And that doesn't sound like an unforgivable sin, right?

An unforgivable sin, there is no more opportunity. So here, even these scribes and Pharisees, the rulers of Israel, who rejected Jesus and accused him of being Satan's worker, there's another opportunity, another opportunity to turn to him.

The second view, which I find to be a little bit more compelling, is really a more, I call it a dispensational view.

It really requires an understanding of the context in which Jesus was ministering. We've talked about many times in the past that Jesus' ministry, his three-year ministry on the earth, was to a specific people group.

It wasn't to the whole world. And who was it to? The Jews, to Israel. His ministry was to Israel. In fact, he says, and this is in Matthew 15, 24, if you're not familiar, Jesus says, I was not sent but to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.

[31 : 33] His whole ministry was to the Jews. And he actually told his disciples, he says, I want you to go out and preach the gospel of the kingdom. And he said, don't go into the way of the Gentiles.

Only go to these lost sheep of the house of Israel. This is who our ministry is to. And so, in that context, maybe we can think about this from a God and Israel perspective.

You know, you can kind of look at God's outreach to Israel. Part of Jesus' ministry was to try to reach out to Israel and have them turn back to God.

That was his message. A message turn back to God. It was the message of John the Baptist, a message of Jesus, a message of the disciples. The kingdom is coming. The kingdom for Israel is coming.

Turn back to God. And how long had God been trying to get the people to turn back to him? Was this a new thing? Had they just recently kind of turned?

[32 : 36] Or was this something that had been going on for generations and generations and generations? Turn to the book of, or if you're still in Mark, go to Mark chapter 12 and we're going to read something.

Jesus tells a parable about the wicked vine dresser.

And I'm just going to read through this real quickly. Then he began to speak to them in parables. A man planted a vineyard and set a hedge around it, dug a place for the wine vat and built a tower, and he leased it to the vine dressers and went into a far country.

Now at vintage time he sent a servant to the vine dressers that he might receive some of the fruit of the vineyard from the vine dressers. And they took him and beat him and sent him away empty handed. He gave responsibility to these group of people called vine dressers to take care of the garden, to take care of the vineyard.

And then he went away. And he starts sending people to get some fruit from his vineyard.

[33 : 53] And then it goes on. And it kind of lifts on just to kind of go through this pretty quickly. Sends many people. These people represent what? This is God sending prophets to Israel to say turn back to me.

I want to see some fruit in this kingdom that I've established, in this people group that I've established. I want to see some fruit. He sends the prophets. And what happens to the prophets? Are they heralded, celebrated?

No. Almost all of them are killed. They're hated and killed. Verse 5, And again he sent another, and him they killed, and many others. And then verse 6, Therefore, still having one son, his beloved, he also sent him to them last, saying, They will at least respect my son.

But those vine dressers said amongst themselves, This is the heir. Let us kill him, and the inheritance will be ours. So they took him and killed him and cast him out of the vineyard. Therefore, what will the owner of the vineyard do? He will come and destroy the vine dressers and give the vineyard to others. Who's the son?

[35 : 05] That's Jesus. So here in this parable, we see that God, throughout the Old Testament, tried to get Israel to bear some fruit, to repent, to turn to him, without much success.

There was some pockets of success individually, but as a whole, it was a failure. Then he said, I'll send my son. They'll respect my son. And what do we see that happens with Jesus?

This is what Jesus is talking about. I'm fairly certain. Hey, they're calling me a Satanist. They're calling me a son or somebody that serves, a servant of Beelzebub, a servant of Satan.

And notice here in this parable, do they, are they, are they questioning whether this is really the son in this parable? The vine dressers?

No, they know who it is, don't they? They know that this is the son because they say, hey, if we can get rid of him, we'll become the heirs. So Jesus said, you know, going back to Mark chapter 3, what does he say?

[36 : 27] Assuredly I say to you, verse 28, all sins will be forgiven the son of men and whatever blasphemies they may utter. You can utter blasphemies against God the father.

You can reject him. You can utter blasphemies against the son. You can reject him, at least, I think he's talking about during this three-year period of his ministry in Israel.

But what about the Holy Spirit? We see this stage in which the prophets are sent from the father and then the son comes. There's actually this third stage.

This talked about both in the Old Testament and then in the New. After Jesus left, he ascended into heaven after his ministry to Israel was over.

And then what happened? Jesus said something. He told his disciples, I'm going to go, but it's good for you because when I go, I'm sending someone else.

[37 : 34] And who was it? The Holy Spirit. That time is the time of the Spirit, the time of the Holy Spirit. I think there's another parable that talks about this.

It's less clear if you turn to Luke chapter 13. Luke chapter 13. Verse 6. It's short and it kind of, it's maybe hard to discern what he's talking about.

But I'd like to give it a go here. Luke chapter 13, verse 6. He also spoke this parable. A certain man had a fig tree planted in his vineyard. And he came seeking fruit on it and found none.

Notice the similarity. He's looking for fruit. I want some fruit. It's in a vineyard. This time it's a fig tree. Then he said to the keeper of his vineyard, look, for three years I have come seeking fruit on this fig tree and find none.

Cut it down. Why does it use up the ground? It's a waste of space. Let's just cut the tree down. For three years I've been looking for fruit. Well, three years?

[38 : 42] I thought that God had been looking for fruit from Israel for hundreds of years, thousands of years even. What is this three years that he's talking about? Yeah, I think the ministry of Jesus, right, was how many years?

Three years Jesus came and ministered to Israel, calling them to turn to God. So this is God the Father saying, listen, they haven't borne any fruit.

It's been three years. I sent my son. Nothing. No fruit. Forget about it. Cut it down. Now, the keeper of the vineyard said this, but he answered and said to him, Sir, let it alone this year also, just one more year, until I dig around it and I fertilize it.

And if it bears fruit, well, but if not, after that, you can cut it down. So I think that speaks, he's speaking to this time after Jesus' ministry is up.

And here's this time of, he calls it fertilization, fertilization. We're going to fertilize this time of the ministry of the Holy Spirit. There's the time of the Father with the prophets.

[39 : 51] He sends the prophets. The time of the Son. And then this time of the Holy Spirit. In Matthew 3, verse 11, Jesus said this.

No, excuse me. This was John the Baptist. I indeed baptize you with water under repentance, but he who is coming after me is mightier than I, whose sandals I am not worthy to carry. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire.

The Holy Spirit's coming. But Jesus himself said this in John 7, 39. But this he spoke concerning the Spirit, whom those believing in him would receive, for the Holy Spirit was not yet given, because Jesus was not yet glorified.

We see the Holy Spirit active throughout the Old Testament, throughout the ministry of Jesus. But notice how Jesus here says the Holy Spirit has not yet been given. There's this other event that's going to happen in which the Holy Spirit will kind of take the front seat.

But it's not until Jesus is, what, glorified. He's ascended. He's gone back up to glory. And then, let's turn to the book of Acts.

[41 : 05] And we're just, we're going to look at a few more verses. Acts chapter 2, verse 16. There's that day of Pentecost.

And the Holy Spirit comes into that upper room. And there are the cloven tongues of fire, it says. And there's the speaking in tongues. And then people hear the speaking in tongues.

And they hear their own languages. And there's Jews all out on the streets. And they're saying, this is crazy. I'm hearing people speak in my own language. The praises of God. And I know they don't. I know they're not from where I'm from.

How do they speak this language? And they gave opportunity for Peter to preach to them. And he preached the resurrection of Christ from the dead. And that Israel should turn to him. But what Jesus says, or what Peter says here in Acts chapter 2, verse 16, he says, this is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel.

This is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel. And he quotes Joel. The outpouring of the Spirit. This is the outpouring of the Spirit. This is the time of the Holy Spirit.

[42 : 13] Spirit. This is what you're witnessing. Let's look at verse 32 and 33. Peter says, let me see, where are we at?

Yeah, verse 32. This Jesus God has raised up, of which we are all witnesses. Therefore, being exalted to the right hand of God and having received from the Father, the promise of the Holy Spirit, he poured out this, which you now see and hear.

Jesus rose from the dead. We're witnesses to it. And this that you see is the outpouring of God's Spirit. This is to be a sign to you, a witness to you, that this man whom you crucified is who he said he was.

Turn to chapter 6. We see the Holy Spirit at work in the disciples and many other followers of Jesus to be witnesses of the resurrection of Jesus.

A witness to Israel, to the people of Israel, to the leaders of Israel. Stephen, he became one of the helpers.

[43 : 42] He was chosen to serve among the people there in Israel and Jerusalem. And it says in verse 8, chapter 6, verse 8, and Stephen, full of faith and power, did great wonders and signs among the people.

Then there arose some from what is called the synagogue of the freedmen, disputing with Stephen. Verse 10, and they were not able to resist the wisdom and the spirit by which he spoke.

They weren't able to resist the spirit by which he spoke, the Holy Spirit speaking through him. Don't turn there, but in Luke chapter 12, verse 10, you can write this down if you want.

Luke chapter 10, verse 12, Jesus actually uses this blasphemy of the spirit to talk about what's going to happen in the future. He says this, he says, and anyone who speaks a word against the son of man, it will be forgiven him.

If you speak against the son of man, that's forgivable. But to him who blasphemes against the Holy Spirit, it will not be forgiven. And you might think, well, that's where it ends.

[44 : 51] And then he just, Jesus goes on to talk about a different subject, but I don't think that's the case. It continues on in verse 11. Now, when they bring you to the synagogues and magistrates and authorities, do not worry about how or what you should answer or what you should say, for the

Holy Spirit will teach you in that very hour what you ought to say.

Don't worry about using your own words. The Holy Spirit is going to speak through you. You don't have to prepare. You don't have to be ready. You just have to be willing. The Holy Spirit will speak through you.

He's going to speak to this people. You just need to be willing vessels. Notice how he says this in reference to the blasphemy against the Holy Spirit.

I think that's what Jesus is talking about. Rejecting the blasphemy against the Holy Spirit, slandering the Holy Spirit. This is Israel.

God sent the prophets. God the Father sent the prophets. Jesus himself, God the Son came. Now, in this last and final phase, this last and final opportunity to turn to God, he sends the Holy Spirit.

[46 : 08] Don't reject the message of the Holy Spirit. There's not a fourth phase. It's not coming. This is your final opportunity.

Don't pass it up. But we see with Stephen, he preaches to those Israelites. And he preaches the whole, he starts, I forget exactly where he starts, but way back in the Old Testament, all the way through what happened to Jesus and his death, burial, and his resurrection from the dead.

And if we look at the end of his sermon there, Acts chapter 7, we'll start at 51. This is after he's gotten through his whole, he got through his whole message.

And he says this, verse 51, you stiff-necked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, you always resist the Holy Spirit. As your fathers did, so do you.

Which of the prophets did your fathers not persecute? And they killed those who foretold the coming of the just one, of whom you now have become the portrayers and murderers, who have received the law by the direction of angels and have not kept it.

[47 : 37] He's saying you keep resisting the Holy Spirit. You resisted during the days of the prophets. You resisted the ministry of God the Son himself. Here's your final chance.

What does it say in verse 54? When they heard these things, they were cut to the heart and they gnashed at him with their teeth. But he being full of the Holy Spirit, gazed into heaven and saw the glory of God and Jesus standing at the right hand of God.

And he said, look, I see the heavens opened and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God. Then they cried out with a loud voice, stopped their ears and ran at him with one accord and they cast him out of the city and they stoned him.

And the witnesses lay down their clothes at the feet of a young man named Saul. This is a pivotal time in the time of the nation of Israel.

Stephen was preaching to them through the power of the Holy Spirit, through the ministry of the Holy Spirit. This is your last chance, guys. And the rejection continued, even in that ministry of the Holy Spirit.

[49 : 02] So here's the question. Can I commit the unpardonable sin? Have I? I don't think so at all.

Even if we consider both of the kind of options, whether, was it those Pharisees right then and there who accused Jesus of being a Satanist, basically? Was that the unpardonable sin?

Was it later on with these Jews? We live in a different age. We're not Israel. We're a different group. And God has offered to the whole world, specifically, he talks about this gospel to the Gentiles, this good news to the Gentiles. Whoever trusts in him can receive forgiveness of sins.

In Colossians chapter 2, verse 13, it says this, And you, he's talking to believers, being dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, he has made alive together with him, forgiving you all trespasses.

[50 : 14] All of them. Having wiped out the handwriting of requirements that was against us, which was contrary to us, and he has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross.

Notice how he didn't just pardon and forgive sin. He took the whole law away. All the commandments, he just took it out of the way, nailed it to the cross. You know, in this day and age, in the age in which we live, every sin that you might ever commit, whether it was 20 years ago or 20 minutes ago, can be forgiven, can be pardoned.

And God is willing to pardon, no matter what it is. So many people have cursed God for years and years and years.

And then somehow, some way, there was a softening that came. God softened their hearts. And they turned to him. And did God say, no way, too late?

No. All those who come to him, this says in Romans, I think it's Romans, he will in no way cast out. That's what it says.

[51 : 39] Whoever comes to him, whoever you are, no matter what you've done, he's not going to cast you out. He's going to accept you if you're willing to come to him. That doesn't mean that every sin is pardoned.

You have to come to him. But if you do, he's willing to pardon every single sin that you might commit. And then, once you do so, you come to him.

It says this in 2 Corinthians 5.21, one of my favorite verses. For he made him who knew no sin. That's Jesus. Jesus died on a cross.

He never sinned. Never committed any sins. He made him who knew no sin to be sin for us. He took sin on himself. He took our sin on himself.

That we might become the righteousness of God in him. Not only are our sins forgiven, but if you stand trusting in Christ, you can rightly call yourself the righteousness of God.

[52 : 47] How in the world could that possibly be? Why would God do such a thing? I don't completely get it.

But he did. We can stand righteous 100%, not 99% righteous. 100% righteous in his sight just by standing in him.

Trusting in him. We're going to finish there. I'm actually going to speak a little bit to this follow-up, the rest of this passage.

If we want to get a mic ready, we'll go ahead and take a couple of questions. The rest of this passage is his brothers and his mother came, and they were standing outside, and they called to him, and there was a multitude standing around, and they said to him, hey, your mom, your brothers and your sisters, they're out here.

They want to see you. But he answered, and he said to them, well, who is my mother or my brothers? That seems kind of rude. You know, if you're at somebody's house and your mom comes knocking at the door, instead of saying, oh, we'll let her in, you say, well, these people over here, they're really my mother and my brothers.

[54 : 06] Seems kind of rude. You know, Jesus was on a mission. He had an important mission. Really, he didn't have time for family matters. He just didn't. But what he was saying, what, is that, hey, there's this other family that I need you to know about.

It's called the family of God. And those who have joined themselves to me, they're my brothers. They're family. And that matters even more than biological family.

Even more. And we experience that today, don't we? We sometimes call ourselves, between us, right, brothers and sisters in Christ. We are family. We are part of God's family.

And, you know, some people grow up with families that kind of stink. They do. Moms or dads that weren't that great. Sometimes they didn't even know who they were.

Brothers and sisters, ooh, weren't awesome. But when we join ourselves to the family of God, we can have a new family.

[55 : 09] And that's what I think Jesus was talking about here. It's important, you know, our biological family. We have duties and obligations for our biological family and so many opportunities for love and relationship within our biological family.

But now we can expand that to the body of Christ. I'm going to end right there and see if there's any thoughts or questions on all this before we finally close.

Anybody have anything? Anything? Anything? Anything? Okay.

Well, in there, let's close in a word of prayer. Father, thank you for your word. We bless you. We thank you for all that you've done for us. The grace that you have poured out for us that we might have eternal life just by trusting you.

I pray right now that if there's anybody in this room that has not done that, that you would work on their hearts. To point them towards just simple humility and faith, just humbling themselves and looking to you for forgiveness and a righteousness that has no end.

[56 : 31] I pray this in Jesus' name. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.