

**Sermon Notes of
Guest Speaker Jim Petty's Sermon on December 31, 2017**

"Just What is the UNFORGIVEABLE SIN?"

[In today's sermon, "Just What is the UNFORGIVEABLE SIN?", guest speaker James Petty shows from Scripture that there will be a time in the future for people to repent of what's called the "unforgivable sin".]

Notes

Introduction:

Matthew 12:30, "He who is not with me [Jesus] is against me, and he who does not gather with me scatters. 31) Therefore I say to you, any sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven people, but blasphemy against the Spirit shall not be forgiven. 32) Whoever speaks a word against the Son of Man, it shall be forgiven him, but whoever speaks against the Holy Spirit, it shall not be forgiven him, either in this age or in the age to come.

- These are the words of Jesus giving a warning to the Pharisees and to the leaders of the nation.
- Today's message isn't to minimize the terrible transgression that took place by the religious leaders wanting to have Jesus killed.
- Nor is it to minimize the horrible consequences that had inflicted the nation.
- But rather, today's message will show the grace of God.
- Now initially, it's hard to see the grace of God in these verses, but hopefully by the end of the sermon, you will.

- So, Jesus came to the Children of Israel and was offering to them the Kingdom of God.
- Jesus went from city to city, town to town, synagogue to synagogue preaching the Kingdom of God and that He was the Messiah, that he was the Son of God, and that they had an opportunity to enter that Kingdom.
- Now before we get into the answers here, let's go over quickly the purpose of God and show what His plan is for humanity.

The plan of God:

Genesis 1:26, And he (God) said, "Let us make man to our image and our likeness..."

- So the Triune God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit have made a plan to have a relationship with mankind and bring us into a relationship with them.
- According to the Bible, history is moving toward a goal: the realization of the Kingdom of God in time & space. Salvation takes place in time.

Genesis 1:31, God saw all that he had made, and it was very good. And there was evening, and there was morning – the sixth day. 2:1, Thus, the heavens and the earth were completed in all their vast array.

- So, we have in the plan of God the physical creation taking place, but it's not the whole creation, but it is the physical part of the creation.

Genesis 2:2, And God blessed the seventh day and made it holy...

- The Hebrew word for "holy" is *Godhash* and it means, "to enable people to be qualified to be in the presence of the Holy God."
- So now we have the physical creation, but God is also beginning His spiritual creation with the seventh day.
- And the seventh day is not a 24 hour time period, but continues on, because there is no evening and morning of the seventh day like there is of the first six days.
- There is no 24-hour period to bring about the spiritual creation of man into God's image.
- This time is unending until the salvation of mankind is completed.
- Phase one is the physical creation of mankind.
- And phase two is the spiritual creation of mankind.
- Now God told Adam, "Here is the tree of life, but don't take of the other tree, the tree of the knowledge of good and evil."
- But mankind chose the "tree of good and evil" and thus refused the Spirit that God made available for them at that time.
- So, as a result, God cut off access to the tree of life and access to the Spirit as we read in Genesis 3:24.

Genesis 3:24, He (God) placed...cherubim and a flaming sword flashing back and forth to guard the way to the tree of life.

- All mankind has experienced, since then, the suffering of life apart from God, and then dying.
- Now when Jesus came to the earth, He opened the door once again to have access to the Spirit and to life.
- So the whole world changed once Jesus came to this earth.
- Now let's go back to the Old Testament and take a look at the unforgivable sin at that time.

The Unforgivable Sin in the Old Testament:

1 Corinthians 1:11, Now these things happened to them as an example, and they were written for our instruction upon whom the ends of the ages have come.

- The nation of Israel was a special generation of people as they saw what no other generation had ever seen or experienced – they saw the glory of God.

Deuteronomy 4:32, Has anything so great as this ever happened, or has anything like it ever been heard? 33) Has any other people heard the voice of God speaking out of fire...?

- So Israel, called out of Egypt, was a very special generation, just like the generation of people at the time when Jesus was on this earth.

Ancient Israel is put to the test – will they believe?

- They were going to have to make a decision about what they were going to do, just like the people living when Jesus was here.

Numbers 13:1 The Lord said to Moses, send some men (chosen leaders) to explore the land of Canaan, which I am giving to the Israelites.

- These leaders went up into the land of Canaan for 40 days and saw the beauty and productivity of the land.
- God wanted them to possess the land.
- When these leaders come back to the nation of Israel, what did they say?

Numbers 13:32 And they spread a bad report among the Israelites.

- They talked about giants in the land.

Numbers 14:10 The whole assembly talked about stoning them [Moses and Aaron].

- The people believed those leaders who went to Canaan and wanted to stone Moses and Aaron, just like the people wanted to stone Jesus in His day.
- So God sends them all away from Canaan since they have refused to obey Him and go into the Promised Land.
- God then tells them:

Numbers 14:22, Surely all the men who have seen my glory and my signs which I performed ... and have not obeyed my voice 23) shall by no means see the land which I swore to their fathers, nor shall any of these who spurned me see it.

- So this was an unforgivable sin as God would not allow that generation to ever enter into the Promised Land.

1 Corinthians 10:5, Nevertheless, God was not pleased with most of them, for they were struck down in the wilderness.

- But there were some who did enter after 40 years.
- Those who entered included Joshua (filled with the spirit of wisdom, Deut. 34:9), Caleb (he had a different spirit, Num. 14:29), and the children 19 and under (who had not hardened their hearts).
- This is just like what happen in Jesus' day, where the majority of Israelites blew it, but there were a handful who accepted Jesus and entered into the Kingdom of God.
- So there are similarities between the Old Testament examples and the time when Jesus was here.

The coming of Jesus:

- The whole world changed when the King, Deliverer, and Savior was sent to this earth by God.
- The world was never been the same again.
- Jesus gave humanity access to the Holy Spirit and began to expand the Kingdom of God which has continued to expand from that point forward.

Genesis 49:10, The scepter shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come; and to him shall the gathering of the people be.

- So Jesus is sent to the earth and He is king, our legitimate ruler
- The Dutton Basic Bible translation of the latter part of Genesis 49:10 captures a very crucial part of the true understanding. It states: "till he comes who has the right to it and the people will put themselves under his rule."
- So now we see the Kingdom is based on willful obedience by the people.
- It's not like the kingdoms of this world, where the rulers come in and force people to their way of thinking and force them to obey.
- The one who rules has the mightiest army.
- That's how Satan rules – by intimidation, by brute force.
- Now the Kingdom of God is different, whereby people recognize that Jesus is the rightful king and say, "I will commit myself to Jesus."
- Jesus saw to it that the nation of Israel and its leaders would have to make a decision whether they were for him or against him.
- To be in the Kingdom of God, one has to say, "I accept You Jesus as the King, as the Messiah."
- There is also a need to respond to the Holy Spirit, who is able to transform us and to change our nature.
- So Jesus goes forth in the land doing miracles and providing signs to establish that He is the Messiah.
- And the message He is proclaiming is the good news about the Kingdom of God.
- Jesus also wanted the people to make a decision, "Will you accept me as your King or not?"

The purpose of Jesus:

Matthew 8:2, A man full of leprosy came and knelt before him ... 3) Jesus reached out his hand and touched the man...

- This was probably the first time the leper had ever been touched.
- The law told people to remain 6 feet away from a leper.
- And when the wind was blowing, you had to stay a 100 feet away because the leper was very contagious.

...he said, "Be clean!" Immediately he was cured of his leprosy ... 4) Jesus said, "Go show yourself to the priest."

- Luke, the physician, tells us that the man was "full of leprosy" meaning he was probably a just a few days away from death.
- Now what's also interesting is that the leper recognizes the Messiahship of Jesus.
- Now there are two miracles, according to the rabbis, the first one is a regular miracle so to speak, which many of the priests and prophets performed.
- Then they taught in the synagogues that there were some miracles that only the Messiah could do.

- One of those Messianic miracles was to heal a leper.
- In Leviticus 13 and 14, there are detailed instructions of what the priests should do when a leper, who was cleansed, came to them. But no cleansed leper ever came to them.
- So, Jesus deliberately sent the cleansed leper to the priesthood down in Jerusalem to get the leaders to start investigating His messianic claims and come to a decision regarding Him – that He was the Messiah as predicted by the prophets.
- So first the religious leaders began to investigate whether this man was ever a leper.
- As a result, a team of observers commissioned by the Great Sanhedrin is sent to check out this Messianic claim.
- They can't ask any questions in stage one. They can only observe. This was dictated by the Great Sanhedrin.
- So, Jewish religious leaders from all over came to investigate Jesus as Luke 5:17 tells us.

The next miracle of Jesus, which is under observation:

Matthew 9:2, Jesus said to the paralytic, “Take heart son; your sins are forgiven.

- Now that is a provocative statement, which Jesus does deliberately because He is identifying to the Pharisees who He is – that he is the Son of God who is able to forgive sin.
- Jesus does this very cleverly without boldly saying, “I am the Son of God.”
- So the Pharisees can't run to the Romans and tell them “Jesus says he's God.”

3) At this point some of the teachers of the law said to themselves “This fellow is blaspheming!”

4) Knowing their thoughts, Jesus said ... 6) ”that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth ...” 7) then he said to the paralytic, “Get up take your mat and go home...” 8) When the crowd saw this, they were filled with awe; and they praised God...

- The Pharisees now go back to the Sanhedrin in Jerusalem and give a verdict. It is a significant moment.
- Now they move to stage two, which is the stage of interrogation.
- The religious leaders will now follow Jesus and ask questions, raise objections, and ultimately try to trap Him.

Matthew 12:22, Then they brought him a demon-possessed man who was blind and mute, and Jesus healed him, so that he could talk and see. 23) All the people were astonished and said, “Could this be the son of David?” [meaning the Messiah]

- Why were the people astonished?
- The rabbis taught that only the Messiah can deal with a demon that is mute.
- Now some of the rabbis were able to cast out demons by asking the demon what his name was first.
- But the rabbis couldn't cast out an obstinate mute demon. They said only the Messiah could.

The Blasphemy Against the Spirit Occurs:

Matthew 12:24, But when the Pharisees heard this, they said, “It is only by Beelzebub, the prince of demons, that this fellow drives out demons.”

- So there is a breach between the Pharisees and Jesus.
- And it’s a total rejection of Jesus.
- This is a big turning point in the ministry of Jesus.
- He will no longer talk about the Kingdom of God, but instead will preach in parables.
- What the Pharisees did was to commit blasphemy.

Blasphemy – A plan devised that looks for an opportunity to accuse, to work against the activity of the Spirit of God by the use of slander or other defamatory language to make one’s thought publicly known with the purpose to discredit or ruin the legitimacy of God’s activity, particularly with self-serving motive. It will not waver.

- The Pharisees and the other religious leaders were committed to rejecting Jesus. There was no turning back.
- They were plotting to stop Jesus from further influencing the people.
- This is a horrendous sin.
- And Matthew 21:43, shows the end result.

Matthew 21:43, “Therefore I tell you that the kingdom of God shall be taken away from you and given to a nation who will bring forth its fruit.

- Jesus is now dealing with his followers who are now the sons and daughters of the Kingdom, because they have made a willful commitment to follow Him.
- For the time being, it’s over for Israel because of the decision they have made.
- Jesus had given them one last sign – His resurrection.
- But the religious leaders tried to hide the fact that Jesus was, indeed, resurrected and bribed the Roman soldiers to lie about what happened.
- So the religious leaders refused to repent.
- This is what they were like:

Acts 7:51, You men who are stiff-necked and uncircumcised in heart and ears are always resisting the Holy Spirit; you are doing just as your fathers did. (Stephen)

- The generation that lived in Israel at the time of Jesus had been a special generation.
- They had seen and experienced the glory of Jesus, His miraculous works and grace and truth.
- It was a greater glory than that which their forefathers had seen.

John 1:14 – And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us, and we saw his glory.

The unforgivable sin:

- So what was the unforgivable sin?

- The unforgiveable sin was the national rejection of Jesus by that generation.
- Jesus gives them a strong warning, but there was still time to change.
- In Matthew 12, Jesus gives the example of what's going to happen to them using the example of an unclean spirit.

Matthew 12:43-45, “When an unclean spirit goes out of a man, it passes through waterless places seeking rest and does not find it. 44) Then it says, ‘I will return to my house I left.’ When it does, it finds it clean, unoccupied and swept. 45) Then it goes and takes with it seven other spirits more wicked than itself, and they enter and dwell there; and that state of the man is worse than the first. So this shall also be with this evil generation.”

- However, while all this is happening, we find out that not everyone in the nation suffered this severe judgement.
- Just like the Exodus generation, those who were of a different spirit (that of the Holy Spirit) entered the Kingdom of God.
- Yes, we know that some of this generation did enter the Kingdom of God.

Now the grace of God:

- In all of this, the incomparable and indescribable grace of God comes into play.
- God is not going to let mankind prevail in this state, but rather He's going to intervene with grace and mercy.

Matthew 12:32, Whoever speaks against the Holy Spirit, it shall not be forgiven him, either in this age or in the age to come.

- We see that there is a time limitation on this unforgiveness.
- And when this time limitation is over, there will be a time when this sin can be forgiven.
- Those who hate Jesus will come under the mercy and grace of God and will be given an opportunity to repent.
- Jesus brought the good news of the Gospel to everyone, to the most wicked, and to those who committed blasphemy.
- The age that these people were living in, who personally rejected Jesus, were living in, the Bible calls, the “present age.”
- The “present age” exists from then until the second coming of Jesus (Matthew 24:3).

Matthew 24:3 What will be the sign of your coming and of the end of the present age?

- And what then is the next age?
- Mark 10 tells us it is “the age to come.”

Mark 10:30 shows that believers will receive eternal life “in the age to come.”

Time of Judgment:

- When will that generation of Jesus day be forgiven?

Matthew 12:41, The men of Niniveh will stand up with this generation at the judgement, and will condemn it because they repented at the preaching of Jonah; and behold, something greater than Jonah is here.

Ephesians 2:7, ...in the coming ages he (Christ) might show the incomparable riches of his grace...

- This time of judgment is the time when Jesus will show his grace and mercy and forgiveness.

John 5:28, (Jesus) “Don’t marvel at this, for an hour is coming when all who are in the tomb will hear his voice 29) and will come forth, those who had done the good, to a resurrection of life,

- That’s us and everyone else, who committed their lives to Jesus – we are the “first fruits”, part of the first resurrection going into the kingdom at the second coming of Christ.
- Then there’s a time gap in this.
- After the millennial kingdom of Jesus’ rule, then comes the great resurrection.

29b) and those who have done evil, come to the resurrection of judgment.

- Those first century Jews who have done evil by not accepting Christ and who plotted to kill Him and blasphemed the Holy Spirit will come up in this resurrection.
- And the men of Nineveh will also rise with them.
- We know that all judgment has been given to Jesus.
- And He has paid the penalty of all sin including the un-evangelized who never heard the name of Jesus, those who ignored the gospel, and even those who were hostile against Jesus – the wicked.
- They all will stand before the Judge who is merciful and kind.
- It’s difficult to image that those who are resurrected then and see the glory of Jesus, will continue to reject Him.
- Let’s look at an example of the worst blasphemer of all, whose name was Saul.
- Saul hated the church; Saul killed Christians; he tortured Christians.
- In essence, Saul was a terror to Christians.
- So what happened to Saul, when he saw the glory of the Lord on the road to Damascus?
- What was Saul’s attitude after Jesus dealt with him and talked to him? – There was a complete turnaround and he then became filled with the Holy Spirit.
- How is God going to transform mankind at the great resurrection? – The same way He dealt with Saul.
- And that’s why the scripture says that “all Israel will be saved” (Romans 11:26), because they will have their opportunity to repent.
- So, in essence, you could say that there is no “unforgiving sin.”

- That type of sin will be forgiven and there will be a glorious victory in the end by God and He is going to say, as he did when he first created humanity, “Let’s us make man to our image and our likeness...”
- In the end, there will be no more death, no more sorrow as the Kingdom of God enters into its full glory.

Closing prayer