

THE UNPARDONABLE SIN
PRESENTED BY
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GREEN LAWN CHURCH OF CHRIST
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I AM READING TWO PASSAGES OF SCRIPTURE FOR OUR TEXT TONIGHT. FIRST, THE ACCOUNT THAT MARK GIVES OF THE OCCASION IN WHICH JESUS DISCUSSED THE UNPARDONABLE SIN, AND THEN SECONDLY, THE ACCOUNT AS GIVEN BY MATTHEW. I THINK THAT THESE TWO ACCOUNTS NEED TO BE READ BECAUSE EACH OF THEM CONTAINS SLIGHTLY DIFFERENT LANGUAGE, AND TO GET THE FULL PICTURE I THINK WE NEED BOTH PASSAGES. THE THIRD GOSPEL WRITER, LUKE, ALSO MENTIONS THE OCCASION, BUT HIS STATEMENT IS RATHER COMPREHENSIVE AND IT IS REDUCED TO ONE VERSE, LUKE 12:10, AND I THINK WE NEED NOT READ IT. WE ARE READING FIRST OF ALL FROM MARK 3:28-30. "VERILY I SAY UNTO YOU, ALL SINS SHALL BE FORGIVEN UNTO THE SONS OF MEN, AND BLASPHEMIES WHEREWITH SOEVER THEY SHALL BLASPHEME: BUT HE THAT SHALL BLASPHEME AGAINST THE HOLY GHOST HATH NEVER FORGIVENESS, BUT IS IN DANGER OF ETERNAL DAMNATION; BECAUSE THEY SAID, HE HATH AN UNCLEAN SPIRIT." THEN WE TURN BACK TO THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW CHAPTER 12 AND READ VERSES 31 AND 32. "WHEREFORE I SAY UNTO YOU, ALL MANNER OF SIN AND BLASPHEMY SHALL BE FORGIVEN UNTO MEN; BUT THE BLASPHEMY AGAINST THE HOLY GHOST SHALL NOT BE FORGIVEN UNTO MEN. AND WHOSOEVER SPEAKETH A WORD AGAINST THE SON OF MAN, IT SHALL BE FORGIVEN HIM; BUT WHOSOEVER SPEAKETH AGAINST THE HOLY GHOST, IT SHALL NOT BE FORGIVEN HIM, NEITHER IN THIS WORLD NEITHER IN THE WORLD TO COME."

I MAY HAVE SOME BRETHREN WHO ARE CONCERNED ABOUT WHETHER OR NOT THEY HAVE COMMITTED THE UNPARDONABLE SIN. I THINK PERHAPS THIS WOULD BE A GOOD EVIDENCE THAT THEY HAVE NOT COMMITTED IT, BECAUSE I DO NOT BELIEVE THAT A MAN WHO IS CONCERNED ABOUT HAVING COMMITTED THIS SIN, HAS INDEED EVER COMMITTED IT, AND I THINK YOU CAN SEE WHY THIS IS THE CASE AS THE LESSON PROGRESSES. THE MAN WHO HAS COMMITTED THE UNPARDONABLE SIN IS THE LAST MAN TO THINK ABOUT WHETHER OR NOT HE HAS COMMITTED IT AND, SHOULD HE THINK ABOUT IT, HE WOULD BE THE LAST MAN TO BE CONCERNED ABOUT WHETHER OR NOT HE HAD COMMITTED THE UNPARDONABLE SIN.

I THINK WE OUGHT TO SAY, ALSO, AS WE BEGIN, THAT THIS HAS, I SUPPOSE, GENERATED A GREAT DEAL MORE HEAT THAN IT HAS LIGHT. I THINK THAT ONE REASON FOR THIS IS THAT MEN HAVE DECIDED TO FIND SOMETHING VERY DIFFICULT IN THIS PASSAGE AND THAT MEN HAVE READ INTO THIS PASSAGE A NUMBER OF DIFFICULTIES THAT REALLY DO NOT EXIST. I THINK ANOTHER REASON IS BECAUSE BRETHREN HAVE DECIDED TO GO TO OTHER LANGUAGE AND OTHER PASSAGES OF SCRIPTURE AND TO FIND THEREIN SOMETHING WHICH RELATES TO THE UNPARDONABLE SIN, AND IN DOING SO THEY HAVE ABUSED CERTAIN PASSAGES IN THE WORD OF GOD. WE SHALL LOOK AT ONE OF THEM IN THE COURSE OF THE LESSON THIS EVENING.

I THINK ONE THING WE NEED TO RECOGNIZE, AND CERTAINLY ONE THING WE MUST ADMIT, IS THAT AS WE HAVE READ THE LANGUAGE FROM MATTHEW AND MARK THERE IS NOTHING IN THE LANGUAGE THAT IS INHERENTLY DIFFICULT. THE LANGUAGE IS SIMPLE, THE DICTION IS PLAIN, AND APPARENTLY JESUS INTENDED TO SPEAK IN VERY MEASURED LANGUAGE IN ORDER THAT THERE SHOULD NOT BE ANY MISUNDERSTANDING ABOUT JUST EXACTLY THAT WHICH IS INCLUDED IN THE CONCEPT OF THE UNPARDONABLE SIN. YET IN SPITE OF JESUS VERY CLEAR ATTEMPT TO SPEAK IN LANGUAGE THAT SHOULD NOT BE MISUNDERSTOOD, A GREAT MANY HAVE MISUNDERSTOOD AND HAVE WRESTED THE LANGUAGE.

THEREFORE, I THINK THE FIRST THING WE NEED TO DO IS TO LOOK AT THE LANGUAGE ITSELF AND THEN TO SEE IF WE CAN UNDERSTAND WHAT THE LANGUAGE SAYS. LET'S TAKE THE ACCOUNT AS GIVEN BY MATTHEW AND IF YOU WILL LOOK IN THE THIRTY-FIRST VERSE OF CHAPTER 12, THE VERY FIRST WORD THAT STRIKES YOU IS THE WORD, "WHEREFORE." NOW THIS FINDS A COUNTERPART IN THE LANGUAGE OF MARK'S ACCOUNT WHEN HE BEGINS WITH THE EXPRESSION, "VERILY, I SAY UNTO YOU." BOTH OF THESE EXPRESSIONS ARE INTENDED TO POINT US BACK TO SOMETHING THAT HAS BEEN SAID, SOMETHING THAT HAS TRANSPIRED, SOMETHING THAT HAS BEEN WRITTEN IMMEDIATELY PREVIOUS TO THE DISCUSSION OF THE UNPARDONABLE SIN. SO WE LOOK BACK TO SEE WHAT HAS TRANSPIRED BEFORE THIS LANGUAGE, AND UNLESS WE DO

THIS WE ARE NOT IN A POSITION TO UNDERSTAND WHAT JESUS SAID ABOUT THE UNPARDONABLE SIN. IF YOU WILL GO BACK TO THE BEGINNING OF THE TWELFTH CHAPTER OF MATTHEW, YOU WILL DISCOVER THAT JESUS AND HIS DISCIPLES WERE PASSING THROUGH THE CORN FIELDS, AND AS THEY PASSED THROUGH THE CORN FIELD ON THE SABBATH DAY, THE DISCIPLES OF JESUS PULLED SOME EARS OF CORN AND ATE THEM. THE FIRST THING THE PHARISEES DID WAS TO SAY THAT THE SABBATH HAD BEEN VIOLATED--THEY ACCUSED JESUS AND HIS DISCIPLES OF DESECRATING THE SABBATH DAY. COME A LITTLE BIT FURTHER INTO THE TWELFTH CHAPTER AND YOU READ THE OCCASION OF JESUS' HEALING OF THE MAN WITH THE WITHERED HAND. THE REAL CRUX OF THE OCCASION WAS NOT SIMPLY THE HEALING OF THE HAND ITSELF, BUT THE FACT THAT THIS EVEN TRANSPIRED ON THE SABBATH DAY. HAVING, THEN, SEEN JESUS HEAL ON THE SABBATH, THE PHARISEES, THE SCRIPTURE SAYS, IMMEDIATELY WENT OUT AND TOOK COUNSEL AS TO HOW THEY MIGHT DESTROY HIM, OR KILL HIM. NOW THIS IS IMPORTANT TO NOTICE BECAUSE IT IS TELLING US SOMETHING ABOUT THE ATTITUDE THAT THE PHARISEES HAD. THAT ATTITUDE WHICH CAUSED JESUS TO FEEL OBLIGATED TO SAY SOMETHING TO THEM CONCERNING A CERTAIN SITUATION WHERE IT WAS IMPOSSIBLE TO BE FORGIVEN. IMMEDIATELY FOLLOWING THAT IN THE TWELFTH CHAPTER WE FIND THAT JESUS HEALED A MAN WHO WAS POSSESSED OF A DEVIL, WHO WAS BLIND AND DUMB, AND WHEN THIS HEALING HAD TRANSPIRED, THE PHARISEES STOOD BACK AND SAID, "HE DOES IT NOT BY GOD, BUT HE DOES IT BY THE POWER AND BY THE SPIRIT OF BEELZEBUB."

NOW PUTTING ALL OF THESE EVENTS TOGETHER, WE ARE ABLE TO SEE A CERTAIN ATTITUDE WHICH THE PHARISEES POSSESSED. ALL OF THESE EVENTS SHOWED THEIR DISPOSITION TO REJECT ALL OF THE TESTIMONY THAT JESUS MIGHT POSSIBLY GIVE IN WORD OR IN DEED TO HIS MESSIAHSHIP. IT SHOWED THEIR DISPOSITION TO REJECT ALL EVIDENCE THAT JESUS MIGHT OFFER WHICH WAS CONTRARY TO THEIR PURPOSE--THEIR PURPOSE BEING TO PUT JESUS CHRIST TO DEATH. WHAT THE PHARISEES, THEN, HAD DONE WAS TO RENDER THEIR VERDICT IN ADVANCE, AND HARDEN THEMSELVES IN SUCH A WAY THAT THEY WOULD NOT LISTEN TO ANYTHING THAT JESUS HAD TO OFFER NO MATTER WHAT THE TESTIMONY. SO JESUS, SEEING THIS ATTITUDE ON THE PART OF THE PHARISEES, DEFENDS HIMSELF, AND HE DEFENDS HIMSELF BY POINTING OUT TO THEM, AMONG OTHER THINGS, THE IMPOSSIBILITY OF BEING IN A NEUTRAL RELATIONSHIP AS FAR AS HE IS CONCERNED. IT IS IN THE VERSE IMMEDIATELY PRECEDING OUR TEXT FROM MATTHEW 12 THAT JESUS SAYS "HE THAT IS NOT WITH ME, IS AGAINST ME; AND HE THAT GATHERETH NOT WITH ME, SCATTERETH ABROAD." JESUS IS SUGGESTING THAT THEIR BLASPHEMOUS ACTION HERE MAKES IT NECESSARY FOR HIM TO TELL THEM SOMETHING ABOUT THE SITUATION IN WHICH THERE IS A LIMITATION PLACED UPON THE POSSIBILITY OF FINDING FORGIVENESS. THE LANGUAGE OF OUR TEXT THEN IMMEDIATELY FOLLOWS.

LET'S LOOK AT THE TEXT THEN. FIRST OF ALL, LET'S NOTICE THE RULE. JESUS GIVES A VERY PLAIN RULE AND THAT RULE IS THIS, THAT ALL SHALL BE FORGIVEN. NOW THIS IS IMPORTANT BECAUSE IT INDICATES WHEN WE COME TO SPEAK OF THE UNPARDONABLE SIN THAT WE ARE SPEAKING OF AN EXCEPTION TO THE GENERAL RULE. THE GENERAL RULE AS STATED BY JESUS IS THAT ALL SHALL BE FORGIVEN. NOW WE MIGHT ALSO NOTICE HERE THAT IN STATING THIS GENERAL RULE, JESUS DOESN'T SAY ANYTHING ABOUT THE CONDITIONS WHEREBY FORGIVENESS SHALL BE GRANTED. THIS IS NOT TO IMPLY THAT THERE ARE NO CONDITIONS TO OBTAIN FORGIVENESS. THEY HAVE BEEN STATED AS FAR AS THIS DISPENSATION, THE JEWISH DISPENSATION IN WHICH THIS WAS TRANSPIRING WAS CONCERNED, IN OTHER PASSAGES. FOR INSTANCE, IN MATTHEW 3:2 JOHN CAME SAYING, "REPENT YE; FOR THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN IS AT HAND." THERE IS A CONDITION THERE PRECEDING THE RECEPTION OF FORGIVENESS. IN MATTHEW 4:17 JESUS CAME PREACHING THE SAME MESSAGE. "REPENT; FOR THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN IS AT HAND." SO WHEN JESUS SAID HERE ALL SHALL BE FORGIVEN, THOUGH HE DID NOT STATE A CONDITION HE WAS NOT STATING THAT FORGIVENESS IS UNCONDITIONAL. THEN WE NEED ALSO TO NOTICE UNTO WHOM THE PROMISE WAS MADE. ALL SHALL BE FORGIVEN UNTO MEN. UNTO WHAT MEN? THERE ARE NO QUALIFICATIONS, NO QUALIFICATIONS. THIS BRINGS BOTH BELIEVERS AND UNBELIEVERS INTO THE SCOPE OF THE CONTEXT. THEN, HAVING STATED THE RULE, ALL SHALL BE FORGIVEN, JESUS STATED THE EXCEPTION TO THE RULE. THE EXCEPTION TO THE RULE WAS THIS: ALL SHALL BE FORGIVEN EXCEPT BLASPHEMY AGAINST THE HOLY

GHOST. NOW, OF COURSE, HERE IS THE CRUX OF THE WHOLE MATTER. HERE'S WHERE ALL OF THE DIFFICULTY COMES IN DETERMINING JUST EXACTLY WHAT IS MEANT BY THE EXPRESSION "BLASPHEMY AGAINST THE HOLY SPIRIT," BUT IF YOU WILL BEAR WITH ME JUST A MOMENT, I BELIEVE FROM THE CONTEXT WE CAN SHOW YOU JUST EXACTLY WHAT JESUS HAD IN MIND, BECAUSE HE IS TALKING ABOUT SOMETHING THE PHARISEES DID. HE HAD TOLD US WHAT THEY DID AND THEREFORE, THE BLASPHEMY OF THE HOLY GHOST MUST BE DEFINED BY THAT WHICH THE PHARISEES DID UPON THIS OCCASION. SO THE RULE IS ALL SHALL BE FORGIVEN. THE EXCEPTION TO THE GENERAL RULE IS THE BLASPHEMY AGAINST THE HOLY SPIRIT. HAVING STATED THIS, JESUS RESTATES THE RULE AND AMPLIFIES IT WHEN HE SAYS THAT ANY MAN WHO SPEAKS AGAINST THE SON OF MAN IT SHALL BE FORGIVEN HIM, BUT WHOSOEVER SPEAKETH AGAINST THE HOLY GHOST IT SHALL NOT BE FORGIVEN.

WE HAVE GOT THE RULE, WE HAVE GOT THE EXCEPTION TO THE RULE, NOW WHAT CAN BE MEANT BY THE EXPRESSION "THE BLASPHEMY AGAINST THE HOLY SPIRIT." I BELIEVE THERE ARE THREE POSSIBILITIES. THE FIRST POSSIBILITY SUGGESTS THAT THE PHARISEES WERE NOT REALLY GUILTY OF THE UNPARDONABLE SIN. IT SUGGESTS FURTHER THAT THEY COULD NOT HAVE BEEN GUILTY OF THE UNPARDONABLE SIN, AND IT SUGGESTS THAT ON THE BASIS THAT IT IS A SIN AGAINST THE SPIRIT, AND THE SPIRIT HAD NOT BEEN GIVEN. IN OTHER WORDS, THE SPIRIT WAS GIVEN ON THE DAY OF PENTECOST AND SINCE THE SPIRIT HAD NOT BEEN GIVEN WHEN JESUS WAS TALKING TO THE PHARISEES HERE THEY COULD NOT POSSIBLY HAVE BEEN GUILTY OF THE SIN. WELL, NOW IT IS TRUE THAT THE SPIRIT HAD NOT BEEN GIVEN PRIOR TO THE DAY OF PENTECOST IN THE MANNER IN WHICH IT WAS GIVEN ON THE DAY OF PENTECOST, BUT DOES THE FACT THAT THE SPIRIT HAD NOT BEEN GIVEN IN THE WORLD IN THE MANNER IN WHICH IT WAS GIVEN ON THE DAY OF PENTECOST MEAN THE SPIRIT HAD NOT BEEN GIVEN AT ALL? THE ANSWER MUST BE NO. THE SPIRIT HAD BEEN GIVEN JESUS BEFORE THE DAY OF PENTECOST. HE RECEIVED THE SPIRIT WITHOUT MEASURE. IN MARK 3:30 THESE INDIVIDUALS MUST HAVE HAD SOME CONCEPT OF THE SPIRIT BECAUSE THEY SAID, "HE HATH AN UNCLEAN SPIRIT." THIS UNDERSTANDING OF THE UNPARDONABLE SIN REALLY HINGES UPON WHAT IS MEANT BY THE TERM "WORLD." "IT SHALL NOT BE FORGIVEN HIM, EITHER IN THIS WORLD OR IN THE WORLD TO COME." NOW THIS WORD WHICH IS TRANSLATED "WORLD" CAN ALSO BE TRANSLATED "AGE," AND IT IS SUGGESTED THAT IT LITERALLY MEANS "SHALL NOT BE FORGIVEN HIM IN THIS AGE (THE JEWISH DISPENSATION) OR IN THE AGE (THE CHRISTIAN DISPENSATION) WHICH IS TO COME." BUT I BELIEVE THAT THIS DOES VIOLATION TO THE CLEAR MEANING OF THIS LANGUAGE AS WE FIND IT IN THIS CONTEXT. THE LANGUAGE IS VERY PLAIN. THE LANGUAGE IS VERY PRECISE. LET ME READ SOME OF THE EXPRESSIONS AND SEE IF IT SOUNDS LIKE IT WON'T BE FORGIVEN HIM EITHER NOW IN THE JEWISH AGE OR IN THE CHRISTIAN AGE THAT IS TO COME. IT SAYS, "IT SHALL NOT BE FORGIVEN UNTO MAN." IT SAYS, "HATH NEVER FORGIVENESS." IT SAYS, "IN DANGER OF ETERNAL DAMNATION," OR IF YOU PLEASE AS MORE PROPERLY RENDERED BY THE TRANSLATION IN THE AMERICAN STANDARD, "IS GUILTY OF AN ETERNAL SIN." THE CLEAR IMPLICATION IS THAT THIS SIN SHALL NOT BE FORGIVEN EITHER IN TIME OR IN ETERNITY. WHY, THEN, DOES HE SAY "NEITHER IN THIS WORLD, OR IN THE WORLD TO COME." SURELY WE ALL KNOW THAT THERE WILL BE NO FORGIVENESS OF SIN IN THE WORLD THAT IS TO COME. I BELIEVE THE REASON TO BE THAT HE HAS SIMPLY ADDED THIS SECOND EXPRESSION IN ORDER TO REINFORCE THE FIRST AND TO EMPHASIZE THE FACT THAT THIS SIN REALLY IS AN UNPARDONABLE SIN. THERE IS, INCIDENTALLY, HERE NO IMPLICATION OF PURGATORIAL CLEANSING. SOME HAVE READ THIS AND SAID, "YES, IT SHALL NOT BE FORGIVEN IN THIS WORLD OR IN THE WORLD TO COME. NOW IF THERE IS A SIN WHICH SHALL NOT BE FORGIVEN IN THE WORLD TO COME, THERE MUST BE SOME SINS WHICH ARE GOING TO BE FORGIVEN IN THE WORLD TO COME." BUT THIS IS READING SOMETHING INTO THE LANGUAGE OF JESUS WHICH IS NOT TO BE FOUND. HE IS SIMPLY EMPHASIZING THE FACT THAT HERE IS A SIN, A PARTICULAR SIN, A SPECIFIC SIN, WHICH SHALL NOT BE FORGIVEN.

THE SECOND POSSIBILITY AS TO WHAT IS MEANT BY BLASPHEMY AGAINST THE HOLY SPIRIT IS THAT IT REFERS TO CONTINUED RESISTENCE, THAT IT REFERS SIMPLY TO OBSTINANT OPPOSITION, TO THE GRACE OF THE GOSPEL, IMPENITENTLY AND UNBELIEVINGLY PERSISTED IN UNTIL THE END, IN OTHER WORDS, HERE IS A MAN WHO DOESN'T REPENT OF HIS SINS, HERE IS A MAN WHO GOES TO THE GRAVE AS AN UNBELIEVER AND SINCE HE HAS DIED IN THAT CONDITION, SINCE HE HAS PERSISTED IN IT UNTIL THE END, THEN HE HAS COMMITTED THE UNPARDONABLE SIN. GENERALLY I JOHN 5:16 IS READ IN THE CONNECTION. I JOHN 5:16 READS ON THIS WISE, "IF ANY MAN SEE HIS BROTHER SIN A SIN WHICH IS NOT UNTO DEATH, HE SHALL ASK, AND HE SHALL GIVE HIM LIFE FOR THEM THAT SIN NOT UNTO DEATH. THERE IS A SIN UNTO DEATH; I DO NOT SAY THAT HE SHALL PRAY FOR IT." AND THEN ONE STANDS BACK HAVING READ THAT AND SAYS, "HERE IT IS, DEMONSTRATED." THERE IS A SIN UNTO DEATH, THERE IS A SIN NOT UNTO DEATH, AND THAT SAYS, ACCORDING TO THEM, THAT WHEN A MAN SINS UNTO HIS DEATH, HIS PHYSICAL DEATH, THAT HE HAS COMMITTED THE UNPARDONABLE SIN. BUT THIS IS A MISAPPLICATION. IT IS A MISUNDERSTANDING OF I JOHN 5:16. HOW ARE WE GOING TO UNDERSTAND DEATH HERE ANYWAY? IT CAN HAVE TWO POSSIBLE MEANINGS. THE TERM DEATH USED IN THE SCRIPTURE DOES NOT APPLY EXCLUSIVELY TO PHYSICAL DEATH. IT IS ALSO USED TO APPLY TO SPIRITUAL DEATH, AND SINCE "DEATH" IN THIS CONTEXT STANDS IN OPPOSITION TO "LIFE," THE DEATH SPOKEN OF IS NOT SINNING TO A PHYSICAL DEATH, IMPENITENT UNTIL A MAN PHYSICALLY DIES, BUT IT IS SPEAKING HERE OF SPIRITUAL DEATH. THUS, THE VERSE HAS NO APPLICATION AT ALL IN THE SENSE IN WHICH THESE WOULD USE IT. NOW, IT IS NOT OUR PURPOSE HERE TO SHOW JUST EXACTLY WHAT THIS VERSE DOES MEAN, THOUGH THIS WOULD BE INTERESTING, BUT SIMPLY TO SHOW THAT IT DOESN'T MEAN THAT A MAN CAN SIN UNTIL HE PHYSICALLY DIES AND HE HAS COMMITTED THE UNPARDONABLE SIN. THIS VERSE DOES NOT MEET THE NEEDS OF THE UNPARDONABLE SIN. GOD COULDN'T GIVE THE PHARISEES LIFE IN ANSWER TO PRAYER. THEY COULDN'T SIN UNTO DEATH AS THEY WERE ALREADY DEAD. THE UNPARDONABLE SIN DOES NOT BRING DEATH BUT IT WALLS ONE INTO DEATH WHERE HE CAN'T GET OUT. IT IS AN UNPARDONABLE SIN. THE UNPARDONABLE SIN IS A SIN WHICH CANNOT, AND MAY I UNDERSCORE THAT, THE UNPARDONABLE SIN IS A SIN WHICH CANNOT BE REPENTED OF. THIS SAYS THAT THE IMPOSSIBILITY OF FORGIVING IT LIES WITH MAN AND NOT WITH GOD. TURN TO HEBREWS 6:4-6. THERE YOU READ OF SOME BROTHERS WHO HAD TASTED OF THE WORD, WHO HAD PARTAKEN OF THE HOLY SPIRIT, AND FELL AWAY. THE WRITER SAYS, "FOR IT IS IMPOSSIBLE FOR THOSE WHO WERE ONCE ENLIGHTENED, AND HAVE TASTED OF THE HEAVENLY GIFT, AND WERE MADE PARTAKERS OF THE HOLY GHOST, AND HAVE TASTED THE GOOD WORD OF GOD, AND THE POWERS OF THE WORLD TO COME, IF THEY SHALL FALL AWAY, TO RENEW THEM AGAIN UNTO REPENTANCE; SEEING THEY CRUCIFY TO THEMSELVES THE SON OF GOD AFRESH, AND PUT HIM TO AN OPEN SHAME." HE CONTINUES TO SAY THAT, IN THIS SITUATION, THERE REMAINS NO SACRIFICE FOR SIN, BUT A FEARFUL LOOKING FORWARD UNTO JUDGMENT. NOW THIS ALSO I THINK, EXPLAINS WHY OTHERS CAN BE FORGIVEN, AND THAT IS BECAUSE THEY DO NOT RENDER REPENTANCE IMPOSSIBLE. IT IS THE WORK OF THE SPIRIT, OR PERHAPS I SHOULD SAY, IT IS A WORK OF THE SPIRIT, JOHN 16:8, TO CONVICT MEN OF SIN, AND WHEN A MAN REJECTS THE SPIRIT, WHEN A MAN BLASPHEMES AGAINST THE SPIRIT OF GOD, HE HAS FOREVER SHUT HIMSELF OFF FROM ANY EFFECTIVE WORK OF THE SPIRIT IN HIS LIFE AND THEREFORE HE IS NOT GOING TO BE CONVICTED OF SIN, AND NOT BEING CONVICTED OF SIN, HE IS NOT GOING TO REPENT. WHY IS IT IMPOSSIBLE TO RENEW THEM UNTO REPENTANCE? SEEING THAT THEY CRUCIFY TO THEMSELVES THE SON OF GOD AFRESH AND PUT HIM TO AN OPEN SHAME.

NOW NOTICE THE SIMILARITY BETWEEN THIS LANGUAGE AND THE ATTITUDE OF THE PHARISEES. THE PHARISEES WERE NOT GOING TO LISTEN TO ANY TESTIMONY. THE PHARISEES WERE NOT GOING TO ACCEPT ANY FACTS WHICH WOULD TEND TO DISCREDIT THEIR PURPOSE OF CRUCIFYING THE SON OF GOD, AND IN HEBREWS 4:4-6 IT SAYS, HERE ARE SOME PEOPLE WHO ARE DOING THE SAME THING ALL OVER AGAIN. AS THE PHARISEES CRUCIFIED HIM BEFORE, SO THESE INDIVIDUALS ARE CRUCIFYING THE SON OF GOD AFRESH. THIS IDEA THAT THIS UNPARDONABLE SIN IS SIMPLY CONTINUED RESISTANCE AND OBSTINANT OPPOSITION TO THE GRACE OF THE GOSPEL IS TOO WIDE IN EXTENT, TOO GENERAL IN

CHARACTER, WHEREAS THE BLASPHEMY AGAINST THE HOLY SPIRIT, ACCORDING TO THE LANGUAGE OF OUR TEXT, IS SOMETHING NOT GENERAL, BUT SOMETHING VERY SPECIFIC AND SPECIAL. IF THE SIN IN QUESTION CONSISTED SIMPLY IN FINAL BELIEF, THEN THE UNPARDONABLE SIN WOULD BE LITTLE, IF ANYTHING, DIFFERENT FROM SIN IN GENERAL, BECAUSE SIN IN GENERAL OBSTINANTLY CONTINUED IN IS GOING TO CAUSE A MAN TO BE ETERNALLY DAMNED. IF THE UNPARDONABLE SIN IS SIMPLY ANY SIN IMPENITENTLY PERSISTED IN, THEN WHY IN THE WORLD DIDN'T JESUS JUST COME OUT AND SAY THAT? IT WOULD HAVE BEEN AS EASY TO SAY AS WHAT HE DID SAY. WHY SINGLE OUT THIS ONE PARTICULAR SIN OUT OF ALL OF THOSE THAT COULD HAVE BEEN CHOSEN? JESUS HAD MULTITUDES OF SINS TO PICK OUT OF THE PHARISEES' LIVES AND SAY, "BRETHREN, IF YOU DON'T REPENT OF THIS YOU ARE GOING TO BE LOST ETERNALLY." IF IT IS NO DIFFERENT FROM ANY SIN PERSISTED IN, WHY WOULD JESUS PICK OUT THIS ONE? WHY NOT JUST TELL THEM THAT THEY HAD BETTER REPENT OF SINS, THIS SIN OF BLASPHEMY AGAINST THE SON OF MAN OR BLASPHEMY AGAINST THE SPIRIT EITHER ONE, OR ELSE THEY COULD NOT BE FORGIVEN. AND I HAVE SAID THAT TO SAY THIS, THAT THERE IS A DIFFERENCE (YOU CAN SEE IT IN THESE TWO WORDS) IN SIN UNPARDONED AND SIN UNPARDONABLE. I BELIEVE YOU CAN SEE THE DIFFERENCE. THERE IS A DIFFERENCE BETWEEN SIN WHICH IS UNPARDONED AND SIN WHICH IS UNPARDONABLE. SIN WHICH IS SIMPLY UNPARDONED, MAY BE PARDONED, BUT SIN WHICH IS UNPARDONABLE CAN NEVER BE PARDONED. IT IS AN ETERNAL SIN, AS THE LANGUAGE OF OUR TEXT DESCRIBES IT.

NOW THE THIRD POSSIBILITY. THE FIRST POSSIBILITY STATED THAT THE PHARISEES COULD NOT COMMIT IT BECAUSE THE SPIRIT HAS NOT YET BEEN GIVEN. WE SAY THAT THE SPIRIT WAS PRESENT IN THE WORLD AND THAT THE PHARISEES COULD SPEAK AGAINST THE SPIRIT OF GOD. THE SECOND POSSIBILITY IS THAT THE UNPARDONABLE SIN IS CONTINUED RESISTENCE AND OBSTINANT OPPOSITION TO THE GRACE OF THE GOSPEL. NEITHER OF THESE FITS THE SITUATION. THE THIRD POSSIBILITY IS ASCRIBING TO THE POWER OF SATAN THE MIRACLES WHICH THE SAVIOR PERFORMED BY THE HOLY SPIRIT, THUS REJECTING THE EVIDENCE OF THE SPIRIT TO THE DIETY OF CHRIST. NOW LET ME GO OVER THAT AGAIN. IT IS SO SIMPLE, ISN'T IT? JUST EXACTLY WHAT THE TEXT SAYS. BLASPHEMY AGAINST THE HOLY SPIRIT IS ASCRIBING TO THE POWER OF SATAN THE MIRACLES WHICH THE SAVIOR PERFORMED BY THE HOLY SPIRIT AND REJECTING THE EVIDENCE OF THE SPIRIT TO THE DIETY OF CHRIST. WE SAY THAT JESUS TALKED ABOUT SOMETHING THAT THEY DID, AND THAT (AS STATED ABOVE) IS JUST EXACTLY WHAT THEY DID. IT FITS EVERY DESCRIPTION THAT IS GIVEN IN THE TEXTS OF WHAT WENT ON AT THAT TIME. FOR INSTANCE, IT IS A SIN OF SPEECH. BLASPHEMY AGAINST THE HOLY SPIRIT IS A SIN OF SPEECH, MARK 3:30, "BECAUSE THEY SAID, HE HATH AN UNCLEAN SPIRIT." SO HERE IS A SIN OF SPEECH. CERTAINLY IT SPRUNG FROM THE ATTITUDE, BUT IT IS EXPRESSED BY THE LIPS. SOME WOULD OBJECT TO THIS BEING AN UNPARDONABLE SIN, SAYING THAT THE SCRIPTURE DOESN'T REALLY SAY THAT THEY WERE GUILTY OF UNPARDONABLE SIN, BUT THAT THEY WERE "IN DANGER OF ETERNAL JUDGMENT." BUT THIS IS THE TIME WE NEED TO CORRECT A MISTRANSLATION IN THE KING JAMES. THE AMERICAN STANDARD RENDERS IT MORE ACCURATELY, "HE IS GUILTY OF ETERNAL SIN." IT DOESN'T SAY THEY ARE IN DANGER OF IT, IT DOESN'T SAY THEY ARE ABOUT TO COMMIT IT, IT SAYS RATHER THAT THEY COMMITTED IT, THAT THEY ARE GUILTY. THAT MEANS THAT IT HAS BEEN DONE, THE GUILT IS THERE. THEY ARE GUILTY OF ETERNAL SIN. THE VERY REASON THAT JESUS GAVE THE WARNING WAS BECAUSE THEY SAID HE HAD AN UNCLEAN SPIRIT, SIMPLY LOOKING AT JESUS, SEEING HIS POWER, RECOGNIZING THAT IT TOOK A POWER GREATER THAN THE POWER OF MAN TO DO WHAT JESUS DID, AND NOT BEING WILLING TO SAY, "IT IS BY THE POWER OF GOD. LET US FOLLOW THIS MAN," THEY SAID INSTEAD, "IT IS BY THE POWER OF THE DEVIL. LET US CRUCIFY HIM," THAT IS JUST EXACTLY WHAT THEY DID AND THEREFORE THIS MUST BE THE BLASPHEMY AGAINST THE HOLY SPIRIT.

BUT NOW THAT GIVES US ANOTHER QUESTION AND THAT IS, "CAN THIS SIN BE COMMITTED TODAY?" CAN ANY MAN TODAY COMMIT THE UNPARDONABLE SIN? SOME SAY HE CANNOT COMMIT IT BECAUSE IN THE DAYS OF JESUS THERE WAS A SPECIAL MANIFESTATION OF THE SPIRIT IN A MIRACULOUS MEASURE. SINCE THAT MANIFESTATION OF THE SPIRIT IS NOT PRESENT TODAY, NO MAN CAN ATTRIBUTE TO AN EVIL SPIRIT THE MIRACULOUS WORK OF THE SPIRIT. I DO NOT KNOW WHETHER OR NOT THAT IS SO. IT

IS AN INTERESTING SPECULATION AND ONE THAT I PERHAPS WOULD LIKE TO ACCEPT BECAUSE IT MEANS THAT I CAN'T COMMIT IT. BUT I THINK WE CAN SAY AT LEAST THIS MUCH. BECAUSE OF THE DIVINE POWER, BECAUSE OF THE DIVINE NATURE OF JESUS CHRIST, HE WAS ABLE TO SEE THESE INDIVIDUALS AS NO ONE ELSE COULD SEE THEM. JESUS COULD SEE THEIR HEARTS. JESUS COULD SEE THEIR FINAL REJECTION. THEREFORE, JESUS, BEING DIVINE, COULD SAY THEY HAVE FINALLY AND IMPENITENTLY AND FOREVER REJECTED THE WORK OF THE SPIRIT OF GOD. I DON'T POSSESS THAT POWER AND YOU DON'T EITHER. WE MAY LOOK AT THE ACTS OF AN INDIVIDUAL AND WE MAY SAY IT APPEARS TO US AS IF, BUT I BELIEVE BRETHREN THAT WE WOULD BE WRONG. I BELIEVE WE WOULD BE GUILTY OF SIN, TO SAY OF ANY MAN TODAY THAT HE HAS COMMITTED THE UNPARDONABLE SIN. I BELIEVE THE PREROGATIVE OF THAT JUDGMENT BELONGS TO THE FATHER AND TO THE FATHER ALONE, OR TO THE SON AS THE FATHER HATH GIVEN JUDGMENT INTO HIS HAND. WE CANNOT SEE AS JESUS SAW.

THE WORDS OF JESUS IN THESE TEXTS AND THE WORDS OF THE WRITER OF THE HEBREW LETTER IN HEBREWS 4:4-6 CAN SERVE AS A WARNING TO US, AND SURELY, SURELY, THIS IS A WARNING THAT WE OUGHT TO HEED. IT CAN SERVE AS A WARNING TO SAY TO US THAT WHEN A MAN DELIBERATELY ANSWERS THE WORK OF THE SPIRIT WITH BLASPHEMY, HE FOREVER NULLIFIES EVEN THE SPIRIT'S POWER TO CHANGE HIM. IT CAN WARN US THAT WHEN A MAN RESISTS THE WORK OF THE SPIRIT IN HIS HEART, AS THE SPIRIT WITH HIS SWORD, THE WORD OF GOD SEEKS TO DRAW MAN TO JESUS, THAT WHEN A MAN FINALLY HARDENS HIMSELF TO THE EXTENT THAT THAT GLORIOUS STORY OF JESUS NO LONGER APPEALS TO HIM AND NO LONGER MOTIVATES HIM TO WANT TO OBEY THE GOSPEL, THAT THIS MAN IS ALREADY IN THE POSITION OF THE DEVIL AND THE ANGELS IN HELL.

WHILE WE CANNOT SAY A MAN HAS COMMITTED IT, I DO BELIEVE THAT WE CAN LOOK AROUND US AND SEE SOME VERY CLOSE APPROXIMATIONS. WE CAN SEE IT IN A REJECTION OF THE TRUTH OF THE SCRIPTURE, WILLFULLY PERSISTED IN. WE CAN SEE IT AS A MAN TRIFLES WITH THE URGING OF THE SPIRIT THROUGH THE WORD TO BECOME GOD'S CHILD, AND I WOULD SUGGEST JUST HERE THAT THERE ARE PERHAPS INDIVIDUALS IN THIS AUDIENCE WHO HAVE SAT UPON OCCASIONS LIKE THIS IN DAYS GONE BY AND HAVE BEEN CALLED BY THE GOSPEL TO COME TO JESUS CHRIST. YET WHEN THE INVITATION SON WAS SUNG AND THE INVITATION OF JESUS WAS EXTENDED, INSTEAD OF THANKING GOD FOR YOUR OPPORTUNITY, INSTEAD OF LETTING GO OF SELF AND COMING TO JESUS CHRIST, YOU STOOD THERE AND YOU FOUGHT THAT FEELING AND YOU WORKED AGAINST IT, YOU HELD TO THE BENCH. YOU HELD TO THE BOOK. YOU HELD TO ANYTHING TO KEEP YOU FROM COMING TO JESUS CHRIST. TONIGHT, THIS GOSPEL IS NOT APPEALING TO YOU AS IT DID IN DAYS GONE BY. YOU ARE APPROACHING THE POINT OF NO RETURN. YOU ARE APPROACHING THE POINT WHEN THE INVITATION OF JESUS CHRIST SHALL ONE DAY NOT APPEAL TO YOU AT ALL, AND YOU CAN SIT BENEATH THE SHADOW OF THE CROSS AND GO ABOUT YOUR BUSINESS JUST EXACTLY LIKE THOSE DID WHO CRUCIFIED HIM IN THE LONG AGO. WE SEE A CLOSE APPROXIMATION OF IT IN THOSE WHO WOULD RIDICULE CHRISTIANITY. WE SEE A CLOSE APPROXIMATION OF IT IN THOSE WHO WOULD EXPRESS HOSTILITY TO JESUS CHRIST. WE SEE A CLOSE APPROXIMATION OF IT IN THOSE WHO HOLD IN CONTEMPT AND WHO DIRECT SLANDER AGAINST JESUS, GOD, AND THINGS OF GOD, AND THE CHURCH, THE PEOPLE OF GOD, WE SEE A CLOSE APPROXIMATION OF IT IN THOSE WHO WOULD MOCK SACRED THINGS. WE SEE A CLOSE APPROXIMATION OF IT IN BLASPHEMOUS SUGGESTIONS WHICH ARE HARBORED IN THE HEART.

BUT MAY I SAY A WORD TO THE MAJORITY OF MY AUDIENCE NOW. I DON'T BELIEVE THE MAJORITY OF MY AUDIENCE HAS ENGAGED IN THESE THINGS WHICH WE HAVE SAID ARE CLOSE APPROXIMATIONS, BUT I WANT TO SUGGEST THAT THE DELIBERATE, WILLFUL, FINAL REJECTION OF THE SPIRIT IS NOT THE ONLY WAY TO SIN AGAINST THE SPIRIT OF GOD. WE ALSO SIN AGAINST THE SPIRIT OF GOD BY JUST LETTING THAT SPIRITUAL BEING WITHIN US SORT OF ATROPHY, JUST SORT OF GO AWAY. FOR INSTANCE, THERE ARE TWO WAYS I COULD REMOVE MY EYE. I COULD TONIGHT JUST GET A SHARP INSTRUMENT AND DRIVE IT INTO MY EYE AND I WOULD LOSE THE SIGHT OF THAT EYE IMMEDIATELY. BUT YOU SEE, THAT IS NOT NECESSARY. I CAN ALSO TAKE A BANDAGE WHICH IS IMPERVIOUS TO LIGHT AND PUT IT OVER THAT EYE AND LEAVE IT THERE LONG ENOUGH UNTIL THE OPTIC NERVE WILL BECOME AN INSENSATE THREAD AND I CANNOT SEE. I COULD TONIGHT GET SOMEONE TO TAKE AN AXE AND AMPUTATE MY ARM, AND I WOULD LOSE THE USE OF THAT ARM. BUT THAT IS NOT THE ONLY

WAY IT CAN BE DONE. I CAN TAKE THAT ARM AND BIND IT TO MY SIDE AND LEAVE IT THERE LONG ENOUGH UNTIL, WHEN I REMOVE THE BONDS, THE ARM HANGS LIFELESS AND USELESS AT MY SIDE. AND SO IT IS TONIGHT THAT MANY OF THE PEOPLE OF GOD ARE NOT GOING TO DELIBERATELY EXTINGUISH THEIR FEELINGS FOR THE SAVIOR, ARE NOT GOING TO DELIBERATELY GRIEVE AND QUENCH THE SPIRIT, ARE NOT GOING TO DELIBERATELY HARDEN AND SEAR THE CONSCIENCE, BUT BY YOUR INDIFFERENCE AND BY YOUR APATHY TO THE THINGS OF THE SPIRIT AND TO THE THINGS OF GOD YOU ARE GOING TO ACCOMPLISH EXACTLY THE VERY SAME THING, UNTIL YOU CAN COME INTO WORSHIP LIKE THIS, AND SIT WITH YOUR HARD HEART AND NEVER EVER BE ALMOST PERSUADED TO DO ANYTHING MORE OR BE ANYTHING MORE FOR THE LORD JESUS CHRIST. THE APPEAL OF THE HOLY SPIRIT, THE APPEAL THAT THE HOLY SPIRIT DEMANDS THAT YOU RECEIVE IS EXPRESSED IN HEBREWS 3:7,8, "TODAY IF YE WILL HEAR HIS VOICE, HARDEN NOT YOUR HEARTS, AS IN THE PROVOCATION." WHEN A MAN EITHER DELIBERATELY OR THROUGH INDIFFERENCE SHUTS OUT THE CALL OF THE SPIRIT OF GOD, HE GOES INTO THE HOUSE HE SHUTS THE DOOR, HE LOCKS IT AND HE THROWS THE KEY AWAY. GOD CANNOT REACH HIM.

IN WHAT SPIRITUAL STATE ARE YOU TONIGHT? ARE YOU IN THAT STATE WHICH IS CLOSE TO JESUS CHRIST? CAN YOU SAY TONIGHT THAT "ZEAL FOR THINE HOUSE HAS EATEN ME UP?" DO YOU SIT TONIGHT AS ONE INDIFFERENT, AS ONE CARELESS, AS ONE COLD, SLOWLY BUT SURELY LETTING THE VERY SPIRITUAL LIFE DRAIN AWAY FROM YOUR BEING?

MAY I CLOSE BY REMINDING YOU OF A PARABLE WHICH JESUS TOLD. THE PARABLE OF VIRGINS, WISE AND FOOLISH. THE FOOLISH LET THEIR LAMPS GO OUT, AND WHEN THE CRY CAME, "THE BRIDEGROOM COMETH," THOSE THAT WERE READY WENT IN WITH HIM, BUT THE FOOLISH HAD GONE AWAY TO BUY. WHEN THEY RETURNED, THEY DISCOVERED IT WAS TOO LATE. THE DOOR HAD BEEN ETERNALLY SHUT. I AM PLEADING WITH YOU TONIGHT TO NOT WAIT UNTIL THE BRIDEGROOM COMES. I AM PLEADING WITH YOU TONIGHT TO COME TO JESUS CHRIST AND TO FILL YOUR LAMP WITH THE OIL OF GRACE, THAT IT MIGHT BURN BRIGHTLY IN THIS WORLD, AND THAT WHEN JESUS COMES, WHEN THE BRIDEGROOM COMES, YOU CAN ARISE AND MEET HIM IN THE AIR AND TRIM YOUR LAMPS AND BE WITH HIM FOREVER AND FOREVER. TONIGHT THE SPIRIT IS CALLING, WILL YOU NOT REJECT HIM, WILL YOU NOT OBSTINATELY RESIST HIM, BUT WILL YOU COME WHILE WE STAND AND WHILE WE SING.