What is an Unpardonable Sin

Summary

The fear of having committed "the unpardonable sin" has haunted sincere believers for centuries. This article traces the warning back to its original audience — and offers real reassurance.

- The original context: Pharisees who witnessed the Messiah's miracles firsthand and knowingly attributed them to Satan.
- The unpardonable sin defined as deliberate, informed rejection of Yahweh's Spirit — not any specific act or words.
- Reassurance: worrying over having committed it is itself evidence one has not.
- A second, related unforgivable state: refusing to forgive others.

The full article begins on the next page.

What is an Unpardonable Sin

The idea of an unpardonable sin comes from something Yah'shua said. This is a little odd, because He is the one who died so all of our sins can be forgiven.

Here is what He said: "Everyone who speaks a word against the Son of Man [Yah'shua] will be forgiven, but anyone who blasphemes against His Holy Spirit will not be forgiven" *(Luke 12:10)*.

Matthew 12:31-32 and Mark 3:28-29 are parallel scriptures, saying that any sin will be forgiven except blasphemy against His Holy Spirit. This particular "eternal sin" is unique - unlike other sins, it will not be forgiven.

The historical situation helps us understand why Yah'shua mentioned blasphemy against His Holy Spirit: "He said this because they were saying, `He has an evil spirit'" *(Mark 3:30)*.

Some Jewish religious leaders had accused Yah'shua of being demon possessed *(v. 22)*. They suggested that Yah'shua could only conduct His miracles and order demons around because He was working with the ruler of the demons *(vv. 22-24)*.

Yah'shua showed that their claim was hypocritical and ridiculous in verses 25 to 27. But the Pharisees were refusing to accept the evidence, even though they had seen many of the miracles first-hand - and some of them even conceded that He was a teacher sent from Yahweh *(John 3:2)*.

The Pharisees were jealous and did not want to admit they might be wrong. In self-imposed blindness, they were rejecting not only Yah'shua, but also the dramatic evidence they had seen - evidence of the miracle working power of Yahweh.

So Yah'shua warned them about the sin that would not be forgiven. If you reject an obvious miracle of His Holy Spirit, calling a good miracle evil, then what could possibly change your mind? Perhaps nothing!

The Holy Spirit is the means by which Yahweh works in our hearts and minds to transform us and to lead us to salvation. But how could Yahweh help these Pharisees that were knowingly rejecting the very way that Yahweh works in them?

Yahweh loved the Pharisees, just like all human beings, without any favouritism *(Acts 10:34)*. Yahweh is merciful and always willing to forgive *(Luke 6:36)*.

Yahweh is able to forgive any sin, no matter how great. But He obviously cannot forgive a party who has sinned and does not want to be forgiven, or who refuses to admit he has done wrong.

Yahweh will not force anyone to live forever with Him in the Kingdom if that party does not want to do so. But few people ever reach that extreme place of knowing Yahweh and then fighting against Him.

Yah'shua was demonstrating the power of His Holy Spirit, not His own power to perform miracles - He admitted time and again that He was capable of doing nothing without the Father and His Holy Spirit.

The Pharisees were calling Him satanic - knowingly speaking against the miracles done by His Holy Spirit.

Yah'shua was warning them about how serious their accusations were - but it was a warning - not a condemnation. There was still hope. The Pharisees still had time to think about it and time to change their attitude.

Many of them did - some tried to help Yah'shua escape *(Luke 13:31)*. Some helped bury Him *(Luke 23:50-53)*. Some became His disciples after His resurrection *(Acts 15:5)*.

"If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins" *(1 John 1:9)*. Yahweh is able to forgive any and every sin *(Psalm 103:3)*. Even the people who helped to kill the Messiah could be forgiven their sins *(Luke 23:34; Acts 2:36-38)*. Paul murdered and persecuted members of the Church before his conversion, and that also was forgiven *(1 Timothy 1:13)*.

Any person can be forgiven for any sin. But Yahweh will not forgive people who refuse to admit sin and repent, when those people know better.

Few reach such extreme stubbornness. Few are so warped in their sense of good and evil that they can deliberately set themselves to oppose Yahweh and the work He does through His Holy Spirit - once they know Him.

Such people have grown to misunderstand Yahweh, to reject eternal life with Yahweh, resent what Yahweh has done, reject His offer of salvation and don't want or care about His forgiveness.

That brings us to an all-important point. If you are worried about the unpardonable sin, the mere fact that you are worried - thinking that you may have done it, proves you have not committed an unpardonable sin! The proof is in the fact that you care! You want to be right with Yahweh.

Because you care, there is hope for you, just as there was for the Pharisees, just as there was for those that killed the Messiah. All sins can be forgiven.

We can trust in Yahweh who accepted the Messiah's sinless life as sacrifice for every sin that humans have ever committed - past and future. Nothing can separate us from the love of Yahweh.

There is another sin that cannot be forgiven - a sin often misunderstood and rarely mentioned in discussions of the unpardonable sin.

Nonetheless, the Biblical terminology is almost the same: Yahweh will not forgive us if we fail to do one particularly important thing. The Biblical teaching is clear.

If we forgive others, Yahweh will forgive us. If we don't, Yahweh will not forgive us - if we hold a grudge, if we hold on to a desire for revenge, we are in danger! The teaching is repeated in Matt. 6:14-15; 18:21-35; Mark 11:25 and Luke 6:37.

Like blasphemy of His Holy Spirit, this is a sin that will not be forgiven, unless of course, we change our ways. Our relationships with others, in many ways reflect our relationship with Yahweh *(1 John 4:20)*.

We must get them right! Our family relationships can, for example, interfere with our prayers *(1 Peter 3:7*) and provide evidence that we are "worse than an unbeliever" *(1 Timothy 5:8)*.

In some ways, refusing to forgive someone else is the same as blaspheming His Holy Spirit. It is in fact, denying the power of Yahweh to transform that party by the power of His Holy Spirit. If we refuse to forgive someone, we are refusing to believe that Yahweh can take care of that party in the best possible way.

It is rejection of the fact that the Messiah died for all people, including that party. It is failing to realize what Israelite faith is all about.

If we understand this, and if we allow His Holy Spirit to transform our minds and hearts to become more and more like Yahweh, we will be gracious, merciful and forgiving, as our Father is.

"Do not grieve the Holy Spirit of Yahweh," Paul says in Ephesians 4:30. "Get rid of all bitterness, rage and anger, brawling and slander, along with every form of malice. Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in the Messiah, Yahweh forgave you" *(vv. 31-32)*.

Not one of us is perfect, but we all have tremendous hope. Yahweh can help us become more forgiving. He knows our weaknesses and our need for His help - as long as we want that help. He is always able and available to help us. His mercy endures forever *(Psalm 136:1-26)*.

We can freely approach Yahweh, through our High Priest Yah'shua the Messiah, assured that He will give us the strength of His Holy Spirit, not only to live better lives ourselves, but for the help we need to forgive others.

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