

Blasphemy Against the Holy Spirit: Mark 3:19b-30

Sunday, March 10, 2024
Covenant Church
Pastor Zack Phillips

Mark 3:19b-30

^{19b} ...Then he went home; ²⁰ and the crowd came together again, so that they could not even eat. ²¹ When his family heard it, they went out to restrain him, for people were saying, "He has gone out of his mind." ²² And the scribes who came down from Jerusalem said, "He has Beelzebul, and by the ruler of the demons he casts out demons." ²³ And he called them to him, and spoke to them in parables, "How can Satan cast out Satan? ²⁴ If a kingdom is divided against itself, that kingdom cannot stand. ²⁵ And if a house is divided against itself, that house will not be able to stand. ²⁶ And if Satan has risen up against himself and is divided, he cannot stand, but his end has come. ²⁷ But no one can enter a strong man's house and plunder his property without first tying up the strong man; then indeed the house can be plundered.

²⁸ "Truly I tell you, people will be forgiven for their sins and whatever blasphemies they utter; ²⁹ but whoever blasphemes against the Holy Spirit can never have forgiveness, but is guilty of an eternal sin" — ³⁰ for they had said, "He has an unclean spirit."

Introduction

John Bunyan (1628–1688)

John Child (1638–1684)

Interpreting Our Passage

The traditional answer is *probably* right? Based on (1) what the scribes actually say; (2) what his family says; (3) Paul's likely biography; and (4) a larger view of the God of the Bible.

Is the sin in view in Mark 3:29 the same as that in 1 John 5:16 and/or Heb 6:4-8 and/or Heb 10:26-31?

1 John 5:16 If you see your brother or sister committing what is not a mortal sin, you will ask, and God will give life to such a one—to those whose sin is not mortal. There is sin that is mortal; I do not say that you should pray about that.

Heb 6:4-8 4 For it is impossible to restore again to repentance those who have once been enlightened, and have tasted the heavenly gift, and have shared in the Holy Spirit, 5 and have tasted the goodness of the word of God and the powers of the age to come, 6 and then have fallen away, since on their own they are crucifying again the Son of God and are holding him up to contempt. 7 Ground that drinks up the rain falling on it repeatedly, and that produces a crop useful to those for whom it is cultivated, receives a blessing from God. 8 But if it produces thorns and thistles, it is worthless and on the verge of being cursed; its end is to be burned over.

Heb 10:26-31 26 For if we willfully persist in sin after having received the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins, 27 but a fearful prospect of judgment, and a fury of fire that will

consume the adversaries. **28 Anyone who has violated the law of Moses dies without mercy “on the testimony of two or three witnesses.” 29 How much worse punishment do you think will be deserved by those who have spurned the Son of God, profaned the blood of the covenant by which they were sanctified, and outraged the Spirit of grace? 30 For we know the one who said, “Vengeance is mine, I will repay.” And again, “The Lord will judge his people.” 31 It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.**

What about “speaking” in Matt 12:32?

Whoever speaks a word against the Son of Man will be forgiven, but whoever speaks against the Holy Spirit will not be forgiven, either in this age or in the age to come.

Conclusion

Fate of Bunyan/Childs like the fate of Peter/Judas:

Mr. Collings: “[C]an you contentedly sink into the deep Abyss of Misery, without striving for Salvation? Would you not run to Christ? Strive to take hold of him, and his purchas’d Blessedness.”
Mr. Child (with a very grim Countenance) said, I shall go to Hell, I am broken in Judgment...¹

“Then the tempter again laid at me very sore, suggesting, that neither the mercy of God, nor yet the blood of Christ, did at all concern me, nor could they help me, for my sin; therefore it was but in vain to pray. Yet, thought I, I will pray. But, said the tempter, your sin is unpardonable. Well, said I, I will pray. ‘Tis no boot, said he. Yet, said I, I will pray. So I went to prayer to God...” —John Bunyan²

Two major ways our passage has functioned in Christian history

What about (1) Genesis 18:16-33: Abraham “bargaining” with God over Sodom and Gomorrah; (2) Isaiah 38: King Hezekiah’s illness; (3) Matt 15:21-28//Mark 7:24-30: “Crumbs from the table”?

We must seek a Person rather than a solution!

Question: What is one thing that God may have said to you through this sermon?

¹ *A Relation of the Fearful Estate of Francis Spira, After He Turn’d Apostate from the Protestant Church to Popery. As also the Miserable Lives, and Woful [sic.] Deaths, of Mr. John Child...and Mr. Geo. Edwards, Late of Stratford in Essex, who Willfully Shot Himself to Death, Jan. 4, 1704.* Printed for B. Harris at the Golden Boars-Head in Grace-Church-Street; and Sold by E. Tracy at the Three-Bibles on London-Bridge, 1715.

² John Bunyan, *The Pilgrim’s Progress and Grace Abounding to the Chief of Sinners*; ed. John Thornton (New York: Vintage E-book).