

The Hinge-Point of History

Matthew 12:22-32 - NCBC, May 17, 2020

Main Point: **Israel's rejection of the power of God's Spirit is the unpardonable sin.**

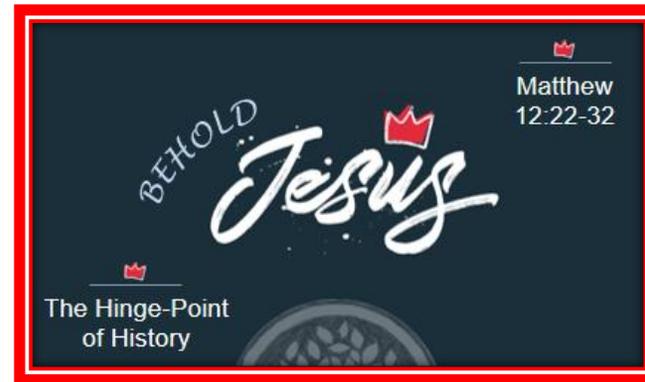
- The power of God's Spirit revealed (22-23)
 - Supernatural Authority to free sinners from sin's slavery (22)
 - Speculating Amazement that Jesus may be the Messiah (23)
- The power of God's Spirit rejected (24)
 - By accountable leaders
 - With hardened unbelief
 - Through demonic blasphemy
- The power of God's Spirit reasoned (25-30)
 - Spiritual kingdoms are loyal to their ruler (25-27)
 - Spiritual signs prove Jesus rules now (28-29)
 - Therefore you either serve Jesus or Satan (30)
- The power of God's Spirit realized (31-32)
 - When any sinner is forgiven (31a, 32a)
 - When unbelieving Israel is forsaken by God (31b, 32b)

Application: **Receive God's pardon by submitting to the power of His Spirit!**

Opening Announcements:

- **Remember to visit myncbc.org** and follow our NCBC Facebook page to stay informed on all ministry/event updates during this season of sheltering, that has now been extended by our Governor through the month of May.
- Tonight is our **2019/20 Annual Meeting Celebration!** Please join our live-stream at **6pm**. Members will be asked to vote on the 2020/21 proposed budget. Everyone is invited!!

<<His Mercy is More>>



Good morning church! What a joy to set aside time together this morning to worship our God of mercy and forgiveness. Praise the Lord that although our sins are many, His mercy is more!

Please open your Bibles (or Bible apps on your device) to **Matthew chapter 12** as we continue celebrating the grace of our Lord together this morning.

And while you prepare for our Scripture reading together, please notice all the livestream links for fill-in-the-blank sermon notes, the preaching manuscript, and children's coloring pages. You are always welcome to pause this video, print those files, and then rejoin our worship with those notes in front of you.

I'm so excited to be able to preach this particular Scripture to you this morning. **Matthew 12 verses 22-32** reveal a significant Turning Point in all of human history!

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW				
1-3 Presentation of the King				
4-7 Proclamation of the King <i>Sermon on the Mount (5-7)</i>	8-10 Power of the King <i>Sending out the 12 Apostles (10)</i>	11-13 Rejection of the King <i>Kingdom Parables (13)</i>	14-20 Priorities of the King <i>Topsy-Turvy Values (18)</i>	21-25 Progress of the King <i>Olivet Discourse (24-25)</i>
Kingdom offered to Israel		12 Kingdom offered to all Nations		
26-28 Passion & Proof of the King				

Right here in the middle of **chapter 12** is where the leaders of Israel reject King Jesus. Israel refuses her King. Even though it will be another year before they actually crucify Jesus, Israel's rejection of Jesus is finalized right here and now – in **Matthew 12**.

After this point in time, this kingdom is offered to all nations – effectively cutting off Israel's branch and grafting the Gentiles into God's kingdom program.¹

There are critical verses for Jewish history. But these verses are important for the church today as well – for few verses are so widely misunderstood than these verses among Christians today.

So are you prayed up and ready to submit your soul to the glories of Christ's good news this morning? Please pray for spiritual understanding as we meditate upon **Matthew 12, verses 22-32** together. A right understanding of this passage will free your soul from fear, and cause your faith to soar to new heights as you stand amazed at the power of God's Spirit to forgive all your sins!

¹ Romans 11:17-25



So let's read **Matthew 12, verses 22-32**, in the ESV:

²² Then a demon-oppressed man who was blind and mute was brought to him, and he healed him, so that the man spoke and saw. ²³ And all the people were amazed, and said, "Can this be the Son of David?" ²⁴ But when the Pharisees heard it, they said, "It is only by Beelzebul, the prince of demons, that this man casts out demons." ²⁵ Knowing their thoughts, he said to them, "Every kingdom divided against itself is laid waste, and no city or house divided against itself will stand. ²⁶ And if Satan casts out Satan, he is divided against himself. How then will his kingdom stand? ²⁷ And if I cast out demons by Beelzebul, by whom do your sons cast them out? Therefore they will be your judges. ²⁸ But if it is by the Spirit of God that I cast out demons, then the kingdom of God has come upon you. ²⁹ Or how can someone enter a strong man's house and plunder his goods, unless he first binds the strong man? Then indeed he may plunder his house. ³⁰ Whoever is not with me is against me, and whoever does not gather with me scatters. ³¹ Therefore I tell you, every sin and blasphemy will be forgiven people, but the blasphemy against the Spirit will not be forgiven.

³² And 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.

This is God's Word.

Let's Pray Together.

If I said, "Stop thinking about a pink elephant!" an image of a pink elephant would immediately pop into most of our minds!

And for some of us, that's what happens when we read **verses 31 and 32**. As soon as we read that blasphemy against the Spirit will not be forgiven, our minds immediately wonder – have I committed the unpardonable sin? Am I now unforgiveable by God? Have my sins disqualified myself from God's continued mercy and forgiveness in some way?

Throughout church history, Satan has had a hay-day with this passage – using it to sow the seeds of doubt, discouragement, and despair among some of the most conscientious of God's children.

So if that's you, I can relate. When I was 16-years old I sincerely believed I had trampled on the blood of Christ,² and therefore God could no longer forgive my sins. I have personally experienced the despair of such lies.

² Hebrews 10:29

³ C.f. 1 John 1:9

So as we walk through these verses together, I'm praying God's Spirit would set you free from the prison of anxious self-condemnation this morning. For when rightly understood, this Scripture actually teaches there's no sin that won't be forgiven when we come humbly in repentance before God.³

We must understand these verses in their literal, grammatical, historical context. Remember, "a text without its context is just a pretext for a proof text."⁴

Although Satan is mentioned in these verses – these verses exalt the power of God more than the power of Satan. And although there is a kind of rejection and blasphemy which brings God's judgment rather than forgiveness, this paragraph is more about miraculous power of God's Spirit in biblical history than it is about something you've done or not done in your own life.

Listen carefully. The main point of **verses 22-32** is that:



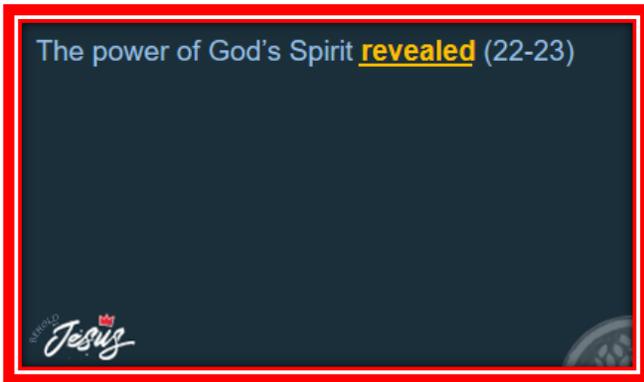
Israel's rejection of the power of God's Spirit is the unpardonable sin. The unpardonable sin in **Matthew 12**

⁴ I first heard this memorable Bible interpretation principle from Dr. John Street at The Master's University in Santa Clarita, CA.

is not about you – it’s about the specific rejection of Jesus by Israel’s leaders.

When Israel’s leaders rejected Jesus as their King, they spoke against the undeniable power of God’s Spirit in their midst – choosing to align God’s work with Satan Himself rather than submitting to King Jesus. So the unpardonable sin is something that leaders of God’s people committed – in **Matthew 12** – at a critical moment in history.

It is not possible for anyone today to commit any sin that is beyond the reach of God’s forgiveness if they turn in repentance and faith. This is the glorious power of God’s Spirit, so let’s jump into **verses 22 and 23** where we see,



The power of God’s Spirit revealed.

It’s too easy to gloss over the amazing miracle in **verse 22**. So slow down and savor the wonder of this.

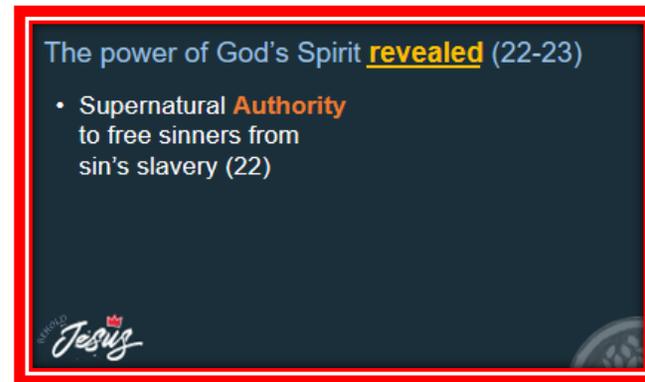
Here’s a man controlled by the dark supernatural power of demons. Ever since Satan took over his life, he’s been

blind and mute. He can’t see and he can’t speak. More than likely he was also deaf since hearing and speaking so often go together.

This man is imprisoned in the terrifying state of slavery to all that is sinful and evil. Apart from holding him in a mute darkness, we don’t know how the demons tormented him. Perhaps it was through seizure-like tremors, or fear-screaming hallucinations, or uncontrollable fits of rage and violence? But because of Satan’s power, this man whom God had created to bear His image was now the personification of evil and sin.

He was unable to see any hope, and unable to ask for help. In many ways, he was as good as dead.⁵

But someone loved him...for in **verse 22** someone brought him to Jesus. And although this man probably had no idea what was happening, Jesus had mercy upon his plight and by the power of the Spirit of God casts out the demons –immediately giving the man back his sight and speech, and restoring wholeness to his life!



⁵ Ephesians 2:1-3
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Now church, this is a revelation of the **Supernatural Authority of God's Spirit to free sinners from sin's slavery.**

Verse 28 makes it clear – Jesus freed this man from Satan's slavery through the power of the Spirit of God. So don't miss this -- God's Spirit has the power to set the worst sinners free!

It doesn't matter how dark your life has become... or how hopeless or helpless you are in sin's prison... God's Spirit is powerful enough to restore the image of God in your soul, and deliver you from the strongest grip of evil!!

So no wonder the crowds were amazed in **verse 23**. They were so overwhelmed by such supernatural power over evil, they started to question whether Jesus could actually be the Son of David.



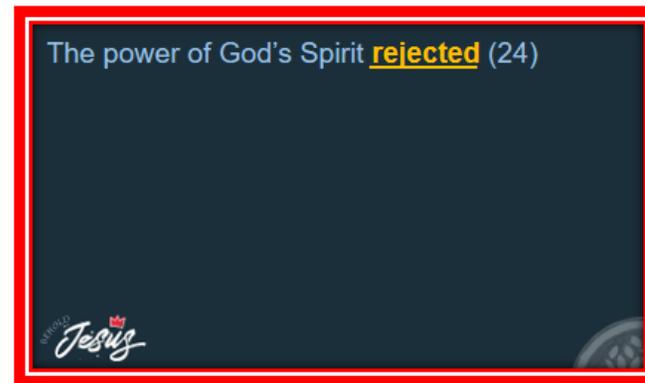
This was **Speculating Amazement that Jesus may be the Messiah.**

Who else but the long-promised Davidic king – could have the power to eradicate evil and break all demonic strongholds of sin in a person's life?

The word “amazed” in **verse 23** is a strong word – it means they were besides themselves in astonishment.

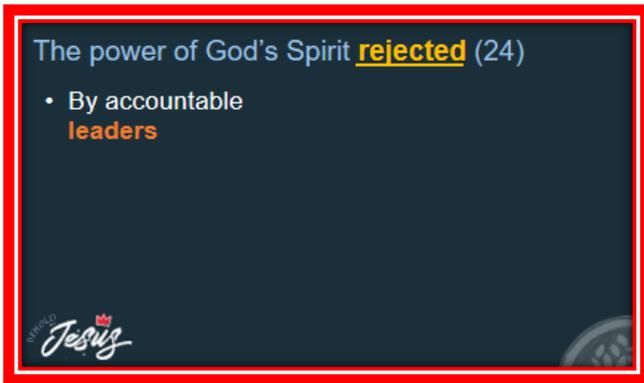
And so the Pharisees – the spiritual rulers of Israel who were watching all of this, knew that they had to squash the people's wonder in this miracle worker.

So in **verse 24** we see,



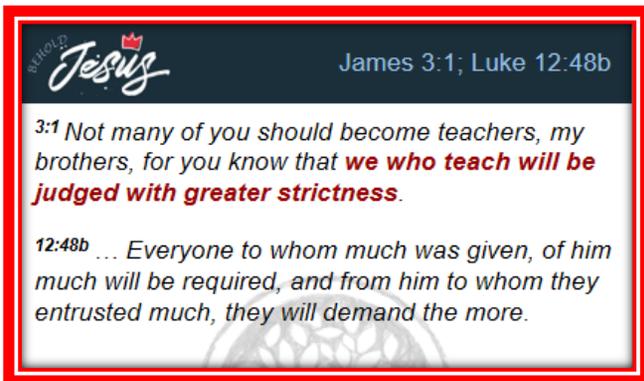
The power of God's Spirit rejected.

And in this context, it's important to note that **verse 24** is the teaching of the Pharisees – the religious leaders of Israel. Here the undeniable power of God's Spirit is rejected,



By accountable leaders. By those who should have known better. By the very ones God held accountable for the spiritual well-being of Israel.

Scripture is clear that God holds spiritual leaders to a higher level of accountability since their sins have greater consequences in the lives of others.⁶

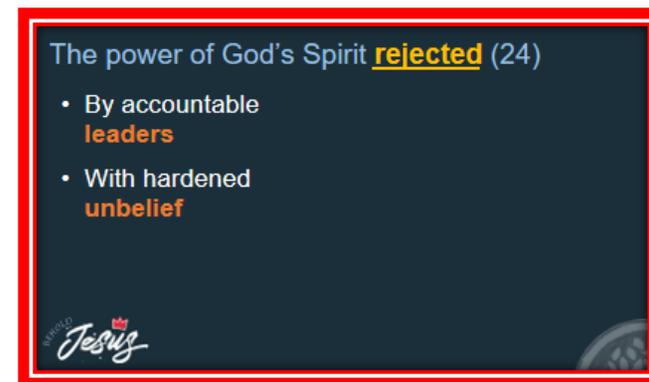


James 3:1 reminds us that *teachers will be judged with greater strictness*. And **Luke 12:48** reminds us that greater responsibility comes with greater revelation.

And consider all the revelation God had entrusted to the scribes and the Pharisees. They had constant access to all the Old Testament Scriptures. And remember – this was 1400 years before the printing press was invented. So all the common people relied on oral teaching of the scribes and Pharisees in their synagogues for their own understanding of God's Word.

And along with the Scriptures – these Pharisees had been given unmistakable proof after proof that Jesus was the Messiah. Miraculous signs had piled up over the last year and a half of Jesus' ministry – immediate healings, raising the dead, casting out demons, calming storms, and even forgiving sins! All done in a way that fulfilled the Old Testament Scriptures!

And yet, the very leaders who should have helped all of Israel see Jesus as the Messiah willfully turned a blind eye to His power and rejected Him with the high-hand of,



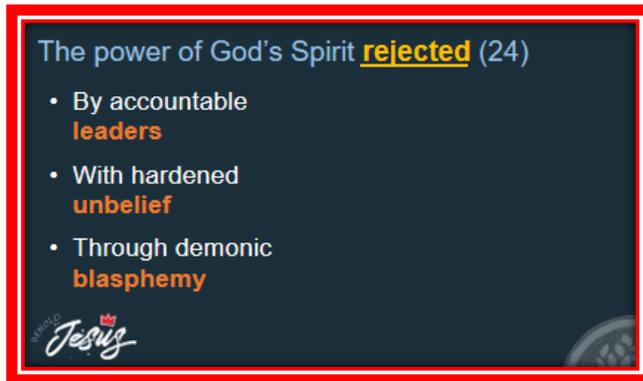
hardened unbelief.

⁶ C.f. Ezekiel 34; Jeremiah 23

Jesus was a threat to their religious establishment. He had openly condemned their hypocrisy and paid no regard for their man-made rules.

Therefore in the face of undeniable evidence these contemporary Pharaohs⁷ hardened their hearts, stiffened their necks, and proudly resisted the work of the Holy Spirit.⁸

The unbelief of Israel's selfish shepherds was willful, persistent, and permanent. And it left them with only one option – to reject God's Messiah,



Through demonic blasphemy.

You see there was no denying Jesus' power. No one could doubt that this man used to be blind and silenced by demons. This wasn't some sleight of hand that the Pharisees could explain away.

There was only two possible explanations for this kind of supernatural power. This was either the power of God,

or the power of Satan! And so in their unbelieving rejection, the Pharisees taught in **verse 24**,

It is only by Beelzebul, the prince of demons, that this man casts out demons!

Even though they know this be the work of God's Spirit, they purposefully attribute Jesus' power to Satan himself.

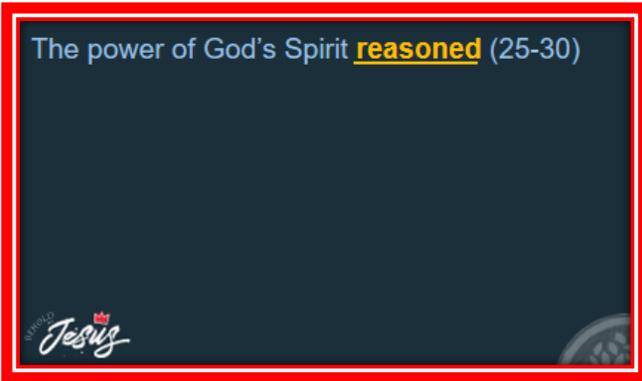
These Pharisees are the very ones God holds accountable to spiritually shepherd His chosen people...and they blatantly teach a lie – blaspheming the Holy Spirit by crediting Satan with the very works of God Himself.

This is the unpardonable sin. You and I cannot commit any unpardonable sin unless we are one of Israel's spiritual leaders, who willfully rejects the power of God's Spirit in hardened unbelief to the point that we're teaching the nation of Israel that Jesus is a representative of Satan Himself at the very moment He is offering the kingdom of God to His chosen people. Israel's official rejection of the power of God's Spirit is the unforgiveable sin.

And so now that the unpardonable sin has been committed, and the work of God's Spirit has been rejected, we see

⁷ C.f. Exodus 4:21; 8:19; 14:4

⁸ C.f. Acts 7:51



The power of God's Spirit reasoned by Jesus in **verses 25-30**.

King Jesus is so powerful, that He can read peoples' minds...and so first He argues against the Pharisees' blasphemy by teaching that,



Spiritual kingdoms are always loyal to their respective ruler.

Everyone knows there are only two supernatural kingdoms – one ruled by Satan and one ruled by God.⁹

⁹ C.f. Ephesians 2:2, 6:12; Colossians 2:15
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So the Pharisees' teaching that Jesus cast out Satan's demons by the power of Satan is absurd.

Verses 25-26 argue it is illogical for Satan to destroy himself. Satan is not stupid. Therefore if some power is opposing the kingdom of Satan, it must be the power of God Himself.

And in fact, the Pharisees knew this. Jesus exposes their inconsistency in **verse 27**. For the Pharisees allowed some of their disciples, or "sons" as they are called in **verse 27**, to cast out demons.¹⁰

And so Jesus asks the Pharisees – by what power do your own disciples cast out demons? If they said, by Satan's power, it would discredit their own ministries. But if they said by God's power, it would lend credibility to the idea that Jesus also was working by God's power.

Their approval of Jewish exorcisms judged and exposed their blasphemy as the lie that it was.

Further, **verses 28-29** reason against the Pharisees' blasphemy since the,

¹⁰ C.f. Matthew 7:22



Spiritual signs prove Jesus rules now.

Verse 28 is a key verse – look at it carefully,

But if it is by the Spirit of God that I cast out demons, – and clearly this was the case since only God's kingdom opposes Satan's kingdom – then the kingdom of God has come upon you.

Jesus' miracles of healing, casting out demons, raising the dead, and even forgiving sin makes it undeniable that God's Spirit is working ...which means the kingdom of God and its king is standing right in front of them!

Clearly the Pharisees are rejecting the anointed King sent to rule on earth over God's kingdom in fulfillment of the Abrahamic Covenant¹¹ and the Davidic Covenant!¹² They are rejecting the "Son of Man" who has been sent to reign over Israel in fulfillment of **Daniel chapter 2**¹³ and **Daniel chapter 7**.¹⁴ The miraculous signs of God's Spirit at work in the nation of Israel should have been

¹¹ Genesis 17:6-8

¹² 2 Samuel 7:8-16

more than sufficient to open their blind eyes and help them receive their Messiah and His earthly kingdom.

Jesus couldn't be clearer – the kingdom of God is here – right now! If you reject the King of God's kingdom, then you abort yourself from the very kingdom of God!

Verse 29 –all these signs prove God's Spirit is more powerful than the strong man Satan. Satan has no power in Jesus' kingdom.

Therefore **verse 30** drives home Jesus' verdict. Since there's only two spiritual kingdoms, and you've spent the last year or more rejecting sign after sign of God's power over sin and suffering in this world,

Whoever is not with Jesus is against Jesus.



You either serve Jesus or Satan.

Neutrality towards Jesus and His kingdom power is impossible.

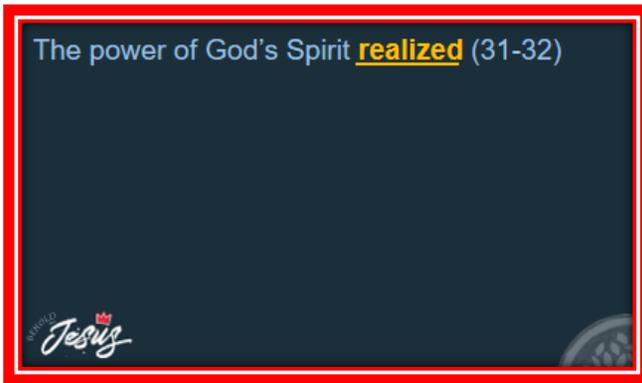
¹³ Daniel 2:44

¹⁴ Daniel 7:13-14, 18

You only have two choices – choose Satan or choose Jesus. There's no middle ground.

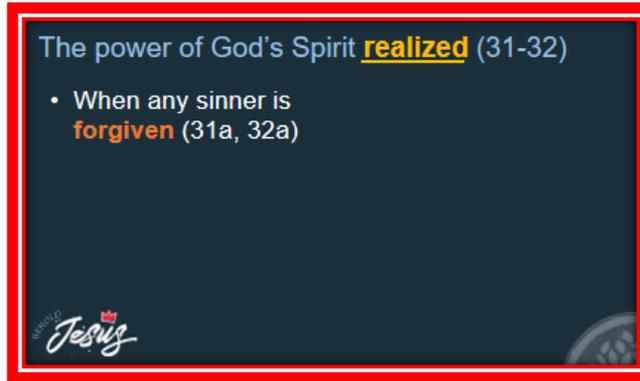
And of course, the Pharisees had made their resolved choice in **verse 24**. Their religious pride blinded their eyes, hardened their hearts, stiffened their necks, and caused them to blaspheme God's Spirit – rejecting Jesus and aligning themselves with a demonic kingdom of hatred against God.

So in **verses 31 and 32**, Jesus explains the consequences of realizing the Holy Spirit's power.



The power of God's Spirit is realized in one of two ways.

First, the power of God's Spirit is realized,



When any sinner is forgiven, set free from Satan's lies, and made whole again for the glory of God.

Look at the first half of **verses 31**:

Therefore I tell you, every sin and blasphemy will be forgiven people...

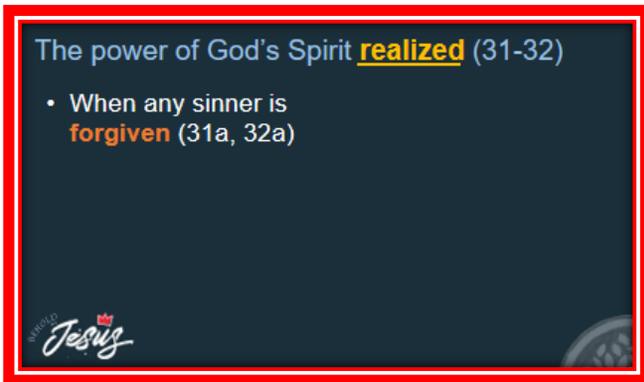
And **verse 32** ... even if you speak a word against or blaspheme Jesus Himself, you can be forgiven.

Don't miss what Jesus is teaching here. God's Spirit is so powerful...that not only can He heal diseases, and raise the dead, and cast out demons...but God's Spirit is able to give repentance to any sinner so they might believe on King Jesus and have their sins forgiven!!

You see, according to the Scriptures, repentance is both a command and a gift. **Acts 17:30** commands all people everywhere to repent of their sins and receive God's forgiveness. Only those who repent will be forgiven.



But **Acts 11:18** and **2 Timothy 2:25** make it clear that **God grants repentance**. No one can repent and have their sins forgiven apart from the power of God's Spirit.¹⁵ It is only the miraculous work of God's Spirit in the human heart fulfilling the New Covenant¹⁶ that causes a selfish heart of stone to love and submit to King Jesus.



So please don't miss this – the power of God's Spirit is realized through the forgiveness of any sin! No matter how dark, or habitual, or blasphemous.

Remember – God forgave David who both murdered and committed adultery.¹⁷ God forgave Peter after he denied the Lord three times!¹⁸ Jesus even forgave those who spoke against and killed Him – for as He was hanging on the cross he exclaimed, "Father forgive them!"¹⁹

Verse 31 is clear – *every kind of sin and blasphemy will be forgiven people ...*

But you might object... I've sinned too much. God could never forgive me after what I've done. I've sinned with a high-hand. I knew what I was doing, and I still did what was wrong.²⁰ God could never forgive me now that I've done what I've done.

Friends, nearly 20 years ago now a Christian sister came to me for counsel with a very sad story. Her pastor had sent her to professional counseling with one of the so-called "Christian Counseling Centers" in our area. And after she told her counselor that she was afraid she had committed the unpardonable sin, her well-intentioned counselor diagnosed her with scrupulosity – an overactive conscience, and told her to go out in a field all by herself and curse and blaspheme God as loud and as long as she could until she stopped feeling guilty. This was the horrific "cure" offered by a local "Christian" counseling agency.²¹

¹⁵ Romans 2:4-5, 8:4, 8-9; 10:3; Galatians 5:18

¹⁶ Ezekiel 36:26-27

¹⁷ 2 Samuel 12:13

¹⁸ John 21:15-19

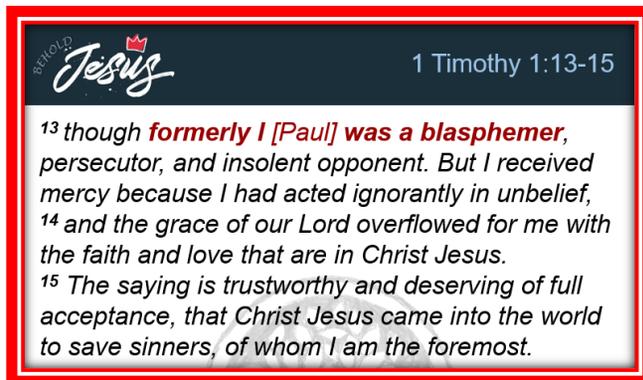
¹⁹ Luke 23:34

²⁰ C.f. Romans 7:15-20. Paul understands our weak human condition.

²¹ As a side note, this experience was very influential in forming my convictions on the necessary of restoring competent and compassionate

Unfortunately, my sister followed her counselor's orders... only to end up feeling more guilty and ashamed of herself after she had spent every ounce of her energy trying as hard as she could to blaspheme God's Spirit. Now she was sitting in front of me, convinced that God could never forgive her.

She had certainly sinned! My heart broke as I listened to her story. But **Matthew 12:31** says the Holy Spirit is even powerful enough to forgive blatant sins of blasphemy.

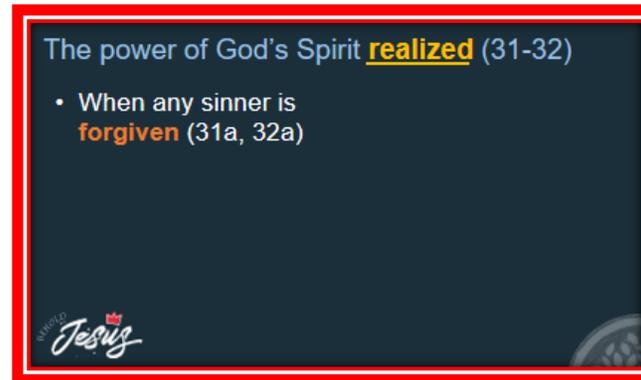


Just like the sins that Paul the blasphemer committed²² when he persecuted Christ's church, and used all of His energies to tear down and publicly discredit the work of God's Spirit.

So here's where **Matthew 12** applies to us today. It's not to wonder if we've committed any sin that God cannot forgive... the unpardonable sin was a once-in-time rejection of the Messiah by the religious leaders of Israel.

biblical counseling to Christ's church! Not all counseling that claims to be Christian is truly biblical and centered on Christ and His Gospel.

²² 1 Timothy 1:13-15



The application of **Matthew 12:22-32** for us today is to receive the power of God's Spirit – which is realized every time the most vile and wicked sins are truly forgiven!! There's nothing you have done, or could do, that can't be forgiven by the power of God's Spirit. God's grace and mercy is far greater than all of our sin!²³

So today we can finally stop our anxious self-focus...and just humbly bring all of our sins to the foot of the cross. See how Jesus died once and for all to pay the real penalty for all your sins.²⁴ See how Jesus rose from the dead to give you a new heart! See how Jesus ascended to the Father and sent His Spirit to dwell in you and cause your faith to persevere even to the end of the age!²⁵

Have you experienced the power of God's Spirit? Have you asked Him to forgive all your sins?

Simply believe that Jesus is your Lord and Savior, turn from your sins in repentance, and rest in God's peace for

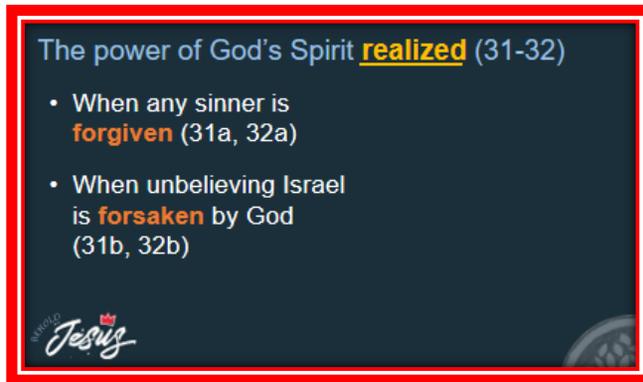
²³ Romans 5:20

²⁴ Hebrews 10:10

²⁵ John 10:29; Romans 8:16-17, 26-27; Ephesians 1:13-14; Hebrews 10:39

your soul. There is no greater power known to us than when the Holy Spirit grants us repentance and forgives all our sins! Hallelujah for the powerful Spirit of God!!

Now of course, the last half of **verses 31 and 32** help us see how the power of God's Spirit is also realized,



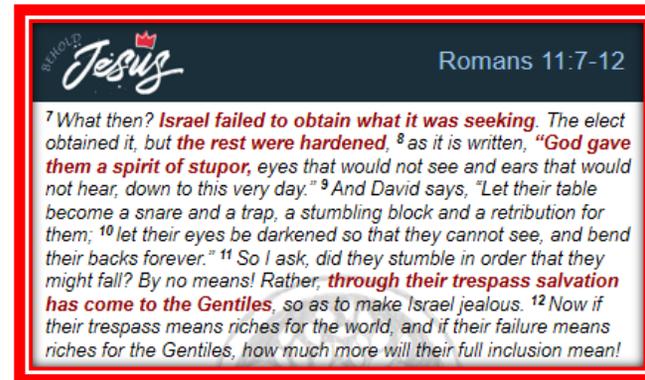
The power of God's Spirit **realized** (31-32)

- When any sinner is **forgiven** (31a, 32a)
- When unbelieving Israel is **forsaken** by God (31b, 32b)

When unbelieving Israel is forsaken by God.

You see there was no coming back from the nation's official rejection of Jesus. Once the Pharisees formally spoke against the Holy Spirit, they revealed that their hearts were evil. They were resolved to willfully reject what God had undeniably revealed to them, even crediting Satan with the power of God's Spirit. This is a major hinge-point in history.

The Pharisees thought they had rejected Jesus. But actually, it was the King who had rejected them.



Jesus Romans 11:7-12

7 What then? Israel failed to obtain what it was seeking. The elect obtained it, but the rest were hardened, 8 as it is written, "God gave them a spirit of stupor, eyes that would not see and ears that would not hear, down to this very day." 9 And David says, "Let their table become a snare and a trap, a stumbling block and a retribution for them; 10 let their eyes be darkened so that they cannot see, and bend their backs forever." 11 So I ask, did they stumble in order that they might fall? By no means! Rather, through their trespass salvation has come to the Gentiles, so as to make Israel jealous. 12 Now if their trespass means riches for the world, and if their failure means riches for the Gentiles, how much more will their full inclusion mean!

The apostle Paul explains what was happening behind the scenes of **Matthew 12** in **Romans chapter 11**, stating in **verse 8** that,

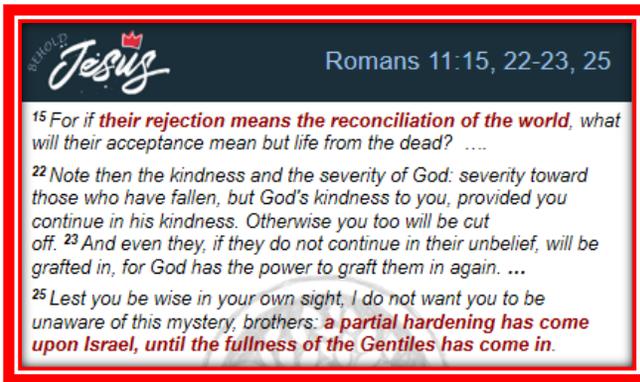
God gave [the Jews] a spirit of stupor, eyes that would not see and ears that would not hear...

All so that as **verse 11** says,

Through the Jew's trespass salvation has come to the Gentiles.

In other words... God hardened Israel's heart for a season – just like He did to Pharaoh back in Exodus, all so that Jesus would be crucified as the substitutionary sacrifice for sinners, and God could glorify Himself in the salvation of people from all tribes, and nations, and tongues!

Paul goes on in **verse 15** of **Romans 11**,



To help us understand that *Israel's rejection means the reconciliation of the world*...and there will be a future day when Israel will formally accept King Jesus as their Messiah, and they too will experience the power of God's Spirit in forgiveness.

But for now, while Israel remains hardened in their opposition to Christ, **verse 25** makes it clear that *a partial hardening has come upon Israel, until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in*.

Translation: ever since **Matthew 12:24**, the Spirit of God has been working to grant repentance and faith to sinners from every nation under heaven...all so God may be glorified through the building of His church.

So let's not miss the point of **Matthew chapter 12** and Jesus' teaching about the unpardonable sin.



Israel's rejection of the power of God's Spirit is the unpardonable sin. It's not possible for anyone today to commit any sin that God's Spirit is unable to forgive.

If you are not an accountable leader of Israel, speaking on behalf of your nation, at the moment the King is offering your people God's kingdom...then you cannot commit the unpardonable sin.

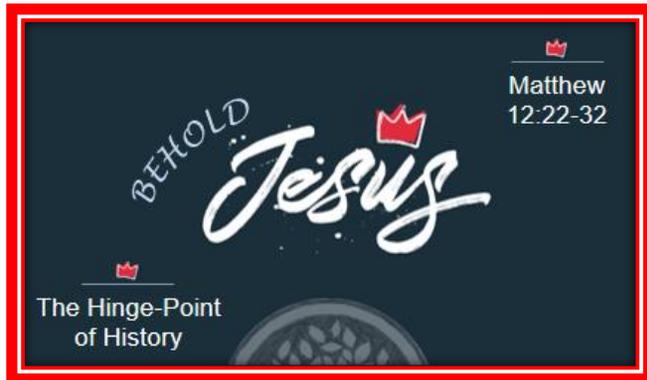
The lesson for us this morning is therefore simply to,



Receive God's pardon by submitting to the power of His Spirit!

The evidence of God's power over sin and all of its consequences is truly amazing. So submit to the power of God's Spirit today as He draws you in repentance, and opens your eyes to see Jesus as beautiful and lovely.

Cry out to God and believe that because of the perfect sacrifice of Jesus Christ on your behalf, all of your sins – past, present, and future – have been completely forgiven once and for all!

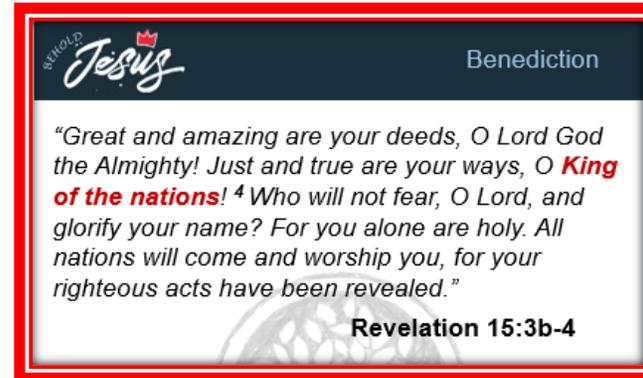


Let's pray.

<<In Christ Alone>>

*Remember to take advantage of the Sermon-Stretcher
Downloads links!
Tonight – Live-Streamed Annual Mtg @ 6pm!!*

Let's pray our benediction together as we dismiss.



Great and amazing are your deeds, O Lord God the Almighty! Just and true are your ways, O King of the nations! Who will not fear, O Lord, and glorify your name? For you alone are holy. All nations will come and worship you, for your righteous acts have been revealed.
Revelation 15:3b-4

Recommended Resources on The Hinge-Point of History:

- Exodus 4:21; 8:19; 14:4
- Leviticus 24:16
- Matthew 23:38-39; 26:69-75
- Mark 14:66-72
- Luke 12:48; 23:34
- John 3:19
- Acts 7:51; 10:38
- Romans 2:4-5; 11:7-12, 15, 22-25
- 1 Corinthians 2:10-14; 12:3
- Ephesians 1:7
- 1 Timothy 1:13-14
- Hebrews 2:3-4; 6:4-6
- James 3:1
- 1 John 1:9, 2:12

- <https://www.ccef.org/unpardonable-sin/>
- <https://www.desiringgod.org/articles/what-is-the-unforgivable-sin>
- <http://bradhambrick.com/can-we-reason-ourselves-into-assurance-of-salvation/>

- *Stop Asking Jesus Into Your Heart*, JD Greear
- *There Really is a Difference*, Renald Showers

Growing Deeper: Life Group Questions

1. Read Matthew 26:69-75, Luke 23:34; 1 Timothy 1:13-14, and 1 John 1:9. Is there any kind of sin today that God will not forgive if you truly come in repentance and faith?
2. Read Romans 11:11-24. How does the historical context of Matthew 12 help us understand what Jesus is referring to with the unpardonable sin of Israel's leaders rejecting their Messiah and crediting His power to Satan?
3. Read James 3:1. Why does God hold spiritual teachers to a higher accountability? Why was God's judgment of the Jewish scribes and Pharisees so severe throughout Matthew's gospel (c.f. Matthew 23)?
4. Read Isaiah 29:18 and 35:5-6 along with Matthew 12:22. Recount together all the various signs that Jesus had already performed for the Jewish people thus far in His ministry. Why do you believe the Jewish leaders continued to reject Jesus as God's Messiah?
5. Compare Exodus 4:21; 8:19; 14:4 with Romans 11:7-10. How does God glorify Himself through the hardening of men's hearts?
6. Read Matthew 12:31-32. Have you ever wondered if you've committed an unforgiveable sin? How does this sermon help you think differently about the power of God's Spirit to forgive all your sins, and bring you into the experience of His perfect righteousness?