

## Text— Matthew 12:31-42

Fellow redeemed sinners, redeemed by the blood of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ,

The Labor Day weekend is once again upon us— Labor Day being a holiday in honor of working people. Unfortunately, God’s gracious and numerous labors of love done for us sinful human beings are rarely remembered in our nation which was founded upon Christian principals.

Think about it. All the Christian holidays have been perverted by the majority of people. For instance, Christmas is the time when Christ’s birth is to be celebrated, a day to remember, as Galatians 4:4-5 relates, “when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, To redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons.” However, what has happened concerning Christmas? Most people have made it a day for celebrating the fictitious character of Santa Claus, with a flying sleigh pulled by flying reindeer, supposedly bringing toys for boys and girls. Unfortunately, God’s wonderful gift of the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, coming into the world to redeem the world, is either totally ignored or at the very least pushed far into the background.

Easter is a day upon which the bodily resurrection of Jesus Christ is to be celebrated, because it is Jesus Christ, “Who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification,” as Romans 4:25 reports. However, what is Easter day to most folks in America? A day for bunnies and baskets of colored eggs and candy. Unfortunately, the fact that Jesus Christ is our living Lord and Savior is either totally ignored or at the very least pushed far into the background.

Reformation Day is a time when the restoration of God’s Word in its full truth and purity is to be celebrated, because the Holy Bible is such a wonderful and necessary gift to us sinful human beings, for we need God’s Word to show us our sin and our only Savior from sin, the Lord Jesus Christ.

God raised up His servant Martin Luther to restore the truth to a hurting world, which was for the most part spiritually blind. However, what has happened regarding Reformation Day? It is pushed aside, unknown, or ignored by most people, even among many who call themselves “Lutherans”. Instead, most folks celebrate Halloween— which is NOT at all a “holy evening”; rather, Halloween is a celebration of evil, with devils, jack-o-lanterns, witches, skeletons, various costumes and candy. Unfortunately, the privilege of worshiping the Lord in the beauty of holiness, having God’s Holy Word in its full truth and purity, is either totally ignored or relegated far into the background, while evil is celebrated and joked about.

Thus, God and His labors of love are repeatedly pushed aside in favor of worldly things.

My friends, God is to be taken seriously and not derided, for in our sermon text the Lord Jesus Christ sets the record straight regarding:

### “SINS OF BLASPHEMY”

With that as our theme, may we, in view of our text and with the help of the Holy Ghost, see—

- 1) What sins of blasphemy are
- 2) What sin of blasphemy is unforgivable and why
- 3) What sins of blasphemy are forgivable and yet very dangerous

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Verses 31 & 32, ----- (Matthew 12:31-32)

The opening two verses of our sermon text are words spoken by Jesus Christ, who is true God and true man, who always speaks the truth. Notice that Jesus says: *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*. Thus, we see that blasphemy is a sin of speaking, a sin of speech. In fact, when I looked-up the original Greek word “blasphemia” in several Greek/English lexicons, the word is defined as: “abusive speech, slander, reviling, evil speaking, insulting and irreverent speech, profane and impious, directed against God.” Hence, sins of blasphemy are terrible sins of the tongue directed against God, heinous sins of speech.

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As we continue to ponder our sermon text, let us see what sin of blasphemy is unforgivable and why.

Again, verses 31 & 32, ----- (Matthew 12:31-32)

Very carefully consider the words just read. Observe that Jesus was responding to something which was earlier said to Him, for our text opens with Jesus saying: *Wherefore I say unto you*. Now, looking back at Matthew 12:22-24, we read, “Then was brought unto him one possessed with a devil, blind, and dumb: and he healed him, insomuch that the blind and dumb both spake and saw. And all the people were amazed, and said, Is not this the son of David? But when the Pharisees heard it, they said, This fellow doth not cast out devils, but by Beelzebub the prince of the devils.”

Oh, the Pharisees hated Jesus Christ so much that they verbally accused Him of working in concert with Satan, even though they knew that such was not the case. The Pharisees muttering among the people was fully known by Jesus Christ, as was the reason behind their thoughts and speech, because Jesus knows ALL things, for in Matthew 12:25 we are informed, “Jesus knew their thoughts.” Yes, Jesus Christ is true God in addition to being true man, “For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily.” — relates Colossians 2:9. Hence, Jesus was fully aware of the Pharisees’ blasphemy.

In Mark 3:28-30, Jesus said, “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 [the Jewish scribes] said, He hath an unclean spirit.”

So, Jesus Christ in fact cast out devils, as Matthew 12:28 relates, “by the Spirit of God,” for Jesus’ Spirit IS THE HOLY SPIRIT, GOD THE HOLY GHOST.

Accordingly, the Pharisees were either very close to committing, or had actually committed, the sin of blasphemy which is unforgivable, that being, **BLASPHEMING THE HOLY GHOST**, for such sin is directed deliberately and knowingly against the Holy Ghost and His perfect, holy work.

My friends, when one, against better knowledge, blasphemes the Holy Ghost, one sins against sin’s remedy, for 1 Corinthians 12:3 declares, “Wherefore I give you to understand, that no man speaking by the Spirit of God calleth Jesus accursed: and that no man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost.” Hence, the Holy Ghost is WHO gifts folks with faith in Jesus Christ: the faith which personally receives the forgiveness of sins and salvation earned by Jesus Christ. Thus, when a person has been convinced of the truth by the Holy Ghost working through the Word, and yet the person resists that truth and uses deliberately abusive and irreverent speech, evil and impious speaking, directed against God the Holy Ghost; such a person so sinning remains stuck in his or her sins and headed for hell! Yes, the sin of blasphemy against the Holy Ghost is unforgivable because it blocks the remedy for sin, by making faith in Jesus Christ impossible for such sinners.

It’s as we read in Hebrews 10:26-31, “For if we sin wilfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins, But a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries. He that despised Moses’ law died without mercy under two or three witnesses: Of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy

thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace? For we know him that hath said, Vengeance belongeth unto me, I will recompense, saith the Lord. And again, The Lord shall judge his people. It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God." Accordingly, the sin of blasphemy against the Holy Ghost – insulting the Spirit of grace, the Spirit of God, with contempt – is unforgivable since it renders the sinner incapable of obtaining and retaining personal faith in Jesus Christ.

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As we ponder our sermon text to its conclusion, let us see what sins of blasphemy are forgivable and yet very dangerous.

Verses 32 & 33, ----- (Matthew 12:32-33)

Jesus is true man and true God, but one Christ, for in Philippians 2:6-8 we learn that Christ Jesus is He, "Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross." Hence, as a man, Jesus appeared a humble servant on earth, for He did not showoff Himself as the King of glory which He actually was and is. Rather, it came to pass as the prophet Isaiah prophesied in Isaiah 53:1-2, where we read, "Who hath believed our report? and to whom is the arm of the LORD revealed? For he shall grow up before him as a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground: he hath no form nor comeliness; and when we shall see him, there is no beauty that we should desire him." Therefore, in our sermon text Jesus remarks: *whosoever speaketh a word against the Son of man, it shall be forgiven him.*

Yes, blasphemy against Jesus, AS THE SON OF MAN, is forgivable, since such a sin can be done in ignorance. Indeed, when considered simply according to outward appearance, Jesus looked like any other human being, despite the fact He

was and is TRUE MAN, sinless man, as well as being TRUE GOD, begotten of the Father from eternity. Even yet today, when a person has very little BIBLICAL knowledge of Jesus, it is possible that such a person can in ignorance blaspheme Jesus, and be forgiven for that sin. Oh, it's still a SIN to blaspheme Jesus; but, it's forgivable when done in ignorance.

Nevertheless, notice what Jesus says in verse 33 of our sermon text: *Either make the tree good, and his fruit good; or else make the tree corrupt, and his fruit corrupt: for the tree is known by his fruit.* So, JESUS could – and can today – be known as the CHRIST, by His Holy Word and the mighty works He did. The Holy Ghost, the Spirit of Christ, works through the WORD of Christ, the Word of God, which tells us that Jesus Christ IS TRUE GOD in addition to being true man. "So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God." (Romans 10:17)

While Jesus walked this earth in the days of His humiliation, He many times showed forth His divinity by the numerous miracles He did in healing the sick and infirm, giving sight to the blind, casting out devils, raising the dead, and stilling wind and wave. Once Jesus was known, or is now known, as being true God in addition to being true man, it is very dangerous to blaspheme Him and remain in unbelief, for John 3:16-18 clearly states, "God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved. He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God."

Jesus is the ONLY SAVIOR! Jesus must be believed on as one's personal Savior and Lord if one would actually receive the forgiveness of sins and salvation which Jesus earned for all people. Yes, it's as John 3:36 declares, "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not

the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him.”

Verses 34-37, -----. (Matthew 12:34-37)

Jesus rightly labeled the unbelieving Jews a *generation of vipers* and *evil* because they were in fact children of the devil, the old serpent, for Jesus told them straight out in John 8:42-47, “If God were your Father, ye would love me: for I proceeded forth and came from God; neither came I of myself, but he sent me. Why do ye not understand my speech? even because ye cannot hear my word. Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it. And because I tell you the truth, ye believe me not. Which of you convinceth me of sin? And if I say the truth, why do ye not believe me? He that is of God heareth God's words: ye therefore hear them not, because ye are not of God.”

The unbelieving Pharisees never had a good thing to say about Jesus, even though they could never show Him to be sinful in anything, for out of their evil hearts their mouths spoke.

Sins of blasphemy against Jesus Christ are very dangerous, because if they are not repented of they can land the person in hell, for Jesus warns in our sermon text: *I say unto you, That every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment. For by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned.*

Think about what Jesus is getting at when He says: *by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned.* In Luke 12:8-9 Jesus says, “Whosoever shall confess me before men, him shall the Son of man also confess before the angels of God: But he that denieth me before men shall be denied before the angels of God.” Indeed, without honestly professed heart-deep

faith in Jesus Christ as one’s personal Savior and Lord, one will be condemned to hell on the great Judgment Day, “For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. For the scripture saith, Whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed.” — declares Romans 10:10-11.

Verses 38-42, -----. (Matthew 12:38-42)

Observe the feigned respect shown to Jesus by the Jews who actually hated Him and had blasphemed Him, for *certain of the scribes and of the Pharisees answered, saying, Master, we would see a sign from thee.* Yeah, they sarcastically addressed Jesus as “Master” since they wanted to see a sign, a miracle, done by Jesus Christ who had already performed hundreds – if not thousands – of wonders during His public ministry. Blasphemers of Jesus Christ are frequently sign-seekers, people who are never satisfied with what Christ has already done.

Jesus told the unbelieving sign-seekers straight out: *An evil and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign.* The unbelieving Jews were an evil and spiritually adulterous generation: a people who had cast aside the true God and His Word to serve sin and Satan. The only sign the unbelieving Jews would then yet get would be Jesus’ glorious bodily resurrection, after they would demand He be crucified and He would subsequently be buried and spend three days in a sepulcher.

Christ’s resurrection was pictured by what happened to Jonah during Old Testament times, for we read in Jonah 1:17 and 2:10, “Now the LORD had prepared a great fish to swallow up Jonah. And Jonah was in the belly of the fish three days and three nights. And the LORD spake unto the fish, and it vomited out Jonah upon the dry land.” Then, concerning Christ, we read in Luke 24:1-7, “Now upon the first day of the week, very early in the morning, they came unto the sepulchre, bringing the spices which they had prepared, and certain others with them. And they found the stone rolled away from the sepulchre.

And they entered in, and found not the body of the Lord Jesus. And it came to pass, as they were much perplexed thereabout, behold, two men stood by them in shining garments: And as they were afraid, and bowed down their faces to the earth, they said unto them, Why seek ye the living among the dead? He is not here, but is risen: remember how he spake unto you when he was yet in Galilee, Saying, The Son of man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men, and be crucified, and the third day rise again." Thus, it all happened as Jesus said: He gave a wonderful sign, proving He is the Christ, the Savior, by bodily rising from the dead after three days in the grave!

Interestingly, Jonah 3:3-5 relates, "Jonah arose, and went unto Nineveh, according to the word of the LORD. Now Nineveh was an exceeding great city of three days' journey. And Jonah began to enter into the city a day's journey, and he cried, and said, Yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown. So the people of Nineveh believed God, and proclaimed a fast, and put on sackcloth, from the greatest of them even to the least of them." In our sermon text Jesus warned the Jewish unbelievers of their impending doom by pointing out the fact that the people of Nineveh will rise up on Judgment Day and condemn those wicked scribes and Pharisees, because the people of Nineveh repented of their sins when Jonah preached to them; and yet, Jesus Christ – who is infinitely greater than Jonah – was NOT believed upon by the hate-filled scribes and Pharisees!

In 1 Kings 10:1-3 we read, "when the queen of Sheba heard of the fame of Solomon concerning the name of the LORD, she came to prove him with hard questions. And she came to Jerusalem with a very great train, with camels that bare spices, and very much gold, and precious stones: and when she was come to Solomon, she communed with him of all that was in her heart. And Solomon told her all her questions: there was not any thing hid from the king, which he told her not." In our sermon text we learn that the queen who came a great distance to hear king Solomon of old speak words of wisdom, will rise up on Judgment Day

with the unbelieving Jews and condemn them, for she traveled very far to hear Solomon's words; and yet, the wicked scribes and Pharisees refused to listen to Jesus Christ's words even though Jesus is infinitely wise!

My friends, the sin of blasphemy against the Holy Ghost is unforgivable; the sin of blaspheming Jesus Christ, because He is the Son of man, is forgivable, and yet very dangerous, for concerning Jesus Christ Acts 4:12 states, "Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved." So, let us therefore beware of sins of blasphemy.

Let us daily and sincerely repent of all our sins. Let us keep our full trust and confidence in Christ Jesus as our personal Savior and Lord. And, let us go forward honoring the true God – Father, Son and Holy Ghost – with our lips from our heart. Amen.

m.e.l.