

## The Mind of Christ - Lesson 102

April 16, 2021

Welcome to another edition of The Mind of Christ. We are making our way chronologically through the life of Christ. We are following A. T. Robertson's book, "The Harmony of the Gospels". We are in the second half of Section 61 which we began last week. We are in the section of "Blasphemous Accusations of League with Beelzebub".

We began this section last week and we read down through about verse 29 of Matthew 12 so we'll continue reading to get a sense of what we're talking about here, so let's jump right in.

### Matthew 12:30-37

<sup>30</sup> He who is not with Me is against Me; and he who does not gather with Me scatters. (We talked about that last week.) <sup>31</sup> "Therefore I say to you, any sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven people, but blasphemy against the Spirit shall not be forgiven. <sup>32</sup> Whoever speaks a word against the Son of Man, it shall be forgiven him; but whoever speaks against the Holy Spirit, it shall not be forgiven him, either in this age or in the age to come.

<sup>33</sup> "Either make the tree good and its fruit good, or make the tree bad and its fruit bad; for the tree is known by its fruit. <sup>34</sup> You brood of vipers, how can you, being evil, speak what is good? For the mouth speaks out of that which fills the heart. <sup>35</sup> The good man brings out of his good treasure what is good; and the evil man brings out of his evil treasure what is evil. <sup>36</sup> But I tell you that every careless word that people speak, they shall give an accounting for it in the Day of Judgment. <sup>37</sup> For by your words you will be justified, and by your words you will be condemned."

Then going over to:

### Mark 3:28-30

<sup>28</sup> "Truly I say to you, all sins shall be forgiven the sons of men, and whatever blasphemies they utter; <sup>29</sup> but whoever blasphemes against the Holy Spirit never has forgiveness, but is guilty of an eternal sin"— <sup>30</sup> because they were saying, "He has an unclean spirit."

This kind of gives you some of the flavor of this. We talked about this before in the last section and I would encourage you to go back and listen to that one. If you didn't hear that one, this session will not make as much sense. So we're going to pick up here and talk a little bit about the idea of blasphemy and what that really is.

The section on blasphemy against the Spirit versus other blasphemies including against the Son of Man; Jesus is emphatic that *blasphemy against the Spirit will not be forgiven*. The word '*blasphemy*' is transliterated, (βλασφημία). It is evil speaking, railing, slander, reviling, or impious irreverence. Let's explore this word blasphemy a little bit.

In **Matthew 15:19** Jesus said, "For out of the heart come evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, *slanders*." The heart is the source of evil. **Matthew 26:35** when Jesus declared Himself to be the Son of Man who sits at the right hand of the power, and comes in the clouds the high Priest took this as a *blasphemous* statement.

In **Mark 7:22** Jesus says, Not only do evils like slander proceed out of man's heart, but that these are what *defile* a man; not what he eats! In **Mark 14:64** when the Sanhedrin heard this, the so-called '*blasphemies*' they condemned Him to death. In **Luke 5:21** when Jesus forgave sins, He was accused of *blaspheming*. In **John 10:33** the Jews are more specific. They find Jesus' *blasphemy* as a man making Himself out to be God.

Paul says to put away "slander"; and again, the word slander is 'blasphemy'; the same word. He says in **Ephesians 4:31** and **Colossians 3:8**, "[Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, along with all malice.](#)"

**1 Timothy 6:4** is interesting that it sets up a case for what 'leads to blasphemy' and other sins: the one advocating a different doctrine which does not agree with the sound words defined as our Lord Jesus Christ which conforms to godliness. This reveals man's heart as conceited, that he understands nothing, he as a morbid interest in controversial questions, and disputes about words. So this helps us to get a little insight into the *blasphemous* mind of what is going on. So again, go back and look at **1 Timothy 6:4** because it really defines what is going on in the mind of someone who is *blaspheming* and it has to do with *pride, ignorance and unwillingness or inability to see one's own failings and needs, all lead to speaking against you*. We tend to *slander* and *blaspheme* when we feel that we are right all the time, that we have no humility, and that we can't see the needs of other people. Those are the things that will lead to the sin of *blasphemy*.

Michael, the archangel, did not speak against Satan personally, but said, "[The Lord rebuke you](#)" in **Jude 1:9**. Even speaking against when deserved by the archenemy is pronounced by God, not us. In other words, our enemy, I'm sure deserves 'whatever is given to him' or 'whatever is ascribed to him'. He's probably the most *blasphemous* person ever, but only God should speak against him. The word "*blasphemy*" is used five times in the book of Revelation – **Revelation 2:9** to Smyrna, the *blasphemy* of "[those who say they are Jews but are a synagogue of Satan](#)", so claiming to be something that you are not, and by doing so condemn others. There is conceit found in this. **Revelation 13:1** the beast has blasphemous names written on his seven heads taking identities and authorities not given to him; that's what they were saying about Jesus. Jesus was ascribed as casting out demons by Beelzebub. That was truly a *blasphemy*. Again, it's ascribing to someone something that is not true.

In **Revelation 13:5-6** from the beast came *blasphemous* words against God and His Tabernacle; those who dwell in Heaven. In **Revelation 17:3** the woman who represents Rome here, has *blasphemous* names written upon her. Remember all that the designations of Rome and her emperors. You remember the emperors considered themselves to be gods and they would mount up names like "Augustus" and various names, and these were *blasphemous* names because they were meant only to be ascribed to God.

In **Luke 23:39** one thief hurled insults against Jesus. The word for "insults" here is *blasphemies*. In **John 10:34-36** see the complicated argument that Jesus used to defend Himself against charges of *blasphemy*, and I would leave that to you to look here at this because Jesus here is defending Himself against *blasphemies*. In **Acts 13:45** we get another insight into where the blasphemy comes from ... jealousy and contradiction of what is said by Paul because they were jealous of him. So they rendered blasphemed against him.

We speak against these things we see as a threat to ‘our position of safety, security, etc’. We tend to speak out against those things that we feel are a threat to us.

In **Acts 18:6** as Paul preached the Gospel to the Jews in Corinth, they resisted and they *blasphemed* Paul, so Paul told them that their blood would be upon their own heads and he turned to the Gentiles. In **Acts 19:37** the town clerk in Ephesus did **not** find Paul to be *blasphemous* against the goddess Diana, so Paul was not charged with *blasphemy* against the goddess. Paul tells Agrippa that when he was persecuting Christians he tried to provoke or persuade or force them to *blaspheme* under the threat of death or being harmed! So, Paul was in the business of trying to get Christians to blaspheme the name of Jesus.

Paul tells the Jews in **Romans 2:24** that because of their hypocrisy, God’s name is *blasphemed* among the Gentiles. So *the way the Jews were acting it was causing Gentiles to blaspheme the name of God.* In **Romans 3:8** some slandered Paul by saying that he was saying, “Let us do evil that good may come”; which was definitely *not* what Paul was teaching. In **Romans 14:16** Paul cautions the meat-eaters (those gentiles who had been accustomed to eating meat that had been sacrificed to idols) not to let their intention of good be spoken of as evil by the way they do the good. In other words, be careful that they don’t cause people to speak against them, to *blaspheme* them. In **1 Corinthians 10:30** a similar admonition is given ... if I eat with thankfulness why do people *slander* me? Again, this is the word for *blasphemy*.

In **1 Timothy 1:20** two men were turned over to Satan so that they would be taught not to *blaspheme*. So, how could Satan teach these brothers not to *blaspheme*? Might it be like if they think Jesus is tough on them when they slander Him, let them see how Satan will treat them? Well, Maybe so. In **1 Timothy 6:1** Paul wants slaves to know that ‘how they treat their masters will often determine how people view the Gospel’. *We don’t want to provide an opportunity for people to blaspheme the Gospel; to speak against the Gospel because of our hypocritical behavior.*

In a similar way, in **Titus 3:5** wives and younger mothers are taught by older women how to treat their husbands and their children *so that the word of God will not be dishonored, or blasphemed or maligned*, as other translations say. **Titus 3:2** says that we are to malign or blaspheme *no man* showing consideration to all men.

So, *blasphemy* is something that is taken very seriously in Scripture. **James 2:7** says that the rich blaspheme the “fair name” by which they were called. **1 Peter 4:4** says that when we “do not run with the evil they blaspheme you.” In other words, if you don’t go along with evil people, sometimes they will speak against you. It is okay when some speak evil against you; so don’t be concerned about that. **2 Peter 2:2** when Christians follow sensuality the way of Christ is maligned or *blasphemed*. The unrighteous do not tremble when they revile angelic majesties. Remember Michael would not blaspheme Satan personally. In **2 Peter 2:12** they revile what they have no knowledge of; and there are several places in the book of Revelation where the word *blasphemy* is used ... **Revelation 13:6; 16:9; 16:11; and 16:21.** This is blasphemy of the God of Heaven because of the plagues. The people, because of the plagues that came upon them by the hand of God, *blasphemed* the God of Heaven.

Those who *blaspheme* show that they are not interested in understanding or considering. They have *their view* and they gain importance by putting down another's view. We can be respectful even of those we disagree with. *Could there be an exception to this?* In **Galatians 1:6-9** where Paul takes a very strong stand against those who were '*changing the Gospel*' and he says, "*Let them be accursed*". So we can take a strong stand against people and ideas *without getting personal* with our attacks.

This is a fitting reminder today that we need to be very careful in our day and age not to blaspheme people by the way we talk about them. We can oppose *ideas*, we can even oppose people, but we need to be very careful about not making attacks personal. Generally the Scriptures want us to be very careful what we say and how we say it, even to Satan; and to be careful not to give anyone an occasion to blaspheme the Gospel because of our inconsistent behaviors.

And now to the difficult part ... to define why *blasphemy against the Spirit is unforgivable*. *Blasphemy is forgivable unless it is against the Holy Spirit*. I remember standing on the steps of the Airport Church of Christ when a good friend of mine told me, with some real fear in his voice, that he had committed this unforgivable sin. He had verbally cursed the Spirit. He would often do things just to 'see what would happen'. He felt he had really 'done it' this time. Knowing how his life turned out, I really wonder if his blasphemy had something to do with it. I really don't know but I do remember very vividly him telling me that he thought that he had committed this sin. There have been very few people in my life, some have, but there have been very few who felt like they had actually committed this sin.

I know all the angles on explaining this verse, but there is always something missing, I believe, in the explanation. There always seems to be a little something missing. The easiest thing to think is, to resist the Spirit who is the quickening and witnessing agent regarding our salvation is practically unforgivable. In other words, if you resist the Spirit, who is the One who is convicting us of sin, and leading us to salvation then in a very practical way; that can not be forgiven because we are cutting ourselves off from the source of forgiveness.

If it takes the testimony of the water and the blood ... both historical acts, but we don't get the testimony of the Spirit within our hearts that we are God's children, then we are a *critical vote short* of what we need to confirm that we are truly in Christ. **1 John 5:8**

*Jesus' death on the cross for all is unchangeable*. It is now a historical fact. And if one was baptized, that too is historical. Of course, Calvinists reject this line of thinking because they believe if we get salvation, that is God's decision and therefore, we can never lose it. But what would a Calvinist do with this verse? How could someone sin against the Holy Spirit if God did not choose them for salvation? If someone is totally depraved, then they are perpetually unforgiven by God's choice alone regardless of what they have done, either good or evil. Jesus says one could speak against Him, but *that* is forgivable; but He is the source of eternal salvation.

According to Calvin, if the Holy Spirit touches your heart, "it" or "He" is irresistible because He acts according to God's eternal unchangeable plan for your life. Forgiveness is totally God's doing.

Jesus is emphatic in **Matthew 12:32**. He says, “Whoever speaks against the Holy Spirit, it shall not be forgiven him, either in this age or in the age to come.” Neither in this age or the one to come will this blasphemy against the Holy Spirit be forgiven.

Let’s think in terms of the nature of God. God’s nature of love demands that if He “can” save, He “must” save. In other words, if God can save someone, if there is a way to do that, He *must* do it. Love exhausts all possibilities which are consistent with God’s nature. So what is there about God’s nature that allows forgiveness for someone who blasphemes Jesus but not for someone who blasphemes the Holy Spirit? They are both Divine; Jesus and the Spirit. They *both are involved* in one’s salvation. *Both are essential* to one’s salvation. Is there something about the work of the Spirit that is fundamentally different than the work of Jesus? Is the answer in **John 14 through 16**? **John 14:17** says *the world cannot receive Him because it does not behold Him or know Him*. In the context, the words are the Father’s words. Jesus is the communicator of these words, but the Holy Spirit *delivers* and *reminds* and *teaches* these words within the heart. See Romans 8 and Galatians 5 for this.

In **John 15:26** it says the Spirit proceeds from the Father, and bears witness to Jesus. In **John 16:7** Jesus had to go back to Heaven in order to send the Spirit. The job of the Spirit was to convict the world of sin and righteousness and judgment. He also explains that Jesus *could not* while He was here. He also speaks what the Father says and glorifies the Son and not Himself. The Holy Spirit is the key link between the Father, the Son and the world and the Christian. *I want you to think about this. The Holy Spirit is the key link between the Father, the Son, the world and the Christian. He ties it all together through truth*. This is a great mystery. He is not a “person” that we want to *blaspheme*. His work is critical. I can’t say why such a distinction is made between the Spirit and Jesus, but Jesus drew the distinction, and it is clear that *we must take great care not to speak against the Spirit of Truth who mediates truth into our world and our lives lest we be in danger of the unpardonable sin*.

Now Mark says that “Whoever blasphemes against the Holy Spirit never has forgiveness, but is guilty of *an eternal sin*.” Does this mean the sin never ends? It is a perpetual sin as opposed to a ‘one at a time’ sin. Is this like when your CD gets stuck and it continues to play the same note over and over again? It becomes a hardened state of mind that closes oneself off from the influence of the Spirit.

**Hebrews 6:1-6** seems appropriate here. If you read that passage, here is a person who has 1. been enlightened, 2. They have tasted the heavenly gift, 3. They have become partakers of the Holy Spirit, 4. They have tasted the good word of God and 5. They have also tasted the powers of the coming age.

Now compare that to **Hebrews 10:26ff**. Here the person is described as one who has received the knowledge of the Truth, so it’s important that the ones said to be in danger spiritually are ones who have great and prolonged exposure to the ‘good things of God’.

These have to muster a greater resistance to what they know and have to be able to fall away! *It is a resistance born in pride, and stubbornness, and hardness that becomes calloused*. There is a loss of sensitivity.

Paul has a similar warning in **Ephesians 4:17-20**; the ‘Gentile’ walk is characterized by futility of mind, darkened understanding, exclusion from the life of God, ignorance in them due to the hardening of their heart, becoming callous leading to sensuality, and practicing impurity with greediness for more.

Now going back to **Hebrews 6:6**, the person described “*may fall away and reach a point of impossible renewal to repentance.*” Since the Holy Spirit is in the business of convicting people of sin, *a continued resistance of the Spirit truly becomes dangerous* because resistance turns to callousness; and callousness to the loss of sensitivity to Spiritual things, and *this* turns to an *impossible state of repentance which is necessary and essential to a Spiritual connection to God.* These are serious matters and need careful consideration lest we mess up the heart and separate our lives from God.

Matthew includes another section about character and fruit. The theme here seems to be about words which come out of the heart. *What is the heart?* Well, a bad tree produces bad fruit, He says. A good tree produces good fruit. *If the stores of treasures are good, you will bring out good treasures, but if the stores of treasures are bad, then the treasures you bring out are going to be bad treasures.* It is the careless word that actually reveals your heart that condemns you. Being able to see a person’s heart, to know the positions they hold, is critical to having good relationships.

Jesus used such practical illustrations. Bad tree produces bad fruit; good tree produces good fruit. How could it be any other way? The law of cause and effect works this way. What you sow, you reap. Vines that stay attached to the healthy branch produce good fruit. What you have in your bank account and how you attained it is what you draw out of your account. Junk in; junk out. Fruit reveals the nature of the tree. What kind of tree is it? The fruit is the ultimate test.

Jesus uses this phrase here in **Matthew 12:34**, “*You brood of vipers, how can you, being evil, speak what is good? For the mouth speaks out of that which fills the heart.*” It is also used in Matthew 23. These are snakes in a brood or family. They have ‘banded together’. This ‘banding together’ allows for cross breeding. *When you get a group that simply shares ideas, thinking and positions only among themselves, they tend to reinforce prejudices and biases and to recycle distorted thinking. When a truth from the outside tries to get in, the brood of vipers bands together, and hiss in unison and strike in concert to strike down the truth.* In this case, these snakes were hissing and striking at Jesus, the One full of grace and truth.

In **Matthew 12:34** Jesus speaks of “that which fills the heart”. Do we see here some distinction between what Dr. Bales, one of my professors in college said? He said there are two types of people; *those with problems* and *those who are problems*. When the heart becomes full of evil, then good is driven out and corruptions have set in, and the heart becomes defiled and contaminated.

**Proverbs 4:23** speaks of the wellspring of life and we should guard that wellspring because it will contaminate the entire life.

The idea of ‘treasure in the heart’ is that we store, we value some things over others. We move through life like picking up things and saving them while we move through life. We collect bits and pieces of life. We accumulate in life. We bring people into our lives. Often we bag up certain ex-treasures and give them to Goodwill so that they can become someone else’s treasure.

We do the same with people! Husbands discard wives or parents discard children. We get ‘tired’ of things or the maintenance responsibility gets too great. We say we need to simplify. That’s fairly easy with the things we collect; but harder when it comes to relationships or to lifestyles. When you tell someone they are not a treasure, they are junk to be set aside on the curb, this rips their soul and creates damaged people. This is trauma. When children are abused and neglected we tell them that they are not valued; they are not one of the treasures in our heart. They are often in competition with our “real treasures”, our freedoms or comfort or other relationships. So, we seek to be someone’s treasure and we believe we are for a while. But does it last? Can treasure thinking be sustained? I want you to think through what I’ve just said because the things you value, they’re your treasures whether they’re people or things. Can you hold onto or treasure something for the duration; for the long haul?

In **Matthew 13:52** is curious because here He says, “Therefore every Scribe who has become a disciple of the kingdom of heaven is like a head of a household, who brings forth out of his treasure things new and old.” What is Jesus’ point? He is addressing the Scribes, student of the Law, who become students of the Kingdom. They have now gone from undergrad to graduate school. If they stay stuck in undergrad thinking, they will close their minds to new things which will elevate them and make them more successful. **Jesus was not saying these Scribes had to reject all the old, but the old had to be made complete by the new. This is a major theme of Jesus’ teaching** ... compatible values; seeing the “fit” instead of the “**competition**”. Seeing how things fit together *instead of* how things may fall apart.

Then He mentions in this context of **Matthew 12:36, a ‘careless word’**. What is a ‘*careless word*’? The word “careless” is ‘argos’ (αργος). It means inactive, an unemployed, lazy, useless, baron, idol or even a slow word. Literally, it means, “without work”. It means a word that is out of work, it’s unemployed. **Matthew 20:3** and **6** talk about men who are standing “idle” in the marketplace. It’s the same word. It’s about young widows who learn to be “idol”, leading to going from house to house gossiping, becoming busy bodies talking about things not proper to mention. **2 Peter 1:8** says, “For if these qualities are yours and are increasing, they render you neither useless nor unfruitful in the true knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.” Peter has a list of traits given there; they will keep one from becoming useless and unfruitful in our knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. In **Titus 1:12** it says, Cretans (the people from the island of Crete) are always “lazy” gluttons. That was a proverb that was said about the Cretans ... so they were unemployed gluttons, slow’ they had slow bellies. That’s literally what it means; they have slow bellies. An unemployed word; words need to “get a job”. Just think about that ... words need to “get a job”. Perhaps it’s talking about something we have no knowledge, of or something we have no real stake in; it’s none of our business. In other words, when we talk about things that are none of our business, it’s like someone who can only talk about somebody else’s business.

Someone who is employed in their business; where we are not in their business ... we don't have employment; so any words we say are unemployed words. Having opinions on a volunteer basis; no one hired us to share our opinion. Pro bono words are sometimes given; sharing without being asked. I wouldn't walk into someone's shop and start working, talking to the customers trying to sell them, asking customers if I can help them. Inappropriate words ... I am not an employee. When I am, I am employed to only talk about certain things. If I go off on subjects I do not know about or it's not part of my job, then it is not appropriate words; those would be "*careless*" words.

Jesus says we will have to give an account for the "unemployed" words; we're going to render account. This is interesting ... it is the word "logos" (λογος) which is a reasoned or a logical explanation. So when you give an account you're going to give a reasoned or logical explanation for what you did. So, He's saying that we have to give a logical explanation for what we carelessly say! If you can't *defend what you said* and *show why you had a right to say it* then you will be judged for the careless word. Senseless words and acts must stand up to the light of scrutiny. Why did you say it, think it, do it? What was your logic? Reasoned explanations require us to *understand our motives* and what *we wish to accomplish* by our words.

In **Matthew 12:36** Jesus says, "But I tell you that every careless word that people speak, they shall give an accounting for it in the Day of Judgment." Jesus mentions giving an account, and again, this is "logos" (λογος), an extremely rich word *even used to describe Jesus Himself* in **John 1:1** and following. It is something said, *including the thought behind the word*. Words that pertain to this include *topic, reasoning, motive, and computations, the divine expressions, account, cause and communication*. "Logos" would be a complete study in and of itself which we don't have time to really do. But Jesus is Logos. He is the Divine expression of Who God is. His whole life on earth was a testimony, an account or Who God is!

Man heard the Testimony and found Him guilty of blasphemy ... speaking against God. So, now, it's man's turn. *We will live out our lives as an expression of who we are*. Daily, we testify to our own lives; what we are about. *But one day, we will be on trial*. What if we are declared a *blasphemer, one who spoke against God* where He says, "I never knew you?" The only hope for us little blasphemers is *to appeal* to the One accused of this on earth; to accept His perfect testimony of being the *exact representation of the Father!*

You see, me and you have *seen* the Father. *This is our hope*. He has even taken blasphemy on Himself! But I wonder; is there one sin that Jesus did not take on Himself; that He did not die for? Is that one sin blasphemy of the Holy Spirit? If He had died to forgive blasphemy of the Holy Spirit would this have *ripped the fabric of the Godhead* in a way that was irreparable ... the unity that exists among Father, Son and Holy Spirit?

He experienced forsakenness by the Father, but His link back to the "wholeness" between Him and His Father was the Spirit. It's just a thought, but if He did not take "blasphemy" of the Spirit on Himself, how could anyone be forgiven for a sin He did not die for?

In other words, and again, this is just a thought. If Jesus did not die for the sin of “blasphemy of the Holy Spirit”, *then it would be the only sin that could never be forgiven*, because how could it be forgiven if Jesus didn’t die for it? Our expressions, our words, are the basis for justification or condemnation. *That’s why the good confession of Jesus as Lord is critical to there being no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus - Romans 8:1.*

So, we have offered some explanations in this section as to why Jesus said that “blasphemy against the Holy Spirit is unforgivable”. We’ve offered a number of different ways of looking at that.

So, I would encourage you, in the last session that we did, and this session in Section 61, that you will consider both of these together; so there’s quite a bit of material here, in order to understand the idea of the blasphemy of the Holy Spirit.

Well again, thank you for joining us today. I’m glad that you’re part of this. If you go to our website <https://www.centraisarasota.org/> you will find all of our material archived. Until next time, God bless you and take care.