

A Misunderstood Miracle

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[0 : 00] Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you. All right. If you got your Bible, go to Matthew chapter 12. And while you're doing that, any of our youth grades 7 through 12 that would like to be dismissed, that haven't already been dismissed to our youth Bible study, you can go ahead and make your way back.

The rest of us, we're in Matthew chapter 12, continuing in our series that we've been in for some time, looking at the miracles of Jesus. And this series is starting to come to a close as we will wrap this up, Lord willing, on Christmas Eve as we look at the miracle of the incarnation.

[2 : 05] But tonight, we're going to turn our attention here to Matthew chapter 12. We've been in Luke. I figure I should at least do one out of Matthew, right? I've been in John, Mark, Luke. So might as well include the entire crew.

So Matthew chapter 12, we're going to look at a miracle that is recorded here in beginning in verse 22. So if you're able to stand, please do so as we honor the reading of God's word.

Matthew chapter 12, verse 22 says, 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.

And all the people were amazed and said, Can this be the son of David? But when the Pharisees heard it, they said, It's only by Beelzebul, the prince of demons, that this man cast out demons. 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.

[3 : 13] And if Satan cast out Satan, he is divided against himself. How then will his kingdom stand? And if I cast out demons by Beelzebul, by whom do your sons cast them out?

Therefore they will be your judges. But if it is by the Spirit of God that I cast out demons, then the kingdom of God has come upon you.

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.

Whoever is not with me is against me. Whoever does not gather with me scatters. Therefore I tell you, every sin and blasphemy will be forgiven people, but the blasphemy against the Spirit will not be forgiven.

And whoever speaks a word against the Son of Man will be forgiven. But whoever speaks against the Holy Spirit will not be forgiven.

[4 : 26] Either in this age or in the age to come. This is God's Word. How many of you, your attention has been grabbed by this passage?

What is Jesus talking about here? Pray with me and let's ask the Spirit of God to guide us into the truth of God. So God, that's our request now as we approach a passage that has been difficult for many.

A passage that no doubt many are curious. What does this mean? Help us understand it. Give us insight to what your Word says. And grant your people hope tonight in the truth of your Word.

And so we give you this time as we now study your Word. May we learn about you and may our affections be stirred for you. And we pray it in Jesus' name and God's people said, Amen.

Amen. You can be seated. Amen. 70 minutes. 70 minutes. No, that's not how long my sermon is going to be tonight. It's about the amount of time that you will likely spend in the company of another person if you are a hospital patient with a terminal illness.

[5 : 46] At least that's the conclusion that Dr. Daniel Somasi, who at the time of his research was the head of the Bioethics Institute of New York Medical College, he conducted a study about the

amount of time that people spent with terminally ill patients while they were in the hospital.

He and his research team, they placed hidden cameras outside 59 terminally ill patient hospital rooms at Georgetown University Hospital.

And then they documented how long those patients had contact with other people. The average daily contact those patients received was 70 minutes.

The breakdown went like this. Three minutes for attending physicians, about nine minutes for interns, 45 minutes nurses or a nurse's aide, and 13 minutes from a family member.

That meant that over 22 hours of the day, that patient was all alone.

[7 : 10] All by themselves. And while the study went on to look at patients from different ethnicity groups and patients that were battling different diseases and other variables that they looked at, the study concluded that almost all patients, regardless of their differences, spent their final hours alone.

Dr. Somasi writes, quote, The sheer aloneness at the end of their lives points to something important and troubling.

Added to this is the fact that patients who are terminally ill, listen, say that their greatest fears are isolation and abandonment, which according to our research is often what they experience.

Close quote. Faith family, I think one of the greatest fears of life is the fear of abandonment. Would you agree? Isn't that one of the greatest fears that you and I face and experience in life?

The fear of being left alone. The fear of being all by yourself. The fear of having no one else around. I'm not talking about the coveted alone time that you might desire.

[8 : 36] I'm talking about truly being abandoned. And this is a fear that you and I struggle with in a variety of different contexts. Maybe for you it's the fear of having a spouse that you love abandon you.

Maybe it's the fear of a father that you need abandoning you. Maybe it's being abandoned by the church that you served. Maybe it's being abandoned by the friend that you supported.

Maybe it's being abandoned by the company that you gave 20 years of your life to. But whatever it is, I don't know that there's a greater fear than the fear of waking up one day in the hospital bed of life only to discover you've been left alone.

And if that is a fear in those kinds of situations, imagine how unsettling it must be of the possibility that you would be abandoned by God.

Imagine that you lived your entire life thinking you were on the inside only to realize one day you were on the outside. You thought your entire life that you belonged to Him only to discover at the end of life He doesn't know you.

[9 : 55] You thought you had your sins forgiven only to discover that somewhere along the way you had committed the unforgivable.

And because of that, had been abandoned by God. It's the fear of spiritual abandonment. And let me be honest with you, Faith Family, I have pastored now for about 25 years, and I have talked to many people that struggle with spiritual abandonment.

They wonder if God has left them. And I don't know of any passage in the Bible that causes such fear than Matthew chapter 12.

Amen? Ed Welch writes the following quote, Pound for pound, the passage on the unpardonable sin can deliver the most guilt in all of Scripture.

Most of us are able to move on and focus on some more conscience-soothing Scripture. But there remains a question. Every time we encounter Matthew 12, is it I?

[11 : 11] Have I committed the unpardonable sin and thus been abandoned by God? Well, tonight, this is what I want us to focus our attention on because there are probably some of you and you don't need to say anything or raise your hand, but you have been, throughout your Christian journey, terrified by this passage.

Amen? Or you know of people that have been terrified by this passage. What is the unforgivable sin? Is it abortion? Is it suicide?

Is it doubting God? What if I've committed it? What if I committed it and I didn't know that I committed it? Am I forgiven or am I not? What comfort do I have that God will not abandon me?

Let's look at this because it centers around a miracle. The entire conversation about this unpardonable sin and what it is comes out of a situation where Jesus performs a miracle.

Look at verse 22. Then a demon-oppressed man who was blind and mute was brought to Jesus and he healed him so that the man spoke and saw.

[12:29] And all the people were amazed and said, Can this be the son of David? So let's first look here at the miracle that Jesus performs and what it means.

And then that will help set us up for the question about the unpardonable sin. Now all the synoptic writers, that is Matthew, Mark, and Luke, include this story in their gospel.

Jesus encounters here a man who quite honestly has had his share of hardships. This guy has had one thing after another go wrong in his life. He is deaf.

If that wasn't bad enough, he's mute. If that wasn't bad enough, he's being oppressed by a demon.

Needless to say, this man needs a miracle. He needs something because life has been hard.

And in our study of Jesus' miracles, this kind of an encounter is not strange. Jesus has encountered many people with physical conditions like this man, many people with spiritual conditions like this man.

[13:36] Remember in Mark chapter 1, it says, They went into Capernaum, and immediately on the Sabbath he entered the synagogue and was teaching. And they were astonished at his teaching, for he taught them as one who had authority and not as the scribes.

Immediately there was in their synagogue a man with an unclean spirit, and he cried out, What have you to do with us, Jesus of Nazareth? Have you come to destroy us?

I know who you are, the Holy One of God. But Jesus rebuked him, saying, Be silent and come out of him. And the unclean spirit, convulsing him and crying out with a loud voice, came out of him.

And they were all amazed, so that they questioned among themselves, saying, What is this? A new teaching with authority? He commands even the unclean spirits, and they obey him.

And now verse 32. That evening at sundown they brought to him all who were sick or oppressed by demons, and the whole city was gathered together at the door, and he healed many who were sick with various diseases, and cast out many demons.

[14:48] And he would not permit the demons to speak because they knew him. Verse 39. And he went throughout all of Galilee, preaching in their synagogues, and what? Casting out demons.

This is not his first rodeo. This is not the first encounter that Jesus has had with somebody that is deaf or blind, or possessed or oppressed with a demon.

He has dealt with these things before. And Jesus does for this man in Matthew 12 what he does for others throughout the gospel. He cast the demon out of the man.

Now why? Why does Jesus perform this miracle of casting the demon out of the man? Well, he tells us here in this passage why he performs this miracle.

Look at verse 28. But if it's by the Spirit of God that I cast out demons, then the kingdom of God has come upon you.

[15:48] Underline that again. In fact, I'm going to read it again. But if it's by the Spirit of God that I cast out demons, then the kingdom of God has come upon you. 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. The casting out of this demon, or the miracle if you will, is a sign. And we've seen this throughout our study that signs are pointing to something bigger.

It's rarely ever about just the miracle itself. It's going bigger. It's pointing to something greater. And Jesus here shows us here that this is not about removing a demon.

This is about the entrance of God's kingdom. In other words, notice this on the screen. Through this miracle, Jesus is showing the kingdom of God is here and demons run in fear.

That's the point. The king is here. The kingdom is here. And because of that, you see the sign of how demons run.

[16:59] Demons are cast out. And it's important to keep this in mind as you approach Christmas. For those of you that have been around me for a long time, you know that I always love to bring this up at Christmastime, that this is what Christmas is about.

Christmas is not just about, you know, pretty trees and glowing lights and hot cocoa and all that kind of stuff. Christmas is about a king whose kingdom has invaded the world.

That is what Christmas is about. The manger is not some cute little Noel song. The manger is a declaration of war.

A king has come and the kingdom has come with him. And the demonic forces run in fear. 1 John 3, verse 8 says, The reason the Son of God appeared, that is the reason that Jesus came, was to

destroy the works of the devil.

The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the works of the devil. Now, if you're here and you're like, I just don't really believe in demons. I just don't really believe in this whole powers of darkness.

[18 : 15] Then let me just tell you that is precisely where the enemy wants you. The enemy would love for you to think that he is fake. The demonic forces would love for you to think that this is just some kind of fairy tale.

As many of you know, one of my favorite C.S. Lewis books is Screwtape Letters. And it's a fictional writing about a conversation between a senior demon and kind of a younger demon and all the strategies that one could use to impact Christians in spiritual warfare.

And in letter 7, Lewis, writing this, talks about how one of the strategies the enemy uses is to make us not believe in spiritual forces.

Here's what the older elder demon is writing to the younger one. Quote, I do not think that you'll have much difficulty in keeping your patient in the dark. The fact that devils are predominantly comic figures in the modern imagination will help you.

If any faint suspicion of your existence begins to arise in his mind, suggest to him a picture of something, you know, in red tights. And persuade him that since he cannot believe in that, it is an old textbook method of confusing them and therefore cannot believe in you.

[19 : 39] So we'll just, we'll treat this like it's a comic book character with red tights and a pitchfork and eventually be able to dismiss the existence of such things.

Let it be said tonight that here at Faith Family, we believe in demonic forces. We believe in spiritual warfare. We believe that we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but the powers and principalities. But let it also be said, and with even greater clarity, that greater is he that is in us than he that is in the world. It's why we sing a mighty fortress is our God.

That yes, there is the existence of Satan in the world, but his doom is sure. The right man is on our side.

The man Christ Jesus. The king has come and with him the kingdom and the demons run in fear. That's what this miracle is about.

[20 : 40] Jesus cast out the demon and he tells us that what that is about is that the kingdom of God has come upon you. The strong man has been plundered.

Merry Christmas. Now, that's the miracle and that's what it means. But notice the misunderstanding that takes place as a result of this miracle.

Verse 24. But when the Pharisees heard it, they said, Oh, no, no, it's only by Beelzebul, you know, the prince of demons that this man cast out demons.

Knowing their thoughts. I'll stop right there for a second. So we see the misunderstanding here that they have over the miracle. Now, of course, it doesn't surprise you. At this point, we've studied so many miracles.

There are several things that should not surprise you. One of which is that Jesus has the power to cast out the demon. Amen. The second thing that shouldn't surprise you is that the Pharisees have a problem with it.

[21 : 43] That they take issue with what Jesus is doing because they care more about their institution than an actual person. We've seen this repeatedly. Do you remember in John?

Jesus heals the lame man. They catch up with him later in the gift shop. You know, remember the temple gift shop and he's there shopping and they walk up to him and say, Not, hey, it's so awesome that you're walking.

Their issue is what? You can't carry your mat. It's the Sabbath. They don't give a rip about this guy. They don't give a rip about his life. The only thing they care is about their institution.

And so their institution is being threatened by Jesus and they have a problem with that. Notice this on the screen. The issue for the Pharisees is not the miracle.

It's the claim of Messiah. They don't have a problem with Jesus performing this miracle. Let me show you what they have a problem with.

[22 : 44] Go back to verse 23. And all the people were amazed and said, Can this be the son of David? Is this the Messiah?

Son of David language is Messiah language. Are you with me tonight? All right. Maybe it snowed another 11 inches. Who knows?

All right. We're stuck all night. Here we go. That language. Could this be the son of David? That goes back to a promise that was given to David. A promise about a king.

God had told David that from his line one of his descendants would come an anointed king. And that king opposes or is a threat to all other kingdoms.

Notice this on the screen. Not only is the kingdom of God a threat to the kingdom of principalities, casting out the demon, the kingdom of God is a threat to the kingdom of Pharisees. Notice this.

[23 : 43] If everybody starts thinking he's the Messiah, everybody's going to follow him. And if everybody's following him, guess who they're not following? Us. And so they began to say, okay, this cannot be of God.

This cannot be the promise of David. This must be Satan casting out Satan. And so they claim, this is very important.

You shouldn't zone out because we're about to get to the part that's terrified of you. They are saying, they are concluding that Jesus' performing of this miracle is not by the power of the spirit, but of the power of Satan.

Are you with me? That's their claim. And Jesus exposes their ignorance. I love, again, never argue with Jesus.

Amen? Right? Always going to win. And notice how Jesus turns this on the Pharisees. I love it. Probably, again, a little too much. Verse 25. Knowing their thoughts, Jesus said to them, let's think about this for a minute, all right?

[24 : 55] Every kingdom divided against itself is laid waste, and no city or house divided against itself will stand. If Satan cast out Satan, he is divided against himself.

How then will his kingdom stand? In other words, you num-nums. Do you even realize how illogical it is of what you're saying?

Why would Satan cast himself out? Why would Satan oppose himself? That would be like a nation saying, we have a great idea. Let's go to war against ourselves.

Now, yeah, that may have happened in history, but does it ever turn out well? No. It's a terrible idea. Or a team saying, I got an idea. Let's not beat the opponent.

Let's beat ourselves. Jesus is saying, what you are saying is ridiculous. It is absurd. In other words, Jesus not only in this passage puts demons in their place, Jesus puts Pharisees in their place.

[25 : 59] Amen? Amen? Amen? You are nuts! What you're saying doesn't make any sense at all. Notice this on the screen. This is not about a kingdom being divided.

This is about a kingdom that is dawning. You are seeing the very kingdom of God. And isn't it interesting, I love this, that the Pharisees aren't questioning whether the miracle happened.

They can't. They're not denying, oh, that guy wasn't really demon oppressed. No, they're simply, they have an issue with the claim that this is the son of David.

This is the anointed king of God who has come. Who's with me? We've seen the miracle. And what it means. And the misunderstanding that's come out of that.

And it's from that. And this is why I want you not to zone out. Because it's from all of that context that Jesus says the part of this passage that has terrified so many people.

[27 : 04] Let's look at it. Verse 30. Whoever is not with me is against me, and whoever does not gather with me scatters. Therefore, I tell you, every sin and blasphemy will be forgiven people, but the blasphemy against the Spirit will not be forgiven.

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

What is that? About. There is a sin that is not forgivable. If that's the case, then what does it mean to commit the unpardonable sin?

And so what I want to do is I want to address this as simply, I trust based on the context of which I've been preaching, simply address what this is, and I hope bring comfort to each and every one of you if you know Jesus.

And the reason why it's important for us to do this is because, as you can imagine, over the last, whatever, 25 years, I have heard all kinds of interpretations of this.

[28 : 16] I have heard people, in fact, I was talking with a friend of mine just on Friday that said, because he held a different view on speaking in tongues with somebody that was more of the charismatic movement, that they accused him of blaspheming the Holy Spirit because he didn't believe in speaking in tongues.

That is nuts. And if you want to get punched in Jesus' name, say that to me, all right? I'm kidding. I won't punch you. That is nonsense. That is nonsense.

And we have all these different views about what could this be, and if we just study the passage in context, we'll be able to see what it means.

Here's the first point I want you to see. We're going to walk through this simply, and I hope make, give some clarity around this. Number one is this. All of the miracles, all of the miracles of Jesus were done by the power of the Holy Spirit.

In fact, Jesus' entire life and ministry was exercised in the power of the Spirit. He was conceived by the, this is the audience participation part of the sermon, he's conceived by the Holy Spirit.

[29 : 30] At his baptism, he is anointed by the Holy Spirit. He's led into the wilderness, the text says, by the Spirit. Jesus, the Bible says, performs miracles by the power of the Holy Spirit.

Yes, Jesus is fully God, but we forget that he did not take advantage of his divine attributes, Philippians 2.

Jesus laid them down, if you will, in that he did not take advantage of all that was divinely his, so that he could identify with us as fully human.

Is everybody with me so far? That's Christmas, by the way. He has the divine attributes. He doesn't take advantage of them, Philippians 2, so that he can identify with us in our humanity.

So, how then does Jesus perform his work? Answer, through the power of the Spirit.

[30 : 33] When he teaches, he's teaching in the power of the Spirit. When he performs a miracle, he's performing a miracle in the power of the Spirit. And that language, look, come on back in, brother.

That gets so interpreted through modern language of being Spirit-led.

And we start thinking charismatic type stuff. I'm not, nothing against charismatic at all. But if you want to know what it means to be anointed by the Holy Spirit in the Old Testament, it means you are king.

The Spirit leaves Saul and goes on who? David. David is now the anointed king of God.

And what does he do? He goes out into the battlefield and he defeats Goliath, the enemy of God.

After his sin with Bathsheba, do you remember what he says?

[31 : 38] Take not your Holy Spirit from me. That is not, I don't want to lose my salvation. It's, I don't want you to remove my kingship. I still want to be king.

Spirit anointing language in the Old Testament is kingship language. How do you know? Jesus is the son of David.

The king promised this anointed one from long ago. How do we know this is him? Because he does his works by the power of the Spirit.

That's how we know he is Messiah. Everybody with me so far? There was your little theology lesson for the night, all right? Second, the Pharisees said that Jesus did his miracles by the power of Satan.

Okay? Simple enough. Jesus did all of his miracles by the power of the Spirit. But the Pharisees said that he did these miracles by the power of Satan. Translation, they are saying Jesus is not the Messiah.

[32 : 45] He's not the son of David. They're claiming for him in verse 23. They are denying Jesus as Messiah by denying the power of the Spirit.

Is everybody still with me? Number three. Jesus calls this blaspheming the Holy Spirit. Jesus calls this specifically blaspheming the Holy Spirit.

That is, when you reject Jesus as the Messiah, your problem is not with Jesus. Your problem is with the Spirit of God.

Look at verse 32. Whoever speaks a word against the Son of Man, that is his humanity, will be forgiven. But whoever speaks against the Holy Spirit will not be forgiven, either in this age or in the age to come.

It is very, very simple to understand in the context of this passage. It's one thing to speak against Jesus as the man. It's another thing to speak against the Spirit.

[33 : 49] That is his anointing of God. Because when you deny Jesus as the Christ, which means the anointed one, you are in opposition to God.

You're in a different kingdom. You belong to a different family. You are outside the kingdom of God. Why?

Because you do not recognize the Spirit's role in the life of Jesus. Everybody still with me? Is this helpful at all? Is this making sense? Number four, that sin, that sin, that particular sin, that is the sin of rejecting Jesus as the Messiah, will not be forgiven.

That sin, this specific sin of rejecting Jesus as Messiah, will not be forgiven. Now, I struggle with this a bit to make it simple, because on one hand, I want to say, no one in this room can even commit this sin.

Because there's a real aspect of the fact that this was a specific group of people, the Pharisees, who saw a specific miracle, the casting out of a demon, by the Spirit, and specifically opposed it and claimed it to be of Satan.

[35 : 10] Okay? Now, that experience probably is not going to happen to anybody in the room. Amen? I mean, we are not going to see Jesus physically on earth perform a miracle and therefore have the ability in that moment to say, I think you did that of Satan, not of the Spirit.

Now, if that does happen, you have committed the unpardonable sin. So, there's a sense in which you're not even going to commit this anyways, because of the specific context.

The only basic application or parallel that I can even draw is this. If you are a person whose heart is so hardened towards the things of God, that you deny Jesus as Messiah, then you are not forgiven. Here's why. Look at verse 30. I hope this makes it clear. Verse 30. Whoever is not with me is against me. And whoever does not gather with me scatters.

In other words, listen. Lord, help me teach this clearly. All I want to do is teach this clearly. If you are against Jesus, you're not with Jesus.

[36 : 24] And if you are not with Jesus, you will not be forgiven. That is as simple as I can make this complicated passage.

There is no neutral ground. You are either with Christ, and you believe that he is the son of David, that he is the king of kings, that he is God's anointed one, he is the son of God, or you do not.

And if you do not, and you remain in that position of disbelief or unbelief, you will not be forgiven.

So, if you're here, and you have put your faith in Jesus as Messiah, guess what you don't ever have to worry about committing?

The unpardonable sin. This should not be, for the Christian, a terrifying passage. In fact, what I will argue in just a moment is that this should be a glorious passage.

When I read it earlier at the beginning of the message, what you should have done is said, Yes! What a beautiful passage! Hallelujah! I can't wait for this truth! But instead, some of us are like, Oh no.

[37 : 46] What does this mean? And I'm a bit nervous and terrified about, Don't be. If you have put your faith in Jesus, you have done the very opposite of what the Pharisees have done here in Matthew 12.

So, that's the miracle in its meaning. That's the miracle in its misunderstanding. What's the application for us as we close? First is this. We would walk away from this passage seeing the power of Jesus to save.

That is so abundantly obvious in this passage. Amen? The power of Jesus to save. This passage shows us the power of Jesus, whether it is a physical condition or a spiritual condition, to save us. Physically, we see the power of Jesus. He takes a man's life, oppressed by the demonic forces, and he sets him free. We see a man that is blind and mute, and by the end, he's able to speak and see. We see Jesus who has the power to save whatever it is we are going through. Whatever you are dealing with, Jesus has the power to deliver.

[38 : 53] I'm screaming it at you because I want it to get in here. There's nothing. What have I said a thousand times throughout this series?

There's nothing impossible with our King. Believe it. Whatever it is that you're going through physically, see and behold the power of Jesus to save, but also spiritually.

As we would be right to point out, the casting out of this demon is a picture of our salvation. Is it not? Here's Paul's words in Colossians 1 verse 13.

He delivered us from the domain of darkness and transferred us into the kingdom of his beloved Son, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of our sins.

Praise him. Hallelujah. He has delivered us like he delivered this man in Matthew 12. And if you're here tonight and you have not been set free by the power of Jesus, if you would trust him with your life, you can be free indeed.

[40 : 00] Are you with me? Oh, we see the power of Jesus to save. Secondly, and I might get loud here. I don't know. I might get loud.

It's possible. I might get to preach in here. We see the grace of Jesus to forgive. We see the grace of Jesus to forgive. Here's what I want to say. Are you ready to think differently about this passage? Are you ready to have one of those moments where you're like, oh, I never saw that. I never thought of it that way. Here is what happened to me as I thought about this passage in preparation to preach it.

I thought this. Isn't it interesting that the passage that makes most people worried about not being forgiven is a passage on forgiveness?

Think. Isn't it interesting that the very passage that terrifies people that they're not going to be forgiven is actually a passage on forgiveness? And everything in me really wants to scream this, but I'll be as calm as I can.

[41 : 06] Look at this on the screen. If the only sin not forgiven is rejecting Jesus, then there's no sin he won't forgive if you accept Jesus.

Think about that. Instead of being terrified of, what if I've done this sin that Jesus won't forgive and now I'm not pardoned and I'm going to wake up at the end of my life and be all spiritually alone, you don't have to live that way.

Because if this passage teaches anything, it's this. If you accept him, if you believe in him, there is no sin that will not be forgiven.

That's the grace of this Messiah. Amen? So stop thinking about this passage as something that terrifies you and let it be a passage that gives you hope.

If you have put your faith in Jesus, there's nothing you have ever done whereby he won't forgive you.

[42 : 13] Anybody want to say amen? Amen. That is the grace of this Messiah. And that is what this kingdom that he brought is all about.

There is absolutely nothing that you have ever done or ever will do that can separate you from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord. Third and last is the warning of Jesus to the religious. If there's anyone that should be terrified by this passage, if there is anyone that should be worried, it's not the prostitute, it's not the murderer, it's not the thief.

If there is anyone that should be terrified by this passage, it's the religious person whose morality has blinded them to the need of Messiah.

You should be terrified. You should be very, very nervous. Because this particular warning, this particular warning from Jesus is given, are you listening?

[43 : 34] Nowhere else in the Bible except to Pharisees. And I still need time to think it all out in my mind, but I'm going to go ahead and put it on the screen.

The unpardonable sin is the sin of Phariseeism. There is something specific. The Pharisees in their institution wouldn't allow them to see by faith in Jesus Christ.

And it caused Jesus to say, that will not be pardoned. And that's a warning, I think a rightful warning for those of us that have grown up in church and we've been a part of religious systems all of our life, is that what should worry us, what should terrify us, is that it's only Pharisees that get this warning.

It's only Pharisees that Jesus says this to. So my encouragement would be, don't let your merit keep you from Messiah.

Don't let your morality keep you from the saving grace of Jesus. I don't really need a Messiah because I'm not perfect, but I'm pretty good. That should terrify you.

[44 : 58] That you might get to the end of your life and find yourself alone, separated from God.

So faith family, there's no greater fear in life than the feeling of being abandoned, of coming to the end of your life and realizing that you're all alone.

But faith family, do you know that if you're a Christian, you never, ever, ever, ever, ever, ever, ever have to fear that. You never, ever have to fear that.

And here's why. Because at the end of Jesus' life, he was left alone. Because he was abandoned on his deathbed because of our sins.

And if you put your faith in him, not only is there no sin, he won't forgive, there's no chance you'll ever be abandoned. Not only is there no sin, he won't forgive, there's no chance that he will ever leave you or forsake you.

[46 : 11] You see, the gospel frees us from the fear of the unforgivable sin because of our faithful Savior.

And all God's people said, Amen. Amen. Let's pray. Let's pray. God, thank you for tonight. This is such a difficult passage. Again, a passage that has caused so many of Christians to be nervous. And yet, it's the glorious truth of the gospel. There is no sin that our King Jesus will not forgive except those who simply say, I am not with him.

And to those in some way like the Pharisees who say, I am not on the side of Jesus and I reject who he is and I want nothing to do with him.

If they continue in that state of unbelief, there is no forgiveness. But for those who have repented and believed and trusted Jesus that put our faith in him, we have nothing to fear.

[47 : 19] No, the comfort of the gospel is I will never leave you or forsake you. You are mine. You'll never be abandoned because I was already abandoned for you on the cross.

As he cried out, my God, my God, why have you forsaken me? It is that that bought us the eternal security of adoption in Jesus Christ.

So thank you, God. Thank you, Messiah Jesus, that you love us this much and that your grace is this abundant in our lives. And thank you for the hope that we have this Christmas because of the King and his kingdom that has come into the world.

Invade our lives, we pray. In Jesus' name. Amen.