

Blasphemy

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Today the title of my message is:

Blasphemy

First of all, why did I choose to do a message on blasphemy? It sounds like one of those medieval words that gets thrown around in movies, but you don't hear this word very much in modern English.

What is blasphemy? Is it important to us? Look at the words of Christ in Matthew 12:31-32.

Matthew 12:31 *Wherefore I say unto you, All manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men: but the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost shall not be forgiven unto men.*

32) *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. (KJV)*

We can see a little bit more information in Mark 3:28-30. This is the same instance—the same conversation, just worded a little differently.

Mark 3:28 *Verily I say unto you, All sins shall be forgiven unto the sons of men, and blasphemies wherewith so ever they shall blaspheme:*

29) *But he that shall blaspheme against the Holy Ghost hath never forgiveness, but is in danger of eternal damnation:*

30) *Because they said, He hath an unclean spirit. (KJV)*

I'm not going to go through the whole story but before these verses, Christ had ordained the apostles and had given them the power to cast out spirits and heal the sick. There were so many people who came to be healed that they pressed upon them in the house they were in and there wasn't enough room for them to even eat food and have dinner. The Pharisees are seeing this—scores of people—and instead of rejoicing and being happy with the work of God, they said He casts out spirits by Beelzebub. They accused Him of being of the devil. Isn't that just "the pot calling the kettle black" as we find out later on. In Matthew 12:34, we see Christ telling these vipers just what they are.

Matthew 12:34 *O generation of vipers, how can ye, being evil, speak good things? for out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh.*

35) *A good man out of the good treasure of the heart bringeth forth good things: and an evil man out of the evil treasure bringeth forth evil things.*

36) *But I say unto you, that every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment.*

37) *For by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned. (KJV)*

Then in two more chapters ahead in Matthew 15:18.

Matthew 15:18 *But those things which proceed out of the mouth come forth from the heart; and they defile the man.*

19) *For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies:*

20) *These are the things which defile a man: but to eat with unwashen hands defileth not a man. (KJV)*

Some people, in the name of medical science today, might say that this would be wrong, but we have it right here. So, what is true defiling of a man? Is it a little bit of mud or dirt? No. Is it the clothes of a man? No, absolutely not; it's what comes out of the man's heart—that's what defiles a man. In Mark 7:20-23, we are told the same thing.

Mark 7:20 *And he said, That which cometh out of the man, that defileth the man.*

21) *For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders,*

22) *Thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness:*

23) *All these evil things come from within, and defile the man. (KJV)*

For those who are wondering, *an evil eye* (4190 poneros referring to “envy, evil thoughts”) is more colloquially known as “a stink eye”; someone is giving me a dirty look, shooting daggers at me—anything like that. Oftentimes it can show a person's character. They say the eyes are “the windows to the soul”. It can show you a person's character in how they look at people, how they treat people. If you see someone who is homeless, you might look at them with contempt or disgust, if you were using the evil eye, as it were. Notice Ephesians 4:29.

Ephesians 4:29 *Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers.*

30) *And grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption. (KJV)*

Come back to the beginning of that, in verse 29.

“Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth”,

That's one thing. But, “that which is good to the use of edifying” is a whole other thing. So not only are we shown that we're not supposed to let evil communication proceed

out of our mouths, but the absence of edification can be just as painful for some. Without that good word of encouragement in the right moments—to pick them up. Think back to a time when you were down and you got a card from somebody in the church. Or just a kind word to help lift you back up. The absence of that can be just as awful as corrupt communication.

29 continued) ... that it may minister grace unto the hearers.

30) And grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption. (KJV)

Continuing on:

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31) Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice:

32) And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you. (KJV)

Ephesians 5:1 *Be ye therefore followers of God, as dear children;*

2) And walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling savor. (KJV)

Where it says, “and evil speaking”, that *evil speaking* is the same word that is translated time and time again as *blasphemy*. In fact, it occurs in the New Testament nineteen times. Of those nineteen times, sixteen of those times it is “blasphemy”. One of those times is here, where we are told it’s called *evil speaking*. Then another two times it appears as *railing*. The word that we are using is *blasphemia* which is the Greek #988 out of Strong’s and it means “vilification”. Then in the Greek there are two other words that mean *blasphemy* and are used throughout the New Testament numerous times. They all have basically the same meaning. There is the Greek #987 and the Greek #988 and Greek #989; they are the three words we have and they are all right next to each other. #987 is *blasphemeo*, “to vilify, to speak impiously”; this word means to “bring down another’s value, honor, due respect, to injure another’s reputation in the eyes of others”.

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Greek #989, *blasphemos* and it’s defined as “abusive, speaking evil”. It is a derivative of Greek 984 and the Greek 5345 *pheme* meaning *to speak. A report, rumor fame.*

Greek #984, *blapto* to “hinder, injure, mar, damage, weaken”.

The Greek word #5345 *fema* from which we get the word “fame”; “to defame somebody or defamation”. It originally denoted a divine voice and oracle.

That's the background of *blasphemy* here. I only bring this up because, when I was younger, I always thought that blaspheming meant you were trying to go "square to square" (a boxing term) with God, which is not the case. You can clearly blaspheme outside of that, because here in Mark we were told by Christ that all number of blasphemies will be forgiven, except blaspheming against the Holy Spirit. So, it can't just be to blaspheme against God.

In 1 Timothy 1:12, we have Paul speaking and giving Timothy some encouragement and advice.

1 Timothy 1:12 *And I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who hath enabled me, for that he counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry;
13) Who was before a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious: but I obtained mercy, because I did it ignorantly in unbelief. (KJV)*

That's very important. Paul did it ignorantly in unbelief; he didn't know what he was doing, he didn't have the Holy Spirit and, in his perspective, he was defending God. It's not important that you don't live your life perfectly always, but when you come to that moment, that realization, when we are given that chance to correct ourselves, we have to make a decision and I hope we make that decision in going towards God.

*14) And the grace of our Lord was exceeding abundant with faith and love which is in Christ Jesus.
15) This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief.
16) Howbeit for this cause I obtained mercy, that in me first Jesus Christ might shew forth all longsuffering, for a pattern to them which should hereafter believe on him to life everlasting.
17) Now unto the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God, be honor and glory for ever and ever. Amen. (KJV)*

That's us he is talking about. You and I are the ones which,

...hereafter [from the time he wrote that letter] should believe on Him to life everlasting.

God showed that mercy to Paul, a person who vilified Christians, for our sake and there must be a reason for that. (I have done my best to move in a linear progression, so that we are not jumping all over the Bible.)

However, these are by far not the only verses that discuss *blasphemy*. Notice 1 Timothy 6:1.

1 Timothy 6:1 *Let as many servants as are under the yoke count their own masters worthy of all honor, that the name of God and his doctrine be not blasphemed.*

2) And they that have believing masters, let them not despise them, because they are brethren; but rather do them service, because they are faithful and beloved, partakers of the benefit. These things teach and exhort. (KJV)

If we treat our boss with disdain, with disrespect—whether it be our boss at our job or our leadership—are we blaspheming God and His doctrine? Are we turning away from that? Are we giving a bad name to the Christian name? Vilifying it? We have to be careful with that. Continuing on:

3) If any man teaches otherwise, and consent not to wholesome words, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the doctrine which is according to godliness;

4) He is proud, knowing nothing, but doting about questions and strife of words, whereof cometh envy, strife, railings, evil surmising,

5) Perverse disputing of men of corrupt minds, and destitute of the truth, supposing that gain is godliness: from such withdraw thyself. (KJV)

Here, the word *godliness* is used over and over, and we see this is talking about “respect” or “piety”. There is a semblance of self-respect, of honor or piety in them.

6) But godliness with contentment is great gain.

7) For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out.

8) And having food and raiment let us be therewith content. (KJV)

I am going to go through the whole chapter of 2 Timothy 3.

2 Timothy 3:1 *This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come.*

2) For [every time you see “for” you can just replace it with “because”. This is the reason why perilous times shall come] men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy,

3) Without natural affection, trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent [which means without self-control], fierce, despisers of those that are good,

4) Traitors, heady, high minded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God;

5) Having a form of godliness [a form of “respect”, of “piety”], but denying the power thereof: from such turn away.

6) For of this sort are they which creep into houses, and lead captive silly women laden with sins, led away with divers lusts,

7) Ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth. (KJV)

I don't believe this is a sexist term here, especially when you look at the church and the fact that we are considered the bride of Christ—the church is the bride of Christ and we know that there were some foolish virgins and some wise virgins there. We know that

half of those lost their oil and didn't wake up in time. This is us; we are those foolish women that are in danger of such things unless we always turn to God.

8) Now as Jannes and Jambres withstood Moses ... (KJV)

I looked into this and those two names, Jannes and Jambres which withstood Moses are in the talmud, the names of the Egyptian priests who stood before the Pharaoh and withstood Moses. One of them means *he vexed*—that was Jannes—or cursed. The other one is translated to *foaming healer* and I have no idea what foaming healer would mean. As another example, not just these two men, I would also point your mind back in Numbers where Korah and Nathan and all them were challenging Moses and Aaron and saying,

“Who put you in charge, what makes you so great?”

It wasn't Moses they were blaspheming; it was God's Holy Spirit they were blaspheming. It was Moses' spirit they were blaspheming and they didn't live very long thereafter. I'm not going to be turning to that, but just bringing that to mind a little. I believe they were the ones that God did something to that He had never done to anyone before.

8 continued) ... so do these also resist the truth: men of corrupt minds, reprobate concerning the faith.

9) But they shall proceed no further: for their folly shall be manifest unto all men, as theirs also was.

10) But thou hast fully known my doctrine, manner of life, purpose, faith, longsuffering, charity, patience,

11) Persecutions, afflictions, which came unto me at Antioch, at Iconium, at Lystra; what persecutions I endured: but out of them all the Lord delivered me.

12) Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution. (KJV)

We can't be afraid of offending people because we just can't say it the right way; I can promise, you can't say it the right way. Christ Himself offended people telling them the truth of God. If He couldn't impress them, having been taught by the Father directly, we have no hope. But that's not the point; the point is to deliver the message. You have nothing to do with the reception of that message so we shouldn't let anger cloud us if we perceive that somebody hasn't received the message that we would like them to receive.

13) But evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving, and being deceived.

14) But continue thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned them; (KJV)

That is God and Christ. He's not saying Timothy, you know you learned from me, Paul. He is saying, you know where the truth came from, don't worry about these other people.

15) *And that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.*

16) *All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness:*

17) *That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works. (KJV)*

It says it's profitable for doctrine, reproof, correction, instruction in righteousness. It doesn't say it's good for abusive, evil speaking. That's not the way we are supposed to correct, as God's people. Going over to James 2:5.

James 2:5 *Hearken, my beloved brethren, Hath not God chosen the poor of this world rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom which he hath promised to them that love him?*

6) *But ye have despised the poor. Do not rich men oppress you, and draw you before the judgment seats?*

7) *Do not they blaspheme that worthy name by the which ye are called?*

8) *If ye fulfil the royal law according to the scripture, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself, ye do well:*

9) *But if ye have respect to persons, ye commit sin, and are convinced of the law as transgressors.*

10) *For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all. (KJV)*

I don't think that we are doing that outrightly—openly saying that one man is better than this man. But how many times do we have our own sources out in the world—our own news channel, our own way of looking at things and we take those expert opinions and hold them over our brethren? How many times do we get frustrated when a brother just won't see things the way we see them? What do we do in the next step? We have to think about that and consider that. Turn with me to Jude and I will read through the whole thing. Not just as filler, but sometimes I think we forget that these letters were just that—letters. I think if any one of us went back and found letters we had from ten, twenty, thirty and fifty years ago and we just read one line here, one line there, we are not going to get the whole message. It's good to read line upon line, here a little, there a little but it's also good to sometimes go back and take the whole thing.

Jude 1:1 *Jude, the servant of Jesus Christ, and brother of James, to them that are sanctified by God the Father, and preserved in Jesus Christ, and called:*

2) *Mercy unto you, and peace, and love, be multiplied.*

3) *Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints.*

4) *For there are certain men crept in unawares, who were before of old ordained to this condemnation, ungodly men, turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness, and denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ.*

5) I will therefore put you in remembrance, though ye once knew this, how that the Lord, having saved the people out of the land of Egypt, afterward destroyed them that believed not. (KJV)

Again, those who were destroyed were those who had blasphemed God.

“You’re only bringing us here to kill our children. You are only doing this to slay us in the wilderness.”

For forty years they blasphemed God.

6) And the angels which kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation, he hath reserved in everlasting chains under darkness unto the judgment of the great day.

7) Even as Sodom and Gomorrah, and the cities about them in like manner, giving themselves over to fornication, and going after strange flesh, are set forth for an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire.

8) Likewise, also these filthy dreamers defile the flesh, despise dominion, and speak evil of dignities.

9) Yet Michael the archangel, when contending with the devil he disputed about the body of Moses, durst not bring against him a railing accusation, [the Greek, #989; abusive, evil speaking. He didn’t look at him and call him names—you, this and that and you ought to do this and that] but said, The Lord rebuke thee.

10) But these speak evil of those things which they know not: but what they know naturally, as brute beasts, in those things they corrupt themselves.

11) Woe unto them! for they have gone in the way of Cain, and ran greedily after the error of Balaam for reward, and perished in the gainsaying of Core. (KJV)

Those were the ones who were going after Moses and saying,

“Who put you in charge here?”

This was said after the Ten Commandments were given so we all know God is the One who put them in charge. Who else ratified that decision? The elders of Israel, were probably these same men who, down the road said, “Who put you in charge?” were probably the very ones who said, “No you go up to the mountain and you speak, for we’ll die.”

12) These are spots in your feasts of charity, when they feast with you, feeding themselves without fear: clouds they are without water, carried about of winds; trees whose fruit withereth, without fruit, twice dead, plucked up by the roots;

13) Raging waves of the sea, foaming out their own shame; wandering stars, to whom is reserved the blackness of darkness forever.

14) And Enoch also, the seventh from Adam, prophesied of these, saying, Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousand of his saints,

15) *To execute judgment upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have ungodly committed, and of all their hard speeches which ungodly sinners have spoken against him.*

16) *These are murmurers, complainers, walking after their own lusts; and their mouth speaketh great swelling words, having men's persons in admiration because of advantage.*

17) *But, beloved, remember ye the words which were spoken before of the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ;*

18) *How that they told you there should be mockers in the last time, who should walk after their own ungodly lusts. These be they who separate themselves, sensual, having not the Spirit.*

19) *These be they who separate themselves, sensual, having not the Spirit.*
(KJV)

Sensual here, is the Greek word *Psuchikos* and that means, “pertaining to the natural”.

20) *But ye, beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Ghost,*

21) *Keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life.*

22) *And of some have compassion, making a difference:*

23) *And others save with fear, pulling them out of the fire; hating even the garment spotted by the flesh.*

24) *Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy,*

25) *To the only wise God our Savior, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever. Amen.* (KJV)

We have seen many ups and downs in the church. I speak mostly of America because I live in America. But this has gone on worldwide in the past twenty years, in the past thirty years. Even going back to the '70's within the church—ups and downs, ebbs and flows, political opinions go and rise in the most important things. We have to remember the most important things are our relationship with God and how we deal with each other. If we're bringing railings and accusations against people, that's not going to do any good. Nobody is convinced by, “You idiot”, as an opening statement. We have to remember that God is the one who opened our eyes. I didn't become knowledgeable in God's ways because I was so wise that God had to get my opinion on something. That's quite the opposite. I was way down on the bottom rung, scraping the wood chunks of the barrel so to speak and God may have said, “I'll really make them look foolish by using one of these guys.” That's the position I occupy. What if I have a problem with my brother or what if you have a problem with me? Should we go online and post it? Should we go start our own church? Should we split up and go our own ways? No, I have seen a lot of different movies with sheep in pastures. I'm not a sheep herder myself but I don't think I've ever seen them running around fighting each other and tearing at each other. Who knows, maybe it will happen but I don't think it's common.

We have a due process that's laid out by Christ. If you have a problem with a brother or a brother has a problem with you, you go to that person one on one. If they still won't hear you, you go and get two people in the church with God's Holy Spirit and talk to them. It does not say you go recruit two people who are of the same opinion as you—you don't ask if they agree with you, and if they don't agree with you don't take them with you. This is not "jury selection". You select two people with God's Spirit and go and talk to the person. It may be that you are the one who is wrong. These are supposed to be impartial judges. If they still won't listen, you bring it to the church and if they still won't listen, then they are to be put out of the church. That's easy—that's in the church—what do we have for recourse in the world? Does God want us taking law suits and go out protesting in the street, maybe waving a sign, getting angry, drawing names, reviling left and right? No—we have the highest appeal in the universe. Every night, every morning, every day when you pray to God, you are going before the King of the cosmos—throughout all time. He who has mercy and justice for you and loves you more completely than we can even know in this lifetime. That's who we go to and appeal and that's who we pray to.

When Daniel was told that he couldn't petition anybody, that nobody except Darius could be petitioned throughout the whole kingdom. He didn't go get Meshach, Shadrach and Abednego and say, let's go protest down there at the gates of Babylon—the Ishtar gates—no, he immediately went up to his room, opened his windows and sent his appeal to the highest authority in the heavens. The highest authority in existence. I will say to you that I believe that that was far more effective than if he had gone to King Darius in person.