

Struggling with Forgiveness

The unpardonable sin. A lot of us get nervous when the topic is brought up—and for good reason. Ever thought something like this? "I've been such a dunderhead, doing things I told God I'd never do again. I'm concerned I may have 'crossed a line' in God's eyes."



Whether you've thought that or not, I've had too many conversations with Christians who have. So let me state two truths that you might want to put on magnets and stick to your refrigerator.

1. There is an unforgivable sin.
2. You have not committed it.

The unpardonable sin is tied to those who *continually* resist the conviction of the Holy Spirit. They see no need for forgiveness and have no desire to be forgiven. But the fact that a person wants to be forgiven is a clear sign no unpardonable sin has been committed. Just by asking the question, "Have I committed the unpardonable sin?" implies a desire to not be in an unforgiven state.

God wants to forgive us far more than we want to be forgiven! How desirous is He to forgive you? He let His Son die a torturous death to take away your sin—*all your sin*—and extend to you His gracious forgiveness.

OK, so why don't I feel forgiven?

If you have repented but don't feel forgiven, there are two possible scenarios.

1. You're relying on your feelings. Just look at the statement: I don't *feel* forgiven. Feelings are fickle and unreliable. One unusual December, my wife said, "It just doesn't feel like Christmas." I guess I could have told her, "In spite of the tree inside our house, the nonstop Hallmark movies, and Bing Crosby on the radio, it must not be Christmas since you don't *feel* it. Glad I know that now before I bought you a gift." Since wise men are a part of Christmas, I was a wise man and kept my mouth shut. And I went shopping.

Let me say it again. Feelings are fickle and unreliable. Faith is not based on what we think or feel; faith is a

confident trust in the faithfulness and truthfulness of God. So when He says ...

- "I, even I, am he who blots out your transgressions, for my own sake, and remembers your sins no more" (Isa. 43:25).
- "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness" (1 John 1:9).

... you are forgiven!

Rest in the fact of what God says. Feelings will eventually catch up.

2. You haven't forgiven yourself. What's often behind the feeling of unforgiveness is an inability to forgive yourself. Admit it. You blew it. You did the very thing—*again*—you told God you'd never do again. And I'm guessing it's not the first time you blew it. You feel true remorse over your sin and you're beating yourself up for letting God down.

There's a key phrase in Micah 7 I want you to see:

"You do not stay angry forever but delight to show mercy. You will again have compassion on us; you will tread our sins underfoot and hurl all our iniquities into the depths of the sea" (Micah 7:18-19).

God hurls our iniquities into the depths of the sea. In her book, *Tramp for the Lord*, Corrie ten Boon said she imagines that, after hurling our sins into the sea, God puts up a sign: NO FISHING ALLOWED.



Stop fishing! Put the pole down and get on with the life God has for you. He wants you to move beyond your sin. He wants to grow you and use you for His kingdom, but He can't so long as you hold on to your sin.

The truth of your forgiveness rests in Jesus; after all, He is the truth. "You will know the truth, and the truth will set you free" (John 8:32).

Run in the freedom of His forgiveness.