

The Second Sin

Then the man replied, "The woman You gave to be with me-she gave me [some fruit] from the tree, and I ate." So the Lord God asked the woman, "What is this you have done?" And the woman said, "It was the serpent. He deceived me, and I ate." – Genesis 3:12-13 HCSB

A lot has been said about the first sin. Philosophers often wonder about it, though the average person doesn't usually give it much thought. But the second sin may, in fact, be more important because we'll never recover from the first sin as long as we're guilty of the second. No matter what the sin, no matter the problem, we have a God who has the solution, if only we will avail ourselves of Him. But this second sin renders us incapable of receiving aid. So what is the second sin? It is the sin of passing the buck, shifting the blame.

As we see in this passage, after Adam and Eve sinned, God came (as was His custom) walking in the garden. God, knowing everything and being everywhere simultaneously, knew exactly what they had done, but He came looking for them anyway. He even tried to give them the chance to own up to their sin. I am firmly convinced that if they had simply "fessed up" and repented, He would have forgiven and rehabilitated them. Why am I so convinced? Because Humanity's long and sordid history is full of stories of God seeking us out to forgive us and restore us to fellowship. But Adam and Eve didn't repent. They didn't confess. They blamed others. And because they would not take personal responsibility for their sin, they blocked God's forgiving powers.

This is the very essence of the unpardonable sin. People always ask what the unpardonable sin is. It is not suicide. It is described as the "sin against the Holy Spirit."¹ Whoever blasphemes against the Holy Spirit "never has forgiveness."² What exactly is the Holy Spirit's role? What does He do that we could blaspheme against Him? Christ tells us that the Spirit's role is to testify about Christ Himself.³ This gives us our clue. The Holy Spirit constantly points toward the atoning work of Christ. He always speaks of the Son and directs us to accept His Lordship. Since it is only through the finished work of Christ that we may receive forgiveness, refusing the Spirit's message of salvation by grace through faith in Christ means you are refusing forgiveness.

One last word on this – notice that Adam was even brazen enough to blame God for his own sin! "The woman YOU GAVE ME" he said. If you harden yourself against the gentle whispers of the Holy Spirit about your sinful condition and about the source of your salvation, you will end up even blaming God for your own sin.⁴ Then, not even God Himself can help you.

¹ Matthew 12:31

² Mark 3:28-29

³ John 15:26

⁴ James 1:13