

IS SUICIDE FORGIVABLE?

By Denver Cheddie

A preacher once related his experience at a Hindu funeral of someone who committed suicide. The pundit conducting the service stated that those who commit suicide have lost all chance of forgiveness. The preacher marveled how even a Hindu pundit could get such a revelation of truth. First of all I question whether that is really a truth, and secondly how much that pundit really knows about Hinduism.

There is one sin that is unforgivable – blasphemy against the Holy Spirit (Matt. 12:31, 32). 1 John 5:16, 17 also speak of a sin unto death. The context of 1 John suggests that John has in mind apostasy as being that sin unto death, for which there is no forgiveness (cf. Heb 6:4-6; 10:26). It is difficult to say exactly what blasphemy against the Holy Spirit is, but I believe it is the same sin as apostasy. In any case, neither passage implies that suicide is the unforgivable sin.

Suicide however is unique in that it is difficult to repent of it after committing it. This raises the question of whether repentance is necessary for forgiveness. It is necessary for forgiveness in the sense of reconciling broken fellowship with God (Isa. 59:1, 2). Confession of sins and repentance are necessary to maintain an open relationship with God, not to maintain salvation. The context of 1 John 1 is fellowship with God (vs. 3). But as long as we are in Christ, the blood of Jesus continually cleanses us of all sin (vs.

7) whether or not we repent. We should confess our sins if we desire an intimate walk with God, but even if we do not, our salvation is not affected. Thus suicide is forgivable.

The real question is not whether suicide will prevent one from going to heaven – it will not. Only unbelief will (John 3:18). It is whether a genuine Christian will commit suicide. I personally do not believe that they would but in the rare event that they do, it will not deny them of heaven. What ultimately determines whether we go to heaven is whether we were in Christ.

Let me close with a scriptural example of someone who committed suicide - Samson (Judges 16:30). Samson was captured by the Philistines and he prayed to God for strength so that he could uproot the foundation pillars of the building and kill the Philistines together with himself. GOD ANSWERED HIS PRAYER. Samson killed himself and I don't think he got a chance to repent afterward. Did the Bible condemn Samson for his "cowardly act"? No instead, the writer of Judges boasted that Samson killed more people in his death than in his life. Hebrews 11:32,34 continue to boast about Samson, specifically how out of weakness he was made strong. Samson is listed as a hero of faith. Yes he had his issues, but this was not one of them. You could recast this event in whatever terms you wish, you could never escape the conclusion that Samson killed himself. Based on Hebrews 11, I doubt very much that he is in hell.

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