



Does God forgive suicide or is it an unpardonable sin?

It would be difficult to argue that suicide is not a sin, for it is the taking of a human life. God is the Author of life, thus, the giving and taking of life ought to remain in His hands. There's no doubt that suicide is a terrible tragedy, because it is a waste of a life that God intended to use in a glorious way.

Few of life's events are as deeply tragic. Questions are left unanswered. Feelings of guilt can torment those left behind. For each life lost to suicide, the lives of many others are profoundly impacted, the lives of the people left behind — parents, husbands, siblings, children. They are called suicide survivors.

Suicide is in fact considered a sin in most faith traditions. Taking of one's own life is violating God's intentions for us as He is the only One who should determine when it is our time to leave this world. In light of this, many survivors are probably sharing some guilt or having some very deep emotional feelings and are looking for the answers to very deep questions: "Is my loved one condemned to hell? Are they at peace? Are they with God?" There are very few people who can understand the issues that eat at you when you lose a loved one to suicide.

There are 7 accounts of suicide in the Bible, but nowhere is it condemned. Among them: *King Saul* and his armor bearer. After losing his sons and all of his troops in battle, King Saul, assisted by his armor-bearer, ended his life. Then his servant killed himself.

Ahithophel, King David's ex counsellor. Disgraced and rejected by Absalom, Ahithophel went home, put his affairs in order, and then hung himself.

General Zimri (1 Kings 16:18), rather than being taken prisoner, set the king's palace on fire and died in the flames.

And *Judas Iscariot*, who was overcome with remorse after he betrayed Jesus, and hung himself. The Gospel of Matthew, portraying Judas simply as the "betrayed" of Jesus, describes his hanging himself matter-of-factly, without judgment.

Suicide happens because people are *in extraordinary pain*. Their statement is, "I can no longer handle the pain in my life. I can't go on anymore." A person who completes suicide is *not acting out of malice*. They're *acting out of desperation*. And God judges us negatively when we act out of malice but not when we are under mental anguish. If you are a parent, consider how you react when your children act meanly and maliciously, and when they are scared, or sad and desperate. Remember that God's nature is merciful.

What about the unforgivable sin? Is that suicide? No. Suicide is not the unforgivable sin. Jesus said in Matthew 12:22-32 that there is no unpardonable sin except to oppose the Holy Spirit. That means to harden your heart to God's Spirit, refuse to believe in Him and be against Him, like the scribes and Pharisees who crucified Jesus. They hardened their hearts to the very end, even while He was suffering on the cross, they cursed Him and denounced Him and resisted His Spirit. In fact, as Stephen said to them, "Ye do always resist the Holy Ghost." Jesus said this would not be forgiven them either in this life or the next. But I don't find any place where He includes any other sin that is unforgivable.

The Bible tells us that, at the moment of salvation, a believer's sins are forgiven (John 3:16; 10:28). When we become a child of God, all of our sins, even those committed after salvation, are no longer held against us. Ephesians 2:8 says, "God saved you by His grace when you believed. And you can't take credit for this; it is a gift from God." So, we are saved by God's grace, not by our own good deeds. In the same way that our good works don't save us, our bad ones, or sins, cannot keep us from salvation.

The apostle Paul made it plain in Romans 8:38-39 that nothing can separate us from God's love: *And I am convinced that nothing can ever separate us from God's love. Neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither our fears for today nor our worries about tomorrow -- not even the powers of hell can separate us from God's love. No power in the sky above or in the earth below -- indeed, nothing in all creation will ever be able to separate us from the love of God that is revealed in Christ Jesus our Lord.*

No one can truly understand the depth of someone else's suffering or the reasons that could drive a soul to such desperation. Only God knows what is in a person's heart (Psalms 139:1-2). « O Lord, thou hast searched me, and known me. Thou knowest my downsitting and mine uprising, Thou understandest my thought afar off. » Only He knows the extent of pain which might bring a person to the point of suicide. In conclusion, it bears repeating that suicide is a terrible tragedy, but it does not negate the Lord's act of redemption. Our salvation rests securely in the finished work of Jesus Christ on the cross. So then, "Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved." (Romans 10:13, NIV)

Some people get so depressed and oppressed that they think life is too hard and they want to end it all. Or in defeat and pride and humiliation, they just don't think they can face life and face others, so they'd rather kill themselves and face God. Apparently they just don't have enough faith or strength to hang on a little longer and trust the Lord to deliver them His way, so they take their life—and their death—into their own hands. I truly believe that God will forgive them and will judge them according to His perfect wisdom.