

## **SUICIDE, AN UNFORGIVABLE SIN?**

### **The arguments for and against, in an imagined conversation**

The bridge was closed off at both ends because of a jumper on the north side parapet. He stood there straight as a board, feet half over the edge, teetering between doubt and getting it over with.

“So, why don’t you jump?” a voice in his head whispered.

“Because suicide’s an unforgivable sin,” the jumper replied.

“Is it now?” the voice responded, “so why would Christ die to forgive every sin but suicide, do you think?”

“Because killing yourself is premeditated murder,” the jumper shouted, “and you know what the Bible says about that.”

“Oh, so murder’s an unforgivable sin too, is it?” the voice asked.

“You bet it is,” the jumper replied, “no murderer has eternal life in him, 1 John 3:15.”

“That’s true,” the voice said, “but adulterers, homosexuals, thieves, drunks and cheats don’t have eternal life in them either, 1 Corinthians 6:9-10, so why should murder be any different?”

The jumper swayed a bit and sniffed. “Well, that’s what I was told,” he mumbled.

“Ah, and were you also told,” the voice asked, “what happens when people confess their sins, including those who murder?”

“Yes, yes, I know, God forgives,” the jumper replied, sniffing again, “but suicide is different. If you kill yourself, God won’t forgive you because you can’t confess after you’re dead, can you? And if you don’t confess you go to Hell.”

“Oh, so it’s not confessing that’s an unpardonable sin now, is it?” the voice asked.

“Yes, it is,” the jumper fired back, “you have to publicly confess your sins before you can be saved, Romans 10:10.”

“And did you also read verses 8, 9 and 11?” the voice asked softly.

“Yes I did, if you must know,” the jumper huffed in reply.

“Then you know from the context that it isn’t confessing one’s sins that saves a person, it’s confessing their faith in Christ, right?” the voice asked.

“Well, yes,” the jumper admitted, “but I still say suicide is different because the Bible says if I deliberately destroy my body, God will destroy me, 1 Corinthians 3:17.”

“That would be true,” the voice replied, “if that verse is talking about you taking your life by suicide, but it isn’t. It’s talking about you wrecking your life if you insist on living by the world’s standards, not God’s. Read the context, son, read the context.”

“I have,” the jumper cried, “and that’s what worries me. Killing myself isn’t exactly living by God’s standards, is it? I’m taking what belongs to him and deliberately destroying it. My body isn’t my own, it’s God’s, 1 Corinthians 6:19.”

“And you know the context to that verse too, right?” the voice asked.

“Yes, yes, yes,” the jumper answered wearily, “it’s not talking about suicide, verse 18, it’s talking about sexual immorality - but can we forget the context for a second? We’re talking serious stuff here about God deciding what happens to our bodies, not us. He’s the one who determines the length of my life, not me.”

“So, why are you taking medication?” the voice asked, “Isn’t that interfering with God’s plan for your life by using human means to keep yourself alive?”

“But without medication, my life would be a living hell,” the jumper protested.

“Yes, and that’s what you’re really afraid of, isn’t it?” the voice replied, “it’s not all this stuff about going to Hell for ever, it’s having to live another day in hell here, right?”

“Well, at least you understand,” the jumper sighed, “and you’re right, it’s my life now that’s killing me. I hate it. I hate not having control over what happens to me. I’m useless to my family and I feel so guilty. For their sake and mine, I’m better off dead than alive.”

“Well, you may think that,” the voice replied, “but Christ doesn’t. He came for people just like you.”

“So I’ve been told,” the jumper sighed again, “but the pain gets so bad at times that’s all I can think of. Everything else goes out the window.”

“And is that an unforgivable sin, too?” the voice asked.

“No,” the jumper cried, “nothing separates us from Christ’s love.”

“Need I say more?” the voice replied.