

Great Adventure Matthew Part 2 Questions (2011):

Q1. Why can you speak against Jesus and be forgiven, but speak against the Holy Spirit and not be forgiven per Matt: 12:32?

“And whoever speaks a word against the Son of Man will be forgiven; but whoever speaks against the holy Spirit will not be forgiven, either in this age or in the age to come.

A. This saying also appears in the Gospels of Mark and Luke:

- 1) Mark 3:28-30: “Truly I tell you, people will be forgiven all their sins and all the blasphemies they utter. But whoever blasphemes against the Holy Spirit will never be forgiven, but is guilty of an eternal sin. He said this because they [the Pharisees] were saying, ‘He has an evil spirit’.”
- 2) Luke 12:8-10 " “I tell you, whoever acknowledges me before men, the Son of Man will also acknowledge him before the angels of God. But he who disowns me before men will be disowned before the angels of God. And everyone who speaks a word against the Son of Man will be forgiven, but anyone who blasphemes against the Holy Spirit will not be forgiven.”
- 3) All three of the Gospel passages are in a context in which Jesus’ ministry is being criticized by the Pharisees, specifically in which they ascribe his miraculous works to Satan.

B. Attributing the work of God to Satan: CCC 1864:

"Therefore I tell you, every sin and blasphemy will be forgiven men, but the blasphemy against the Spirit will not be forgiven." There are no limits to the mercy of God, but anyone who deliberately refuses to accept his mercy by repenting, rejects the forgiveness of his sins and the salvation offered by the Holy Spirit. Such hardness of heart can lead to final impenitence and eternal loss"

According to the Catholic Catechism, there are no limits to the mercy of God, but anyone who deliberately refuses to accept his mercy by repenting, rejects the forgiveness of his sins and the salvation offered by the Holy Spirit. Such hardness of heart can lead to final impenitence and eternal loss.

C. Some sins that are frequently considered eternal include deliberate rejection of the mercy of God, and ascribing the work of the Holy Spirit to Satan.

D. The Catholic Church further believes there is no offence, however serious, that cannot be taken away by Baptism, or absolved from in the Confessional - that no one, however wicked and guilty, may not confidently hope for forgiveness.

E. Note that while Our Lord did declare blasphemy against the Holy Spirit unforgivable, He did not except it from the sins that may be forgiven by Baptism and Penance..

- 1) St. Thomas explains that its unforgivability means that it removes the entrance itself to these means of salvation - however, it cannot hinder Almighty and Merciful God to take away this obstacle by sort of a miracle.
- 2) This is affirmed by the Catechism, which says that Christ desires “the gates of forgiveness should always be open to anyone who turns away from sin.” The Sacraments of Baptism and Penance, notably, take away any sin if received.
- 3) Blaspheming the Spirit is thus a failure to repent and ally oneself with Jesus. Since this can always be done during one's life (cf. 20:1-15), blasphemy against the Holy Spirit must be a final refusal to repent, or final impenitence.

Q2.