

MARK 3:28-30

THE BRIDGE TO THE KINGDOM

²⁸ I tell you the truth, all the sins and blasphemies of men will be forgiven them. ²⁹ But whoever blasphemes against the Holy Spirit will never be forgiven; he is guilty of an eternal sin. ³⁰ He said this because they were saying, "He has an evil spirit."

What is so special about the Holy Spirit that only the blasphemies against the Spirit will not be forgiven? Matthew expands upon this statement by writing that a man could even be forgiven for speaking against the Son of Man, but not the Holy Spirit. He goes on to say that this "unforgiveness" will be experienced in both this age and the next (Matthew 12:32). How can this be?

In John's Gospel, the work of the Holy Spirit is explained by Jesus in terms of the conviction of sin (John 16:8). This has been taken to mean that human beings cannot even see themselves as sinners without the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. If that is the case, then Jesus' statement is no longer an arbitrary pronouncement about the Holy Spirit, but rather a proclamation of a natural consequence. If we can only recognize our sinfulness and seek forgiveness through the Spirit, then our denial of the Spirit would short circuit the entire process before it could begin. The use another metaphor, we would be burning our only bridge to forgiveness, and therefore, salvation, before we crossed it.

This has consequences on both sides of the grave. The kingdom of God is not the Great By-and-by, but exists in the here-and-now and extends past the grave. Jesus' proclamation was that "The kingdom of God is near. Repent and believe" (Mark 1:15). Where the King is, there too is the kingdom. The ticket to kingdom citizenship is repentance of sin and belief in Jesus as the Christ. Without the Holy Spirit convicting us of sin, there is no knowledge of sin; no understanding of the need to repent; no compulsion to believe in Jesus; and no entry into the kingdom (now and forever).

God is Trinity – the Unity of three persons. The Holy Spirit is not an accessory of God, the Spirit is God. The Holy Spirit is not the fruit to be picked off the tree, the Spirit (as God) is the tree. We tend to think of the Spirit in terms of gifts and fruits for believers, but the greatest gift is the knowledge of our sin and need for redemption – and the greatest fruit is citizenship in the kingdom of God.

O God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, search me and shine the bright light of your righteousness upon my life so that I might see my sins and repent. Keep me from denying your word and your promptings through my guilty conscience. But most of all, search out those aspects of my life where even my conscience no longer experiences guilt and give me the strength to open those doors and clean out rot of sin. Amen.