

Third Sunday After Pentecost

June 10, 2018

Matthew R Ude

Mark 3:20-35 ²⁰ Then the multitude came together again, so that they could not so much as eat bread. ²¹ But when His own people heard *about this*, they went out to lay hold of Him, for they said, "He is out of His mind." ²² And the scribes who came down from Jerusalem said, "He has Beelzebub," and, "By the ruler of the demons He casts out demons." ²³ So He called them to *Himself* and said to them in parables: "How can Satan cast out Satan? ²⁴ "If a kingdom is divided against itself, that kingdom cannot stand. ²⁵ "And if a house is divided against itself, that house cannot stand. ²⁶ "And if Satan has risen up against himself, and is divided, he cannot stand, but has an end. ²⁷ "No one can enter a strong man's house and plunder his goods, unless he first binds the strong man. And then he will plunder his house. ²⁸ " Assuredly, I say to you, all sins will be forgiven the sons of men, and whatever blasphemies they may utter; ²⁹ "but he who blasphemes against the Holy Spirit never has forgiveness, but is subject to eternal condemnation" -- ³⁰ because they said, "He has an unclean spirit." ³¹ Then His brothers and His mother came, and standing outside they sent to Him, calling Him. ³² And a multitude was sitting around Him; and they said to Him, "Look, Your mother and Your brothers are outside seeking You." ³³ But He answered them, saying, "Who is My mother, or My brothers?" ³⁴ And He looked around in a circle at those who sat about Him, and said, "Here are My mother and My brothers! ³⁵ "For whoever does the will of God is My brother and My sister and mother."

Christ's Family Are Those Whom He Separates from Sin and Satan

What makes someone of the family of God?

In the first verse the crowd came together, this is emphasizing the crowd but it's also indicating a wider theme for Mark. Notice in the first three verses three different groups come before Jesus. The crowd came. His family came. The scribes came.

Mark is pulling our attention to this very wide and diverse crowd, all coming before Jesus all thinking they have a claim on Jesus, all wanting something from Him.

The crowd wants entertainment, healing and miracles. So many people today, that's what they want out of their church. And sure we had a colorful poster out at the parade yesterday,

hopefully that will help grab people's attention. But it's not what Jesus is all about . It's not what makes one of the family of God.

Second, we have His actual real family. And they are concerned about him. He is working too hard. He isn't eating we have to do something. But again Jesus makes it clear that they have no claim on Him. Being related by earthly blood does not make one a member of God's family.

I remember a lady who wanted to get married in one of our churches. She was the granddaughter of the pastor who had first started the church. And yet she was not a member of the church, she did not believe the truth of God's word as it is taught in our churches and at that one. She kept saying this is my grandfather's church, and yet she had no part in it.

Third we have the scribes, and oh boy did they think they had a claim on Jesus. They were the intelligent ones, they knew all the scriptures. If anyone had a part in the kingdom of God surely it was them. Or so they thought. But of course knowledge and power is not what gives us a part in God's kingdom.

This is exactly what the Catholic Church taught and still teaches, the pope and cardinals and monks, they are the real believers. They are the ones that are truly a part of God's kingdom.

And it is easy for us in the ministry to think this way as well. I give my life to Christ I am a better Christian. I don't need to confess my sins that is for those sinners out there. I'm good to go. But that is not what makes us a part of Christ's family.

So Mark purposely portrays these three diverse groups of people all converging on Christ, all demanding something from him, all thinking that they have a claim on Christ. What does Christ do? Verse 23

“So He called them to *Himself* and spoke to them in parables”

Jesus doesn't pit one fraction against the other. He doesn't say to them you are coming for the wrong reasons so I'm not going to speak to you. He doesn't decide between the three, **but he calls them all to himself.**

All three groups are equally sinners; all three groups need the same thing the call to repentance. Jesus doesn't play favorites. All people have the same problem: sin. The answer is the same for all: Jesus. Jesus calls all who are willing to listen, regardless of where they come from or why they are coming to him. This is how Jesus builds His church.

In order to make us His family He must separate us from Satan.

This was prophesied way back in Genesis **“I will put enmity between you and the women”**

God came walking in the cool of the evening and Adam and Eve were ashamed to be seen by Him. What a wonderful thing that would be to walk with God in the evening. For one thing you wouldn't need to come to church anymore, not if you could walk each evening with God.

But we can't and why not because we are on the wrong side. We are on Satan's side. But this is what Jesus came to do to divide us from Satan, so that we can once again walk with Him.

Yet dividing us from Satan also means dividing us from the WORLD. And the scribes don't like that do they? They don't want to be divided from the power and the riches of this world. They like what they got.

In their attempts to deny who and what Jesus is, they come up with this ridiculous lie. Well he can only cast out demons by the power of Satan. Jesus immediately points out the stupidity of this claim. Satan isn't going to fight against himself.

But more importantly he points them to the very thing He came to do in fulfillment of Gen 3. He came to plunder the house of Satan. Yet before he can plunder Satan's house he has to defeat him. He has to tie him up. That is exactly what Jesus is doing when he casts out demons, and finally when he dies on the cross. He Jesus is the stronger man who is tying up the strong man (Satan) so that He can plunder his house. And what is that Jesus steals from Satan? US! As Gen 3:15 foretold **“I will put enmity between you and the women.”**

This is how Jesus builds his church. This is who is Jesus family, those who did belong to Satan but he has conquered Satan and set us free.

Again the Scribes make excuses

Yet again Jesus calls them to repentance, **“every sin will be forgiven you even if you utter blasphemy.”** This is exactly what they were doing. They were not just blaspheming they were blaspheming Him Jesus. But says Jesus even that will be forgiven

BUT not if you blaspheme the Holy Spirit.

This is often referred to as the **“sin against the Holy Spirit.”** So what is this sin again the Holy Spirit? And why is this one sin the only thing which cannot be forgiven?

The sin against the Holy Spirit is the blatant and continual refusal to listen to the word and repent of your sins.

This after all is the work of the Holy Spirit, that though the preaching of the word he might bring us to faith and repentance. To reject this work, to reject this call of the Holy Spirit, is to reject God, His word and therefore also Christ and His work.

Thus if you were to do this, you would be putting yourself outside of Christ and therefore outside of the forgiveness that comes only from Christ.

This is not something that you do accidentally or without realizing it. Yes you might not know that you are blaspheming the Holy Spirit, but you certainly know that you are insisting you are right, refusing to repent, and refusing to listen to God's word.

Here we have the example of David, who committed adultery and murder and yet said in his heart, "I have done nothing wrong. I am the king. I deserve this." While he thought this way in his heart he separated himself from God.

Imagine a former prostitute comes up to you and tells you of your sin. How easy it would be to think: "You were a prostitute and are you going to lecture me?" A former prostitute who acknowledges her sin is a part of God's kingdom. A pastor who does great deeds of charity but refuses to humble himself in confession before God is not a part of God's kingdom. The prostitute or the pastor whoever will not admit they are a sinner this one is committing the sin against the Holy Spirit. The sin of prostitution or the sin of the pastors pride in himself, these things both are forgiven, that's not the problem but when we refuse to acknowledge our sin then how can it be forgiven.

This does not mean that we need to enumerate every sin before it is forgiven, but simply to acknowledge that yes I am a sinner. The life of a Christian is a life of repentance. That is always being ready to confess yes I am a sinner.

Jesus not only separates us from Satan but also from sin, and in this way builds his Church.

For as he says to the crowd at the end, "these people are not my brothers and sisters and mother, but whoever does the will of my Father." Yet none can do the will of the Father, therefore it is Jesus who must separate us from Satan and Sin and thus makes us His family, through His word and by faith in Him.

Amen

The peace of God that surpasses all understanding shall keep your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus