

Study of Mark – Lesson 08

Mark 3:20-35. Jesus Accused

Jesus Accused by His Family and by Teachers of the Law

3 ²⁰ Then Jesus entered a house, / and again a crowd gathered, / so that he and his disciples / were not even able to eat. / ²¹ When his family heard about this, / they went to take charge of him, / for they said, / “He is out of his mind.”

²² And the teachers of the law / who came down from Jerusalem / said, / “He is possessed by Beelzebul! / By the prince of demons / he is driving out demons.”

²³ So Jesus called them over to him / and began to speak to them / in parables: / “How can Satan drive out Satan? / ²⁴ If a kingdom is divided against itself, / that kingdom cannot stand. / ²⁵ If a house is divided against itself, / that house cannot stand. / ²⁶ And if Satan opposes himself / and is divided, / he cannot stand; / his end has come. / ²⁷ In fact, / no one can enter a strong man’s house / without first tying him up. / Then he can plunder the strong man’s house. / ²⁸ Truly I tell you, / people can be forgiven all their sins / and every slander they utter, / ²⁹ but whoever blasphemes / against the Holy Spirit / will never be forgiven; / they are guilty / of an eternal sin.”

³⁰ He said this / because they were saying, / “He has an impure spirit.”

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³¹ Then Jesus' mother and brothers arrived. / Standing outside, / they sent someone in to call him. / ³² A crowd was sitting around him, / and they told him, / "Your mother and brothers are outside / looking for you."

³³ "Who are my mother and my brothers?" / he asked.

³⁴ Then he looked at those / seated in a circle around him / and said, / "Here are my mother and my brothers! / ³⁵ Whoever does God's will / is my brother and sister and mother."

Vocabulary

1. **To take charge of someone:** To assume control of another person.

As parents, we must take charge of children, but adults certainly resent that attitude.

2. **Beelzebul:** Another name for Satan. A demon, a devil.

3. **Parable:** A story, usually short and simple, that teaches a lesson.

4. **Plunder:** Steal. Take possessions by force and robbery.

5. **Slander:** To speak untruths in order to hurt someone or damage their reputation. Libel is written untruths.

6. **Utter:** Speak

7. **Blaspheme:** Something you say or do that shows disrespect for God or religion.

Questions

1. How many people tried to get into the house to see Jesus?

2. Who are “his own people” and how do you think they heard about Jesus?
3. Why would his family think Jesus had lost his mind? What practical things could he have given up to go about teaching and preaching?
4. The *experts in the law* keep following Jesus. Why would they think Jesus was possessed by the devil?
5. Are the thoughts of the *experts* blasphemous? How?
6. Abraham Lincoln quoted verses from this passage during the Civil War. Can you guess which ones?
7. Who is the strong man in contrast with Beelzebul?
8. What is the context of Jesus saying there is an unforgiveable sin?
9. How did Jesus deal with his mother and brothers?

Notes

1. Jesus’ own family had begun to think he was out of his mind. Jesus had probably left his carpentry job in Nazareth and for what? No sensible man would give up all he had to do what Jesus did, would he? And to make matters worse, he had angered the powers that be. He went head to head with the religious and political powers of his country. Teachers of the law and Pharisees followed him everywhere. Jesus could never hope to get away with that! And this new group of follower— a bunch of fishermen, a tax collector and a bunch of wanderers! After all, *birds of a feather, flock together* people say. And he was broke now. He gave up his good business and a home and all that. He was mooching off of these “new” friends. And he didn’t seem to care a flip for what good people said. Surely, the

family must take charge of him! Just get him back home and maybe he would settle down and be sane again.

2. Exorcism was a common practice in Jesus' day and the authorities never questioned Jesus' ability to do that. But they said he was possessed by a demon himself. Jesus was a good man, and the *teachers of the law* could not see the good. They were blasphemous about Jesus. William Barclay said, "Jesus saw the essential struggle between good and evil which is at the heart of life and raging in the world. He did not speculate about it; he dealt with it and gave others the power to overcome evil and do the right." (p. 79)
3. Insulting the Holy Spirit was and is blasphemy. When the scribes and Pharisees declared that Jesus worked by the power of evil or the devil, these *teachers of the law* were unable to look at good things and see the love of God.
4. Pentecost is the day we have the coming of the Holy Spirit for all men. It is celebrated 50 days after Easter Sunday. It is described as the *birthday of the church* for with the Holy Spirit, we have been given power to proclaim God. Jesus was the proclaimer and the Pharisees truly could not see truth. "To identify the source of good with the impersonation of evil implies a moral wreck for which Jesus can provide no remedy."
5. Mary, the mother of Jesus, and his brothers called him to come outside. Jesus knew they had been influenced to do this. He said his new followers were his family. Sometimes friends are closer and more understanding than family. True kinship (friendship) has four grounds: common experiences, common interests, common obedience and a common goal.