

Mark 3:20-30 The Blasphemy Against the Holy Spirit

This morning we are in Mark chapter 3 verses 20 through 35 but our focus will be on verses 20 through 30, the blasphemy against the Holy Spirit.

So far in this chapter in verses 1 through 6 we have seen the curing of the man who had the withered hand. All as a testimony to the people as to who Christ is, but also as a testimony to those who were purposely looking for Him to break their own religious sabbath day law to work on the sabbath day. They did not care about the man with the withered hand, all they cared about was catching Jesus breaking one of their own personal religious rules.

Then we saw in verses 7 through 12, the confession of demons, which is very important. Demons can confess the truth about who Jesus is. We saw that they can also believe, the demons also believe and tremble over Jesus Christ. They also perform signs and wonders, miracles. So we have to be careful it is not just the performing of miracles that would get us sidetracked, but following after them. Some people that is all they do is follow signs and wonders and miracles believing that it is the Spirit of God, which it might not be. It might be but it might not be, so we have to be careful. We saw the demons could also witness, they also give testimony - pointing people to messengers who are bringing the gospel but in reality the testimony is coming from a demon and not the Lord. Not all testimony is of Christ. Not all testimony is of the Holy Spirit, which is important in our study today.

We saw in verses 13 through 19, the choosing of the twelve apostles. Jesus went from Peter's house, **up onto a mountain**, it says in verse 13, **and He calls to Himself whom He himself was desiring** (or *was willing*) **and they came to Him**. It is important to understand two things from our study in this section.

- 1) Jesus chose twelve from out of the disciples to become apostles. He did not choose them to be saved, they were already disciples and He chose them to be apostles.
- 2) The second thing we understand is that the apostles themselves: their personalities, their lifestyle. Remember when they traveled with Jesus for almost three years they did not have the Holy Spirit living inside of them. So they were just raw human flesh following the authority of Christ, mixing together, not getting along together, yet Jesus chose them.

What we are to get out of that is the God does not always put us in with people that we get along with. Sometimes we look for a church or fellowship where our friends are there and where people are like us, like-minded, and so we get along with them so we have a little clique, a little club that we can be a part of to satisfy our social needs. But in reality, the Lord could put us in with people that our personalities clash with, that we do not get along with, just for the sake of growth, for the sake of getting the ministry that the Lord has for us. I have often said, for all of us, if we did not have Christ, if we were not focused on the things of the Lord and pursuing the things of the Lord, none of us would probably associate with everybody else. The only thing we have in common is Christ.

And we come together with our differences and in our differences in order to follow Christ.

So then after Jesus chose the twelve apostles it says - for today - in Mark chapter 3 verses 20 through 30, but we start at verses 20 and 21 as we study the contempt against Jesus as He presents the blasphemy against the Holy Spirit.

And He comes, verse 20, and He comes into a house. So He comes down the mountain and goes back into the home, into the house, probably Peter's house in Capernaum. **And again,** more than one time, **and again a crowd comes together, so that they were not even able to eat bread.** They could not even eat a meal in the house it was so packed out with people. You remember before it was so crowded that you could not get in the front door. So the crowds began to gather together so that they could not even eat bread.

(verse 21) **And having heard this** (this information) **the ones belonging to Him...** Notice the literal translation - the term *the ones belonging to Him* is talking about His own people, it is talking about His family that will see in verses 31 to 35. Jesus had a family, He had brothers and sisters. We will see them arrive at the scene. We are told in Matthew chapter 13 verse 55 the names of Jesus' brothers.

...and they come to Him. Those belonging to Him, those of His family, physical family members, heard of the crowds gathering together and hearing of the works of Jesus, they come together. It says in verse 21, **they went out to take hold of Him.** They said, "We have to go get Him." And the reason why, **for they were saying that He was out of His mind.** Crazy. The term *out of His mind* is a Greek word, **ἐξέστη** (exestē), where we get our word *ecstasy* from. It is just one word. They thought He was outside or beside Himself. They thought that He was crazy, insane. He thinks He is the Messiah and they went to take Him and to bring Him home.

We have to remember that we are told in John chapter 17 verse 5 that the Lord's brothers did not believe. In fact, they mocked Him over his life. In John chapter 7 they mocked Him because He told them the truth about a message about feeding on Him rather than depending on the food that He could provide materially. And you remember when the twenty-thousand people heard this they left Jesus, and left Him with twelve, the twelve apostles. And His brothers in John chapter 7 mocked Him. They said, "Go into Jerusalem. You lost Your following. You lost all those thousands of people. Go into Jerusalem and do some more magic tricks and get another following for Yourself." But they did not believe, not until after He rose from the dead. After He rose from the dead He revealed Himself to His brothers and then they believed and they became leaders in the early church.

Verse 22, **And having come down, the scribes, the ones from Jerusalem.** Interesting, they came all the way down from Jerusalem because they heard what Jesus was doing. **These scribes were saying that He has Beelzebul and that (secondly) in the prince of the demons He is casting out demons.**

The Philistines, who were in this area, would make gods out of various animals. In pagan religions they actually worship the very creatures that were plaguing them, whether it be demons

or insects or animals. They figured if they worshipped these creatures, that they would become friendly and not harm them. So they were afraid of demons, so they would worship demons and worship different animals that threatened them. They would make a god out of that animal and worship it so that maybe it would cause them to become more friendly.

I can remember a long time ago, many years ago, on the television there was an African tribe inside of a big tent and they were beating drums and worshipping. And I was on the phone at the time and when I saw and heard it I had to hang up the phone because I said, "There is an interesting church service going on." And so I turned the volume up and it was just like church. I could not understand what they were saying because it was in a different language. And then the commentator, the narrator came on and explained the fact that every year they come together and they worship demons so that one of them would get struck by demons, demon possessed, and it would be their sacrifice for the whole tribe for the year. And they would take this person who became demon possessed and they had a caged area where all these demon-possessed people would go, and they would put them in this area and try to feed them and take care of them but they were then demon possessed. But they were dancing, and they were singing, calling for the demons to come down and fill them, fill one of them, take one of them for sacrifice.

And so what the Jewish leaders did was they mocked the Philistines. They said, "Well, you make gods out of animals and demons." The head god of the Philistines they called *Beelzebul*, that is what the text says, which means *lord of the flies*. So they said, "Your god, your head god, your lead god is the lord of the flies., that is who you worship," in mockery. Some texts read *Beelzebub* rather than *Beelzebul*, but it means *lord of the flies*.

So is was slanderous term used to downgrade the gods of the Philistines, and a derogatory term. And so they applied it to Christ. They said, "Christ is Beelzebul, the lord of the flies," mocking Him, attributing His work as the text tells us in verse 22, **that in the prince of demons He is casting out demons**. So, "The head of the demons is casting out demons, that is who Jesus is," they said. So while the Spirit of God continues to manifest and give evidence through Jesus - the work of God and the approval of God - the religious leaders became more antagonistic against Jesus.

And what we have seen in Mark - he presents to us the difference between religion and relationship. The religious leaders of Jesus's day were the ones who came up against Him. And yet, Jesus was involved not in empowering the old Jewish religious system, but in bringing people to Himself. It is coming to Jesus, that is what God's work was doing.

Eventually a person must come to a decision about what Spirit is ministering through Jesus. It is either the Spirit of God or it is Satan, one of the two. There is none other. So spiritually it is either Satan or God. So they said, "It is Satan. Satan is casting out Satan." So He presents five things to them by way of a parable. First of all, with a question and then there are four examples of answers to the question in verses 23 through 27.

Verse 23, after they made this statement about being Beelzebul and in the prince of demons He cast out demons. It says in verse 23, **And having call them to Himself, He was**

speaking to them in parables, He says, **How is Satan able to cast out Satan?** That is a good question. **How is he able to cast out Satan?**

First of all, **And if a kingdom should be divided against itself, that kingdom is not able to stand.**

Secondly, **If a house should be divided against itself, that house is not able to stand.**

Thirdly, verse 26, **And if Satan rose up against himself, and has been divided, he is not able to stand, but he has an end.** The end would be he would destroy himself, is what Jesus is saying if Satan were casting himself out.

Fourthly, verse 27, **No one is able, having entered into his house, to plunder the goods of the strong man.** The strongman is presented to be Satan. So, **No one is able, having entered into his house, to plunder the goods of the strong man, unless he should first bind the strongman; and then he will plunder his house.** So a person cannot steal a person's things, especially the house of the strongman, without binding the strongman before you take it or else the strongman is going to defend himself and his property. And so Jesus is saying Satan would have to bind himself in order to cast out Satan from a person's life.

But now, secondly, after speaking that parable we have verses 28 and 29. Verses 28 and 29 are two of the most powerful verses that Jesus could ever express to people. Powerful verses. Verse 28, **Truly I say to you, that all of the sins will be forgiven for the sons of men.** The term *sons of men* is making reference to our human state or our human condition. But, **all sins will be forgiven to the sons of men, and blasphemies whatever they should have blasphemed.** All sins should be. **But whoever should blaspheme against the Holy Spirit does not have forgiveness into the age,** that is forever, **but is liable of eternal judgment. Because they were saying, "He has an unclean spirit."** That Jesus has a demon. So Jesus made these remarks. Blasphemy against the Holy Spirit is the only sin that a person cannot be forgiven for.

All other sins, all other blasphemies, and Jesus even said in Luke chapter 12 verse 10, you can even speak against Jesus, and it will be forgiven you, but you cannot blaspheme against the Holy Spirit. The word *against* is literally translated from the Greek word that means *towards* or *at*. It shows direction. So to blaspheme at or toward the Holy Spirit is to express a response or reaction of rejection to the Holy Spirit. I will repeat that because it's important. To blaspheme at or toward the Holy Spirit is to express a response or reaction of rejection to the Holy Spirit. So when you express rejection to the evidences and the ministry that the Holy Spirit is presenting that is called *blasphemy*, blasphemy of the Holy Spirit.

In I John chapter 2 verse 2 it says that not only was Jesus the substitutionary sacrifice for our sins but for the sins of the whole world as well. He died for everybody's sins. What Jesus is saying is that when He dies on the cross He is the sacrifice to pay the penalty for the sins of everyone that has ever lived.

Do you know the Bible teaches that when a person stands before the Lord they are going to only have to answer for one thing and it is because of the death of Jesus Christ on the cross. Because of His death and the penalty payment He has made for our sins, because of that there is only one thing that a person will have to answer for. And the one and only thing that a person cannot be forgiven for and what He has to answer for is the blasphemy against or towards the Holy Spirit. *Blasphemy* means to express a rejection toward something. Blasphemy means to express a rejection towards the Holy Spirit in this instance.

And here is what it is all about. In John chapter 16 verses 8 through 11 Jesus said that when the Holy Spirit comes He will convict the world of sin and of righteousness and judgment which is to come. When the Holy Spirit comes He will convict the world of three things: sin, righteousness, and judgment. So He is going to testify to a person's heart and convict them of their sin.

Jesus used the word *conviction*. It is a legal term to present evidence for conviction in a courtroom. He will convict the world of righteousness. He has God's stamp of approval of righteousness because He was resurrected and was ascended up to the right hand of the Father. Then He will convict the world of judgment. Satan in this world has already been judged. And a person is under that judgment unless that person chooses to get out from underneath the judgment of God and receive Christ. But in order to be under that judgment and reject Christ you have to say no, or you have to speak against in rejection to the Holy Spirit coming and bringing that conviction to the heart.

So it really is, just putting it in plain language, it is really about what did you do in response to the Holy Spirit convicting you and presenting evidence to you of your sin, and of God's righteousness in Jesus Christ, and of the judgment to come? What did you do? How did you respond? Is it to reject? In some way, shape, or form you have to say no to the Holy Spirit - you have to ignore Him or just flat out reject Him. This is called *the blasphemy against (or towards) the Holy Spirit*.

Now what is blasphemy towards the Holy Spirit? It is whether a person has received or rejected the Holy Spirit's testimony to them about the person of Jesus Christ and their need for Him. Rejection. Out of God's love He convicts us of who we really are and our need for Him. Not to condemn us but so that we would look to Him so that we can make decisions.

They had come to the point where they rejected the testimony of the Holy Spirit through Jesus Christ. And Jesus said, "That is the only sin." When you stand before God, it will be the only sin that you will ever be able to commit, which you will never be able to be forgiven for. It is a heart condition. And they kept rejecting until their heart came to a point where they said, "It is of the devil." That is what verse 30 says, **They said, "He has an unclean spirit."** And once you reach that point, when you attribute the work of the Holy Spirit and the testimony of the Holy Spirit to Satan himself, then you have committed the blasphemy of the Holy Spirit.

You have had to change who you believe Jesus is, in order to reject the testimony of the Holy Spirit. And Jesus said, "Be careful if you reject the Holy Spirit's testimony to you." And you keep putting it off, refusing the persuasion of God's Spirit, and you will not surrender your

life to Christ, and that is what you are going to have to answer for when you stand before God. Because when Jesus died on the cross He died for the sins of the whole world and all other blasphemies. So my sin problem is taken care of on the cross. For me to receive forgiveness for those sins I must receive Christ. But that is not what I am going to have to answer for because Jesus died for those sins. He paid the penalty for those sins. He made the payment for the sins.

What I am going to have to answer for is how did I respond when the Holy Spirit testified to me of my need for Christ to receive Him and to surrender to Him? I either rejected that ministry and conviction or I responded and received Christ. One or the other. That is what I will have to answer for.

Now after He told the scribes about the blasphemy against the Holy Spirit, His family came to see Him and to get Him as we were introduced to in verse 20 and 21. We do not have time for that this week, we will finish out the chapter next week. But it is important to understand the seriousness of either avoiding or being passive towards the persuasion of the Holy Spirit. That is what we will have to answer for. Let's close with prayer.