

Mark 3:31-35 The Correction Concerning Family

We are still in Mark chapter 3 verses 20 through 35, but today we are going to be focusing in verses 31 to 35. We took verses 20 through 30 last week, so this week, 31 through 35.

Last week's message was about the teaching of Jesus, after going up on the mountain and taking the disciples with Him and choosing out of them twelve apostles. But verse 20 and 21 describes for us what happened after Jesus came down from the mountain, that He comes into *a* house, this would be Peter's house that He has been staying in Capernaum.

Verse 20, **And again a crowd comes together, so that they were not even able to eat bread.** Packed out house, could not even eat. (verse 21) **And having heard the ones belonging to Him**—and we shared with you last week that means the Lord's family, His physical family, *the ones belonging to Him*—**went out to take hold of Him: for they were saying that He was out of His mind.** The Greek word **ἐξέστη** (*exestē*), where we get our word *ecstasy* from. They thought He was mad. They thought He was crazy. He was going around presenting Himself as being the Messiah. So His physical family, mother and brothers, came to get him and to take Him home. You can imagine what they were going through.

And the scribes actually came down, verse 22, and were saying that He casts out demons in the prince of the demons. But Jesus spoke a parable to them, **How is Satan able to cast out Satan?** He went on to say, in other words, if Satan casts out Satan he destroys himself and his own kingdom. Verse 27 said, **No one is able, having entered into his house, to plunder the goods of the strong man,** the strong man being Satan, **unless he should first bind the strong man and then he will plunder his house.** So, Satan cannot be bound unless he binds himself and delivers people from Satan, which Jesus says that is not what is happening, but that is what you are saying is what is happening.

But He went on in verses 28, 29, and 30 to say, **Truly I say to you, All the sins will be forgiven to the sons of men.** The term *sons of men* is a phrase referring to our human state and condition. But, **all sins will be forgiven to the sons of men, and blasphemies, whatever they should have blasphemed. 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."** Meaning Jesus. So Jesus said in verse 28 that there is only one thing that a person cannot be forgiven for, just one, that is it, and that is the blasphemy against or toward the Holy Spirit. *Blasphemy* means *to express a rejection towards something or someone.* The word *against* literally means *towards* or *at.* So the blasphemy at or toward the Holy Spirit is an expression, or response, or reaction of rejection to the Holy Spirit when He comes.

We saw from John chapter 16 that the Holy Spirit comes to convict the world of sin and of righteousness and judgment. And the people who reject that conviction that the Holy Spirit brings, and they come to their own conclusions as to what ministry, what Spirit, Jesus is of, shows where they are at in their response to Christ. Their heart is coming to a conclusion here in

our text, that His ministry was of the devil. Instead of attributing it to be of God. It was the indication that they had committed the blasphemy against or toward the Holy Spirit. They attributed the ministry of God's Spirit through Jesus as that of the devil. Therefore they have rejected the evidence and the conviction that the Holy Spirit was giving through Jesus and attributing it to be of the devil.

Now in verses 31 through 35, the correction concerning family. A very touchy subject. A very hard subject. Very difficult for us here in the Western world because family relationships are emotional. And we find it very difficult when personal physical family clashes with the spiritual family of God, as Jesus will point this out. So after he told the scribes about the blasphemy against the Holy Spirit, His family—remember in our remarks on verse 20 that his family heard that He was in town again, and that there was a big crowd around the house.

Now, Matthew chapter 13 verse 55 tells us that Jesus had brothers and sisters. They even give the brothers' names: James, and Jude, Simon, and Joseph. In fact, there are two letters in the New Testament that were written by His half-brothers, James and Jude. The book of Jude and the book of James are written by His half-brothers.

But in John chapter 7 verse 5 it tells us that His brothers did not believe in Him when His ministry was on the earth, for they were taunting Him while He was here on the earth. After His resurrection Jesus appeared to them, then they believed and they became leaders of the church, the early church. But at this point they thought He was crazy. They said, "He is mad, He is beside Himself, He is out of His mind. Our brother thinks He is the Messiah." So they did not believe until after the resurrection of Jesus when He appeared to them, then they believed. Then they they became strong leaders and pillars in the early church.

But in verse 31, beginning at verse 31, it says, **Therefore the brothers and his mother came, and, having stood outside, they sent to Him, calling Him. (verse 32) And a crowd was sitting around Him, and they said to Him, "Behold, Your mother and Your brothers are outside seeking You."** Some Greek manuscripts include *sisters* in this, in Matthew 13 verse 55 it is original. But it is interesting they are telling Him. The place is crowded, we are here crowded all around You. **Your mother and Your brothers and sisters are outside asking for You, calling for You.** They want to take Him home. They think He has lost His mind.

(verse 33) **And He answered to them, saying, "Who is My mother and My brothers?"** (verse 34) **And having looked around *in a circle* at the ones sitting around Him, He says, "Behold My mother and My brothers. (verse 35) For whoever should do the will of God, this one is My brother, and My sister, and mother."** Sister is original there, in verse 35. Now He was not disowning His family, His physical family. He is talking to all of those people who were sitting there listening to His word, who were seeking to do what God wanted them to do as they listen to Him and as they followed Him. He said, "This is family, right here." Everybody who is doing the will of God is family - mother, brothers, and sisters. Jesus said, "This is where it is at." Behold My mother, and My brothers, and My sisters are those who do the will of God. That is family.

There are only two kinds of family. There are only two kinds of people in the whole world, and that is what tears us apart in our society. We have spiritual family, and we have physical family. We are so emotionally attached to what we call family that it tears us apart, because spiritually there are only two kinds of people, those who are energized by Satan and those who are energized by Christ. The only two kinds of people in the world: one energized by Satan, one energized by Christ.

The nonbelievers are energized by Satan. Paul told us that in Ephesians chapter 2 verse 3, that before we came to know Christ we were like those who were fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and that Satan was energizing us to fulfill those desires. So Satan gives people the desire to fulfill their flesh and their mind, until you receive Christ, then you are energized by God's Spirit and belong to Christ.

But then our dilemma is that we have physical family. Once we receive Christ, we still have physical family. Jesus said when He came He came to create division not unity. We have to get that in our minds. We always talk about *unity*, well there is only one unit in *unity* and that is when people are in Christ. Because you are in Christ and I am in Christ, we have unity.

We are told by Paul to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. Not make unity, we already have unity. But keep the unity. Satan tries to break up that unity that we already have to bring division, but that is the only oneness and unity that there is in Christ, that is in the body of Christ, with those who are born of the Spirit of God.

Jesus said, about this division in Matthew chapter 10 verses 34 through 36, He says, "**Do not think**—that is the word *to perceive*, do not let your perceptions be thinking or perceiving—**that I came to bring peace upon earth. I did not come to bring peace but I came with a sword. For I have come to 'set a man against his father, a daughter against her mother, and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law'; and 'a man's enemies will be those of his own household.'**" The closest people to you, they will either be one of two kinds of people, energized by Satan or energized by Christ. And there will be a division. In other words, do not think that you are going to become a child of God, and the home is going to be at peace. He says He came to divide not bring peace. People have to make decisions.

Here is an example Luke chapter 9 verses 57 through 62. **Now it happened as they journeyed on the road, that someone said to Jesus, "Lord, I will follow You wherever You go." And Jesus said to him, "Foxes have holes and birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay His head."** So He is telling this one, if you are going to follow Me, you are going to be without a place to live. You will be sleeping with Me out in the garden. I have no place to live. Are sure you want to follow Me?

Then Jesus Himself said to another person, "Follow Me." But he said, "Lord, let me first go and bury my father." It is that phrase, *let me first go*. It is never *me first* with Christ. It is Him first. **Jesus said to him, "Let the dead bury their own dead, but you go and preach the kingdom of God."** In other words, I am calling you now. Let the dead bury their own dead. Cannot even take a minute to bury his father. Some believe that his father was still

living, that he was taking care of him, and asking for time. And then, after his father was dead then he would be free to go. Jesus said, "No, you come now."

And another also said, "Lord, I will follow You, but let me first (see, let me first) go and bid them farewell who are at my house." Let me go say goodbye to the people at my house. It seems like a very reasonable request. **But Jesus said to him, "No one, having put his hand to the plow, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God."** The word *fit* means *straight, lined up with*. So when you follow Him as your Lord and your Savior He is going to bring division all around you because everything is divided up into two kinds of people and two kinds of family.

And there are going to be consequences because, again, let me repeat again, there are two kinds of people. There are people who have received Christ and there are people who have rejected Him. There are people who are born of the Spirit of God and there are people who are not. There are people who are energized by the Holy Spirit and others who are energized by Satan. There are only two kinds of people.

Now here is the catch point for you for today's study. He is not showing irresponsibility to His family, He is showing priority. In other words, Jesus is not saying you have to be irresponsible to your physical family because now you belong to Christ. He says it is a matter of priority. You must minister to and love those who are closest to you, but not put them ahead of the Lord. After all, that is what His title is. He is Lord. Family members are not Lord. But once you receive Christ and belong to Him. Then family members whom we love and cherish become enemies.

I have said it before, and I have said it recently several times, and I will say it again—even with my own children, I have said before, I will not allow them to take me hostage. I will follow Christ. If they do not want to follow Christ, they have heard, they know. They know where to come to find answers to the questions. But I do not deter from Christ. I do not compromise with my relationship with Christ to follow family. That is an emotional relationship, relationship with Christ is spiritual.

But Jesus did say some pretty hard things, pretty hard things. Listen to Matthew chapter 10 verses 37 to 39, **He who loves father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me: and he who loves son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me.** Notice that, *more than Me*. Jesus said, "You have to love Me more." Even to the point in Luke's version, in another message in Luke chapter 14 verse 26 Jesus even said, **"If anyone comes to Me and does not hate his father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters, yes, and his own life also, he cannot be My disciple."** Hate. Mother, father, wife, children, brothers and sisters, even hate his own life also. If you do not hate your own life, Jesus said, "You cannot be My disciple."

In the Greek He is showing comparison. The word hate **μισέω** (*miseō*) is a word of comparison. It does not mean to go out and beat people up to show that you hate them in order to show your love for Christ. Jesus said you must love Me so much that you make decisions to follow Jesus Christ and everybody else thinks that you hate them because of it. They say, "You

do not run with us anymore. You do not do the things that we want to do anymore. You always have to follow the Lord."

Years ago, these people were called fanatics. "Jesus people," who only lived for Christ. They loved everybody, loved their families, but Jesus comes first. No compromise with Jesus. And so, first Jesus said if you love them more than Me, you are worthy of Me. And unless you hate—that is, love Me so much more that they think that you hate them because you do not do what they want to do anymore. You do not run with them. And because of that Jesus said, "Unless you hate them and your life also you cannot be My disciple."

But He goes on, in Matthew chapter 10, remember verse 37, **He who loves father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me: and he who loves son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me.** But He goes on to say in verse 38, **And he who does not take up his cross and follow after Me is not worthy of Me. He who finds his life will lose it...** The word *finds* has to do with *preservation*. If you seek to preserve your life, you will lose it. **...and the one who loses his life for My sake will find it.**

In Luke chapter 12 verse 52 Jesus said, **From now on in your house,** in your one household of five people, it will be three against two, and two against three. He went on to describe how part of a family will receive Christ, especially a Jewish family receiving Jesus as the Messiah. It was a very difficult thing they had to go through.

So in summary, Jesus said I did not come to bring peace, but I came with a sword, and I came to divide. And He says there will be a family of five and there will be three in that family divided against two. You think that Christianity or following Christ is supposed to bring people together. Jesus said if you have that philosophy in your mind you are mistaken.

It is especially hard within a Jewish family. Because you have five people in a Jewish family and maybe two people will receive Jesus Christ as the Messiah, the other three will reject Him. Especially with some of the more orthodox Jews. I have told you many times about the testimony about the man in New York, the Jewish man who received Jesus Christ as his Messiah. His family literally kicked him out, and they said to him you will have to leave our household, our son is dead. They even had a funeral for him. And as he turned around to leave, he left for months without seeing his physical family until one day he sees his father walking down the street in New York toward him. Both walk in opposite directions and once he recognized his father passing him he turns around and grabs his father's shoulder, says, "Father, it is me, your son. I am not dead I am alive." And the father just pulled the shoulder away from his son and kept on walking. The son went after him again followed behind him and grabbed him by the shoulder and said, "Dad, it is me, I am alive." And his father said to him, "You cannot be my son, my son is dead," and turned around and walked away.

It makes for very hard situations and very hard circumstances. We do not realize the threat. If you received Christ as your Messiah within a Jewish community you are excommunicated from the local synagogue, which was the center of community involvement and fellowship. You could not buy or sell. You could not get work. They would not hire you. You

could not buy food. They did not want anything to do with you if you followed Jesus as your Messiah.

So He did not come to unite churches and synagogues and have a great ecumenical movement. He came to call people to receive Him and to be His disciple and to turn their life over to Him personally, to have a personal relationship with Jesus Christ. We cannot please God and man. We just have to realize that when Jesus came He called people to follow Him, to be born of His Spirit and to submit to His Spirit and be part of His spiritual family.

It is missing and lacking in our day when people are looking for religious systems and looking for Christian clubs to belong to. It is not about church. It is not about religion. It is relationship, first to Christ and then to one another on a personal intimate spiritual bases. Caring for one another, being concerned about one another, that is really what it is all about. Personal. Following Christ on a personal basis. Being part of God's family spiritually.

There is an old saying that says blood is thicker than water, so family is more important than anybody else. There is another saying, Spirit is thicker than blood. The spiritual family of God takes priority. Christ takes priority. Everyone gets our relationship with Christ. That is what is a ministry to them, and they are not going to like it. There will be division, division takes place. In a society in which we work hard at loving each other and causing unity. That is not love. It is not the love in the Scriptures. Certainly love and caring for people spiritual welfare is the love coming from the Scriptures, but it is our love for Christ that people respond to. It is our relationship with Christ that people respond to.

Let's close with prayer.