



THE GOSPEL OF

**MARK**



## Sermon Series Notes

### “The Blasphemy of the Holy Spirit” (Mark 3:20-30)

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Read the text.

vv.20-21 Jesus is making such a commotion that his family thinks he’s flipped! There is a lack of understanding about all that is happening regarding Jesus and His actions, even among those who humanly speaking know him the best. Along with the commotion being created by the crowds flocking to Jesus, there is the rising frustration and animosity of the religious leaders. So when knowledge of what is happening reaches Nazareth, Jesus’ family sets out to “take charge of him.” Their intentions are to literally seize him and take him home. Boy will they will be surprised at what Jesus has to say when they show up! (Mark 3:31-34, next weekend).

There may be times that, if we really follow the personal path the Lord has laid out for us, our family will think we have flipped.

What did Abraham’s family think when he told them he was leaving Ur of the Chaldeans, not really knowing his destination? What do you think Zaccheus’ family thought when he gave half his possessions to the poor? What do you think Saul of Tarsus’ family thought when he became a radical follower of Jesus? Speaking of Saul of Tarsus, we have record of him being accused of being insane. See Acts 26:24.

What do people think about you being a follower of Jesus Christ? Do they know that you are? Are you?

Having his family think he’s crazy is one thing, but note with me the accusation of the teachers of the law against Jesus. They say he is possessed by Beelzebub. This is another name for the devil. It means “lord of the flies,” and was originally used of a Philistine god. The root portion of the term comes from the name “Baal,” a false god that goes far back into the ancient world, one that Israel worshipped time and time again.

Jesus’ response to this accusation is what I call “Classic Jesus.” He always spoke with irrefutable wisdom. So much so that the time eventually came when Matthew 22:46 tells

us “No one could say a word in reply, and from that day on no one dared ask him any more questions.”

His answer here includes a parable. Parables are meant to make plain what is being communicated.

The point of the parable is that Satan is not foolish enough to oppose himself. And what Jesus is doing is clearly in opposition to Satan. Satan does not want people forgiven, healed, set free from his rule and reign in their lives. So in order for Jesus to be able to do these things, he must be stronger than Satan. If this were not true, it would be like a weaker individual coming into a strong man’s house and robbing him, and the strong man doing nothing to stop them.

The parable makes it abundantly clear that the accusation is **illogical**.

Arguments (or accusations) against truth, when examined honestly, are illogical.

Belief in evolution is illogical. It is illogical to be an atheist. Part of my devotional reading this past Friday was Psalm 14. It opens like this: “The fool has said in his heart, ‘There is no God.’”

In 1916 Albert Einstein didn’t like where his calculations were leading him. He believed in a pantheistic god, the belief that god and the universe are one. But if his theory of General Relativity was true, it meant that the universe was not eternal but had a beginning. Einstein later called his discovery “irritating.” He disliked his findings so much that he introduced a “fudge factor” in an attempt to discredit his own theory. But in 1919, British cosmologist Arthur Eddington conducted an experiment during a solar eclipse which confirmed that General Relativity was indeed true. Eddington, like Einstein, was not happy with his discovery. He wrote, “Philosophically, the notion of a beginning of the present order of nature is repugnant to me...I should like to find a genuine loophole.” He never did. By 1922, Russian mathematician Alexander Friedmann had officially exposed Einstein’s “fudge factor” as an algebraic error. Meanwhile, Dutch astronomer Willem de Sitter had found that General Relativity required the universe to be expanding. In 1927, the expanding of the universe was actually observed by astronomer Edwin Hubble. Looking through the 100-inch telescope at California’s Mt. Wilson Observatory, Hubble discovered a “red shift” in the light from every observable galaxy, which meant that those galaxies were moving away from us. In 1929, Einstein made a pilgrimage to Mt. Wilson to look through Hubble’s telescope for himself. What he saw was irrefutable.

General Relativity supports one of the oldest formal arguments for the existence of a theistic God (one God who is Creator & Ruler of the universe) – The Cosmological Argument.

- Everything that had a beginning had a cause.
- The universe had a beginning.
- Therefore, the universe had a cause.



Above info taken from “I Don’t Have Enough Faith To be An Atheist” (Norman Geisler and Frank Turek, chapters 3 & 4).

The accusation against Jesus here is not only illogical, it is **blasphemy**. To blaspheme is to speak evil of. The blasphemy here is called “The blasphemy of the Holy Spirit,” because it is the Holy Spirit enabling Jesus to cast out Satan’s demons and set people free.

People still question and debate exactly what “the blasphemy of the Holy Spirit” is. I think sometimes in attempting to go too deep on a matter we may lose the simple understanding of the issue. The issue here is the clear evidence that what Jesus is doing is not only in opposition to Satan, but is by the power of God. The NT tells us that the works Jesus did and the miracles He performed testify to the truth of who He is (Heb.2:4). But instead of acknowledging the truth evidenced by Jesus’ works, these religious leaders absurdly accuse Him of casting out demons by Beelzebub. In doing so, they commit “the blasphemy of the Holy Spirit.”

Some may be relieved at this point, because they have wondered if they have committed the blasphemy of the Holy Spirit. Perhaps now they can rest assured that they have not (?). Hold that thought for a moment.

The blasphemy of the HS is also referred to as “the unpardonable sin.” And if it is the sin that is unpardonable, & I have committed it, I am now doomed to hell & eternal damnation.

So, since I’ve never accused Jesus of casting out demons by Beelzebub, I’m in the clear, right?

Not so fast.

My understanding of the blasphemy of the HS is that it is the unwillingness to acknowledge who Jesus is, based on the evidence presented by the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit’s ministry is to testify of Jesus (John 15:26).

Jesus said something in Luke’s gospel that we should consider. Read Luke 16:31. Now read II Peter 1:20-21. The record of the Scriptures is completely adequate to prove the truth about Jesus (Luke 24:25-27; Ps.40:7).

Jesus said something else in the context of the blasphemy of the Holy Spirit that we really should take note of; See Matt.12:26-32. Based on what Jesus says here in v.30, in light of the context of the statement, those who do not make proper decisions based on the clear witness of the Spirit concerning who Jesus is are in the same company as these religious leaders who are accusing Jesus of casting out demons by Beelzebub. And a failure to respond correctly to the witness of the Holy Spirit about Jesus has both earthly and eternal consequences.

“I am trying here to prevent anyone saying the really foolish thing that people often say about Him: I’m ready to accept Jesus as a great moral teacher, but I don’t accept his claim

to be God. That is the one thing we must not say. A man who was merely a man and said the sort of things Jesus said would not be a great moral teacher. He would either be a lunatic — on the level with the man who says he is a poached egg — or else he would be the Devil of Hell. You must make your choice. Either this man was, and is, the Son of God, or else a madman or something worse. You can shut him up for a fool, you can spit at him and kill him as a demon or you can fall at his feet and call him Lord and God, but let us not come with any patronizing nonsense about his being a great human teacher. He has not left that open to us. He did not intend to.” **C.S. Lewis, Mere Christianity**

*The consequences of failing to respond correctly to the truth about Jesus?*

### **Eternal unforgiveness**

What does eternity look like for those who have not been forgiven by God?

A portion of my devotional reading for this past Thursday morning was in Matthew 13. Let me read you a couple of sections of that assignment. See Matthew 13:24-30, 36-43, 47-50. Also see Matthew 25:31-34, 41, 46; The law of expositional constancy for Bible interpretation requires that *eternal* here must mean the same for both groups. See Mark 9:43, 47-48; II Thess.1:8-9; Rev.14:11; 20:11-15; Eccl.3:11

### **Earthly (worldly) slavery**

These same religious leaders had a conflict with Jesus in regard to his assertion that they were slaves (see John 8:31-36). They were slaves in Egypt for over 400 years. At time these words were spoken, they were “slaves” to Rome. They not only ignored and rejected these obvious truths about themselves, they failed to see their slavery to sin. See Luke 16:14-15, 13; Matthew 23:25-26.

II Peter 2:19...a man is a slave to whatever has mastered him.”

### **Retain a relationship with the devil (John 8:37-47; Eph.2:1-2)**

*The consequences of responding correctly to the truth about Jesus?*

### **Eternal forgiveness**

Col.2:13...He forgave us *all* our sins...

### **Freedom**

- From Satan; Satan is the strong man. What are Satan’s possessions? II Tim.2:26...and escape from the trap of the devil, who has taken them captive to do his will; The demoniac living among the tombs, see Mark 5:1ff (also Matt.8 & Luke 8); You may not be possessed like this man was, but you nevertheless belong to Satan. And like this man, when nobody else can help you, Jesus can!
- From the world (I John 2:15-17); Sexual sin, greed, hatred, pride, etc.

### **Peace with God (Rom.5:1)**

### **Power available to settle conflict (Eph.1:18-20)**

There is a cosmic conflict in our world, as well as in the heavenly realms. The conflict in this world, national, international, and personal, is all tied to this cosmic conflict. Nations fight against one another, people fight within their own country, and husbands fight with their wives, etc. History is full of both world wars, and civil wars. The problems in France, Dallas, Baton Rouge, New York, Orlando...are all linked to this cosmic conflict.

The conflict is not between two equally powerful forces at war with one another and the uncertainty of who might win. Jesus, and the works He did, prove that His kingdom is more powerful. And one day the kingdom of God will come to earth & sovereignly rule. Until then, we have to make a choice as to which kingdom we will side with. If we side with the kingdom of God, then the power of that kingdom is available to us, to settle conflict, to bring peace, to forgive, etc. Any choice to not to side with the kingdom of God automatically causes one to forfeit the benefits of His kingdom, and all we are left with is the kingdom of this world, which is controlled by the devil. He is the prince of this world. There is tremendous irony in Jesus' statement about Satan's kingdom. Any kingdom divided will not survive, yet the whole purpose of his kingdom is to divide. The forces of hell *unite to divide* families, churches, cities, nations, peoples. John 10:10 The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they might have life, and have it to the full. Ephesians 2:14; No greater hostility in history than between Jew and Gentile. Isn't it interesting that, despite all the advancements in our world intellectually & technologically, conflict is still with us. And it will continue until the Prince of Peace comes. When he comes, wonderful changes in this world come with Him.

### **Future world with no conflict.**

The prelude to a forever world without conflict is called "The Millennium." This is a future thousand-year period when Christ rules and reigns on this present earth. Isaiah says that in that in that day "of the increase of his government *and peace* there will be no end (Isaiah 9:7).

Isaiah 2:4 He will judge between the nations and will settle disputes for many peoples. They will beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks. Nation will not take up sword against nation, nor will they train for war anymore. (also Micah 4:3) Jesus is the the answer to national & international conflict. And He is the answer to personal conflict, that between you and your husband, brother, sister, mom, dad, work associate, neighbor, etc. But if you reject Him as the answer, if you fail to acknowledge and turn to Him for help, He cannot help you. And that means the conflict has the potential to ruin you, your family, your life. And don't forget that the consequences of rejecting Jesus as the answer in this world goes beyond this world. To reject the witness of Jesus as the answer means not only that I forfeit the opportunity for Him to reconcile and bring peace to conflict in my life here and now, but that I also will forfeit forgiveness for all eternity, and a future world where there is no conflict.

## CONCLUSION

“You are either a prisoner in need of liberation, or you are a witness testifying to the freedom Christ has secured for you.” (Alistair Begg)

What position is determined by a choice; See Prov.8:1-5; 9:13-16; two voices calling out, which will you listen to?

Acts 7:51 “You stiff-necked people...You always resist the Holy Spirit!”

Hebrews 3:15 “Today, if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts...”