



THE GOSPEL OF

MARK



Sermon Series Notes

“Surprising Truths About Jesus’ Family” (Mark 3:31-35)

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If you have ever wondered exactly what the “Blasphemy of the Holy Spirit” is, also called “the unpardonable sin,” last weekend’s may help you. The religious leaders accuse Jesus of casting out demons by Beelzebub, and Jesus responds with a parable that clearly reveals how irrational the accusation is. Jesus is causing such a commotion that his family thinks he’s lost his mind, so they intend to come get him and take him home. We are not told if the whole family came, but if so it would have been Mary and at least six of Jesus’ siblings. Somewhere in the story of Jesus, Joseph disappears from the scene. He is not mentioned or seen in the Scriptures during any of Jesus’ public ministry. The last time we see him is when Jesus stays back in Jerusalem after the feast and is debating with the teachers of the law (Luke 2:41-51). Jesus’ brothers were James, Joseph, Simon, & Judas (not the Simon and Judas of the apostles), and his sisters are mentioned without giving us their names (Matthew 13:55-56). I would assume that some if not all of his brothers are with Mary, because if he resists they’re gonna need some muscle.

What a surprise they are in for when they show up. And not only them, but those who hear what Jesus has to say when he is told his family is outside and wanting to see him.

Read the text.

Jesus’ statement is not in any meant as being disrespectful of his family. So what does his statement teach us?

Catholic doctrine concerning Mary is in error. If she holds the position and is of the character the Catholic church claims, I should be shocked, even offended, at what Jesus says here, because no one should be allowed to talk this way about her.

Just what does the Catholic church teach about Mary?

- She Is A Perpetual Virgin
 - “Mary, the Mother of God, remained a virgin not only in the conception of Christ but also in His birth and during the rest of her life.” (Baltimore Catechism)
 - Gal.1:19...James the Lord’s brother
 - John 7: 3 Jesus' brothers said to him, "You ought to leave here and go to Judea, so that your disciples may see the miracles you do. 4 No one who wants to become a public figure acts in secret. Since you are doing these things, show yourself to the world." 5 For even his own brothers did not believe in him.
 - Matt.13:55-56 (above)

- She Was Born Of An Immaculate Conception

- This doctrine was introduced by Pope Pius IX in 1854 and goes like this, “We declare, pronounce and define that the Most Blessed Virgin Mary, at the first instance of her Conception was preserved immaculate from all stain of original sin, by the singular grace and privilege of the Omnipotent God, in virtue of the merits of Jesus Christ, the Savior of mankind, and that this doctrine was revealed by God, and therefore, must be believed firmly and constantly by all the faithful.”
- She Is Co-Redemptrix
 - “Because of her consent to accept the office of Mother of the Redeemer, and also because of her merits in intimately sharing the sufferings of her Divine Son for the salvation of mankind, the Blessed Virgin is given the title of Co-Redemptrix of the human race.” (A Catechism of Christian Doctrine, p.65).
 - I Tim.2: 5 For there is one God and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus...
- That She Ascended Physically Into Heaven
 - Pope Pius XII said, “Now God has willed that the Blessed Virgin Mary should be exempted from this general rule (death). She, by an entirely unique privilege, completely overcame sin by her Immaculate Conception, and as a result she was not subject to the law of remaining in the corruption of the grave, and she did not have to wait until the end of time for the redemption of her body...We pronounce, declare, and define it to be a divinely revealed dogma” that the Immaculate Mother God, the ever Virgin Mary, having completed the course of her earthly life, was assumed body and soul into heavenly glory.”

None of these teachings are even remotely found in the Scriptures. Apart from Acts 1:14, Mary is mentioned nowhere else outside the gospels. Not only is there no Scriptural support for these doctrines introduced by the Catholic church, but Scripture refutes them.

This does not at all mean that Mary is not a chosen saint who has been granted unique, nor does it mean that we cannot learn from her tremendous example of faith and godly character. I have done one whole message on Mary called “The Blessed Mother,” because that she is. But Jesus is just as much Mary’s Savior as he is ours. See Luke 1:46-47.

Luke 11: 27 As Jesus was saying these things, a woman in the crowd called out, "Blessed is the mother who gave you birth and nursed you." 28 He replied, "Blessed rather are those who hear the word of God and obey it."

What else does Jesus’ statement teach us?

The family Jesus is referring to goes beyond blood relations.

Blood relationships refer to those we are related to based on natural birth. We can of course marry into someone’s family, or be adopted into a family. But Jesus is referring to those who have become a part of an eternal family by being born again (John 3:3, 5-6).

John 1:12-13 Yet to all who received him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God – children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband’s will, but born of God.

The family of God goes beyond blood relationship. So we as Christians have an *earthly* family, and we have a *spiritual* family. Our spiritual family could also be called our heavenly family.

Jesus' spiritual family does the will of God.

I am of course not talking about sinless perfection, but rather a recognizable direction in life, as well as deeds that are in keeping with obedience to the Lord.

James 2:17-18 In the same way, faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead. But someone will say, "You have faith, I have deeds." Show me your faith without deeds, and I will show you my faith by what I do.

See I John 3:9-10

Doing the will of God brings me close to Jesus.

To do the will of God requires repentance.

Isaiah 53:6 We all, like sheep, have gone astray...

So those who do the will of God are those who have turned from going astray and are now submitted to the Lord. They have repented. Repent = To turn.

Repentance is required to begin walking in the will of God, but repentance will be required to remain in the will of God, and therefore close to the Lord.

How close to the Lord do you think John Mark felt when he deserted Paul and the team in Acts 13:13? The decision to go back to Jerusalem was obviously not the will of God for Mark, because the decision of whether or not to take Mark on the second missionary journey was based on his deserting on the first journey (Acts 15:36-41).

How close to the Lord do you think Peter felt when three times he denied having a relationship with Jesus?

How close to the Lord do you think Elijah felt when he ran from Jezebel and hid in a cave?

How close to the Lord do you think Adam and Even felt after they ate the forbidden fruit. Not doing the will of God separates us from a close fellowship with Christ. Sometimes it even causes us to run and hide from him. Just ask Jonah (summarize that story).

The story of the Prodigal. The Father is waiting, longing for those who have wandered (or run) away to come home.

If I want to be close to Jesus, I must first become a member of his heavenly/spiritual family. Then I must maintain a walk in life that is in the will of God. Also important in remaining close to Him is my closeness to His family. The closer I am to the family of God, doing things together that are in the will of God, the closer I am to Jesus. That is why my experience doing ministry with other members of God's family are times when I have felt closest to Jesus. Examples? Short term mission trips, Men of Arms projects, volunteering for various church events, etc.

Note: It does not have to be a positive experience doing something with the family of God in the will of God that brings me close to Jesus.

Phil.3:10 I want to know Christ and the power of his resurrection and the fellowship of sharing in his sufferings...

The disciples going through storms together; Recent youth Guatemala missions experience, etc.

Earthly relationships do not have a spiritual perspective.

If even our own Christian brothers and sisters sometimes don't understand or agree with us when we are following the will of God for our lives, how in the world can the unbeliever?

Imagine trying to have spiritual conversation with someone who has no spiritual, biblical foundation.

I Cor.2:14 The man without the Spirit does not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him, and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually discerned.

A classic example of this is in John 7:1-10; Jesus did nothing apart from the Spirit's leading, and the Father's will. But his brothers, due to their unbelief, had no spiritual discernment or direction in life.

This is why it is vitally important to make the right decision in marriage. I have talked to numerous people over the years who married out of the will of God and it limited or prevented them from following Christ completely, because now they are bound to spouse that has no spiritual foundation and therefore no spiritual perspective.

I must never allow *any* earthly relationships to lead me away from the will of God.

Luke 14:25-26 If anyone comes to me and does not hate his father and mother, his wife and children, his brothers and sisters – yes, even his own life, he cannot be my disciple.

See I Kings 19:15-16, 19-21; The area Elisha lived was the breadbasket of the Jordan River valley. Most family farms were small enterprises consisting of a single plow and one set of oxen. The twelve yoke of oxen suggests that this was a large farm and Elisha was from a wealthy family. The cloak Elijah threw over Elisha was one that distinguished a prophet (Zech.13:4), so Elisha knew exactly what was happening. He was being called to leave his life on the family farm and follow the call of God. Some have compared Elisha's request to kiss his father and mother goodbye to something Jesus said in Luke 9:59-62. But the two responses here in Luke 9 and Elisha's response are all different. All Elisha is asking is permission to bid farewell to mom and dad. The first man in Luke 9 is asking Jesus' permission to delay going with Jesus until after his father is dead. The statement by Jesus, "let the dead bury their own dead," refers to the man's father's spiritual condition, telling us that he is not part of Jesus' family, a spiritual family. The second man in Luke 9 either wants to do more than simply bid farewell to mom and dad, or else Jesus sees a duplicity in his heart that will keep from being all in in his commitment. This is why Jesus says that anyone who puts his hand to the plow and looks back is not fit for service in the kingdom. Elisha made sure there was no looking back, that's why he slaughtered the oxen and burned the plowing equipment. For him, there was no looking back, no turning back. I like what Mark Batterson says about what Elisha did in his book "All In": "Elisha literally cooked his old way of life and ate it for dinner. And forgive me if this is taking the analogy too far, but after digesting it, he got it out of his system." I don't think that's taking it too far, because I remember what Paul the apostle said about the things he had left behind in order to follow Christ: Philippians 3:7-8 But whatever was to my profit I now consider loss for the sake of Christ. What is more, I consider everything a loss compared to the surpassing greatness of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whose sake I have lost all things. I consider them **rubbish**, that I may gain Christ...

Sometimes even relationships within the spiritual family of Jesus attempt to influence us away from the will of God. See Matthew 16:21-24; Acts 20:22-24; 21:3-4, 10-14; Gen.16:1-5 (Abraham & Hagar); Deut.13:1-11.

In our text of Mark 3 today, we have a combination of Jesus' spiritual family and his earthly family attempting to divert him from the Father's will. Mother Mary is obviously a believer, but his brothers did not believe (John 7:1-10).

Had Jesus submitted to his earthly mother and siblings, it would mean leaving where He was and what He was doing and going back to Nazareth. This of course would have been out of the God's will for Him, and He knew that. This is very practical for Christian parents who have a child or children following the will of God for their lives, but the parent does not share the same opinion. Even Mother Mary thinks Jesus is not mentally stable, but this is not the case at all!

Sometimes following the will of God means ignoring or even resisting the desires or demands that come from earthly family relationships. Sometimes it means ignoring or resisting the desires of relationships even within the family of God. Sometimes it means leaving home, saying goodbye to those you love. But the reward for doing so is received both in this life and in the one to come. See Mark 10:29-30. I have family around the world!

One final note. Sometimes doing the will of God because we are part of Jesus' family means there will be family division (See Luke 12:49-53).

CONCLUSION

On Feb. 19, 1519 the Spanish explorer Hernan Cortez set sail for Mexico with an entourage of 11 ships, 13 horses, 110 sailors, & 553 soldiers. Two previous expeditions had failed to even establish a settlement in the new world, yet Cortez conquered much of the South American continent. Someone estimated that the odds were against Cortez by a ratio of 7,541 to 1. So what made the difference in his success? After landing, he issued an order that turned his mission into an all or nothing proposition: ***Burn the ships!*** As his crew watched their fleet of ships burn and sink, they came to terms with the fact that retreat was not an option.