

## The Servant's True Family (TIJ Mark 3:7-35) Pleasant Plains 3-22-2020AM Nick Angel

- **\*READ Mark 3:1-6\*** As the story of the ministry of Jesus continues to unfold within Mark's Gospel, there are a few things that are becoming abundantly clear.
  1. This man, Jesus, was incredibly special and beyond anything that anyone had ever seen. His ability to teach with such authority, His power to heal broken bodies, and His power to banish demons from human bodies only positioned Him in a place high and far above anyone in the land of Galilee at this time or anytime before.
  2. It is also becoming increasingly clear that Jesus has gained many followers, but He has also gain some significant enemies. The Jewish Religious Leadership in the form of the Scribes & Pharisees were constantly on the case of Jesus, and they were so bothered by His ministry that they were willing to team up with their enemies, the Herodians, in order to put a stop to Jesus.
  3. Finally, it is obvious that their efforts were not going to deter Jesus from doing what He knew He had to do. We noted in our last lesson that Jesus was bringing about a great new change in direction for the people of God, and He wasn't going to allow any opposition to stop Him from fulfilling this mission. We can clearly see this in the text we read together just a moment ago. Jesus knew the hearts of those who opposed Him, and yet He still greatly desired to serve this poor man by healing his withered hand. Jesus was not going to be stopped.
- I believe that we will notice in our study this morning that Jesus was unwilling to be stopped because part of this new direction in which He was heading included the establishment of a new people and family of God. This section of Mark contains a couple of the most difficult statements in all of the Gospel accounts, and yet I believe that these statements are crucially important to recognize exactly what Jesus desired to make known during His ministry. He desired to make known His power from God and His purpose of creating a new people to inhabit this new kingdom. Let's consider the text of **Mark 3:7-35** together this morning so that we can come to identify those who belong to The Servant's True Family.

### **I. Crushing Crowds Follow Jesus (Mark 3:7-12)**

- A. The Situation:** Jesus is forced get into a boat on the Sea of Galilee in order to escape the great crowd of people that was pressing in all around Him to the point that He was in danger of being crushed.
1. Following the obstinance and hardheartedness that Jesus witnessed in the synagogue, Mark tells us that Jesus went out of the city and to the sea. Three times in **vv.7&8**, Mark records that **"large crowds"** were following Jesus and gathering all around Him.
  2. There were so many people that He felt the need to tell His disciples to procure a boat (**v.9**) so that they might go onto the water in order to escape this crowd that had the potential to crush Him and those who were with Him.
- B. What It Means:** People from in and all around Capernaum were recognizing the incredible nature of Jesus. So many people desired to experience Him because of the great power He had shown in healing the sick and casting out unclean spirits.
1. Firstly, I believe that this was a symbolic move by Jesus. He was done with the synagogues where the religious elites spent their time, and He desired to go out to a place where He could form a new people for His new kingdom. This was made much easier by the fact that people were well aware of His actions, and they sought to come to experience His greatness.
  2. I want us to recognize that the people who came to Jesus in these verses were not from just in Galilee, but they were from places all around Galilee. Galilee, Judea, and Jerusalem were Jewish occupied areas that would have been recognized as historically Jewish being in close proximity to Capernaum. However, Idumea (South), the land beyond the Jordan (east), and Tyre & Sidon (north) were all surrounding areas that had Gentile presence. How strongly Jesus's influence must have been to have all of these different people from all of these different places coming to Him!

3. Where did this strong influence come from? Surely it must have come from the incredible power that Jesus had shown over the sicknesses of the people and the ability to cast out demons with only His words. What was made possible by all of these people coming to Jesus in this way? Surely these were those who would have the opportunity to be made into this new people and family of God. However, this new family and people needed leaders, and that is exactly what we see Jesus doing next...picking the leaders of His true family.

## **II. Jesus Appoints His Apostles (Mark 3:13-19)**

**A. The Situation:** Jesus goes up onto an unidentified mountain and summons specific people to Himself. He appoints twelve of these men as His apostles. He sends them out to preach, and He gives them the authority to cast out demons.

1. The text seems to indicate that Jesus goes up onto some unspecified mountain where He calls a number of specific people to Himself. Luke's Gospel (**6:13**) seems to clarify that additional people were present besides the twelve who would be called as Apostles.
2. Mark tells us that these men would be in very close association with Jesus as He trained and taught them personally. They would be sent out by Jesus to preach and teach concerning Him and His kingdom. They would be equipped for this task by the authority to even cast out demons. These men were to play an important role in Jesus's ministry moving forward.

**B. What It Means:** Jesus identifies these twelve men as His special followers to signify the establishment of a new nation of people. Much of what Jesus does in this text echoes what Moses did as he went onto Mt. Sinai, taught the Jews of the Law, and declared them as the people of God.

1. Firstly, I want us to notice that this was a very diverse group of men who would serve in these official capacities as Apostles. One was a tax collector, a handful were fishermen, one was a Jewish zealot dead-set against Roman occupation, some were related, and others were loners. These men seemed to hail from different places and have very different backgrounds at times, and yet they were all to work together in this manner.
2. Let me suggest that these men being chosen and being diverse was no accident. I am convinced that Jesus chose a diverse group of leaders because He expected for His people to be a diverse group of people. No matter your education, your loyalties, or your family origin...you could be a part of this new family and nation. Peter would go later on to describe this new family as *"a holy nation...a people for God's own possession."* (**I Peter 2:9**)
3. Yet, we would be remiss to not highlight the symbolism of what Jesus does in going up on the mountain and choosing twelve men in this manner. The number twelve carried great significance to the Jewish nation and her history. There were twelve sons of Jacob who would come to be known as the twelve tribes of Israel. It was Moses who Himself went up onto Mount Sinai in **the book of Exodus**, and he too gathered a new people unto himself. He taught them of the Law and instructed them to teach that Law to their children.
4. Jesus is reenacting and echoing the deeds of Moses by doing the same thing with these men. He is choosing them as the twelve leaders of the "new" twelve tribes of Israel (**Matthew 19:28**) who would be taught of God and led in His ways. We simply cannot miss Mark positioning Jesus in this way as the new leader of this new exodus movement for this new people. Surely we would expect for this new direction in creating this new people to bring out great joy as we mentioned in our last study, but we're about to see that there were a number of groups of people who simply were not onboard with the plans of Jesus in these regards.

### III. Jesus's Power Over Satan Explained (Mark 3:20-30)

- A. The Situation & Conflict:** Jesus's family is opposed to the attention that Jesus is garnering through His teachings and ministry. The Scribes are also very much opposed to Jesus's ministry to the point they accuse Him of working with demons. point
1. *The Bible Speaks Today Commentary* describes this section of Mark's Gospel as a very "painful section" because those who should have been the first to recognize Jesus's greatness and incredible nature were actually those who first tried to put a stop to it, and those people were Jesus's own family and the established Jewish Religious leadership in the form of the Scribes at this particular point in time.
  2. Jesus's family are seemingly very concerned with Jesus and the ministry He was engaged in because they made the long thirty mile journey from Nazareth to Capernaum to "*restrain*" Jesus from what He was doing because they believed Him to be "*out of His mind.*" (3:21) The Scribes made the even longer trek from Jerusalem to come interfere in the business of Jesus, and they did so by accusing Jesus of actually being under the possession of Beelzebul which means "master of the house" and was another name attributed to the Devil. (3:22) So just to clear up any confusion...the Scribes were accusing Satan of being the one who was empowering Jesus to drive out his own demons who were tormenting the people of Judea at his own (assumed) instruction. I don't know about you...but that doesn't make much sense.
- B. Jesus's Response:** Jesus responds by pointed out the foolishness of their accusation. He then speaks of the power that He possesses over Satan with the ultimate display being His ability to forgive any and all sins.
1. Jesus makes sure at this point to show the absurdity of this accusation to those who were present. Firstly, these accusations had to be levied because there was no denying that something incredible was happening. They had to come up with something, and this is the foolishness that they come up with. How dumb to think that Satan would work against himself to cast out his own demons!
  2. Secondly, Jesus hears them talk of this "master of the house", and He plays upon those words by talking about how in order for someone to come into a house and plunder the goods of the house...the strong man in the house first has to be bound up. Once the strong man of the house is bound up...then the plunderer can get to work. I think we see what Jesus is saying here, right? He is clearly stating that He has come into the "house" of Satan (which is this world where he is the ruler through sin), bound him up, and began to plunder his house by casting out demons, healing the afflicted, and then He would show His ultimate authority by forgiving the sins that Satan had influenced into the lives of the people.
  3. **V.28** begins with "*Truly I tell you...*", but it could be very literally translated "*Amen, I say to you...*" meaning that it is already a foregone conclusion what Jesus is about to say because it is entirely that true. This absolute truth is that Jesus has the absolute power to forgive any and all sins that are committed. He spoke of His ability to forgive sins back in **2:5-11** when He forgave the sins of the paralytic, and He alluded to this power when He spoke of coming as a doctor to those who were sick. (2:17) This is the ultimate power that Jesus has over Satan, and as were about to point out...failing to recognize this power will only lead to harm.
  4. It is quite sad that we often gloss over the powerful statement of **3:28** and focus only on **3:29** and what is termed as the unforgivable sin. The reality is that this statement is quite simple when we understand it in context. Anyone can be forgiven of any sin when they acknowledge the power that Jesus has to forgive sins and recognize that it comes from God. However, when someone (like the Scribes in this case) begins to attribute Jesus's power to Satan...well then there simply isn't any hope of this person because they deny the only power which can

save them. As Brent Kercheville points out so well in his material on this section of Mark's Gospel, *"Please realize that there is no record in the Scriptures of anyone genuinely asking for forgiveness from God and being denied."* If anyone will truly come to Jesus recognizing His power with a penitent heart...then they will be forgiven. However, if they reject that Jesus's power is first and foremost from God...then there is no forgiveness from them. Yet, forgiveness is exactly what Jesus wants, and He so greatly desires to give it to these people who would come as a part of His new family and kingdom. Sadly, His own family continued to fail to recognize these incredible truths about their Son and Brother.

#### **IV. Jesus Identifies His True Family (Mark 3:31-35)**

**A. The Situation & Conflict:** The family of Jesus comes to where Jesus is teaching and sends word that they would like to speak with Him. This seems to be completing what Mark wrote of earlier in 3:20,21.

1. This section begins with Jesus's own family trying to stop His ministry and it close the entire chapter with another episode of the same. Jesus is busy teaching in an extremely over-crowded home His family comes and requests to see Him.
2. It seems that they were either hoping to either be invited into the home to be in front of Him where they could "talk some sense into Him" or they hoped that He might come outside so they could take Him away and back home. However, Jesus does neither of these things.

**B. Jesus's Response:** Jesus asks the rhetorical, *"Who are my mother and brothers?"* He then identifies that His true family was sitting all around Him in this house. His true brother, sister, and mother were those who were seeking to do the will of His Father.

1. Instead, we find Jesus asking this rhetorical question of, *"Who are my mother and brothers?"* He answers His own question by stating that His true family are those who are simply willing to do the will of His father. At the present moment, His family members were seeking to take Him away from His ministry, and even they did not fit into this category.
2. This might seem pretty heavy and shocking to us, but those who were around Jesus had to have been picking their jaws up off the floor! Near Eastern culture (even today) puts great emphasis on loyalty to one's family, and for Jesus to deny His family for basic strangers as His new family would have been mind-blowing. And yet, that is exactly what Jesus is wanting to get across. This new family, with its new leaders in Jesus Himself and the Apostles, would not be build upon bloodlines or family trees. Instead, it would be built upon a single thing...trust in Jesus and faithfulness to the will of God. No matter ones gender, race, national origin, or anything else...anyone could be a part of this family so long as they recognized Jesus's authority and power to save. Sadly, Jesus's own family was failing at this point, but even with this being the case...Jesus took solace in the many new brothers, sisters, and mothers who were gathered all around Him.

#### **V. Application Questions**

**A. Are we willing to come to Jesus on His terms in order to be a part of His true family?**

1. With family being such a key theme in this section...are we doing whatever it takes to be apart of the true family of Jesus? We have noticed some things in this lesson that can keep us from having this as a reality in our lives, but it mostly comes down to this simple question... Are we willing to come to Jesus and join His family on His terms?
2. This again takes us back to what happened during the exodus and up until the point when Israel was read to finally step into the promised land. Moses stood before the people time and time and time again begging them to be faithful to the covenant the God had established with them. If they would be faithful to the covenant on God's terms then they

would be abundantly blessed. However, if they chose to rebel against the covenant then they would only experience covenant curses. They had to keep God's terms in order to be a part of God's special people and family.

3. Are we willing to humbly submit ourselves to Jesus's authority in order to be a part of this special family? It begins with humility on our part. We must acknowledge our need for Jesus, and then we must submit to His authority to rule in our lives. If we want to be in that close covenant relationship with Jesus then we must come to Him on His terms and not our own or else we, like Jesus's family, will be caught on the outside of the house looking in.

#### B. Do we value our spiritual family in Christ as we ought to?

1. If we are willing to submit to Jesus on His terms, then as a part of those in the house...do we appreciate those others who are also with us in this great house of God? This can be determined by the way that we interact with our fellow family members. Who do I most desire to spend my time with? Is it those who are my family in Christ or those outside of Christ?
2. The reality is that those who are outside of our family in Christ often carry themselves just like the family of Jesus and the Scribes. Instead of encouraging us in our faiths, more often than not, those who are outside of our spiritual family seek to, intentionally or not, drag us down in our faith and spiritual encouragement. It might not be all that overt at times, but other times it can be clear as day. They chide us when we speak of being a part of spiritual events. They seek to throw us off of our normal spiritual schedule. They might even do things that they know will make us uncomfortable. They might even ridicule us as being crazy or out of our minds. Are these the type of people who we want to give the majority of our time and attention to? I sure wouldn't think so.
3. Therefore, let's all make a greater concerted effort to be among our spiritual family as often as we can be. They are the ones who, while in their company, are stirring us up and encouraging us to love and good works to the Lord. **(Hebrews 10:24,25)** If Jesus was willing to go against cultural norms to spend time with His new family in this text, then maybe that should encourage us to be willing to do the same. May we truly value those of like and precious faith who have the same goals we have and are doing the same things to achieve those goals.

There is much to be said about family. They are the ones who are supposed to be there for us through thick and thin, good or bad, happy times or sad times...but sometimes we might realize that we feel much more drawn to our spiritual family because we just "get" each other more. If that is you, then don't feel bad or strange for that. Instead, recognize that Jesus desired for us to feel this way about one another, and it is my hope that our considerations this morning have encouraged us to recognize that Jesus really cared for His new family, and He wants for us to do the same. May we keep in mind the words of Jesus this week and we go about our currently strange lives knowing that come what may...it is our brothers and sisters who are seeking to do the will of God who will be with us.

*"Looking at those sitting in a circle around Him, he said, He said, "Here are my mother and my brothers! **Whoever does the will of God is my brother and sister and mother.**""* (Mark 3:34,35)