

BLESSINGS TO YOU ON THIS MEMORIAL DAY

- How many have loved ones lost in battle?
- How many have loved ones serving now?
- How many of you are serving or have served in the armed forces?

Dismiss Children

Fellowship Break

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Pray...

The Parables

Mark 3:22-30, Part 1:

“Are You Hungry?”

Jesus was just beginning his ministry...

- Mark 1 and 2 are flooded with Jesus healing many who had diseases, casting out demons, and commanding the healed to keep quiet about His true identity, because it wasn't yet time.
- Attracting many more WITH diseases – from all over (Jerusalem/Judea – way south, and Tyre/Sidon – way north)
- Preaching truth with great confidence
- Appointing the Apostles to preach and cast out demons as well
- And all this was happening very fast – near his hometown – in a matter of just days.

All this resulted in **3 responses from 3 different groups of witnesses:**

1. Pharisees/Scribes:

- want “to destroy him” (3:6)

2. Great multitudes of diseased/needy:

- “You ARE the Son of God!” (3:11)

3. His friends and/or family (Greek word denotes both... I argue it was indeed his mother and brothers, based on v31-35):

- “He is out of his mind.” (3:21)

And piggy-backing on the family's embarrassment over Jesus' actions:

- **Mar 3:22 ... the scribes said, yeah! That's it!..., "He is possessed by Beelzebul," and "by the prince of demons he casts out the demons."**
 - Have you EVER asked a ridiculous question like this???
 - As if Satan or any opponent would think it a good strategy to take himself out?
 - I often picture these scribes trying to put the toothpaste back in the tube...
 - It is THIS accusation Jesus responds to, using several parables (related) to do so.
 - It is THIS accusation that prompts a 3-part Sunday series!

This is a 3-part mini-series to finish up the parables.

- 1. Today: Focus on these responses I've already mentioned (Mark 3:6-22; 28-30)**
- 2. Part 2: Jesus teaching about a house divided (3:23-26)**

3. Part 3: Binding the Strongman (3:27)

With that, let me read Jesus' response to the accusation that Satan is working through Him:

Mar 3:23 And he called them to him and said to them in parables, "How can Satan cast out Satan?

Mar 3:24 If a kingdom is divided against itself, that kingdom cannot stand.

Mar 3:25 And if a house is divided against itself, that house will not be able to stand.

Mar 3:26 And if Satan has risen up against himself and is divided, he cannot stand, but is coming to an end.

Mar 3:27 But no one can enter a strong man's house and plunder his goods, unless he first binds the strong man. Then indeed he may plunder his house.

And then he addresses a huge consequence about this accusation, to which I'll get in a moment...

Again, Today's focus: **3 groups of people, 3 different responses. Where do YOU fit?**

- Today won't focus on the parables, but on the events and people's responses preceding it.

A closer look into the responses from 3 groups of people...

And as I do, I ask you to consider honestly, ***which response describes you.***

With each one, I'll have a few clarifying questions for you...

1. Pharisees/Scribes, wanting "to destroy him" (3:6)

- We've spent a lot of time on the Pharisees' mindset throughout this series:
 - Briefly, while they were actively seeking Messiah, they believed Messiah would bring back David's military kingdom, Israel would again conquer the known world, and the enemies would not only scatter, they'd be the only people left, because they were God's chosen, and His kingdom would consist only of His chosen.
- So, quickly upon the scene comes someone so fully removed from that description, he must be a fraud or a lunatic.
 - But the crowds are claiming healings and miracles, and calling Him Messiah!
 - In their view, this must be false, but the crowds are growing.
 - If they don't put a stop to this, it'll only get harder to convince bigger crowds in time.
- In their defense, they we're intentionally evil.
 - They thought they were preserving God's chosen people's minds and souls
 - They thought they were protecting the sheep.
 - At least for now.
 - ***Lest anyone accuse me of slamming the Pharisees each week with so many parables directed toward them from Jesus –***
 - ***We're all modern day Pharisees in various settings/beliefs***
 - ***Jesus would rebuke the American church for many things, I believe***
 - ***And He would hold the leaders accountable/responsible***
- "Destroying" didn't initially mean "kill".
 - Greek "apollumi" was used both literally and figuratively
 - It could mean something as simple as discrediting him – destroying his credibility.
 - And his very own family provides an easy segue for them, thus their accusation in v22.

The scribes (and by relation, Pharisees), said, **"He is possessed by Beelzebul," and "by the prince of demons he casts out the demons." (3:22)**

- And Jesus first addresses the accusation, *but then the consequence* for it.
 - **V28-30 address the hardened heart of a leader of God's people who would ascribe to Satan something God Himself is doing.**
 - **Mar 3:28 "Truly, I say to you, all sins will be forgiven the children of man, and whatever blasphemies they utter,**
 - **Mar 3:29 but whoever blasphemes against the Holy Spirit never has forgiveness, but is guilty of an eternal sin" —**
 - **Mar 3:30 for they were saying, "He has an unclean spirit."**
 - Briefly, my scripturally supported take on **this "unforgivable sin"** is this:
 - **1) it is mentioned only in this scene.**
 - Matthew 12 records the same account
 - The fact it's only mentioned once in the entire new covenant record means we must be careful not to build a huge theology around it.
 - **2) it is directed at leaders** – those who God's people look up to for instruction regarding God Himself.
 - **3) it is directly about crediting Satan with the works of God.**
 - **4) the whole of scripture suggests it is "unforgivable" if you take such a belief to your grave.**
 - IOW, beware that you have not created an entirely new God (or Holy Spirit) out of the one described in scripture.
 - Be careful you are not discrediting the Spirit's work in healing, casting out demons, miracles – and calling them something other than what they are.
 - Most of my friends who "claim" Jesus but don't read the Bible (and live according to the world) have such a distorted view of Jesus, that when I bring up the REAL Jesus, they get offended and accusatory toward my narrow-minded views.
 - This, my friends, is what Jesus is talking about.
 - Only it's leveled at LEADERS.
 - The so-called "leaders" in people's lives who have led astray our friends who want to believe God/HS/Jesus was something He is not.
 - So woe to the leaders who would lead God's created away from Jesus, crediting Satan for the works of God and His Holy Spirit.
 - That, my friends, is – according to Jesus – unforgivable.
- Now, a question: **Can you relate to these leaders' desire to "destroy"?**
 - I'm not talking about you wanting to destroy Jesus.
 - While some exist today who want to do that, I'm guessing they're not in this room.
 - However, I AM suggesting some of you have thus far fully REJECTED some things Jesus and His Holy Spirit are about in these verses.
 - Supernatural healing, miracles, teaching followers to preach and do the same
 - We say, **"thank you for saving me... I'll take it from here."**
 - But Healing? That's crazy.
 - Cast out demons? That's not for today.
 - Preach the gospel? ME? My pastor does that.
 - Minister like Jesus? But I don't have that kind of authority.

- You have no problem with JESUS doing these things, but you want no part of doing them yourself.
- If you go so far as to condemn more charismatic churches for similar things happening here at the beginning of Jesus' ministry, REPENT from such things, and look deeper.
 - **(next)** The only difference between you and these in Mark is 2000 years of history.
 - They SAW Him do these things.
 - You have FAITH He did these things.
 - And by His power, He's still DOING these things.
 - I have no doubt you believe this.
 - ***But perhaps you – so far – don't obey His command to be the instrument God uses to heal, to cast out demons, to preach, and minister in such a way as to expect the supernatural to move.***
- I suggest to you that if you can relate, then the FAMILY'S response doesn't seem so far-fetched anymore:

2. His family: "He's crazy"

- Again, the Greek word allows for both, but two things:
 - 1) wherever else it's used, it's "family"
 - 2) It's Jesus' mother and brothers who try once again to bring him into the house AFTER Jesus tells these parables (v31-35)
- **They were truly embarrassed for him.**
- V21 says they went out to seize him
 - **Seize = krateō = to use strength, that is, seize or retain, lay hand (hold) on, obtain, retain, take (by).**
- For 30 years, Jesus' family lived with him – as far as we know.
 - Then, a switch is flipped, and quite rapidly, Jesus begins His purpose.
 - We're given no details about the previous 30 years – none that shed any light on how Jesus knew it was time to begin, anyway.
 - You who have siblings, imagine one of them – at 30 years old – going down to the beach and just start healing people, one after the other.
 - Word spreads fast – twitter, instagram and facebook – your brother is getting tagged and your phone is blowing up
 - **Mememes are being created, comparing him to nut jobs.**
 - The media is at your door, the neighbors are taking pictures of your house
 - Helicopters are doing fly-overs, taking aerial shots
 - Next thing you know, hundreds are following him up the street as he's trying to make it back to the neighborhood.
 - What do you do?
 - Go get him and bring him inside?
 - I think I might!
 - But maybe on the way there, with all the hype and confusion and fear from my neighbors looking for a way to explain what's happening, would I be tempted to say something like, ***"Hey, we got this – he's not been feeling well these last few days... we're gonna just take him inside.."***

- **(next)** Bottom line, they were simply trying to spare themselves embarrassment.
- And perhaps they thought they were sparing Jesus embarrassment as well.
- Either way, **Can you relate?**
 - You're around the dinner table, or lunch cafeteria, and being chided for your faith.
 - You're in a coffee shop and overhear others talking about those idiots who believe the Bible.
 - You're on FB, and unbelieving friends share all kinds of anti-Christian sentiments...
 - **To remain hidden, to not respond, is liken unto making excuses for Jesus.**
 - And that's all the family was trying to do.
 - Spare the embarrassment.
 - **And it leads to less and less speaking about Jesus, because you don't like the idea of having to defend the truth.**

3. Multitudes of Diseased/Needy: You ARE the Son of God! (3:11)

- Among the responses, only ONE of the 3 groups was the desired response from God:
 - **Multitudes of diseased/needy = those who were hungry. (2:23-38)**
 - Kyle, what do you mean, "hungry"?
 - **Not physical hunger, per se, but hungry – desperate to be made whole by their creator.**
 - There's a curious seeming "detour" Mark (Peter) takes at the end of Mark 2:
 - The overall concept of the first 3 chapters of Mark depict the needy in Israel finally seeing Messiah – a real BUZZ in the country – everybody talking about God finally answering the desperate cry of His people in great need of their Savior.
 - Healings, miracles, and the various responses, huge crowds, Pharisees reeling, demons letting the cat out of the bag...
 - **And at the end of chapter 2 are 6 verses telling the story of Jesus and his disciples eating grain from the field on the Sabbath.**
 - Seems out of place.
 - But it's not.
 - Jesus – when accused by the Pharisees of breaking the Sabbath, says (paraphrase), **throughout history, when people are hungry, they do what's necessary to satisfy the hunger.**
 - He brings up David's men in battle, hungry and exhausted from the war, eating – plucking grain like they were – on the Sabbath.
 - **(next)** When hunger strikes, food is all that satisfies.
 - In the same way, Jesus is the only thing that satisfies the soul's longing for wholeness.
 - For healing from sin, disease, the results of this fallen world.
 - For completeness, as originally intended from Creation.
 - **Those who were HUNGRY for wholeness were the ones who correctly responded to God's Son upon His arrival.**
 - So I ask, **Are you Hungry?**
 - Desperate to be made WHOLE by your creator.
 - Hunger drives us to food!
 - Jesus is your sustenance. Your life-giving source.

- Not the Jesus you've perhaps created in your mind.
- The real man Jesus. The healer. The ruler of demons. The miraculous. The supernatural.

My encouragement today is to assess your level of hunger.

- I suggest to you that the follower of Christ is always hungry for Jesus.
- He is never "full up" until Heaven calls.
- Does that describe you?
- **Note some of the ways Mark describes this needy crowd in the first 3 chapters of Mark.**
- **(If it's not yet 11:25) In fact, I want you to get in groups and discover them.**
 - Immediately followed (1:16-20)
 - Bring others to Jesus (1:32)
 - Kneeling and asking for healing (1:40)
 - Carrying friends to Jesus who can't get to Him (2:3)
 - Reclining with Jesus (2:15)
 - Pressing around Jesus to touch him (3:10)
 - Falling down before Him, crying "You are the Son of God!" (3:16)

Are there things on that list that describe YOU?

- Or are you satisfied with just snacking? peanut butter and jelly meals?
 - If your walk with Jesus were compared to a meal, would you be
 - Cold cereal?
 - Yogurt?
 - Marshmallows?
 - Nothing but sweets?
 - Sour grapes?
 - All carbs and no protein?
 - Stuck in a pattern of maybe just 3 or 4 different meals?
 - **The banquet table of Faith in Jesus is never ends.**
 - And endless supply of new, exciting, tasty food, and you are created complete with a stomach and a hollow leg!
 - The Bible is an endless supply of holy Spirit actions for all created peoples and all circumstances and settings.
 - Are you HUNGRY?
 - ***Then pick up a fork, and move into uncomfortable, yet Biblical new places in your walk with Christ.***
 - Don't settle for mac 'n cheese when Jesus sets Filet Mignon before you.
 - Don't make excuses for Him.
 - Don't discard or discredit His supernatural ways living in YOU.

The most interesting man in the world says, "Stay thirsty, my friends."

- Church, I appeal to you: "Stay hungry, my friends."

PRAY