



6: Someone Stronger (Mark 3:7-35)

Have you ever faced a struggle that seemed too big to overcome? Today we explore Mark 3:7-35 and discover why Jesus is SOMEONE STRONGER—stronger than Satan, stronger than sin, and powerful enough to rescue us and transform our lives!

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* All Scripture is from the Christian Standard Bible (CSB).

Mark 3:7-12

Jesus departed with his disciples to the sea, and a large crowd followed from Galilee, and a large crowd followed from Judea, Jerusalem, Idumea, beyond the Jordan, and around Tyre and Sidon. The large crowd came to him because they heard about everything he was doing. Then he told his disciples to have a small boat ready for him, so that the crowd wouldn't crush him. Since **he had healed many**, all who had diseases were pressing toward him to touch him.

Whenever the **unclean spirits** saw him, they fell down before him and cried out, "**You are the Son of God!**"

And he would strongly warn them not to make him known.

Unclean spirits who saw Jesus knew WHO He was - no mere prophet, but **the Son of God** - a phrase Jesus used very rarely until it was time for Him to go to the cross. It's this claim that Jesus is ultimately crucified for (Mk 14:61—64) blasphemous!... unless it's TRUE! Jesus is not ready for His identity to be fully revealed, and He certainly didn't want His enemies carrying His banner. So, Jesus puts a gag order on them, once again showing Who is truly in charge - even over demons!

Mark 3:13-15

Jesus went up the mountain and summoned those he wanted, and they came to him. He appointed twelve, whom he also named **apostles** [this phrase not found in the majority of manuscripts], to be with him, to **send them out to preach**, and to have authority to **drive out demons**.

Whether Mark included the term "**apostles**" here or not, the author DOES later refer to these 12 as **apostles** (Mk 6:30).

- The term **apostles** means "to send out".

Jesus chose these 12 men from the larger group of disciples that He had. Every **apostle** WAS a disciple of Jesus, but only 12 disciples were apostles of Jesus. These men were to **be with Him** - to walk beside Him in ministry for the foreseeable future. Jesus was also going to give them the **authority to drive out demons**, as He had been doing (see Mark 6).

The disciples weren't strong enough to cast out demons on their own. But **they were following Someone Stronger**, and HE gave them authority to do what they could never do by themselves!

🔍 We aren't just to GO tell others about Jesus, we are to **be with Him** first - **to KNOW Him before we GO for Him**.

Mark 3:16-19

He appointed the Twelve: To Simon, he gave the name Peter; and to James [better translated Jacob] the son of Zebedee, and to his brother John, he gave the name "Boanerges" (that is, "Sons of Thunder"); Andrew; Philip and Bartholomew; Matthew and Thomas; James the son of Alphaeus, and Thaddaeus; Simon the Zealot, and Judas Iscariot, who also betrayed him.

The 3 apostles that Jesus made extra time for are mentioned first. **Simon Peter, James, and John**.

- **Simon's nickname of Peter** means rock.
- **James & John** are called "**Sons of Thunder**", likely because they were quick to jockey for position of who would sit at Jesus right and left hand (Mk 10:35-45) & wanting to call down fire from heaven to destroy the Samaritans who rejected them (Lk 9:49-56). The "**thunder**" metaphor captures this volatile energy: sudden, loud, forceful, and potentially destructive. But, over time, this raw power would be refined and focused on following Jesus. James would be the 1st apostle to be martyred for following Jesus (Acts 12:2) and John would live long, despite facing persecution for faithfully following Jesus.
- **Andrew** was Simon Peter's brother, the one who brought Simon to meet Jesus.
- **Philip** brought **Nathaniel** to meet Jesus, and this is likely who **Bartholomew** is referring to (Mt 10:2-4; Lk 6:14-16).
- **Matthew** is likely the tax collector previously referred to as *Levi*.

- **Thaddaeus** was also known as **Judas** (*not the betrayer*). Jesus had a brother named Judas and 2 disciples named Judas. This was a popular name the comes from the tribe of Judah.
- John Mark, probably writing on behalf of Simon Peter, puts **Judas Iscariot** - the one who **betrayed Jesus** - last in the list.

Mark 3:20-21

Jesus entered a house, and the crowd gathered again so that they were not even able to eat. When **his family** heard this, they **set out to restrain him**, because they said, "He's out of his mind."

Jesus had a family - Joseph is not mentioned after Jesus is 12 years old leading scholars to conclude Joseph died while Jesus was fairly young. Mark later tells us that Jesus still had his **mother** (Mary), at least **4 brothers**, and multiple **sisters** (Mk 6:3). Because His ministry grew very quickly, Jesus' own family couldn't get to Him easily since He is constantly surrounded by people who are traveling from all over Israel just to come see Him.

On this day, Jesus' own family was attempting to **restrain Him**, thinking that Jesus was "**out of his mind**" - not thinking straight. Maybe they were concerned about the religious leaders who were keeping a close eye on Jesus.

Mark 3:22

The **scribes** who had come down **from Jerusalem** said, "He is possessed by Beelzebul," and, "He drives out demons by the ruler of the demons."

These **scribes from Jerusalem** were well-trained religious leaders who opposed Jesus. They might have seen Jesus cast out demons, and no doubt had heard about this. But rather than credit Jesus with these unparalleled acts, they reason that Jesus can do this is because He is **possessed by Beelzebul - the ruler of the demons**. **Beelzebul** was a term used for the one who rules other demons - we would call him **Satan** or the **devil**. **Beelzebul**, the term used in our text today, is the Greek version of Baal-zebul meaning "lord [**Baal**] of the dwelling [**zebul**]"...or **ruler of the house**.

Mark 3:23-25

So he summoned them and spoke to them in parables: "**How can Satan drive out Satan?** If a kingdom is divided against itself, that kingdom cannot stand. If a house is divided against itself, that house cannot stand.

A team that STANDS TOGETHER has a chance to win. But a team that's **DIVIDED** against itself will eventually fall apart! Jesus notes that this is a silly argument. How can Jesus be possessed by Satan while silencing his servants and kicking them out of people they possess?

Mark 3:26-27

And **if Satan opposes himself** and is divided, **he cannot stand** but is finished. But no one can enter a strong man's house and plunder his possessions unless he first ties up the strong man. Then he can plunder his house.

Jesus is referring to WHO as "**a strong man**"? Satan. Who is the One who ties up the strong man to plunder his house? Jesus! John the Baptist said that **Someone Stronger was coming**. Now Jesus is showing just how strong He is - stronger than Satan, demons, and these religious leaders. Jesus is PROVING He is now in charge - invading and wreaking havoc on Satan's kingdom!

Mark 3:28-30

"Truly I tell you, people will be forgiven for all sins and whatever blasphemies they utter. But **whoever blasphemes against the Holy Spirit never has forgiveness**, but is guilty of an eternal sin"—because they were saying, "He has an unclean spirit."

These scribes were worried, not only denying the miracles of Jesus, but even attributing them to spirit of Satan instead of the Spirit of God. With that, Jesus fires a warning shot right across their bow.

The other gospels note that even a person who "speaks a word against the Son of Man will be forgiven". So even those who once speak against Jesus can be forgiven, IF they repent of sin and turn to trust Jesus.

If people who repent can be forgiven for these sins, even denying or speaking evil of Jesus, sexual impurity, blasphemy against God, persecuting Christians - the list goes on and on.

❓ Why is the one who **blasphemes the Holy Spirit** not able to be forgiven?

IS IT POSSIBLE that YOU are Guilty of the Unforgivable Sin? Check out the article Jackie wrote.

We have listed all the Greek uses of the Greek term typically translated as blasphemy in the New Testament (and can get you a copy if you email or ask Jackie).

- NOT ONE of these passages beyond the Gospels refer to **blasphemy of the Spirit** - nor remind the reader of it being an unforgivable sin.

❓ If blasphemy of the Spirit is such a dangerous thing to do - unforgivable...why NO MENTION of it in Acts-Revelation?

In context, it's not a mystery. Mark has just noted the scribes attached the exorcisms of Jesus by the power of the devil.

According to Jesus, blasphemy against the Spirit is what happened when a person saw His miracles and STILL claimed that He was empowered by Satan rather than empowered by the Holy Spirit. **They have the Messiah in their midst.**

They have PROOF of His claims in His many miracles, yet they attribute these powers to Satan instead of the Spirit.



Unforgivable Sin?

Since they were convinced that Jesus is an agent of Satan - despite the evidence of the Holy Spirit's miraculous work - they would never seek Him for forgiveness. Jesus is holding **those people** - the ones who saw Him and heard Him - more accountable than ANY OTHER.

- The **blasphemy against the Spirit** that Jesus spoke of could only be committed by people who SAW Jesus perform miracles & still chose to attribute those works to Satan instead of to the Holy Spirit. And...THAT sin could never be forgiven.

🌟 **NT Wright:** "Once you declare that the spring of fresh water is in fact polluted, you will never drink from it."¹

>So what's all this MEAN for you and me? **YOU could never commit blasphemy of the Holy Spirit like Jesus talked about.** Therefore, **NOTHING you have done is UNFORGIVABLE...IF you repent and turn to Jesus.**

Mark 3:31-35

His mother and his brothers came, and standing outside, they sent word to him and called him. A crowd was sitting around him and told him, "Look, your mother, your brothers, and your sisters are outside asking for you." He replied to them, "Who are my mother and my brothers?" Looking at those sitting in a circle around him, he said, "Here are my mother and my brothers! **Whoever does the will of God is my brother and sister and mother.**"

Remember that Jesus' family had earlier tried to restrain Jesus and bring him home? Here we go again.

- Notice how Mark has arranged these events. First, Jesus' FAMILY thinks He's out of His mind. Then the SCRIBES claim He's possessed by Satan. And now Mark returns to His FAMILY. This is sometimes called a Markan sandwich, where one story is interrupted by another before returning to the first.

Whoever does the will of God...is His family!

Jesus is making something clear: Our relationship with HIM must come before every other relationship—even our own family! And if your family or friends try to keep you from obeying God, remember that you have ANOTHER FAMILY—the family of Jesus—people who will encourage you to follow Him!

❓ **Is that what YOUR life is known for—obeying the will of God?** Or are you more concerned about what your family and friends think than what GOD thinks?

Not strong enough to stand up when others reject you? Not strong enough to walk away from my sin and follow Jesus?

JESUS IS SOMEONE STRONGER! He will give you the strength to do what He's calling you to do! He will surround you with His people to encourage you, and He will walk with you as you follow Him!

🌟 **C. S. Lewis:** "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 don't let us come with any patronizing nonsense about His being a great human teacher. He hasn't left that open to us. He didn't intend to."²

❓ **How are YOU responding to Jesus?**

Are you simply *familiar* with Jesus, or are you actually **FOLLOWING** Jesus?

✝ Here's the GOOD NEWS! **Jesus is strong enough to rescue YOU from sin and death!**

Jesus came to rescue sinners, bring them into His FAMILY, and transform their lives! Ask Him to take over!

heretoserveyou

Have questions and need some help? ...real soon...how about now? Please **call** or **text** us soon!

* Contact **Jackie** (850-673-1582), **Christy** (850-673-9764), **Caleb** (864-315-8015), **Gary** (850-673-2507), **Betty** (850-973-3266), or another follower of Jesus soon!

* Or call our **deacons & wives: Alan & Christy Androski** (850-464-1428), **Noel & Patricia Barnes** (813-767-2881), **Derek & Emily Beaty** (813-763-4421), or **Chris & Caitlin Day** (850-673-7920), **Glen & Margie Peacock** (850-464-1484).

¹ Tom Wright, Luke for Everyone (London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 2004), 150.

² C.S. Lewis, Mere Christianity, Book II, Chapter 3 ("The Shocking Alternative")

Discussion questions

These questions are designed to help you LIVE what you LEARN with your family, friends, or small group.

1. **Read Mark 3:7–12.** Why were so many people coming to Jesus? What did the demons recognize about Jesus that many people did not? What does this teach us about the difference between knowing *ABOUT* Jesus and truly *KNOWING* Jesus?
2. **Read Mark 3:13–19.** Jesus called the Twelve first to *BE WITH HIM*, then to *GO* and serve under His authority. Why is spending time with Jesus essential before attempting to serve Him? What are some practical ways we can prioritize being with Jesus this week?
3. **Read Mark 3:22–27.** When the scribes accused Jesus of being empowered by Satan, how did Jesus respond? What does the illustration of the strong man teach us about Jesus' power and authority over Satan?
4. **Read Mark 3:20–21 and 31–35.** Even Jesus' own family misunderstood Him. How does Jesus redefine what it means to be part of His family? Have you ever faced opposition or misunderstanding from family or friends because of your commitment to follow Jesus? How did you respond?
5. Jesus said, "Whoever does the will of God is my brother and sister and mother" (Mark 3:35). What's the difference between being familiar with Jesus and actually *FOLLOWING* Jesus? What evidence should there be in our lives that we belong to His family?
6. Throughout this passage, Jesus demonstrates that He is **SOMEONE STRONGER!** Where in your life are you struggling to obey Jesus because you don't feel strong enough? How does knowing that you're following Someone Stronger encourage you to trust and obey Him this week?
7. Share prayer needs and lift each other up to our King!