

Pastor Dustin Daniels | River Bible Church

Mark: 3:20-35 | Controlling Jesus

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INTRO:

Last week we saw Jesus leave the big city crowds.

He has too many people wanting too much from Him.

Jesus is in a crisis. He needs to make some tough decisions.

Jesus needs to create [appoint and ordain] more people to carry out His gospel message.

Now, He doesn't make this decision on His own.

He climbs a mountain so He can listen to the voice of His Father.

Jesus needs a place to be quiet—away from the noise of the world.

He prays. He listens, and then He obeys.

Jesus chooses twelve ordinary men as Apostles.

And we met them up close and personal last week.

This week, Jesus and his newly appointed Apostles come back into town to find the crowds waiting for them.

And we're going to see something that Mark likes to do in his gospel.

And that is to sandwich one story in the middle of another.

By doing so, Mark not only demonstrates a relationship between the two stories but, by combining the two stories, makes a new point.

What is that point? Well, let's find out!

****PLEASE STAND for the reading of God's Word****

SCRIPTURE: Mark 3:20-35

- **Mark 3:20 CSB** — Jesus entered a house, and the crowd gathered again so that they were not even able to eat.
- **Mark 3:21 CSB** — When Jesus' family heard this, they set out to restrain Him, because they said, "He's out of His mind."
- **Mark 3:22 CSB** — The scribes who had come down from Jerusalem said, "He is possessed by <Bee-L-zuh-bul> Beelzebul," and, "He drives out demons by the ruler of the demons."
- **Mark 3:23 CSB** — So Jesus summoned them and spoke to them in parables: "How can Satan drive out Satan?"
- **Mark 3:24 CSB** — If a kingdom is divided against itself, that kingdom cannot stand.
- **Mark 3:25 CSB** — If a house is divided against itself, that house cannot stand.
- **Mark 3:26 CSB** — And if Satan opposes himself and is divided, he cannot stand but is finished.
- **Mark 3:27 CSB** — 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.

- **Mark 3:28 CSB** — "Truly I tell you, people will be forgiven for all sins and whatever blasphemies they utter."
- **Mark 3:29 CSB** — But whoever blasphemes against the Holy Spirit never has forgiveness, but is guilty of an eternal sin" —
- **Mark 3:30 CSB** — because they were saying, "He has an unclean spirit."
- **Mark 3:31 CSB** — His mother and his brothers came, and standing outside, they sent word to Jesus and called Him.
- **Mark 3:32 CSB** — A crowd was sitting around Jesus and told him, "Look, your mother, your brothers, and your sisters are outside asking for you."
- **Mark 3:33 CSB** — He replied to them, "Who are my mother and my brothers?"
- **Mark 3:34 CSB** — Looking at those sitting in a circle around him, He said, "Here are my mother and my brothers!"
- **Mark 3:35 CSB** — Whoever does the will of God is my brother and sister and mother."

— **PRAY:**

Amen. Please be seated.

EXEGESIS:

Mark 3:20 CSB — Jesus entered a house, and the crowd gathered again so that they were not even able to eat.

As soon as Jesus came down from the mountain after choosing His twelve Apostles, Mark tells us that the crowd is still there.

More than likely, Jesus and His newly created Apostles are going back to the city of Capernaum.

Let me ask you this—What happens when a crowd is waiting to see a famous person and finally see him?

The crowd becomes more passionate than before!

So it seems that the public frenzy continues to grow.

The crowds are consuming so much of Jesus' time that He and His disciples don't have time to eat.

All this news gets back to Jesus' family.

Mark 3:21 CSB — When His family heard this, they set out to restrain Jesus, because they said, "He's out of his mind."

He's not even taking time to eat! What's wrong w/ Him?

So Jesus' family is disturbed by all the news about Jesus.

The idea in this verse is that Jesus has "lost His mind, He's beside Himself, He's insane."

His mother, Mary, of course, did not think that. She knows the truth.

Jesus' half brothers and sisters, on the other hand, didn't believe Him (John 7:5).

Can you imagine that conversation?

Mary is bringing all of Jesus' brothers and sisters around and telling them about the virgin birth.

That Joseph, Mary's husband, their father— is not Jesus' father.

That their half brother was conceived by the Holy Spirit?

That Jesus is indeed the God of the universe—and was born in a barn and placed in a horse trough?

And wise men came to offer gifts!

Can you imagine that conversation?

Regardless, it seems that at the whole family traveling from Nazareth to Capernaum. It's about 20 miles.

This is about a day and a half, two days journey.

Make a note here; it's not just the religious authorities who think Jesus is crazy— it's also those closest to Him—his family.

Back to

Mark 3:21 CSB —When His family heard this, they set out to restrain Jesus..

Your translation may say, "take charge, lay hold, seize, take custody" of Jesus.

This is the same concept of when John the Baptist was seized and arrested.

It's the same image as when the Jews arrested Jesus. They "seized" Him.

Get this...

come home

His family is traveling for the sole purpose of forcing Jesus to return home with them.

Notice here; they want to control Jesus, just like the religious leaders.

But why? A couple of reasons.

① His family heard that Jesus was going toe-to-toe with the religious leaders.

His family was probably concerned that when the religious leaders decided to crack down on Jesus, they also would crack down on everyone close to Him.

Maybe they wanted to control Jesus for their own reputations.

Secondly, it's also possible that the family wanted to rescue Jesus from the crowds.

On the flip side of this is Jesus' friends.

It's possible that they also noticed that Jesus was acting a bit differently.

But it seems that everyone is misunderstanding Jesus' actions.

It appears that they thought that Jesus needed to be protected from Himself because His zeal showed signs of insanity.

This reminds me of when the Apostle Paul was standing before King Agrippa and Festus in the book of Acts. (Acts 26:24).

Paul evidently got really excited telling them about his conversion, and Festus says,

"Paul, you are beside yourself! Much learning is driving you mad!!!" (Acts 26:24b).



Hey, there's nothing wrong w/ being excited about Jesus.

now

Matthew gives us a critical piece of information that Mark doesn't mention.

cf. Matthew 12:22 CSB — Then a demon-possessed man who was blind and unable to speak was brought to Jesus. Jesus healed him so that the man could both speak and see.

This is big!

NOTI TAKERS...

Get out your pens and your highlighters, because this moment is a game-changer.

Demon possession

The Jews would use a formula/procedure to cast out demons.

It was quite lengthy and complicated.

During this procedure, the exorcist would try and find out the demon's name so that the demon could be addressed directly.

Knowing the name of the demon was the most successful tool to cast him out of the person.

Jesus also uses this method where He casts out a Legion of demons from a man who lived in a graveyard. (Mark 5:9)

Normally, however, Jesus would just command the demon to come out of the person without any rituals.

And that is what made Jesus' exorcisms so different.

~~He commanded the demons to come out—his authority to do so.~~

Here's the key point:

If the demon caused the person to be deaf, there was no way of finding its name.

But here in Matthew 12:22, we see that Jesus cast this demon out, and afterward, the man could both speak and see.

Anyway

How was Jesus able to do that?

No one has ever done this before!

Mtc: Deaf

This is what's called a messianic miracle.

This was a miracle that only God could do.

It's Jesus' second messianic miracle. The first was when Jesus healed the leper.

cf. Matthew 12:23 CSB —All the crowds were astounded and said, "Could this be the Son of David?"

Before, people wondered what kind of authority and power, Jesus had to perform these exorcisms. (Lk. 4:36).

But after this particular exorcism, people asked a very different question.

"Could this be the Son of David?"

"The Son of David" is a messianic title.

Messiah means "God's anointed," and its translated "Christ."

The name *Jesus* means "God Saves."

Christ isn't Jesus' last name; it's His title—"God's Anointed."

Jesus Christ = God Saves by God's Anointed

So the Jewish leaders hear this question, and they know people are asking if Jesus is The Messiah.

The crowds realized that this miracle is so unique that only God could perform it.

The Jewish people were willing to ask the question, but they looked to their leaders for the answer.

And when all eyes were on their leaders, they responded...

Mark 3:22 CSB — ~~The scribes who had come down from Jerusalem said,~~ "He is possessed by <Bee-L-zuh-bul> Beelzebul," and, "He drives out demons by the ruler of the demons."

This was by far the most vicious charge against Jesus.

The religious leaders could not deny the fact that Jesus was casting out demons and healing the sick.

But they said that His supernatural power came from Satan.

They accused Jesus of casting out demons by the help of, in the name of, and under the authority of Satan.

That was Israel's official answer to the crowds question.

They said that Jesus was in alliance with Satan, subordinate to him, and dependent on Satan's power to cast out demons.

And you know what, Israel believed their leaders.

<Bee-L-zuh-bul> Beelzebul comes from the pagan god <Bay-L-zuh-bul> "Baalezebul."

That may sound familiar—comes from Baal.

<Bay-L-zuh-bul> "Baalezebul" is one of the god's of the Philistine's.

Whenever you hear Philistine, think Israel's arch-enemy.

The name <Bay-L-zuh-bul> "Baalezebul" means Baal the Prince.

^{Now,} The Jews, evidently like to poke fun of these various pagan gods in their spare time.

So in extra-Biblical writings, the scribes and Jewish theologians changed a few letters in the name of <Bay-L-zuh-bul> Baalezebul.

Baalezebul became <Bee-L-zuh-bul> or <Bee-L-zuh-bub>

Beelzebub, which means "Lord of the flies or lord of the dung."

Who said the Jews didn't know how to have fun! These guys know how to party!

Maybe you've read the book, *The Lord of the Flies* is a takeoff on this title for <Bee-L-zuh-bul> Beelzebub.

Why would Israel's best and brightest accuse Jesus of such a harsh allegation?

The answer is that it made no sense to them that God would empower this uneducated handyman named Jesus of Nazareth to do all these things!

Especially since He had so little regard for their traditions.

So, the Pharisees had only two options.

1. To officially recognize Jesus is the long-awaited Messiah/Christ.

2. To reject the fact that He was their Messiah.

So they go with option number two.

But they had a problem. They had to explain away Jesus' miracles.

So they came up with a rather clever solution by accusing Jesus of being a demon.

Pause... Does it make sense that Jesus would do good things for people with the power of Satan?

Satan's mission is to steal, kill, and destroy.

And the religious leaders knew that!

But... that's their story and their sticking to it.

- Jesus is a demon.

But once again, Jesus responds as only Jesus can.

leaders of Israel

Mark 3:23 CSB — So Jesus summoned them and spoke to them in parables: "How can Satan drive out Satan?"

~~Notice here who Jesus is speaking to — "them." The religious leaders.~~

~~So Jesus is going to tell the religious leaders a parable to respond to these accusations.~~

Parable—story with double meaning

Jesus asked the question, "**How can Satan drive out Satan?**"

What's that even mean? Jesus elaborates.

Mark 3:24 CSB — If a kingdom is divided against itself, that kingdom cannot stand.

- husband, Luke 2:13

— **Mark 3:25 CSB** — If a house is divided against itself, that house cannot stand.

— **Mark 3:26 CSB** — And if Satan opposes himself and is divided, he cannot stand but is finished.

Everybody knows that a nation or a house where people can't get along— will eventually fall apart.

If a country or a family or a Church is not unified, they will split into cliques or groups.

And when this starts to happen—people begin to take sides—the organization's existence is done. *Threatened*

So if Satan was allowing Jesus to drive out his own demons, he was fighting against himself.

If **Satan** were destroying his own work, then his kingdom would be fall apart.

This is not a good war strategy.

The fact that Jesus spent so much time exposing, confronting, rebuking, and casting out demons is proof that He was not empowered by Satan. (cf. Matt. 8:29; 10:1; 12:22; Mark 3:11; 9:29; Luke 8:2; 11:14)

Everything Jesus did, from His miracles to His preaching— as opposed to Satan.

Notice how, when Jesus is moving from one parable/metaphor to the next, the parables—stories within stories— became an instrument of judgment.

One last parable...

Judges the matter of Israel

Mark 3:27 CSB — 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.

If a burglar wants to break into a home, he must think of a way to restrain the owner.

He might point a gun at him; he might drug him, or have his partners in crime overtake him and tie him up.

If he doesn't do that, he can't steal his stuff.

Verse 27 is an allegory.

The strong man is Satan.

The strong man's house is Satan's domain — the present world.

His possessions are the victims whom he's ^{people of demon possession} taken captive.

The stronger one is Jesus, who has come from God.

~~So Jesus invaded Satan's house and tied him up.~~

~~Remember, when Jesus spent forty days being tempted by Satan?~~

~~The gospel of Mark doesn't describe in detail the temptation in the desert.~~

~~But Jesus must have bound Satan for Him to plunder his house now.~~

And with verse 27, Jesus finished His defense against the ridiculous charge that He was a demon and working with Satan.

But Jesus did not stop there. He went on to give the religious leaders a ~~firm~~ ^{stern} warning. He said:

— **Mark 3:28 CSB** — "Truly I tell you, people will be forgiven for all sins and whatever blasphemies they utter."

— **Mark 3:29 CSB** — "But whoever blasphemes against the Holy Spirit never has forgiveness, but is guilty of an eternal sin" —

— **Mark 3:30 CSB** — because they were saying, "He has an unclean spirit."

This is one most disturbing and confusing statements of Jesus.

At this point, let's slow down and define blasphemy.

* Blasphemy, in a general sense, involves speaking a word against God. ^{→ Showing Contempt for God}

It is a violation of the holiness of God.

This can involve insulting Him, mocking Him, or dishonoring Him.

It's the opposite of praising Him.

It's demeaning and discrediting God's power and sovereignty.

Even using the name of God by saying, "Oh, my God," constitutes blasphemy.

Taking the name of *Jesus Christ* in vain is blasphemy.

Please know that the reason the world does this — ~~and no one else~~ — is because the only name you can take in vain is the only name that can save.

^{This is serious}
Because God's name is holy, and we are not to take speak it casually.

Now, if you've done that, I have good news.

Jesus just told us that blasphemy is forgivable.

The Apostle Paul confirms it.

cf. 1 Timothy 1:13 CSB —even though I was formerly a blasphemer, a persecutor, and an arrogant man. But I received mercy because I acted out of ignorance in unbelief,

so that's blasphemy

Now, let's define the *Blasphemy of the Holy Spirit*.

The Holy Spirit is the third person of the Trinity/Godhead.

Father, Son, Holy Spirit.

One God in three person.

Each "person" has a separate role and function.

We use the word "person" for us as humans to grasp the holiness and the mystery of God.

~~Sinful to say that Jesus is the Son of God - shows relationship~~

God is not like us.

brother → humane

Blasphemy of the Holy Spirit is an ongoing conscious and deliberate rejection of God's saving power through the Holy Spirit.

Throughout Scripture we see examples of how this sin is a progressive sin.

During the Exodus, Pharaoh hardens his heart over and over, and then one day, God says, "Time's Up," and then God hardened Pharaoh's heart.

We see this again not only with the religious leaders, but the the people of Israel.

So in today's text, we see the religious leaders harden their heart to Jesus and the Holy Spirit power that is in Him.

FAST FORWARD

— **cf. John 19:14 CSB** — Then Pilate told the Jews, "Here is your king!"

The Jews shouted, "Take him away! Crucify him!" Crucify him!"

— **cf. John 19:15 CSB** — Pilate said to them, "Should I crucify your king?"

"We have no king but Caesar!" the chief priests answered.

wow
The Jews verbally proclaimed that Caesar is their king.

And yet, Jesus said...

— **cf. Matthew 10:32 CSB** — ...everyone who will acknowledge me before others, I will also acknowledge him before my Father in heaven.

— **cf. Matthew 10:33 CSB** — But whoever denies me before others, I will also deny him before my Father in heaven.

From today's Scripture passage, all the way through the crucifixion of Jesus, the people of Israel hardened the heart against the miraculous saving power of the Holy Spirit.

So when people continually deny the working power of God,

Jesus says that this sin is unforgivable.

And the reason that their sin is unforgivable is that they rejected God's plan of salvation for mankind. — *they want to get to God on their own terms*

What does God's Word say about the security of your salvation?

Scripture makes one point very, very clear— over and over.

Jesus came to save sinners through his blood on the Roman cross. Amen?!

Best News Ever

There is no sin that Jesus' blood won't forgive for God's children.

How do you know that you are truly a child of God?

cf. Romans 10:9 CSB—If you confess with your mouth, "Jesus is Lord," and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.

The blood of Jesus Christ covers all sin!

If you are concerned that you have committed the sin of *blaspheming the Holy Spirit*—you haven't.

By asking the question, because you raise the very question, shows that your heart is repentant.

cf. Ephesians 1:13 CSB—In Jesus, you also were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit when you heard the word of truth...when you believed.

cf. Ephesians 1:14 CSB—The Holy Spirit is the down payment of our inheritance...

God has given you Himself when you believed.

You are sealed forever through Christ's penal substitutionary work on the cross.

You that you are saved from yourself and saved from God's wrath.

And because of this promise—sealing—you can't blaspheme the Holy Spirit.

You don't and wouldn't want to.

Now, you can still sin, and do sin, and repentance is needed for that.

But that is very different from *blaspheming the Holy Spirit*.

All that to say...

Israel's explanation of Jesus being demonic became the official basis for the rejection of Jesus not being the Messiah.

They said Jesus was demon-possessed; therefore, He could not be the Messiah.

The main Jewish tradition is this—*"Jesus is a magician and a deceiver. He founded and led a movement that tried to lead Israel away from the one true God and his Torah. He used deception and magic in miracles worked by and alliance with evil. Like all deceivers, He was rightly tried and executed for his religious crimes, as the Hebrew Bible directs."*

Although this was the official basis for rejecting Jesus as the Messiah.

The real reason is that the Jews didn't get their way.

So while all this drama is going on, look what happens in verse 31.

Mark 3:31 CSB — *His mother and his brothers came, and standing outside, they sent word to him and called him.*

Mark now turns back to the family. *He finishes the story he started w/.*

They arrived from Nazareth.

Jesus' immediate family is now on the outside.

Notice here; they are "outsiders."

— **Mark 3:32 CSB** — A crowd was sitting around Jesus and told him, "Look, your mother, your brothers, and your sisters are outside asking for you."

The obligations of a son in a Jewish family are immense.

It was a son's duty to honor his father and mother.

But Jesus knows what's going on.

He knows his family doesn't understand what's happening.

It's almost as if Jesus' family unknowingly joins the religious leaders in trying to get Jesus off mission.

— **Mark 3:33 CSB** — Jesus replied to them, "Who are my mother and my brothers?"

This is probably not the verse you want to use on your next Mother's Day card.

— **Mark 3:34 CSB** — Looking at those sitting in a circle around him, Jesus said, "Here are my mother and my brothers!

Pause
Stop the presses! This is a radical assertion.

Jesus is rejecting the traditional structure of the family.

And then provided his new definition of the family!

The new family includes a group of people not bound by blood but bound by a spiritual commitment by doing God's will.

Now, Jesus is not demeaning the importance of the traditional family, which is maintained throughout the Scriptures.

But what He is doing is explaining the importance of a new family, the church.

There is a deeper relationship in the family of God than in the family of man.

Mark 3:35 CSB — *Whoever does the will of God is my brother and sister and mother.*

The Lord's point was that the only relationship to Him that matters is not physical but spiritual.

Remember when Jesus was speaking to one of the Pharisees, named Nicodemus.

cf. John 3:3 CSB — *Jesus replied, "Truly I tell you, unless someone is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God."*

PREACH:

We have a lot of stuff going on with today's passage.

But there is an underlying theme that I want to finish on today.

We touched on it at the very beginning.

And that was, think about how many people were trying to control Jesus.

Not just the religious leaders, but His own family.

These people are trying to tame Jesus.

They are trying to get Him to stop.

They are trying to get Him off mission.

His own family calls Jesus "insane!"

Tosh Jay!

The religious leaders say He has a demon!

Here's the thing...

And here we are 2,000 years later, and many of us are doing the same thing.

We're trying to Control Jesus.

In what ways are you trying to control Jesus?

Are you bargaining with God?

If you do this, I'll do that?

Are you interfering in the lives of other people and standing between them and Jesus? —Your trying to be the Savior.

Do you refuse to accept some new realities in your life?

Are you resisting the changes that Jesus is trying to make in you?

Are you insisting that we just get on with life and hoping that things will get back to normal?

I pray that you would do some business with the Lord in this area.

Encore

Ask Him, "In what ways am I trying to control you?"

next week

~~Lastly, because the religious leaders publicly reject Jesus as the Messiah,~~

Jesus immediately changes his preaching style.

From this point forward, Jesus purposely hides the message of salvation from the Jewish leaders.

He intentionally hides the gospel message from the Jewish people as well.

For the next six weeks, we're going to go over a slew of parables to see why Jesus would do such a crazy thing.

If you have spiritual questions, please don't leave here today without talking to someone.

Ray and Debrey will be in the prayer room. They will pray for you and address the questions that you have.

Prayer:

BENEDICTION:

2 Corinthians 13:14—The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

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