

## The Servant Accused!

C. S. Lewis in his book *Mere Christianity* says, *"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 let us not come with any patronizing nonsense about his being a great human teacher. He has not left that open to us. He did not intend to... Now it seems to me obvious that He was neither a lunatic nor a fiend: and consequently, however strange or terrifying or unlikely it may seem, I have to accept the view that He was and is God."*

Now I can't be sure about it, but I have a sneaky suspicion that C.S. Lewis may have discovered that paradigm in Mark 3 because of all things in this passage, in verse 21 Jesus' family calls Him a lunatic. In verse 22 the scribes, the religious leaders, say He's possessed by Beelzebul and thus they call Him a liar who claims to be from God but, in fact, is from Satan. While on the other hand, finally, the testimony of the Holy Spirit down in verse 29, of course, is implied and the testimony of the Holy Spirit is He is Lord of all.

We're going to be looking at the last section of Mark chapter 3. It's a prolonged section and it's really a story within a story. Mark does this a lot in his gospel. Bible scholars have called it a Markan sandwich. He sandwiches one event in between the beginning and ending of another. In verses 20 and 21, Mark tells about **"His own people,"** that is, His family and friends who come to **"lay hold of Him, for they said, 'He is out of His mind.'"**

Mark picks that story up again in verse 31 when **"His brothers and His mother came, and standing outside they sent to Him, calling Him."** In the middle Mark sandwiches verses 22-29 where Jesus responds to the accusation that He is demon possessed, and He talks about forgiveness and the unforgivable sin.

If you are curious about the blasphemy of the Holy Spirit and the unforgivable sin, you will have to come next week, because we are not going to get that far today. I will devote a whole message to that subject next week. And the following week we will study verses 31-35 about Jesus' true family. But today we want to study verses 20-27 and consider the things His friends and enemies accused Him of.

**20 Then the multitude came together again, so that they could not so much as eat bread.**

**21 But when His own people heard about this, they went out to lay hold of Him, for they said, "He is out of His mind."**

**22 And the scribes who came down from Jerusalem said, "He has Beelzebub," and, "By the ruler of the demons He casts out demons."**

**23 So He called them to Himself and said to them in parables: "How can Satan cast out Satan?"**

**24 If a kingdom is divided against itself, that kingdom cannot stand.**

**25 And if a house is divided against itself, that house cannot stand.**

**26 And if Satan has risen up against himself, and is divided, he cannot stand, but has an end.**

**27 No one can enter a strong man's house and plunder his goods, unless he first binds the strong man. And then he will plunder his house.**

Now we have seen already in Mark's gospel, Jesus faced criticism from some of the religious leaders, particularly from the Scribes and Pharisees. In this episode He faces opposition to His ministry in two forms and from two sources. First of all it comes, surprisingly so, from Jesus' friends and family. Then secondly we see again it comes also from His enemies, the Scribes and the Pharisees.

### **I. Opposition from Friends and Family**

#### **Accusation: He is Deranged!**

Now let's look first of all at the first source of the Lord's opposition, verse 21 - it says: **'His friends heard of it'**, or His own people heard of it, **'and they went out to lay hold on him: for they said, He is beside himself'** or 'He is out of his mind'. These were close friends of the Lord, perhaps even His relatives - if you look down at verse 31 that we will deal with in a later week, it says **"Then His brothers and His mother came, and standing outside they sent to Him, calling Him."**

Now we're not told precisely what they wanted to say to the Lord Jesus, but it is likely that, whatever it was, it involved a concern either for His safety, or for His reputation as a prophet and a miracle worker - it might have been that they heard what Jesus was teaching, what He was saying, what He was doing, and they feared for Him. They assumed, 'He's gone mad, He's out of His mind, He's beside Himself'. Now of course we know that the Lord Jesus had brothers and sisters, half brothers and sisters according to the flesh. Mark 6 and verse 3 tells us that, but John 7 and verse 5 also informs us that some of His half brothers in the flesh did not believe in Him. Now eventually they did, but at this point they didn't.

Why would they think Jesus was crazy? Look at the evidence:

- He left home to wander around the country and preach.
- He claims to have the authority to forgive sin, in other words, He claims to be God – Mark 2:5

- He calls men to follow Him around the country to preach the Word – Mark 3:13-18
- He does not have time to rest or even to eat – Mark 3:20
- He draws such vast crowds that there is a danger of His being trampled and crushed by the crowds – Mark 3:9. The danger was so real that Jesus had a boat standing by in case He needed to escape the press of the crowds.

His friends and family misunderstood Jesus and His ministry. Because they couldn't understand Him, they thought He was off His rocker.

Friends and family said, 'Jesus, you're deranged! You are deranged! You're mad! You've got a Messiah-complex'. 'You're out of your mind!' - and they sought to take Him away. They probably were embarrassed by the zeal of what they saw as a religious fanatic in the family. Does that sound familiar to any of you? Maybe that's what you have been for many years to some who belong to you. If you are on fire for God, or have a desire to be on fire for God, many times family and friends see you as a fanatic. That's how they viewed Christ.

You might as well come to terms with it today, not everyone is happy that you got saved! There will be some people in your family and among your friends that will criticize you for living for Jesus. They will call you fanatic, Jesus freak, religious nut, holier than thou, Holy Roller, preacher, deacon, etc. Of course, Jesus said it would be this way, Matt. 10:34-38.

Don't be shocked at what your family and friends will do to get you off this "Jesus kick". They will try to talk you out of your commitment. They will try to make you feel guilty for putting Jesus and the church ahead of them. They might even try to tempt you to sin. They will try anything they can to draw you away from the Lord. Doing so makes them look better in their own eyes!

When their attacks come, stay strong in your commitment to Him, 1 Cor. 15:58; Gal. 6:9. He saved your soul; He changed your life; He is your Lord; not them. He will help you to stand for Him and live for Him in spite of what anyone else may throw across your path.

J.R. Miller says this, and I think it's wonderful, he says: 'If there were more of this insanity there would not be so many unsaved souls dying under the very shadow of our churches, it would not be so hard to get missionaries and money to send the gospel to the dark continents. There would not be so many empty pews in our churches, so many long pauses in our prayer meetings, so few to teach in our Sunday Schools. It would be a glorious thing if all Christians were beside themselves as the Master was, or as Paul was. It is a far worse insanity which, in this world, never gives a thought to any other world; which, moving continually among lost men, never pities them nor thinks of their lost condition, nor puts forth any effort to save them'. Are you a fanatic for Jesus Christ? You should be.

They accused Christ of being deranged, that was His friends. What do His enemies say? They accused Him not of being deranged, but of being demonic.

## **2. Opposition from His Foes.**

### **Accusation: He is demonic!**

Verse 22, the Scribes didn't think He was insane, far from it, they thought He was wickedness personified. They accused Him of casting out demons by the power of Beelzebub, which means 'The Lord of dung flies', or 'The Lord of filth.'

So who is this Beelzebub? Well that's a good question. The word itself comes from the ancient world of the Canaanites and the Philistines. It was a derisive term to the Jewish people. Beelzebub was a loathsome, wicked demon associated with all things dirty and filthy. It was a cruel, heartless attack.

They says Beelzebub is the ruler of demons, So it was another name for Satan. They said: 'You're casting out devils by the Devil.'

So, they attack Jesus and accuse Him of being in league with the devil. If this charge sticks, they can undermine His ministry with the people and draw away His crowds.

The Answer – Jesus calls His attackers to Him and He totally destroys their arguments. He uses three illustrations from life that prove Satan cannot be in the business of casting out Satan.

**A. v. 24 A Secular Illustration** – A kingdom in division is a kingdom that cannot stand. When there is civil war and strife within a kingdom, the stability of that kingdom is compromised and that kingdom is more likely to fall. For a kingdom to be strong it must be united.

Satan is out to win the battle between himself and the Lord. He is not going to do anything to weaken himself in that fight. For him to cast out his own demons would be counterproductive.

**B. v. 25 A Social Illustration** – A house that exists in division is a house that cannot stand. Children who grow up in a home where mom and dad fight like cats and dogs do not stand a chance. A marriage that faces a constant barrage of fighting is a marriage that cannot stand. A home is not a home unless it is filled with love, unity and peace.

Again, Satan is out to win! He is not in the business of fighting with himself. It doesn't make sense!

That which is true in a kingdom and in a home is also true in the church. Unity gives us great power with God and against our enemies. Division on the other hand destroys us from within! It is imperative that the church maintain a unity of love and purpose in the midst of differing opinions, 1 Cor. 1:10; Phil. 1:27; 1 Pet. 3:8-9.)

**C. A Spiritual Illustration** – Jesus says that you cannot rob a well defended home unless you first tie up the defender of that home. The illustration is clear, Satan defends his kingdom, but Jesus had the power to invade Satan's kingdom and deliver whomsoever he desires from the devil's grip. Jesus has power over the devil!

It may be that you are in the grip of sin and the devil. Do not despair! Jesus is able to set you free. He is more powerful than Satan and He can invade the fortress of your heart and break the shackles that have you bound. He is able to set the sinner free! (Ill. Rev. 5:9; Gal. 4:5; 1 Pet. 1:18-19)

It may be that you have someone whom you love that is in the grip of sin and the devil. Again, do not despair! Our Lord is able to touch their heart and set them free. He is able to break the bondage of their sinful addictions and give them new life in Himself. Never stop believing and never stop praying. The Lord knows where they are He knows how to reach them.