

Mark 3:13-35 - Not Ashamed to Call Us Siblings

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Introduction - The worldly search for acceptance that promises to protect them and give them a place of standing and honor. In Mark 3, Jesus gives His followers a new identity and rebukes rejections of His identity as the Son of God. We should believe Jesus is the Son of God and identify ourselves as members of Christ's family. Do we find ourselves doing what would bring honor to our heavenly Father and older Brother? God shows us that in our new identity, we are:

v13-19 - Appointed to follow - "And He went up on the mountain and called to Him those whom He desired"

Luke 6:12 says He prayed all night before this. Jesus gave this selection of who to invest more time in great consideration. Jesus appointed 12, reminding us of the 12 tribes of Israel. Jesus is starting a new group of God's people.¹ They are called apostles, "One who is sent with a commission."² Acts 1:21-26 - an apostle was one who was with Jesus since His baptism until His ascension. There are two purposes for calling them: 1) they might be with Him (be more like Him); 2) to preach and have authority to work miracles- expand the mission. Those become our two main purposes.

The list of apostles is also found at Matthew 10:2, Luke 6:14, Acts 1:13. Simon is called Peter, listed first. Cephas is the Aramaic (meaning "rock") and Peter is the Greek form.¹ James and John, brothers, nicknamed "Boanerges," Hebrew Aramaic, Mark translates it as "Sons of Thunder."³ The rest: Andrew (Peter's brother), Philip, Bartholemew (also goes by Nathanael), Matthew (Levi), Thomas, James the son of Alphaeus, and Thaddeus ("Judas brother of James"). Simon the Zealot - some commentators believe this is just a reflection of his worship of God.¹ Most others identify him as a member of a violent group who fought for Jewish freedom known as the Zealots. "The Zealots were an intensely nationalistic sect, the direct opposite of the tax collectors."⁴ Finally, Judas Iscariot, who betrayed Him. The only non-Galilean, Iscariot means "inhabitant of Kerioth."⁵ Kerioth was in Judea. Judas had an opportunity like the rest of them to become like Christ, but instead his heart was filled with greed and pride. Jesus knew Judas would betray Him, but Judas made the decision.

v20-30 - Not of the enemy, but of Christ - "His family heard it... saying, 'He is out of his mind.'" - In the previous passage, Jesus withdrew with His disciples to have a break from this busy ministry. Now, Mark notes they didn't even have time or space to eat. Even His family thought what was happening to Him was crazy, and thought He was too! James didn't come to faith until after the resurrection (John 7:5). Likely only His mother was at the crucifixion. "To seize Him" or "To take custody of Him" (NASB). "Out of His mind" - *Exeste* - "lose one's mind, be out of one's senses."⁶ Paul uses this word when describing how they're "beside themselves" for God (2 Cor 5:13). Mark comes back to this story in v31.

"He is possessed by Beelzebul" The Scribes accuse Him. These are the students of the law, the ones with influence. Why would they make these accusations? Matt 12:22-32 - People were asking if he was the Son of David after he healed a demon-oppressed man. Jesus has power and authority, the demons declare He's the Son of God, and the religious leaders can't compete with His following, teaching, power, or conviction. Beelzebul - "Or, Beezebul; others read Beelzebub" (NASB). It's a derogatory name for Satan the Rabbis used which means "Lord of dung or flies."⁷ Jesus calls out their foolishness using "parables" - "parabole literally means 'a placing beside,' and so 'a comparison.'⁶ The parables will show how illogical it is to claim that "Satan is casting out Satan."

"A kingdom divided cannot stand" - An earthly truth - Israel was divided North and South and eventually fell. "A house divided against itself cannot stand" - Abraham Lincoln quoted this Scripture as a candidate for the US senate. Many houses in the Bible were utterly broken apart because there was no unity in that house (David, Samuel, Gideon, most of the kings, Saul and Jonathan). If it is the case that Satan's followers are fighting against him, then he's doomed to fall. In

¹ *The Bible Knowledge Commentary*. Walvoord and Zuck. Pg. 116.

² *Wiersbe's Expository Outlines on the New Testament*. Warren W. Weirsbe. Pg. 110.

³ *New International Encyclopedia of Bible Difficulties*. Gleason L. Archer, Jr. Pg 313.

⁴ *Halley's Bible Handbook*. Henry H. Halley. Pg 556.

⁵ Strong's Definitions.

⁶ *Word Meanings in the New Testament*. Earle. Pg. 34.

⁷ Thayer's Greek Lexicon.

Matt 12:27, Jesus also reasons that the scribes have people who cast out demons. Surely the scribes wouldn't claim their own are possessed by Satan in order to cast out demons.

"No one can enter a strong man's house" The strong man, Satan, is bound up and Christ is plundering his house. Does that mean Satan is no longer able to operate on earth? No, this is a parable with a main truth: Satan won't let someone just plunder his stuff unless there was someone stronger than him. Christ is stronger than Satan and is removing people from his influence and setting the captives free.

"All sins will be forgiven" Any sin we've committed, any horrendous acts, cannot defeat the forgiveness that comes through the Son's blood. But, what does He mean that any blasphemies will be forgiven, except one? John 3:16 is not qualified. Peter denied the Lord 3 times and Paul persecuted the church, but then became a Christian. The idea in the verses is that if you're in a state of denial and rejection of Christ and the testimony of the Holy Spirit, then you're not under the atoning work of Christ and your sins will not be forgiven. Noting blasphemy against the Son is forgiven, but not the Spirit, Wiersbe frames it this way: "They [the Jewish leaders/nation] could reject the Son of God while He was on earth, and God would not judge them immediately... But when the Spirit came at Pentecost and the believers did many marvelous works, the leaders still refused to believe. This was their last opportunity: they rejected the evidence and died in unbelief."⁸ Jesus' own brothers didn't accept Him until after His resurrection. Verse 30 provides an important reminder for the context: the scribes accusing Christ of being empowered by Satan. If they claim Jesus has an "unclean Spirit," they have blasphemed the Holy Spirit, since He dwells in Christ. The testimony at Jesus' baptism is that the Holy Spirit is the power with Him and that Jesus is God's Son.

v31-35 - A doer of God's will in His family

Jesus' earthly family is struggling with belief and His activity. Jesus has at least six siblings. Joseph and Mary had normative marital intimacy after Jesus was born (Matt 1:24-25) and had at least 4 other sons (James and Joses and Judas and Simon) and at least two daughters (Mark 6:3, Mat 13:56). We don't hear about Joseph after Jesus is a young kid. Because Jesus transfers care of Mary to John at His death, Joseph has likely passed away. When the crowd told Jesus about His family outside, Jesus takes this opportunity to present a spiritual truth. He looks around at everyone sitting there and declares them His family! Jesus teaches that anyone who does the will of God is family to Him. Heb 2:11 - Jesus is not ashamed to call us His brethren (see also how God called Abraham His friend: 2Ch 20:7, Isa 41:8, Jas 2:23).

Note that He says whoever *does* the will of God. We're called to follow Christ, but true relationship with Him means being Holy and doing what He's commanded us. Matt 12:50, Luke 8:21, John 15:12-17 state this too. We can't come to Christ and not leave something behind, not conform ourselves to His image and put our flesh to death, and not stay the same person. Yet, God gave the Israelites the 10 commandments *after* He saved them from slavery. He didn't show people what to do in order for them to earn their salvation, He saved them, then showed them what they should do. Once we're in His family, we have the heart and desire to learn and do the things that are pleasing to our Father.

So, what? Now, what? The best thing we can do with ourselves is to become the woman or man that God has called us to be. Jesus has appointed and called us to be in His family, proven He's the Son of God, and showed us what it looks like to be a Child of God. Listen to the call of Christ to surrender everything to Him, follow Him, believe the testimony of the Holy Spirit, and do what He has commanded. As Jesus taught the scribes, the consequences for rejecting Him and the work of the Holy Spirit have eternal consequences.

- How can the truth that God called us to Himself change our worship and how we relate to those who don't know the Lord?
- What aspects of God's commandments are you struggling to obey? Is there a brother or sister in Christ you can call on to help you become more like Christ?
- How can we better fulfill our call to spend time with Jesus (become more like Him) and preach the Good News?
- Are you struggling to find ways to do life with unbelievers? Make a list of 5-10 activities you like doing. Circle the ones you could do to form relationships with unsaved people. Pray about using your time in this way.
- Is God calling you to missions? Serving at the local church? Pray to see how He wants you to help fish for more members of His family.

⁸ Wiersbe's *Expository Outlines on the New Testament*. Warren W. Wiersbe. Pg. 111.