

Is He Crazy?

Mark 3:20-35

INTRO:

From our side of history, it is difficult to remember that when people heard Jesus preach, they didn't say, "**This is a message from God!**" Many asked, "**Is he crazy?**" And when they did that, they found it so much easier to *NOT* take him seriously.

ME:

I find that this is true for me! Not when people wonder if I am crazy, but when I decide label someone as **crazy**, or **pushy**, or **whatever**. I have labeled them and then I can easily shut them out. *This is especially useful with whom I disagree!* The problem is that I then begin to miss growth opportunities because I am viewing all of life and the world through a tunnel.

YOU:

Do you find it easy to label others and then tune them out? It can bring you some relief from the noise of opposite opinions and views, **but might it also stifle and limit you?**

Let's look together at Mark and see what God can teach us about all this today:

Pray first

GOD:

Mark 3:20 and the crowd came together again, so that they could not even eat. 21 When his family heard it, they went out to restrain him, for people were saying, "He has gone out of his mind." 22 And the scribes who came down from Jerusalem said, "He has Beelzebul, and by the ruler of the demons he casts out demons." 23 And he called them to him, and spoke 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 will not be able to stand. 26 And if Satan has risen up against himself and is divided, he cannot stand, but his end has come. 27 But no one can enter a strong man's house and plunder his property without first tying up the strong man; then indeed the house can be plundered.

28 "Truly I tell you, people will be forgiven for their sins and whatever blasphemies they utter; 29 but whoever blasphemes against the Holy Spirit can never have forgiveness, but is guilty of an eternal sin"— 30 for they had said, "He has an unclean spirit."

31 Then his mother and his brothers came; and standing outside, they sent to him and called him. 32 A crowd was sitting around him; and they said to him, "Your mother and your brothers and sisters are outside, asking for you." 33 And he replied, "Who are my mother and my brothers?" 34 And looking at those who sat around him, he said, "Here are my mother and my brothers! 35 Whoever does the will of God is my brother and sister and mother."

WE:

Mark's Gospel is full of the disciples just not getting it and the religious leaders constantly criticizing Jesus. **So how does Jesus respond to this?**

He talks about Beelzebub, because he's been linked to demon possession and insanity. But they say an insane person is someone who is out of touch with reality. This is a person who is living in another world.

Jesus has come *proclaiming* and *living* out a different sort of reality than most were expecting. This reality has a name:

“The Kingdom of God.”

This is a place, but **more** than a place, this is a system of **values**. It is a set of expectations that is at a polar opposite to the way the world **thinks** and the way the world **works**. So they say Jesus is crazy with this Kingdom of God **talk** and **living**. When you label someone as crazy or out of their mind, it is much easier to **dismiss** them.

We know, hopefully, that Jesus was **NOT** out of his mind, he was not crazy, he simply had another frame of reference, another consciousness — ***the Kingdom of God!***

What does this mean for us as followers of Jesus 2,000 years later?

When we ask Jesus to say something rational so we can further develop our sharp minds he answers us. Like he does in the Gospels, he says, **“Al-**

right, you only grow up by becoming just like a little child. You can only get in the Kingdom of God if you do this. You want to win? The way to do so is by losing. You get by giving, you live by dying.

Then we may remind Jesus that we did ask for him to give us something rational. *All the while thinking to ourselves that maybe he is crazy!*

So perhaps we try again. We ask him to give us something thoughtful, but practical. Something we can use in our daily lives right now.

“Alright. Try this. Blessed are you, the poor. Happy are you, the hungry. Oh, how fortunate are you who are unemployed. Congratulations to those of you who are spiritually poor, those of you who don’t have much spirit.”

And we say, **“Huh?”**

Jesus is trying to help us to see *beyond this world* while we live *in this world*. The world, even we, may think Jesus is crazy or out of his mind, but maybe Jesus is trying to help us see that it is this world that is out of its mind. Jesus was not out of his mind, he was of a different mind, a very different mind.

Jesus saw things upside down, which means right side up in the Kingdom of God. The Kingdom of God is what Jesus was establishing and continues to do so even through us.

There's a popular surfing video that captures well what it feels like to step into the awesome work of the kingdom of God.

The video starts with famed surfer Laird Hamilton upright on his board. He is holding on to a rope being towed along the water by a speeding jet ski. You sense a massive wave rests just underneath Laird and the jet ski, but the camera is focused in a manner that you can't quite tell how big it is.

As Laird gains speed via the power of the jet ski, you begin to see that he is on the downward slope of the wave. He lets go of the rope and the jet ski moves out of the camera's view. The focus is on Laird alone. As the camera pulls back, back, back, you see the surfer for what he is—a mere speck on a wave so enormous it defies comprehension. You realize that Laird is standing on the crest of a 65-foot breaker. The wave curls and the surfer zooms down its face, propelled by the wall of water crashing around him, exhilarated by the ride of a lifetime.

Like the wave, God's kingdom is on the move. It is enormous beyond our comprehension, and it's there whether we're ready to catch it or not. Should we want to ride this wave, we soon learn that it travels so fast, we can't do a thing on our own power. Our paddling simply won't do. We need the Holy Spirit to tow us along to get up to speed. Even when we catch it,

we still don't do the bulk of the work. We are simply willing to ride the wave of what God is doing, exhilarated all the while by its awesome nature.

THE SERMON IN A SENTENCE:

We need to view life through Kingdom of God glasses, just like Jesus did and does.

YOU:

Do you sometimes wonder about Jesus' sanity? Perhaps we should wonder about the sanity of the so called normal world.

CLOSE:

C.S. Lewis is known for many things, but one of his statements about Jesus in particular has always stayed with me. He says that either Jesus was who he said he was, or he was a madman.

But what if he was a little of both?

And if so, **what does that make us for following him?**

We all need to work on trying to really understand what we're talking about when we talk about following Jesus.

Jesus spoke often in hyperbole. *It's funny how some people still try to interpret this hypebole word-for-word!* Jesus came from a culture whose values and symbols don't always make sense to us. Even considering all this,

some of what he wants us to do is, by common cultural standards, more or less nuts.

Jesus has a Messiah Complex (except that he is the Messiah). There were many others going around claiming to be the Messiah, so he's not the only one.

Straightjacket for one, aisle two, please...

Then Jesus tells us to hate our bodies, and even die to self. He wants us to follow him, but tells us up front that it's going to stink. A lot. Just look what happened to him and to most of his followers.

Then there's his whole communication style. Consider an example below:

*Disciple: **Hey Jesus, we have this problem and we need your help.***

*Jesus: **Let me tell you a story...***

*Disciple: **Ummm...what?***

What is the message some Christians sign up for:

forgo benefits and pleasures of life here for some hope of a better thing later. But you only get it after you die, and you just have to trust us that it's really, really there. Even though we don't personally know either.

Another perspective is simply that indulging in earthly pleasures is like throwing your life away. And yet, when we do what Jesus says we should,

we reject so much that the world suggests we hold dear. *Sounds like throwing your life away, doesn't it?*

Reject your family.

Be poor on purpose.

Give all your stuff away and wander around **(be homeless)**.

Talk to an invisible...**something**, out there...**somewhere**.

Love other people, including the ones who may even try to kill you, and even succeed in doing it.

Yell at fig trees.

Subvert the laws of your culture.

Challenge the religious figures who know the rules at the heart of the religious culture.

They say it's really no wonder so many Christians lean on selling the **"ticket out of hell"** angle so often. It's so much simpler and it appeals to the human instinct for self-preservation, and it's a bit less crazy than the alternative.

And yet...

There's some sense of "**rightness**" to it all. Not in the sense of "**I'm right, you're wrong**," but that it feels strangely, curiously compelling. It draws us in, begs deeper study and discernment. It pulls us together, beyond the sum total of our individual component parts. It helps us more clearly imagine the possibility of things we hope for in this world, even if we haven't yet seen them.

It feels as if there's a deeper sense of meaning, belonging and purpose to it all than can be achieved by adding another title to our resume or another zero to our paycheck. After all, the person who dies with the most toys still dies, **right**? And we've chased those rabbits of external status and materialism to no avail. We always still want ... more.

Questions remain that haunt us, like:

Why are we here?

What's the point?

Is there anything more important than what the world says is important?

Is there really anything worth living for, or even worth dying for?

These questions can make anyone a little crazy by normal standards. But considering the state of things all around us in the world, the state of our

environment, our habits for misleading pursuits and mutual destruction at such a rapid pace, maybe “**normal**” is less sane than we’ve thought.

Maybe, in the end, the only reasonable thing to do is to go a little crazy.

How?

Take Jesus at his word and see everything in the light of the Kingdom of God — even if that means seeing things upside down.

Let’s pray for these Kingdom glasses: