

EXPLORE THE BIBLE

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Unites

Scripture Passage: Mark 3:23-35

The Point: Jesus calls believers to be marked by doing God's will.

I. INTRODUCTION & BACKGROUND

- A. All believers are to be engaged in the life and ministry of the church.
- B. We are diverse in our backgrounds, abilities, and gifts, but we are united in our faith in Christ and commitment to do God's will individually and collectively.
- C. Unity is not based merely on agreeable personalities or agreement on policies or procedures.
- D. In the body of Christ, unity results from centering our lives on Christ.
- E. As we draw closer to Him, we inevitably draw closer to one another.
- F. If we are following Him, we will go in the same direction with unity of purpose.

II. UNDIVIDED HOUSE (Mark 3:23-30)

- A. The battle lines around Jesus emerged early in His public ministry. Jesus used the simple teaching method of parables to unite His followers and confound His enemies.
- B. Those who opposed Him, accused Jesus of using demonic power to expel demons.
- C. Parables are simple stories that convey a deeper spiritual truth (v.23).
 - 1. The idea of Satan's expelling from a possessed person the very demonic spirits he sent to control the individual was ridiculous.
 - 2. The silence of the scribes to Jesus' question shows how they were unable to answer His argument.
- D. Jesus led His hearers to think of an empire or nation-state that had experienced fatal internal strife, even civil war (v.24).
 - 1. A divided kingdom will not long endure; it will destroy itself.
- E. "house" could refer to royalty but more than likely is the typical family (v.25).
- F. Having told the two brief parables, Jesus then returned to the question posed earlier to apply the logical conclusion (v.26).
- G. The victim of the break-in was capable of defending himself and his possessions (v.27).
 - 1. Jesus was vastly stronger than Satan, thus He cast out the demonic minions.
- H. The scribes and Pharisees believed in a harsh interpretation and application of the law that focused on wrath and punishment for lawbreakers (v.28).
 - 1. Jesus emphasized the vastness of God's grace in offering forgiveness to sinners.
- I. To ascribe God's redemptive activity to the work of the devil revealed a person's hardened spiritual blindness and rebellion (vv.29-30).
 - 1. The scribes were perilously close to a point of no return in which God's forgiveness was unavailable to them.

III. MISUNDERSTOOD BY FAMILY (Mark 3:31-32)

- A. Jesus' family was living in Nazareth and heard about Him so they came to see for themselves (v.31).
- B. The crowd recognized His family and aided in getting the message to Him (v.32).

IV. UNITED BY PURPOSE (Mark 3:33-35)

- A. Nothing suggests that Jesus ignored His family's request to see Him (v.33).
- B. His family were those in His inner circle (v.34).
- C. Jesus then expands His family (v.35).
 - 1. "whoever" = No one was excluded by race, gender, national heritage, education, ability, or wealth.
 - 2. "the will of God" = The ultimate will and work of God is for people to believe in Jesus as Savior and Lord.
- D. In Christ, believers find themselves joined together in God's eternal family.

V. CONCLUSION & APPLICATION

- A. Believers should affirm with confidence God's power.
- B. Believers should not expect everyone, including those closest to them, to understand following Jesus.
- C. Believers are to make doing God's will their priority.
- D. Teaching Ideas
 - 1. Create Interest
 - a. Ask the group to identify those that they are close to, those that are like family but not really "blood kin". What makes them "family"?
 - 2. Closing Challenge
 - a. Encourage everyone to pick one person, family or friend, and write them a note thanking that person for demonstrating how to honor God with their actions and words.
- E. Don't Forget!!!
 - 1. Unites & Mark 3:23-35
 - 2. Jesus calls believers to be marked by doing God's will.

Dr. Smith serves as the lead state missionary with the Georgia Baptist Mission Board and leads the Sunday School, Small Groups, Discipleship and Faith Development ministries. Visit their website at gabaptist.org/groups for more information and other resources to aid your class, group or ministry. You can also connect with Dr. Smith at facebook.com/GABaptistGroups. Dr. Smith is available for conferences or other speaking opportunities and can be contacted at tsmith@gabaptist.org.