

WEEK 25



Mark 3:22-24
Christ's Later Ministry in Galilee
Jesus' True Family

The charge that Jesus is possessed | 3:22-30

- *The conviction that Jesus is deranged (21) finds a more serious echo in the repeated accusation that he is possessed (22, 30).*
- *There were two accusations "he is possessed" and "he cast out demons by an unclean spirit"*
 - *he second charge Jesus answers directly (23-27).*
 - *And his pronouncement (28-29) implies his answer to the first.*
 - *These accusations were utterly serious approaching blasphemy.*
 - *By their accusations, the scribes accuse Jesus of unlawful work and sorcery (which accusations are reported in the Talmud and early church literature).*

“How can Satan drive out Satan” | 3:23

“Amen, I say to you . . .” | 3:28

- 23 – *Christ’s answer through pithy sayings is cumulative in force. By substituting Satan for Beelzebub, he frames the charge within his mission as direct confrontation with Satan.*
 - *If your accusation is true, there exists the impossible circumstance that Satan is destroying his own realm.*
 - *Or if it is factual, then Satan’s allegiance has become divided, rendering him powerless.*

- 28 – *This formula is unique to the sayings of Christ in the NT.*
 - *To “Amen” your own statements is without analogy in the whole of Jewish literature.*
 - *This self-affirmation is an evidence of Messianic affirmation for Jesus is claiming to do and say only the will of God. For he is the true Witness of God.*

“All sins may be forgiven . . . Except!” | 3:28-29

- *The scribes were thoroughly familiar with this under their formula. They took blasphemy no less seriously than Christ. But here Christ again expands their application.*
- *Casting out demons = a sign of intrusion of the Kingdom of God through the Spirit of God.*
- *By assigning the action of God to a demon, the scribes betray a perversion of spirit in defiance of the truth to the extent they call light darkness. This is the deliberate rejection of the saving power, grace and forgiveness of God released through Jesus’ word and act.*
- *Only the man who sets himself against the forgiveness of God is excluded from it.*
- *This severe warning is not addressed to layman but to trained scholars, called to interpret the Law for the people. It was their responsibility to be aware of God’s redemptive action.*
- *Their insensitivity to the Spirit opened them to grave peril.*
- *The final repeated comment by Mark “they were saying he had an unclean spirit” implies repetition and a fixed attitude of mind bringing them to the brink of unforgivable blasphemy.*

“All sins may be forgiven . . . Except!” | 3:28-29

“It is a matter of great importance pastorally that we can say with absolute confidence to anyone who is overwhelmed by the fear that he has committed this sin, that the fact he is so troubled is itself a sure proof that he has not committed it.”

- Cranfield

Jesus’ true family | 3:31-34

- *The story of the scribes’ incredible unbelief (22-30) inserted in between the story of Jesus’ family coming to restrain him (20-21, 31-24) suggests a parallel between them. This is the necessary background of Jesus’ teaching on his true family.*
- *Jesus’ mother and brothers not able to get to Jesus through the pressing crowd coming to hear him, send word for him and stand calling for him outside. Mark does not say if Jesus knew why his family was calling though he was aware of the unbelief of his brothers (John 7:3-10).*
- *Jesus also knew that there were occasions where pursuing the will of God demanded severing family ties (Exodus 32:25-29, Duet. 33:8-9 with Lev. 10:1-7).*
- *Leaving family was Jesus’ own experience and he did not hesitate to call men to abandon their homes and families in radical obedience to the gospel.*

So how do we reconcile Mark 10:28-30 with Ephesians 5:25, 28 and 1 Tim 5:8 ?

1. *In Mark 10 Christ's point is amazing grace, not amazing sacrifice. Read it in context – 10:17-31. God's love is in view, not my sacrifice (Luke 17:10). The concept of sacrifice is in things not contributing to the work of God.*
2. *Sometimes like Peter in 10:28 or the disciples in 9:34 and 10:35-41, those who leave family for the sake of Christ and the gospel are measuring success against their losses versus their joys. Often there is spiritual pride in this equation (7:11).*
3. *In my experience those who insist on making harsh demands of themselves or their families claiming God called them are not yet resting in the completed work of Christ. They may very well be saved but they are projecting their own efforts (Hebrews 4:10).*

Conclusion, ministry should most often be performed as a family versus as an individual in rejection of family (1 Corinthians 7:14, 9:5). The family of God supersedes blood families. But our first mission field is our blood families (1 Timothy 1:5-6). Jesus reminds us (Mark 7:10 quoting Exodus 20:12, 21:17) of the importance of families. And of course, Jesus planned for his mother's care from the cross.

“Who are my mother and brothers?” | 3:33

- *Probably indicated the 12 closest to him (3:14).*
- *The 12's openness to God's action in sending Christ bound them to him with ties stronger than physical relationship. The 12 are marked off as those who do the will of God.*
- *The broader statement “Whoever does God's will...” encompasses a larger company of those who do the will of God and are counted in determining kinship with Jesus.*
- *Doing the will of God is the decisive designation of who is in the family.*
- *In the new family, there is demanded the radical obedience to God which Christ demonstrated in his submission to his Father and which the disciples demonstrated in answering Christ's call.*
- *This level of demand only makes sense as the Kingdom of God has come near in the person of Christ.*
- *The demand is radical but creates a fellowship of others pursuing the will of God which binds a man closely to Jesus and permits him to know others as brother, sister, or mother.*