

Sermon #12

Series: Mark

Title: **THE GLORY OF THE GOSPEL
AND THE DANGER OF UNBELIEF**
Text: Mark 3:22-30
Reading: *Psalm 130:1-8*
Subject: Forgiveness And Damnation
Date: Sunday Morning - February 23, 1997
Tape # T-44
Introduction:

The title of my message this morning is **THE GLORY OF THE GOSPEL AND THE DANGER OF UNBELIEF**. Our text will be Mark 3:22-30. Let's read it together.

Mark 3:22-30 "And the scribes which came down from Jerusalem said, He hath Beelzebub, and by the prince of the devils casteth he out devils. (23) And he called them *unto him*, and said unto them in parables, How can Satan cast out Satan? (24) And if a kingdom be divided against itself, that kingdom cannot stand. (25) And if a house be divided against itself, that house cannot stand. (26) And if Satan rise up against himself, and be divided, he cannot stand, but hath an end. (27) No man can enter into a strong man's house, and spoil his goods, except he will first bind the strong man; and then he will spoil his house. (28) Verily I say unto you, All sins shall be forgiven unto the sons of men, and blasphemies wherewith soever they shall blaspheme: (29) But he that shall blaspheme against the Holy Ghost hath never forgiveness, but is in danger of eternal damnation: (30) Because they said, He hath an unclean spirit."

The Scribes came down from Jerusalem specifically to slander the Son of God. They saw the miracles which he performed and could not deny their reality. They heard his doctrine and could not refute it. Yet, they would not bow to the Lord Jesus as their Lord, acknowledging him to be the Christ of God. They would not repent of their sins and believe on the Son of God. Instead they accused him of being in league with the devil. They said, "*He hath Beelzebub, and by the prince of devils casteth he out devils!*"

Throughout his life on this earth our Master was misunderstood by his family and friends and deliberately misrepresented by his enemies. This was a trial he had to endure from his childhood until his death as our Substitute upon the cursed tree. While he was most humble, he was thought to be most arrogant. When he went about his Father's business, he was thought to be negligent and irresponsible. Though he was perfectly righteous, he was thought to be altogether sinful.

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We must not expect better treatment in this world. As we endeavor to live for Christ, as we seek the glory of God, as we try to walk in obedience to the will of God, others will judge us to be self-serving, self-promoting, rebels and antinomians. Unbelieving friends and relatives simply will not understand us. Enemies will deliberately misrepresent our actions and accuse us of being ruled by the most vile and base motives imaginable. Our Lord Jesus told us plainly that these things must come to pass.

Matthew 10:16-26 "Behold, I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves: be ye therefore wise as serpents, and harmless as doves. (17) But beware of men: for they will deliver you up to the councils, and they will scourge you in their synagogues; (18) And ye shall be brought before governors and kings for my sake, for a testimony against them and the Gentiles. (19) But when they deliver you up, take no thought how or what ye shall speak: for it shall be given you in that same hour what ye shall speak. (20) For it is not ye that speak, but the Spirit of your Father which speaketh in you. (21) And the brother shall deliver up the brother to death, and the father the child: and the children shall rise up against *their* parents, and cause them to be put to death. (22) And ye shall be hated of all *men* for my name's sake: but he that endureth to the end shall be saved. (23) But when they persecute you in this city, flee ye into another: for verily I say unto you, Ye shall not have gone over the cities of Israel, till the Son of man be come. (24) The disciple is not above *his* master, nor the servant above his lord. (25) It is enough for the disciple that he be as his master, and the servant as his lord. If they have called the master of the house Beelzebub, how much more *shall they call* them of his household? (26) Fear them not therefore: for there is nothing covered, that shall not be revealed; and hid, that shall not be known."

Our Savior's kinsmen said, "*He is beside himself!*" The Pharisees called him a glutton, a drunk, and a sinner. The Scribes said, "*He hath Beelzebub, and by the prince of devils casteth he out devils.*" We will be wise to expect and be prepared for the same treatment, because "*the world knoweth us not,*" even as "*it knew him not.*"

Yet, even these base actions of wicked men were turned by our sovereign Master into an occasion for good to his chosen. He took their evil works and words and used them to teach us much needed spiritual lessons that we would be wise always to remember. The things taught in these verses deserve special attention. So I ask you to give me your undivided attention as I set before you **five things** here recorded for our learning and admonition.

Divisions:

1. The Sinfulness Of Strife.

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2. The Greatness Of God's Grace.
3. The Glory Of The Gospel.
4. The Danger Of Damnation.
5. The Sin Of Sins.

I. **First, I want us to see in these verses THE SINFULNESS OF STRIFE** (vv. 23-26).

Our Lord Jesus responded to the Scribes' accusation by a parable. In the parable he clearly shows the absurdity of their accusation against him. Any fool knows that *"a kingdom divided against itself cannot stand."*

Mark 3:23-26 "And he called them *unto him*, and said unto them in parables, How can Satan cast out Satan? (24) And if a kingdom be divided against itself, that kingdom cannot stand. (25) And if a house be divided against itself, that house cannot stand. (26) And if Satan rise up against himself, and be divided, he cannot stand, but hath an end."

There are many things that may be properly taught from this parable. However, that which is in my opinion the most important lesson to be drawn from these words of our Redeemer is the one thing most often overlooked by the expositors I have read. This parable shows us the shameful sinfulness of strife and division among those who are supposed to be friends and allies in the same cause.

I realize that wicked men, men who would utterly destroy the gospel of Christ, promote peace at all cost. There are many who tell us that we must never oppose anything or anyone. Such traitors to Christ and his gospel must not be heard. Yet, there is a form of strife and division that is evil, always evil, and only evil. It is to be avoided by us at all cost.

A. It is our responsibility to seek, pray for, and promote the peace of Jerusalem, the unity and harmony of God's church and kingdom in this world.

Ephesians 4:1-6 "I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called, (2) With all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love; (3) Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. (4) *There is* one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; (5) One Lord, one faith, one baptism, (6) One God and Father of all, who *is* above all, and through all, and in you all."

Ephesians 4:30-32 "And grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption. (31) Let all bitterness, and wrath,

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and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice: (32) And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you."

B. We should, as much as possible, avoid needless differences, disputes, and debates about spiritual things.

Nothing so weakens the arms of the church as the carnal strife which divides it. Needless disputes absorb thought, energy, time, and effort that should be spent in the furtherance of the gospel. They furnish infidels with weapons to use against us. The divisions that exist among God's true people in this world, no matter how justified we think we are in maintaining them, are but taking sides with the devil against ourselves.

Satan is the one who initiates them, the one who maintains them, and the one who profits by them. If he cannot extinguish the kingdom of God, he labors tirelessly to divide the soldiers of the kingdom into camps that fight each other. The crafty old serpent knows by long experience that "to divide is to conquer."

We should and must be zealous for the glory of God and the truths of the gospel. I utterly abhor that sentimentality that is willing to sacrifice the truth and glory of God upon the altar of what men call love and peace. We cannot be too jealous about the truths of the gospel and the glory of our God. Divine sovereignty, total depravity, eternal election, effectual atonement, almighty grace, and the preservation of God's elect, are matters vital to truth, vital to the glory of God, and vital to the souls of men. With regard to these things, we must never budge an inch for anyone. But the method of church government, the kind of musical instruments employed in worship, and whether the congregation concludes the sermon by saying "Amen," saying nothing, or applauding are matters totally insignificant.

We must not make a fuss about trifles. Far too many are morbidly scrupulous about pointing out, calling attention to, and debating differences with others about the most minute details. They are far more anxious to point out insignificant differences and magnify them than they are to lock arms with their brethren and promote truth for the glory of Christ.

Illustrations: Randy P. - J.D. - B.P. - D.A.
"I don't always agree with you."

Nothing justifies brethren being divided from and opposing one another. Nothing! There is something more important than you and me, something more important than our opinion, our name, or our desires.

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The truth of God, the glory of God, the kingdom of God is infinitely more important.

NOTE: The fact is - All debate is wicked. It is of the flesh, does nothing for God's glory, accomplishes no good, and only gratifies the flesh. Debate is always listed in the Word of God with envy, wrath, strife, whisperings, backbiting, slander, and murder (Rom. 1:29; 2 Cor. 12:20).

Illustration: My Response to Most Carping Letters is,
"No Comment."

C. As we ought to scrupulously avoid needless strife about words and promote the unity of the church and kingdom of God throughout the world, we should be doubly scrupulous in protecting and promoting the peace, harmony, and unity of our own church family.

1 Corinthians 1:9-13 "God *is* faithful, by whom ye were called unto the fellowship of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord. (10) Now **I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and *that* there be no divisions among you; but *that* ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment.** (11) For it hath been declared unto me of you, my brethren, by them *which are of the house* of Chloe, that there are contentions among you. (12) Now this I say, that every one of you saith, I am of Paul; and I of Apollos; and I of Cephas; and I of Christ. (13) **Is Christ divided?** was Paul crucified for you? or were ye baptized in the name of Paul?"

I urge you, my brothers and sisters, my sons and daughters in the kingdom of God...

1. Love one another.
2. Be kind and thoughtful toward one another.
3. Speak well to and of one another.
4. Forgive one another.
5. Be patient, forbearing, and longsuffereing with one another.

James 3:13-18 "Who *is* a wise man and endued with knowledge among you? let him show out of a good conversation his works with meekness of wisdom. (14) But if ye have bitter envying and strife in your hearts, glory not, and lie not against the truth. (15) This wisdom descendeth not from above, but *is* earthly, sensual, devilish. (16) **For where envying and strife *is*, there *is* confusion and every evil work.** (17) **But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, *and* easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and**

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without hypocrisy. (18) And the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace of them that make peace."

James 4:1-3 "From whence *come* wars and fightings among you? *come they* not hence, *even* of your lusts that war in your members? (2) Ye lust, and have not: ye kill, and desire to have, and cannot obtain: ye fight and war, yet ye have not, because ye ask not. (3) Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may consume *it* upon your lusts."

II. **Second**, in verse twenty-seven, our Lord Jesus shows us **THE GREATNESS OF GOD'S GRACE**.

Mark 3:27 "No man can enter into a strong man's house, and spoil his goods, except he will first bind the strong man; and then he will spoil his house."

There seems to be a direct connection between these words and the prophetic words of Isaiah concerning our most glorious Lord Jesus Christ and his almighty, gracious, saving operations in and upon chosen, redeemed sinners.

Isaiah 49:24-26 "Shall the prey be taken from the mighty, or the lawful captive delivered? (25) But thus saith the LORD, Even the captives of the mighty shall be taken away, and the prey of the terrible shall be delivered: for I will contend with him that contendeth with thee, and I will save thy children. (26) And I will feed them that oppress thee with their own flesh; and they shall be drunken with their own blood, as with sweet wine: and all flesh shall know that I the LORD *am* thy Saviour and thy Redeemer, the mighty One of Jacob."

We are all, by nature, sinners under the dominion of Satan. Our hearts are his house and palace. His tyrannical rule and dominion over us is so great, that we are his willing servants. We could never free ourselves from his dominion if we would and would not if we could.

Salvation comes when the Lord Jesus Christ invades the city of Mansoul by the sovereign power of his omnipotent grace, casts Satan out, and takes possession of our lives planting his throne where once Satan reigned, in the very core of our hearts.

The Lord of glory is not a pathetic little *Jesus*, knocking at your heart's door waiting for you to open he door and let him in. Oh, no! He is the sovereign Son of God. When he knocks at your heart's door, he knocks the door in, bolt and bar. He comes in, takes possession of your soul. When he comes in he brings his welcome with him! The first time

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you are even aware of his presence is when he begins to cast the devil out!

- A. **Every chosen, redeemed sinner shall be set free by the power of God's omnipotent grace at God's appointed time.**
- B. **Our glorious Christ regenerates and gives eternal life to dead sinners by the irresistible power and grace of his sovereign Spirit.**
- C. **Awakened, regenerate sinners come to Christ with willing hearts, because he gives them faith and causes them to come to him.**

Psalms 65:4 "Blessed is the man whom thou choosest, and causest to approach *unto thee*, that he may dwell in thy courts: we shall be satisfied with the goodness of thy house, *even* of thy holy temple."

Psalms 110:3 "Thy people *shall be* willing in the day of thy power, in the beauties of holiness from the womb of the morning: thou hast the dew of thy youth."

- D. **All who are saved by the grace of Christ are willingly subdued to Christ as their only and rightful Lord.**

Believers are willing bondslaves, men and women who willingly stoop down before him and slip under his yoke.

III. Now look at verse twenty-eight and see in the *third* place THE GLORY OF THE GOSPEL.

Mark 3:28 "Verily I say unto you, All sins shall be forgiven unto the sons of men, and blasphemies wherewith soever they shall blaspheme."

What a glorious declaration this is! He who delights in mercy declares, "*All sins shall be forgiven unto the sons of men, and blasphemies wherewith soever they shall blaspheme!*"

That may appear to be a trifling matter to some of you. But to that person who has tasted his sin, who knows the corruptions of his own heart, whose soul burns with the very fires of hell tormenting his conscience, this is the greatest thing ever heard. "*All sins shall be forgiven unto the sons of men, and blasphemies wherewith soever they shall blaspheme!*"

- The Sins of Youth and the Sins of Old Age!
- The Sins of My Heart and the Sins of My Hand!
- The Sins of My Mind and the Sins of My Mouth!

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- Open Sin and Secret Sins!
- Past Sins, Present Sins, and Future Sins!
- My Sins as An Infidel and My Sins as A Believer!
- The Sins of Persecutors like Saul!
- The Sins of Idolaters like Manasseh!
- The Sins of Harlots like Rahab!

"All sins shall be forgiven unto the sons of men, and blasphemies wherewith soever they shall blaspheme!"

A. The blood of Christ cleanses s from all sin!

B. The righteousness of Christ covers all iniquity!

C. The intercession of Christ prevails over all transgressions!

JC. Ryle wrote, "The doctrine here laid down is the glory of the Gospel. The very first thing it proposes to man is free pardon, full forgiveness, complete remission, without money and without price."

Acts 13:39 "And by him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses."

1 John 1:7 "But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin."

1 John 1:9 "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us *our* sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."

1 John 2:1-2 "My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous: (2) And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for *the sins of* the whole world."

1. Sinners, this doctrine is the very thing that meets all your needs.

Lay hold of it. If you come to Christ right now, if you believe on the Son of God, you shall be completely forgiven of all your sins forever!

2. Children of God, this is the doctrine we need as well.

Lay hold of this thing which is the very glory of the gospel. Often we faint, falter, and fail. We feel ourselves altogether unworthy before our

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God. We are cast down in our souls. And Satan harasses us with our countless sins. **But this is a fact beyond all dispute** - If we trust Christ alone as our Lord and Savior, if we trust his blood alone to atone for our sins and his righteousness alone to give us acceptance with God, then our God has cast our sins, all our sins behind his back forever! He will never remember them against us!

IV. Fourth, our Lord Jesus speaks plainly about THE DANGER OF DAMNATION (vv. 29-30).

Mark 3:29-30 "But he that shall blaspheme against the Holy Ghost hath never forgiveness, but is in danger of eternal damnation: (30) Because they said, He hath an unclean spirit."

It has become acceptable, and even popular, in many circles today for men, while claiming to believe the Bible, while claiming to preach the gospel, to deny the reality of hell and of eternal punishment. But the Son of God speaks here about "***eternal damnation!***"

Terrible as this truth is, it is truth. We must not shut our eyes to it. We must not fail to declare it. Sin is an infinitely evil thing. It required a sacrifice and an atonement of infinite value to satisfy the justice of God for our sins. And if God finds sin upon you in the day of judgment, he will pour out upon your soul his infinite wrath, without mercy in "***everlasting damnation!***"

Escape for your life! Flee from the wrath of God. Come, take refuge for your soul in the City of Refuge. Never rest until you rest in him who is the Rock of Ages. Will you hear me? Will you hear the Word of God?

- A. **You have an immortal, undying soul.** Will you lose your own soul?
- B. **You must soon meet the holy, eternal God in judgment.** What will you plead for acceptance with him?
- C. **You will spend eternity either under the blackness and darkness of the terror and torment of everlasting hell, or in the bliss, and glory, and delight of heaven.** Where will you spend eternity?
- D. **The sinner's our only hope is Christ!**

*In Christ I now believe,
Now trusting in His name,
Redemption through His blood I have!
In Him complete I am!*

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*This hope my soul uplifts,
When sin and Satan press:
Unchanging are my Father's gifts,
Who promises to bless.*

*My sins, my sins, my sins,
Are blotted out, each one!
No cause for wrath on me remains!
God sees me in His Son!*

*So, come to me what may,
It must, I know, be blest.
God, Who for me His Son did slay,
Will do for me what's best!*

V. In the *last* place, I call your attention to that which our Lord here describes as THE SIN OF SINS, the unpardonable sin.

In verse twenty-nine, the Son of God states emphatically, "*He that shall blaspheme against the Holy Ghost hath never forgiveness.*"

A. There is such a thing as the unpardonable sin.

This is not a matter of speculation. It may not fit well with our theological systems; but it is a matter of Divine revelation, as plain as the nose on your face.

Hebrews 6:4-6 "For *it is* impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, (5) And have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come, (6) If they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance; seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put *him* to an open shame."

Hebrews 10:26 "For if we sin willfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins,"

1 John 5:16-17 "If any man see his brother sin a sin *which is* not unto death, he shall ask, and he shall give him life for them that sin not unto death. There is a sin unto death: I do not say that he shall pray for it. (17) All unrighteousness is sin: and there is a sin not unto death."

B. What is the unpardonable sin?

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I fully recognize that caution must be used here. The Scriptures clearly reveal the fact that there is an unpardonable sin; but they do not expressly tell us what it is. However, the Word of God does give us examples of men who committed it.

- Esau
- Ephraim
- Judas

The unpardonable sin appears to be the willful rejection of Christ and his gospel, a deliberate, persistent refusal to bow to the claims of Christ as Lord. It seems to be a combination of a clear intellectual knowledge of the gospel and a deliberate rejection of it, a knowledge of Christ in the head and a hatred of Christ in the heart.

Proverbs 1:23-33 "Turn you at my reproof: behold, I will pour out my spirit unto you, I will make known my words unto you. (24) Because I have called, and ye refused; I have stretched out my hand, and no man regarded; (25) But ye have set at nought all my counsel, and would none of my reproof: (26) I also will laugh at your calamity; I will mock when your fear cometh; (27) When your fear cometh as desolation, and your destruction cometh as a whirlwind; when distress and anguish cometh upon you. (28) Then shall they call upon me, but I will not answer; they shall seek me early, but they shall not find me: (29) For that they hated knowledge, and did not choose the fear of the LORD: (30) They would none of my counsel: they despised all my reproof. (31) Therefore shall they eat of the fruit of their own way, and be filled with their own devices. (32) For the turning away of the simple shall slay them, and the prosperity of fools shall destroy them. (33) But whoso hearkeneth unto me shall dwell safely, and shall be quiet from fear of evil."

Though Saul of Tarsus was a persecutor and a blasphemer, he obtained mercy because he did it ignorantly.

1 Timothy 1:12-13 "And I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who hath enabled me, for that he counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry; (13) Who was before a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious: but I obtained mercy, because I did *it* ignorantly in unbelief."

C. Perhaps some of you are asking yourselves, "*Have I committed the unpardonable sin?*"

1. I know this: Some of you are in danger of committing it. You who trifle with the gospel trifle with your souls!
2. Yet, I am confident that there is still hope for your soul, if you are concerned about your soul. You may yet obtain forgiveness

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of sin, if you want the forgiveness of your sins. You may yet come to Christ if you desire to come to Christ.

Application: I send you home now to seriously consider these two facts. I pray that God the Holy Spirit will burn them into your heart. I pray that you will not be able to put them out of your mind.

1. There is forgiveness with God for all sins through the blood of Christ!
2. God will not always be gracious!

Hebrews 6:15 "Today, if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts."

Isaiah 55:6 "Seek ye the LORD while he may be found, call ye upon him while he is near."