

Mark 3:20-35

“Questioning The Character Of Christ”

The appointing of the apostles was the subject at hand as our time came to a close last week. After a whole night spent in prayer Jesus chose for Himself some of whom we would consider to be the most unlikely, unstable, and uncertain candidates to be His personal protégés.

But that should in reality be encouraging to you and to me because it sends out a message that “whosoever will” may come, that God doesn’t need the top theological seminary students. He doesn’t need the celebrity or the “who’s who” of this world. God doesn’t generally pick from the “who’s who” list, He generally picks from the “Who’s he?” list. Not many noble, or mighty, or wise according to the flesh are called, God takes the weak things of this world, the foolish things, the base and despised things He takes, and He transforms and He uses so that when it’s all said and done as it is written, *“He who glories, let him glory in the Lord.”* 1 Cor 1:31 It’s God who does the work, and it’s God who deserves the glory and God doesn’t like it when that line begins to blur.

I know that Tom Cruise isn’t as popular right now as he has been in the recent past, but it seems like there for a while he came out with a whole string of movies and though they were all different they all sent basically the same message. “Tom, only you can save us, you’re the only one, no one else can do it, if you fail the world will be destroyed.” and Though that works great for Hollywood, it doesn’t fly in the kingdom of God, God doesn’t need the strong, the super elite, the set apart from the rest in status of this world and apart from them His work won’t get done. God uses the lowly, the humble, the least expected, so that as things come together and an eternal difference is being made, all that can be said is, “To God be the glory, great things *He* has done.”

Perhaps you remember there they were 400 men, downcast, in debt, in distress, and discontented. and They came to David, (who was already on the run from Saul, hiding in caves). and These were the kind of men that David attracted, not exactly elitist, 1st string kinda guys, not really even 3rd or 4th string, but basic societal outcasts and rejects. But David took them in, spent time *around* them, cultivated a relationship *with* them, and took the time to simply invest himself in them, he poured into their lives. and Something interesting took place, as time went by, days, weeks and months came and went, and there they were *with* him spending time *around* him as they’re leader, and you know what happened? They became *like* him and ultimately they became pivotal players in the shaping of David’s kingdom. They went down in history as David’s mighty men of valor.

and So to with the Lord, it’s not generally the “A” players that surround Him, the super stars and highly prized of this world, its people like you, people like me in debt, in distress, and discontented with this world, this life. Such was the story of most of these men whom He chose for Himself, and yet something happened as they spent time around Him, cultivated a relationship of intimacy *with* Him, they became more *like* Him, the greater than David, the Son

of David, Jesus Christ and These guys would be instrumental in laying the foundation for the church, the kingdom of God, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief cornerstone.

Why 12? It seems to me that when God was doing a work through the nation of Israel originally He ordained that there was to be 12 tribes. and Now a new work was to be done, a new nation (if you will) would be established. Peter said this, *“But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light; who once were not a people but are now the people of God, who had not obtained mercy but now have obtained mercy.”* 1 Peter 2:9-10

and Jesus would use these 12 guys (with the exception of Judas, Paul would fill his place) to turn this world upside down with the message of Jesus Christ and Him crucified and with in about 30 yrs after the ascension of Jesus Paul the apostle proclaimed in the book of Col Ch 1 that the gospel had gone out and had brought forth fruit in the entire known world. Jesus took these guys, and trained these guys to continue the work. and There’s an application in there for you and me because not only do we need to be trained, not only do we need to be taught, but we need to train and teach others as well. The work needs to continue on long passed us. Paul told Timothy, *“...be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus. And the things that you have heard from me among many witnesses, commit these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also.”* 2 Tim 2:1-2

How important it is to be pouring into people, taking them and training them, equipping them for the work of the ministry. and There’s a balance there, before Jesus took them and trained them, He spent time alone in prayer, being with the Father, receiving the heart of the Father for His life. We need alone time with God, and time together with others, pouring into them out of the overflow of what God’s doing and /or has done in us. Look at Vs 14-15
Vs14-15

Now there’s a few things I want to highlight for us here that I didn’t have time to last week. 1st of all we note that Jesus “appointed” 12. Jesus has a plan for which He appoints us, a calling for which He equips us, when it comes to the kingdom of God we don’t choose a career that best suits us, according to what I read here there was no vote that took place, God’s kingdom is not a democracy. It’s a Theocracy, it’s a kingdom in which God reigns sovereignly, He reigns supremely, and what He appoints is what takes place.

But He will not *appoint* you apart from *empowering* you, He sent them out to preach and what? and To have *power* to heal sicknesses and cast out demons, to do more of what He’d been doing, if He enlists you, He’ll enable you.

However before all that I think it’s critical that we see what their 1st and foremost priority was to be, did you catch it? Underline it, highlight it, draw attention to it (Vs 14), “Then He appointed 12 that they might be with Him.” They were appointed to spend time personally with Jesus, learning of Him, cultivating a relationship of intimacy *with Him*. When we think of a disciple we think of a learner, and that’s good, but what we need to think of more appropriately would be like an apprentice. One who learns by real time activity, and cultivating a relationship of intimacy with the one who’s teaching them. and *Anything* that we have to give to others in preaching, ministering personally, or bringing healing and deliverance spiritually,

emotionally or even physically *must be* out of the overflow of 1st spending time with Jesus, apart from personal time with Him you and I have nothing to offer.

So Jesus appointed them, He empowered them, but they were to spend 24/7 with Him, sitting under Him, getting to know Him, being sent out by Him, same thing with you, and same thing with me. and Through that time He takes us, trains us, transforms us and uses us for His glory.

Vs20-21

After appointing the 12 Vs 19 tells us that they went again into a house, but we read that the multitude came together again so much to the extent that they couldn't even take the time to eat. Jesus was just so completely giving Himself over to the needs of the people that He was neglecting His own physical need of nourishment. and We read that when His own people heard about that, it was like the last straw (His own people meaning His immediate family according to the flesh), they went to lay hold of Him, seeking to remove Him from that situation saying, "He's out of His mind."

and Where we read that they went out to *lay hold of Him*, it speaks of seizing Him by force, they went to make a family arrest. They thought He'd checked out, He'd left a descent business to start this preaching ministry, they'd heard about the massive crowds gathering around Him, they feared for His personal safety, both the religious and political leaders had their eye on Him in a hostile kind of context but He refused to back down. Maybe all this fame is going to His head, He's got this motley kind of rag tag group of guys around Him that were anything but the cream of the crop, and to top it all off in a culture where meals are rituals and food was scarce to hear that He was neglecting the needs of His own nourishment His family had decided enough was enough, He'd lost it.

His own family didn't recognize Him, Here God was doing a tremendous work in His life, healings, miracles, delivering the demonically possessed, He was putting forth powerful exposition regarding the word of God, yet they figured He must've lost His mind. His own brothers didn't believe in Him and wouldn't believe in Him until after the resurrection. As a matter of fact John's gospel tells us that on another occasion they taunted Him, told Him to go on up to the feast and reveal Himself, show Himself to the world openly.

I have discovered, perhaps you have to that often times the people that are the most difficult to reach are those closest to you, the members of your own family. It's hard for them to see past you and see the Lord *in* you. and That's why Jesus said, "*A prophet is not without honor except in his own country and in his own house.*" **Matt 13:57** They can't get past that little boy, or little girl they've always known, they can't take God's work in you seriously, or as something to be heeded in their lives personally. and It's not that they don't care about you, they do, they just think you're perhaps a little too far over the edge, you've taken this whole thing too seriously. It's like they're saying, "C'mon Jesus, enough is enough, somebody's going to get hurt, why don't we just throttle it back a bit, come on home and get some rest." Hey, devote your life to some noble (but earthly) cause, you're applauded. As a musician, or athlete, perhaps an artist or whatever. Devote and dedicate yourself to the cause and call of God and you're a fanatic. and I'm sure that it hurt Jesus to a degree to be so profoundly misunderstood by His own family, it's not easy to be following the Lord and have those people close to you come in someday against you because they just don't understand you. When Jesus spoke of a

man's enemies being those of his own household He spoke in some ways from experience. His own brothers came against Him and even His own mother didn't fully understand Him.

But as difficult as that may be it was a far more charitable opinion *of* Him then what the scribes and Pharisees were officially purporting *about* Him, notice.

Vs22

Couple of things we need to be aware of here regarding this particular happening. 1st of all Matthew's gospel records for us that before they made this statement Jesus had just delivered a man who was demon-possessed being both blind and a mute, that's why they say, "By the ruler of demon's He casts out demons." The 2nd thing we need to be aware of is that where we read that these scribes "came down" from Jerusalem. What that means to you and me is that this was an official delegation, some men sent to make an official ruling regarding the religious community and what the "powers that be" were prepared to say officially about Jesus. This was an official declaration of a prominent religious delegation. They'd heard about Jesus, knew of the enormous following that He was acquiring and had decided they needed to make an official announcement about Him before this thing got too far out of control.

and So this is their ruling, "He has Beelzebub." Perhaps you're thinking, "What's that? Sounds rather contagious, how exactly is one diagnosed with Beelzebub?" There are a couple different definitions depending on where you grab them, neither one of them are good, the bottom line is that they're saying He's in league with Satan. When they say, "He has Beelzebub" they're saying He's possessed by Satan, Satan has Him. It's not just any demon at work in Him, it's the ruler of demon's himself that's doing these things through Him.

It's one thing to misunderstand Jesus, it's another thing altogether to viciously attack and assault Him in an effort to discredit and destroy Him. and That's what they're doing here, because of their official position what they say carries a lot of weight, and if they want to destroy Him, 1st they have to discredit Him. Now the works can't be denied, however if you want to discredit Him you can't hardly say that God's doing these things through Him, what then is your only alternative, it must be the work of the devil.

and Unfortunately these types of accusations *against* Him weren't altogether uncommon to Him throughout the course of His ministry. *Matt 9:34 "He casts out demons by the ruler of the demons." John 7:20 "You have a demon." John 8:48 "Do we not say rightly that You are a Samaritan and have a demon?" John 8:52 "Now we know that You have a demon!"*

It's interesting to me that the demons cry out that He's the Son of God, but the religious leaders say that He's in league with Satan. Because again how are you going to explain what's taking place in His life, it's undeniable and unexplainable from a natural standpoint, you can only explain it supernaturally. That leaves 1 of 2 options, He's either of God (which they've already denied) or He's of Satan, that's the stand they make. and You guys this is so important because the stand that you take, and the decision that you make regarding the person of Jesus Christ holds all of eternity in the balance for you.

One day Jesus asked the question to His disciples, "Who do men say that I am?" What's the pulse of the people concerning me? They began to say, "Well, some think You're Elijah, perhaps J.B. others say Jeremiah, maybe one of the prophets." We know from this some this that some thought He'd lost it, others that He was in league with Satan. But then Jesus personalized it when He said, "*But who do you say that I am?*" Matt 16:15 and That's the

critical question, some think Jesus was crazy, perhaps an instrument of Satan, others would say He was a good man perhaps a prophet or something, what's important is what do *you* say, what the resolve of your heart personally as it pertains to Jesus Christ Good guy, crazy nut, or the Christ, the Son of the living God, all eternity depends on your answer to that question.

Well, when Jesus hears what they have to say He calls them to Himself shows to them the absurdity of their own rationale by appealing to simple logic.

Vs23-26

No one trying to win a war dismantles his military and systematically destroys his own troops. Jesus is saying, "Think this through boys, its simple logic why would Satan rise up against himself?" When it comes to taking territory and winning wars, unity amongst the troops is key.

and I want to pause on this for just a moment you guys because this is key for us as a body. If we're to wage wise warfare, and be effective in our eternal efforts, of paramount importance is unity with in the body. We can't be divided, splintered, coming against one another and turning in on one another. We've got to lock shields and move forward by faith. Over and over and over again throughout the scriptures is the plea for unity in the body of Christ. Paul in writing to the Romans said, "*Be of the same mind toward one another. Do not set your mind on high things, but associate with the humble.*" Romans 12:16

and Again, "*Now may the God of patience and comfort grant you to be like-minded toward one another, according to Christ Jesus, that you may with one mind and one mouth glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.*" Romans 15:5-6 Then he gives us an exhortation to stay away from situations that might influence us otherwise, "*Now I urge you, brethren, note those who cause divisions and offenses, contrary to the doctrine which you learned, and avoid them.*" Romans 16:17 Over and over again we read, "...*be of one mind,*" 2 Corinthians 13:11 "...*stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel,*" Philippians 1:27 "...*let us walk by the same rule, let us be of the same mind.*" Philippians 3:16 That is the mind of Christ, unity is such a key, and those were just a sample of the scriptures that exhort us unto unity. A kingdom can not stand that's divided against itself. A house that's divided will fall, if we bite and devour one another we'll be consumed by one another and the enemy will win the battle, we know he's lost the war, but there's many a battle between here and there and you don't want to give him a foothold through division and contention in your home or in the body of Christ.

Jesus is pointing out a very simple, yet very powerful principle here that you can not win a war or have fruitful endeavor if you're all the time turning in on yourself and coming against those who are on the same team. Besides all that Satan came not to help, but to hurt, not to deliver but to destroy, not to heal but to harm, not to set men free but to take them captive, that's just the opposite of what Jesus is doing. There's no civil war in Satan's kingdom.

Vs27

In other words I'm not in league with Satan, not possessed *by* Satan, I have power and authority *over* Satan and exercise that authority at will to set men free. Now don't miss what He's saying here, He's saying that Satan is the strong man. Don't mess with the devil, keep Jesus between you and him at all times. There's a reason the bible refers to Satan as a roaring lion and a dragon, he's a powerful being. But the point is that Jesus is stronger than he is,

greater is He who is in you than he that is of the world, Jesus is the Creator, Satan was created. There's no contest there. But Satan isn't going to just lay down or move over for anyone, before you can plunder him you're going to have to bind him. Because his territory won't be surrendered it'll have to be taken by force. and Jesus is saying that in coming to this earth He's entered Satan's domain and plundered his goods, taken from him his treasures those people whom he's bound, whom he's held captive for himself.

You guys that's you and me, the only reason we've been set free from sin and the power of death and destruction is because Jesus Christ rescued us. Satan had us, we're born into captivity, but Jesus Christ has set us free, perhaps you're still bound, Jesus is willing to set you free as well, sometimes people don't want to be set free, they like the bondage and slavery by which they're bound. But if you're willing Jesus is ready and He can set you free even today.

Vs28-30

Couple things here quickly. This is one of those passages of scripture that even most unbelievers are familiar with because there's the ominous warning regarding 1 sin that will not be forgiven, the blasphemy of the Holy Spirit. The question and confusion that surrounds it is, "What exactly is it? What does it mean to blaspheme the Holy Spirit?" I think we do well to not over complicate the matter and simply consider what the word of God says.

and I want to make one thing clear real quick, if you're worried that maybe you've done it, rest assured you haven't. If you were at a point whereby you couldn't be forgiven, your conscience would be so seared that being worried about it would be the last thing on your mind. You wouldn't even be here. Something else I want to clarify is that when Christ died for our sins He died for all of them. There's not the power in the blood of Christ to forgive almost every sin, but there's one He can't cover.

Notice He says in Vs 28, "All sins will be forgiven the sons of men, and whatever blasphemies they may utter." When Christ died on the cross every sin of man what accounted for and cleansed in Him.

Jesus said that when the Holy Spirit came whom He would send, the Spirit of truth that He would testify of Him. He said that He would convict the world of sin, of righteousness and of judgment. Sin because they do not believe in Me. You can either be accountable for your own sin, or have your sin placed on Christ's account. If you do not believe in Christ, then you will be held accountable for your own sin. Jesus said that God didn't send His Son into the world to condemn the world but that the world through Him might be saved. and Then He went on to say, *"He who believes in Him is not condemned; but he who does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God. And this is the condemnation, that the light has come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil."* John 3:18-19 The only provision for man's sin that God has made is in the person of Jesus Christ and to reject Jesus is to reject God's forgiveness. Jesus said that the Spirit would convict the world of righteousness because He goes to His Father, showing that God has accepted Christ as standard of righteousness. and Finally of judgment because the ruler of this world has been judged. If you lock in league with the ruler of this world through the rejection of Christ, then you fall into the same judgment of condemnation.

My point is this, to blaspheme the Spirit is to reject His witness of Christ as God's provision for the sin of the world. and If you won't come to Christ you can't be forgiven because there is no other means.

Now can a person come to such a point in their life whereby they are so seared, so callused against Christ that they've crossed over to a point of no return and they will not and can not be forgiven because their rejection of Christ is so concrete? It would seem to me that the scriptures point to the fact that that can indeed happen. and Refusing to believe the truth they're given over to a strong delusion that they might believe the lie. When does that happen? I believe it's probably different for every person as God searches their heart, that's why it's critical that we not harden ourselves against Christ, the witness of the Spirit, but rather we open ourselves to Christ and receive Him as our Savior and the acceptable sacrifice for our sin.

One hint could be found in what we read here when they accredited the work of Christ to Satan, calling good evil and evil good, putting darkness for light, and light for darkness; bitter for sweet and sweet for bitter. Jesus is sending out a warning against dancing on the edge with that stuff lest you come to that point of cutting yourself off from Christ altogether.

Vs31-35

Once again time forbids that we delve too deeply into this, suffice it to say that Jesus was not disrespecting his family according to the flesh, but rather He was placing proper perspective on the priority, and as important as family is it's the rebirth (ultimately) that matters, that which is born of the flesh is flesh, we have to be born again into the family of God. and That comes through faith in Jesus Christ and So Ch 3 comes to a close on sort of cliff hanger, once again Jesus brings us to a point whereby we have to make a decision, His family confused about Him, the religious leaders hurling condemnation toward Him, but the question comes, "Who do you say that I am?" The religious leaders on the brink of *damnation*, yet Jesus lovingly extending to us an *invitation* to come unto Him, to become part of the family of God, and it's not obedience that makes us His children, it's that obedience that demonstrates the fact that we are His children. Consider it carefully, what's your resolve, who do you say Jesus is?.

Prayer Points:

Jesus may the resolve of each heart, and each life here be to recognize You as you truly are, the Christ, the Son of the Living God, the sacrifice for our sin in whom we trust. and We thank You for taking us and making of us Your family, joint heirs of the kingdom, and we give You praise. We thank You that You're not looking for the elite, but whosoever will may come. and You'll take us and train us and mold us and make of us what You desire of us. May we submit ourselves fully to You. and I pray for anyone here who may be struggling at home, misunderstood in their relationship with You, would you comfort and encourage them, and help them to find their strength in You.

Perhaps you've been confused as to who Christ is, but today it's become clear, and you're not going to resist Him anymore, but you're ready and willing to receive Him as your righteousness, your forgiveness, your acceptance before God. You're ready to receive the witness of the Holy Spirit and turn from your sin and accept Christ into your life. The bible tells us that whoever calls on the name of the Lord will be saved, I want to encourage you to do that right here, right now, in this very moment. Cry out to the Lord from the deep recess of your heart, that He might forgive you, save you and fill you with His Spirit.