

In the Family



Those who are in God's Family, through the Holy Spirit, do the will of God

Mark 3:20 – 35

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Sermon audio and text available at www.waitara.anglican.asn.au

Introduction –

What do you see?

Video - Who do you think Jesus is? (Vox Pop)

Illustration 1

(P) When I was young, my Family and I went on a trip to the snowy mountains during winter. We were there to toboggan - We were a tobogganing family. This is a toboggan if you've never heard of it (show picture). You sit down on it and slide down a mountain covered in snow. I wasn't quite old enough to use one on my own, so I use to go on with my Dad. My dad would be at the front so he could steer and brake, and I'd use to sit behind. SO my Dad would get on and get ready, then it would be my turn to set myself up properly. My Dad use to call out are you ready, and i would give him a Yes or a No. Well this one time - I was setting myself up, he called out are you ready! I said back No! But he misunderstood what I said, and before I even knew it, we were flying down that mountainside and I was bumping all the way down this mountain on a wet, cold and by the end a sore bottom. My Dad had misunderstood what I said. Luckily it wasn't a misunderstanding that hurt me badly.

Have you ever been misunderstood? From the video that we saw, those people clearly didn't

understand who Jesus was, they say he was a good moral man, he was a prophet, some of them

mentioned that some say he was the Son of God – there was misunderstanding and unbelief in their answers. You know some people have said to me, if only I was there with him sitting with the disciples, if I was there face to face with Jesus, hearing him speak, seeing him heal, then I think I would believe? This could be an honest feeling, but if we read the gospels we see that those who were close to him and those people who should have known who he was, did not believe that he was the Son of God, they misunderstood who he was.

Mark has been painting for us a picture of who Jesus is. He is asking us the question - Who do you think Jesus is? Even though we're only at the beginning of Mark's book, he's already shown us that Jesus is the Son of God.

Mark 1:1 (NIV)

The beginning of the gospel about Jesus Christ, the Son of God.

At Jesus' baptism God speaks from heaven saying - Mark 1:11 "You are my Son, whom I love; with you I am well pleased."

As readers of this story, we see that even the evil spirits know who Jesus is:- Mark 3:11 (NIV)

Whenever the evil spirits saw him, they fell down before him and cried out, "You are the Son of God."

Even Jesus claims that he is God by his actions - Last week we saw through the story of the Paralysed man, that he was claiming to be God. Jesus could forgive the sins of that man - only God can do that.

(P) We also see that Jesus is a Famous man – in his time, he's as famous as people like Oprah or Obama. He is becoming well known as a healer. Jesus is surrounded by so many people that he is worried about getting crushed by the crowd, last week we saw that a house was so crowded, that to get to Jesus, a hole had to be made in the roof.

In ch 1 at vs 22 we see that Jesus teaches with authority.²² The people were amazed at his teaching, because he taught them as one who had authority, not as the teachers of the law.

IN Mark 1:15 (NIV) We see that Jesus is there to preach the good news of God "The time has come," he said. "The kingdom of God is near. Repent and believe the good news!"

This is the picture that we see in Mark.

Jesus the Son of God, is bringing in a new way of living in relationship to God through his teaching.

And yet with all this popularity that Jesus gets, there is a growing opposition to him, especially from the Pharisees. Today in our passage in chapter 3 we see at least two groups of people who misunderstand who Jesus really is. It's these groups of people who you least expect to misunderstand him.

Jesus' Biological Family – What do they see?

Illustration 2

I remember a few years back, my brother was organising a week mission for Sydney university. Now, for about a month I hardly saw my brother, He had very minimal hours of sleep a day because of the amount of organising he was doing. Part of the product of this hard work was the video we watched earlier. I had no idea whether he was eating. My family and I were concerned about him. We'd plead with him to sleep and to eat, to take time away from organizing this mission. We were concerned more about his physical and emotional well being rather than his ministry.

(P) So I can sympathise a little bit with Jesus' family, they are hearing reports of the crowds around Jesus, and there were so many of them that he could not even eat. Jesus is a popular man, there are

crowds of people seeking him out. They want to be with Him, to be near him, to touch him. There were so many people surrounding him that he could not even eat. But some in the crowd thought that Jesus was mad. His family hear that he is out of his mind, and they come to take him away from what Jesus is doing. It's important to remember that Jesus ministry is not only healing people and casting out demons, but he is also preaching the good news of God. Here is his family, those who had known him for nearly most of his life, thought Jesus, the sanest human being in the world was insane. At this point, can you see how his family were not in line with the will of God? His family were more concerned about Jesus and maybe their reputation, rather than the importance of his ministry. They see Jesus as a mad man and they leave home to come to stop him. Mark cuts into our story of Jesus family at this point, and brings our focus onto the scribes, his religious family, known as the Jews. Interestingly, Mark also brings our focus onto Satan, and the role he has in the opposition against Jesus .

Jesus' Religious Family – What do they see?

(P) These scribes are trained in religion, they had the very words of God to study, if anyone was to know who the Son of God was, then these were the guys who would know. But we see that this isn't the case. The scribes who had come down from Jerusalem, were spreading a rumour about Jesus, "He has Beelzebul in Him! and, "He drives our demons by the ruler of the demons"

Did you **notice** in this story that they didn't try to deny that these healings were taking place, or deny that Jesus was casting out demons. There were too many witnesses to deny it.

The scribes saw exactly what Jesus was claiming to be! They got it crystal clear, Jesus did things only that God can do. How is it that he can talk with such authority, How is it that he can forgive sins? How

is it that he can cast out demons? It's because he is the Son of God. They knew exactly who Jesus was claiming to be, the problem was - they thought Jesus was wrong. They thought he was a liar.

Jesus' Response to this Unbelief

(P) Jesus hears these accusations and he wants to respond to them. So he summons the scribes and he speaks to them in parables.

The first response is to the claim that Jesus is driving out demons by the ruler of demons.

Their accusation doesn't make any sense Jesus says. How can Satan drive out Satan? It's self evident that a kingdom divided against itself will fall, A house against itself can't stand. All we need to have in mind is Civil war and the destruction that occurs within. If Satan's household had become divided, then it should mean that Satan has become powerless. But clearly, this isn't the case. Satan continues to blind people from who God really is. Satan does everything he can to stop humans from believing and obeying God. Why would Satan would want to work through Jesus to undo his own work? Good things were happening, People were being healed, demons were being cast out. Isn't it ironic – to the demons Jesus identity is perfectly clear and is confessed by them in all these stories, but NOT by these scribes, those who supposedly knew God.

Now Jesus responds to the second claim. If Jesus is not using Satan's power to cast out demons, well whose power is he using? Well in verse 27, Jesus tells them the parable of the strong man. The strong man here is Satan, his possessions are all those who are slaves to sin - every human being. In this parable, Jesus is claiming to be stronger than the strong man. Who is stronger than Satan - how is Jesus doing these works – well it's with the power of God. Jesus is able to heal and to cast out demons

through the power of the Holy Spirit. Jesus has power and authority over Satan, so that if we are in Christ we don't need to fear him, we need to be aware of him, but don't need to be afraid.

On an interesting note – I think Mark has put these two family stories together, so that we see a similarity in thought between Jesus Family and the Scribes. In those days, to be called mad or insane was basically saying that a person was demon possessed. I think Mark has put verses 20-30 in between his story about Jesus' family, because he wants us to see that although they may have had different reasons for their misunderstanding, both their actions showed opposition towards Jesus, both their actions were opposing the will of God.

The problem for the scribes was not because of a lack of knowledge, it was a matter of the heart, it was a matter of the Spirit. In ch 3 verse 5. Jesus is looking around at the pharisees with anger and sorrow because of the hardness of their hearts. It was a spiritual problem and Jesus confronts the Scribes head on with this in verses 28 and 29. They were refusing to believe that Jesus was the Son of God. They went even further by claiming that the good work of the Holy Spirit was Satan's work. They were blind to the fact that it was through the power of the Holy Spirit that Jesus does his work. They weren't allowing the Holy Spirit to open their eyes to the truth.

Jesus' Real Family – What do they see?

(P) Just as he finished speaking to the scribes, His mother and brothers finally arrive. Again there is large crowd around him, that they can't get to him, and so a report comes to Jesus - Hey your mother and brothers are outside looking for you. Can you imagine the murmur that ripples through the crowd when Jesus said, who are my mother and my brothers?

What a thing to say! It would be a shocking statement even if it was said today. Jesus is clearly wanting to make an important point.

He takes this opportunity to teach his disciples about the new relationships that can now be found in the kingdom of God, so he looks around his circle, and says...

"Here are My mother and My brothers! Whoever does the will of God is My brother and sister and mother" Mark 3:34-35

I don't think Jesus is saying that your immediate family is not important. He's not going to ignore his biological family because he has this new family. With these words Jesus brings out the importance of being in his family. Being in his family means that you can have a close relationship with the creator and sustainer of this world. We have a Father who loves and cherishes you. What a wonderful thing! Through God's amazing grace we can be Jesus' brother or Jesus' sister.

A few weeks ago when we were looking at the Holy Spirit, we saw that he is the one who convicts us of the truth, we saw that he helps us to follow Jesus and obey his words as we live our daily lives, in the other words the Holy Spirit helps us to do the will of God. The true family of Jesus understand who he is because of the Holy Spirit.

In this chapter, the disciples are shown to us as Jesus true family. Now I have to say that throughout Mark you'll see that the disciples don't quite understand what it means for Jesus to be the Messiah, but their misunderstanding of Jesus generally did not bring opposition to his ministry. When Jesus called his disciples to follow him, they got up and followed. They sat beside Jesus, They listened to his words, and they obeyed them. This is what it means for us to be in Jesus family. Through the Holy

Spirit we believe in Jesus, who helps us to listen and obey his words. In the next few weeks we will be continuing to hear Jesus words from the Gospel of Mark. What is going to be your attitude when you hear his words?

Let's not make the same mistake as Jesus' biological family or his religious family where their own view of who Jesus was led them to oppose the will of God. Instead let's allow the Holy Spirit to guide our understanding of who Christ is - He is our Lord and Saviour, who calls us to listen and Obey his words.

There are times when I read God's word, and I see very plainly what God wants me to do, I get this feeling inside that convicts me that I'm not following Jesus in this area of my life. I think part of that feeling is the Holy Spirit, calling me to listen and obey God's word. I shouldn't dismiss this feeling but sometimes I do, because I'm a sinful person and I don't always obey him. Have you experienced times like that? We may have times where we fail to obey, but remember God forgives all our sins. We can always come back to God and say sorry and he will forgive.

Ask yourself the question - Is there one area in your life in which you hear Jesus calling you to obey him but finding it hard to follow?

Spend time listening to Jesus, read his word, and allow, ask the Holy Spirit to change you.

My brothers and sisters, those who are in God's family, through the Holy Spirit, do the will of God.

Listen to these encouraging words in (P) Romans 8:15-17 about how we are in the Family of God.

For you did not receive a spirit that makes you a slave again to fear, but you received the Spirit of sonship. And by him we cry, "Abba, Father." [16] The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God's children. [17] Now if we are children, then we are heirs---heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ, if indeed we share in his sufferings in order that we may also share in his glory.

Let's Pray together

Heavenly Father, we confess that we are tempted to ignoring you, we sometimes hear your words and fail to obey you. Please forgive us. Thank you that it is through Christ that we can be forgiven! Lord help us to listen to you and to obey you everyday of our lives. In Jesus name we pray, Amen