

Questioned  
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Mark 3:20-35

One of life's most painful experiences is to be misunderstood – especially when you know in your heart you are doing what is right. If you follow Christ you WILL be MISUNDERSTOOD. What are some examples of that?

If we follow Christ we WILL be MISUNDERSTOOD. Some will think we're crazy; some will think we're quaint; some will believe we've joined a cult. We're not surprised when our faith in Christ causes us to be misunderstood by those who are openly hostile to Him; that is a given. Sadly, however, sometimes our faith in Christ causes us to even be misunderstood by those who love us --- our friends and kin. We shouldn't be surprised because Jesus experienced the same situation while on earth. Though He came to give us peace with God, Jesus warned that following Him would bring division even in families (Mt.10:35-39.)

The point: While we will be misunderstood for following Christ. We must never misunderstand His authority over all creation including Satan. The eternally fatal misunderstanding is to reject Him and His offer of salvation. We must be willing to be misunderstood so we can help others NOT make THAT mistake.

As we turn to Mark chapter three we see that Jesus' ministry was exploding in both reputation and impact. His supernatural miracles were drawing crowds of those seeking His help and drawing the hatred of those seeking to remove Him. Mark 3:8 tells us: *"The news about his miracles had spread far and wide, and vast numbers of people came to see him."*<sup>i</sup> Sometimes the crowds became so unruly and hard to manage that Jesus and His newly called Apostles couldn't escape long enough to rest or eat a meal. That's the situation in Mark 3:20.

**Mark 3:20-21 (ESV) — 20** Then he went home, and the crowd gathered again, so that they could not even eat. **21** And when his family heard it, they went out to seize him, for they were saying, "He is out of his mind."

- It was a family intervention. *"He's not resting, not eating, He can't escape these crazy followers. Let's take Him to Nazareth for His own good."*
- John 7:5 tells us at this point: *"...not even his brothers believed in him..."*<sup>ii</sup>
- His Mother, Mary knew His destiny but perhaps her maternal concerns for His physical and mental health were driving her to intervene.
- Perhaps they were concerned about family reputation or being ostracized.
- Whatever their motives, they couldn't understand this crazy life Jesus was living. They thought maybe HE was "out of His mind."
- What are some situations where faith in Christ can cause division with family? Have you had personal exposure to them?

- Later we'll talk about dealing with family division because of Christ.
- Meanwhile, Jesus' family members weren't the only ones who misunderstood His ministry.
- Jesus' family thought He was a threat to Himself but others saw him as a threat to their power, status and authority.

**22** And the scribes who came down from Jerusalem were saying, "He is possessed by Beelzebul," and "by the prince of demons he casts out the demons."

- The religious leaders couldn't deny the supernatural power of Jesus' miracles so they chose to explain it as demon possession.
- Beelzebul (or Beelzebub) was the name of a false Philistine god but in that culture it became another name for Satan.
- Jesus used three parables (instructive stories) to refute their accusations.

**23** And he called them to him and said to them in parables, "How can Satan cast out Satan? **24** If a kingdom is divided against itself, that kingdom cannot stand. **25** And if a house is divided against itself, that house will not be able to stand. **26** And if Satan has risen up against himself and is divided, he cannot stand, but is coming to an end.

- Jesus said their argument that He was casting our demons using satanic power was absurd.
- A divided kingdom will fall, a divided family will disintegrate *and "...if Satan were fighting Satan, there soon wouldn't be any Satan left."*<sup>iii</sup>
- Then in verse 27 He made a very bold statement:

**27** But no one can enter a strong man's house and plunder his goods, unless he first binds the strong man. Then indeed he may plunder his house.

- Who was the "strong man" in Jesus' illustration? What was Jesus saying about His power in relationship to Satan's power?
- In a war you need to understand the enemy and Satan is our enemy.
- Revelation 12 describes a war in Heaven: "...*the great dragon was thrown down, that ancient serpent, who is called the devil and Satan, the deceiver of the whole world—he was thrown down to the earth, and his angels were thrown down with him.*" He is "*the accuser of our brethren.*"<sup>iv</sup>
- Satan is not equal to God, nor does he threaten God's power (Is.45:5–7).<sup>v</sup>
- Revelation 12:12 tells us Satan is working so hard because he knows "that he has little time."<sup>vi</sup> One day he will be eternally thrown into a "lake of fire."
- Can Satan and/or his demons read our minds? One commentator says the answer is: "No.1 Kings 8:39 says that God alone knows every human heart." On the other hand Satan is an expert as understanding the weaknesses of human nature. James said, we should "resist" him. (Js.4:7)

- Jesus spoke of “binding” the “strong man.” Some misinterpret that and saying they “bind” Satan. There is no scriptural basis for addressing Satan in prayer. When you pray, talk to God about Satan, don’t talk to Satan.
- Jesus didn’t just destroy the arguments of the Scribes, He warned them about how their hard hearts might lead to their own eternal destruction.

**28** “Truly, I say to you, all sins will be forgiven the children of man, and whatever blasphemies they utter, **29** but whoever blasphemes against the Holy Spirit never has forgiveness, but is guilty of an eternal sin”— **30** for they were saying, “He has an unclean spirit.”

- Inquiring minds want to know: What is “blaspheming the Holy Spirit” or the “unpardonable sin?” How can I be sure I haven’t been guilty of this?
- The word blasphemy means, “to speak harm.” You could blaspheme another human being. We think of it in “the biblical context [as] an attitude of disrespect...directed against the character of God.”<sup>vii</sup>
- Specifically, “[I]n the case of the scribes, blasphemy included attributing the acts of the Holy Spirit to the work of Satan. Although not in so many words, they said the Spirit of God was an unclean spirit.”<sup>viii</sup>
- Good news: “The blasphemy against the Holy Spirit, specific as it was to the [scribes and] Pharisees’ situation, cannot be duplicated today. Jesus Christ is not on earth, and no one can personally see Jesus perform a miracle and then attribute that power to Satan instead of the Spirit.”<sup>ix</sup>
- Before we get too relaxed, there is still an “eternal sin.” What is it?
- Wiersbe: “The only sin today that God cannot forgive is rejection of His Son (John 3:16–21, 31). When the Spirit of God convicts the sinner and reveals the Saviour, the sinner may resist the Spirit and reject the witness of the Word of God, but that does not mean he has forfeited all his opportunities to be saved. If he will repent and believe, God can still forgive him. Even if the sinner so hardens his heart that he seems to be insensitive to the pleadings of God, so long as there is life, there is hope. Only God knows if and when any “deadline” has been crossed. (1 Tim. 2:4; 2 Peter 3:9).”
- As a practical matter, if you are worried about committing the “unpardonable sin” it’s a good indication that you haven’t.
- A person can be sure by praying to God confessing our sorrow for sin, our desire to turn from our sin, and asking Him to save us forever.
- Look at Jesus’ promise in verse 28: “...all sins will be forgiven the children of man, and whatever blasphemies they utter...”
- Can a blasphemer be saved? Just ask the Apostle Paul who wrote these words: “<sup>13</sup> though formerly I was a blasphemer, persecutor, and insolent opponent. But I received mercy because I had acted ignorantly in unbelief, <sup>14</sup> and the grace of our Lord overflowed for me with the faith and love that are in Christ Jesus. <sup>15</sup> The saying is trustworthy and deserving of full acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am the foremost.”<sup>x</sup> (1 Ti 1:13–15)

- That explanation by Paul would indicate that even those arrogant scribes still had a chance to turn to Christ avoiding the unpardonable sin.
- Meanwhile, we still have Jesus' family huddled on the front porch.

**31** And his mother and his brothers came, and standing outside they sent to him and called him. **32** And a crowd was sitting around him, and they said to him, "Your mother and your brothers are outside, seeking you." **33** And he answered them, "Who are my mother and my brothers?" **34** And looking about at those who sat around him, he said, "Here are my mother and my brothers! **35** For whoever does the will of God, he is my brother and sister and mother."

- Nothing in scripture indicates Christ was anti-family. He was concerned about His mother's care while on the cross (John 19:26-27).
- Eventually His brothers James and Jude WOULD believe in Him.
- What IS clear in these verses is that doing the will of God was more important to Jesus than any human relationship, even family.
- Any other thoughts on dealing with being misunderstood for our faith?

So, What's the Takeaway?

- While we will be misunderstood for following Christ, we must never misunderstand His authority over all creation including Satan.
- The eternally fatal misunderstanding (the unpardonable sin) is to reject Him and His offer of salvation. We must be willing to be misunderstood so we can help others NOT make THAT mistake.
- We've witnessed divisions with family or friends when someone follows Christ. In extreme cases, it has involved shunning or estrangement.
- How can we deal with being misunderstood by family because of our faith? Chuck Swindoll offers these suggestions: Face it. Accept it. Adjust to it. He writes, "*Live your faith, pray for the faithless. Be ready to share Christ with them when the moment is right, but don't do things to push them away. Don't go out of your way to alienate them with a barrage of spiritual emails, gospel-embedded text messages, constant invitations to church events, or hidden gospel tracts under their pillows or taped to the bathroom mirrors. Don't force mealtime prayers on them. Embrace the new reality that you now live with genuine commitments to both your natural family and the supernatural family of God. Adjust to it.*"<sup>x1</sup>
- We have to trust the Holy Spirit to do what only He can do. That doesn't mean it will be easy, but it's a part of trusting God's sovereignty.
- What about those who misunderstand us and have intent to harm us?
- Jesus said, "Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, pray for those who abuse you. (Luke 6:27-28)
- Even on the cross He prayed: "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." (Luke 23:34)
- And He instructed us: In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven. (Matthew 5:16)

- Jesus paid the price, the Holy Spirit does the convicting, and we are to simply share the gospel and love people trusting the Father with the results.

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<sup>i</sup> Tyndale House Publishers. (2015). [Holy Bible: New Living Translation](#) (Mk 3:8).

<sup>ii</sup> [The Holy Bible: English Standard Version](#). (2016). (Jn 7:5). Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles.

<sup>iii</sup> Peterson, E. H. (2005). [The Message: the Bible in contemporary language](#) (Mk 3:24–26). Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress.

<sup>iv</sup> [The New King James Version](#). (1982). (Re 12:10). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

<sup>v</sup> Cathey, J. (2003). [Devil, Satan, Evil, Demonic](#). In C. Brand, C. Draper, A. England, S. Bond, E. R. Clendenen, & T. C. Butler (Eds.), *Holman Illustrated Bible Dictionary* (p. 419). Nashville, TN: Holman Bible Publishers.

<sup>vi</sup> Tyndale House Publishers. (2015). [Holy Bible: New Living Translation](#) (Re 12:12). Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House Publishers.

<sup>vii</sup> Henry, J. M. (2003). [Blasphemy](#). In C. Brand, C. Draper, A. England, S. Bond, E. R. Clendenen, & T. C. Butler (Eds.), *Holman Illustrated Bible Dictionary* (p. 222). Nashville, TN: Holman Bible Publishers.

<sup>viii</sup> Swindoll, Charles R.. Insights on Mark (Swindoll's Living Insights New Testament Commentary Book 2) (p. 100). Tyndale House Publishers. Kindle Edition.

<sup>ix</sup> <https://www.gotquestions.org/unpardonable-sin.html>

<sup>x</sup> [The Holy Bible: English Standard Version](#). (2016). (1 Ti 1:13–15). Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles.

<sup>xi</sup> Swindoll, Charles R.. Insights on Mark (Swindoll's Living Insights New Testament Commentary Book 2) (p. 103). Tyndale House Publishers. Kindle Edition.