

How Does Jesus Feel About You?

The Galilean Ministry Part 25
Mark 3:20-35 6/17/2018

Summary: Verdicts on Jesus are really verdicts on the people rendering those verdicts. Jesus' family thought he was insane and the scribes thought he got power from Satan. Jesus disproves both by his brilliant response destroying the scribes' position logically and then issuing a stunning warning about unforgivable sin. Then, just as he had recreated Israel on new foundations, he does the same with family, making the family of Christ-followers more important than natural family. He loves you like a brother and like his own mother.

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Mark 3:20 Then Jesus entered a house, and again a crowd gathered, so that he and his disciples were not even able to eat. **21** When his family heard about this, they went to take charge of him, for they said, "He is out of his mind."

22 And the teachers of the law who came down from Jerusalem said, "He is possessed by Beelzebub! By the prince of demons he is driving out demons."

23 So Jesus called them and spoke to them in parables: "How can Satan drive out Satan? **24** If a kingdom is divided against itself, that kingdom cannot stand. **25** If a house is divided against itself, that house cannot stand. **26** And if Satan opposes himself and is divided, he cannot stand; his end has come. **27** In fact, no one can enter a strong man's house and carry off his possessions unless he first ties up the strong man. Then he can rob his house.

28 I tell you the truth, all the sins and blasphemies of men will be forgiven them. 29 But whoever blasphemes against the Holy Spirit will never be forgiven; he is guilty of an eternal sin.” 30 He said this because they were saying, “He has an evil spirit.”

31 Then Jesus’ mother and brothers arrived. Standing outside, they sent for him, calling him. 32 A crowd was sitting around him, and they told him, “Your mother and brothers are outside looking for you.” 33 “Who are my mother and my brothers?” he asked. 34 Then he looked at those seated in a circle around him and said, “Here are my mother and my brothers! 35 Whoever does God’s will is my brother and sister and mother.”

Introduction

Your eternal destiny hangs on two things: who you think Jesus is, and how you respond to his words. We have been studying through the book of Mark, and we are at a section now where Mark is about to address both of those. Here at the end of ch.3 we’re going to see various theories on who Jesus is, and then next week, in ch.4, Jesus is going to teach us all about the various ways people respond to his words.

There’s a story of a man who went into the museum and said to the curator, “I don’t think much of these paintings.” To which the curator said, “These paintings are not on trial; you are.” Those paintings have already been established as great works of art. So that guy’s opinion of them says nothing about them; but says a lot about him. It says he doesn’t know anything about art. When someone looks at the sun and concludes that it’s dark – that says nothing about the sun. It only tells you that that man is blind. When you evaluate something that is truly great, that thing isn’t what’s on trial – you are.

In this passage we see some of the verdicts people rendered about Jesus, and Mark is going to show us that those verdicts tell us nothing about Jesus, but everything about the hearts of those who rendered them. When it comes to the question of your opinion of Jesus, remember that the Lord Jesus Christ is not on trial – they are. Jesus has already been proved to be who he is. God the Father already made that crystal clear. People come into the courtroom thinking they are sitting on the bench as the judge. But as soon as they drop the gavel and give their verdict they discover that they are sitting not on the judge’s bench, but in the defendant’s seat. And the Lord Jesus Christ is sitting not in the defendant’s seat where they thought He was, but on the judge’s bench. So let’s watch as Jesus does that with two different groups here.

Jesus Examined

Family Verdict

Jesus comes down from the mountain after appointing the Twelve, and he’s right back into the chaos of the crowds.

Mark 3:20 Then Jesus entered a house, and again a crowd gathered, so that he and his disciples were not even able to eat.

The crowds have become unmanageable. They almost crushed him before he went up on the mountain. Now they are following him into his own kitchen so he can’t even get a bite to eat. The whole thing is getting out of control.

21 When his family heard about this, they went to take charge of him, for they said, "He is out of his mind."

Honest Reports

The word for **take charge** of means *to seize, or to take into custody*. His family is going to take hold of Jesus and bring him home – whether he wants to come or not, because this is getting out of control. He’s got the authorities so upset they are trying to kill him, and he keeps throwing more kindling on the

fire and stirring up more frenzied crowds. And that has ramifications for his family. For one thing, anything that brought dishonor on the family was a very big deal in that culture. And beyond that, anyone associated with Jesus was getting persecuted and excommunicated from the synagogue.¹ So you can imagine his family's concerns. This whole escapade has gone too far, something drastic needs to happen, and so they decide they need to do an intervention.

Scribes' Verdict

So they set out here in v.21 to go to where Jesus is. But they don't arrive until v.31. It takes them 10 verses to get there. And in those 10 verses, Mark tells us about another assessment of Jesus.

22 And the scribes who came down from Jerusalem said, "He has Beelzebub! By the prince of demons he is driving out demons."

What an unbelievable conclusion to come to about Jesus Christ. If you saw me at my worst, you might conclude that I have some kind of demon influence. But Jesus? What did he do? He healed everyone he met. He gave people the words of eternal life. He forgave sins. He welcomed children. He loved outcasts. He performed miracles of compassion. He fulfilled OT prophecy. He upheld the Scriptures. He honored God. He delivered people from demons. John the Baptist vouched for him. God the Father vouched for him. The Holy Spirit came upon him. And after all that, their conclusion is to say, "He so evil, it's not even enough to say he has a demon. He must have the king of demons in him." You can just feel the hatred. And by the way, getting your power from Satan is sorcery, which carried the death penalty in the law of God. They keep on accusing him of capital crimes.

They can't just say he's crazy, because they are trying to explain his ability to cast out demons and perform miracles. Being crazy doesn't help you walk on water. So they say, "He has power, but he gets it from the devil." The only way you can come to a conclusion like that is to have an evil bias. They can't see the truth about Jesus because they don't want to.

Two Different Verdicts

So those are the verdicts. His family decided he was insane, and the Scribes accuse him of collusion. And not with Russia—even worse; with collusion with the devil. Now we're going to see how Jesus responds.

Jesus' Rebuttal

He responds first to the scribes, because his family still hasn't arrived. His response to the scribes is devastating. First he crushes their argument with logic, then issues a blistering warning. The logic is in vv.23-26 and it comes at them like a machine gun.

23 So Jesus called them and spoke to them in parables

The word translated **called** is that same word from v.13 that I told you refers to a royal summons. He summoned them. "You, you, you, and you, come here!"

1) Satan Can't Cast Himself Anywhere

He's going to cross examine them, which only takes one question. And, as usual, they can't answer it.

23 ..."How can Satan cast out Satan?"

¹ Jn.9:22, 12:42.

² This confirms that Beelzebub is Satan.

That question is actually kind of funny if you think about it. Try answering it. How does one go about casting himself somewhere? You try it. Make it easier—try just giving yourself a shove. You can't even do that, much less pick yourself up and cast yourself anywhere.

Well, they keep their losing streak going. Their percentage of times they can answer one of Jesus' questions stays right there at an even 0%. They are already silenced, Jesus' point is proven, the argument is over, and Jesus has no more questions for these witnesses. It's time for his closing arguments. And he gives three of them rapid fire.

2) If He Could, It Would be Suicide

- **24 If a kingdom is divided against itself, that kingdom cannot stand.**
- **25 If a house is divided against itself, that house cannot stand.**

Whether you're talking about something as small as a household or as big as a kingdom or anything in between—no organization of any size or kind can survive declaring war on itself.

Satan may occasionally let someone have success casting out a demon or two just to deceive people. But that's not what Jesus is talking about. He's not casting out a demon or two here and there. Jesus was *shattering* Satan's kingdom. We're talking scorched earth. The scale on which Jesus was demolishing and dismantling Satan's entire kingdom was something that had never happened before. If you could see the spirit world during Jesus' ministry it would look like a hurricane has swept through Israel. Satan's kingdom was being obliterated. Jesus cast out thousands of demons. Satan's finest were decimated by the Son of God. And to suggest Satan would do that to himself is ridiculous. In a war, it would be one thing for a country to pretend to be defeated in an area or to give up certain things to a spy to keep up his credibility, but no nation would bomb its own capital back to the stone age.

So the first question points out the impossibility of what they are suggesting. No one can throw himself anywhere. And the next two statements describe what the outcome would be if he tried.

Satan is Done

26 And if Satan opposes himself and is divided, he cannot stand; his end has come.

“If the devil fights himself and wins, he's done, right? And if he fights himself and loses, he's done. Either way, you just gave me credit for wiping out the devil. Whether it's the ridiculous way you guys described it, or if it's by the finger of God like I said – either way, you just acknowledged that I'm responsible for the demise of the devil, so, you're welcome.”

3) A Greater Power Must Be Working

I would say at this point Jesus has made his point – and then some. But he's not finished. In v.27 he gives an allegory that answers the question they couldn't answer in v.23. How could Satan cast himself out? First of all he can't, and even if he could, he wouldn't, which only leaves one possibility. If he's cast out, it must be the work of someone more powerful than Satan.

27 In fact, no one can enter a strong man's house and carry off his possessions unless he first ties up the strong man. Then he can rob his house.

If you're going to walk into the Golden Glove champ's house and rob it while he's home, you have to be a lot tougher than him, because he'll be full of adrenaline and will fight you tooth and nail to protect his stuff. Jesus walked right into Satan's house and started taking whatever he wanted (people who had been under Satan's control). Jesus can take a human soul out of the clutches of the devil at will. And he was doing so on a massive scale. Jesus went into Satan's domain, took on all of his hosts, cast them out, and bound and gagged the most powerful created being in existence without even breaking a sweat. And

whenever the demons saw him coming they panicked and begged for mercy. What Jesus would later do on the cross to defeat Satan was invisible. So first Jesus defeated the Satanic host in a clear, observable, visible way so everyone could see it.

Proof of Sanity

Ok, so Jesus has utterly demolished their argument that he is getting his power from Satan. And in doing that, he has also effectively refuted his family's idea that he's insane, right? I don't know about you, but when I see Jesus' response to the scribes, he seems lucid to me. I don't know how you could say that a man is insane when he can confound the academic authorities every single time with a few sentences off the top of his head. If someone looks at Jesus' words – teachings that have captivated humanity for 2000 years, and have comforted and instructed and built up men and women in every culture in every era and transformed millions of lives - they look at those words and conclude that the author of those words was insane, I think we know where the mental deficiency lies.

Jesus' Warning

So Jesus has proved his sanity, and has demolished the scribes' argument, but he's still not done. Next, he issues one of the most chilling, frightening warnings in the whole Bible.

29 But whoever blasphemes against the Holy Spirit will never be forgiven; he is guilty of an eternal sin.” 30 He said this because they were saying, “He has an evil spirit.”

Wow. That's a frightening verse, isn't it? It's one thing for a person who is ignorant about the truth to not understand Jesus. But when the Holy Spirit has enlightened a person's heart to understand, and yet that person continues to resist, there will come a point when the Spirit will withdraw from that person forever. Once that happens there can be no forgiveness because that person will never repent, because the human heart cannot repent without the work of the Holy Spirit. That's why Jesus calls it **an eternal sin** in v.29. It can't be forgiven because it's the sin that never ends. Whenever you commit a sin, that sin continues from the moment you commit it, all the way until the moment you repent. So if you never repent, the sin is eternal.

Don't Resist the Spirit

We all resist the Holy Spirit to some degree. You're reading the Bible or listening to a sermon, and the Spirit touches your heart with that tug of conviction. *“That's for you. You need to respond to that.”* And we end up ignoring it. That's resisting the Spirit. We all do that, but some people keep it up and keep it up until they go too far.

Repent

If you're worried that you might have committed the unforgivable sin, if you want to know for sure that you haven't, then just repent. If you repent, then I can assure you that 100% of your sins will be forgiven—no matter what you have done. Once you've repented, the past is no longer an issue.

Arrival

Ok, so right as Jesus finishes torching the scribes, guess who finally shows up?

31 Then Jesus' mother and brothers arrived.

Here they come – his brother James, Joseph, Judas, Simon, and there's Mary. No mention of whether his sisters were there. What does Jesus say when he sees them? He never does see them because they don't come in.

31 ...Standing outside, they sent for him, calling him.

Why didn't they go inside? They couldn't. The house was so jam packed, they couldn't even get in the door (Lk.8:9).

Outsiders

So here the family is, **standing outside** and the crowd is inside. That's a striking scene because normally when you're at your house, it's the family on the inside and the crowds on the outside. Here it's reversed. And that ends up being a metaphor for the whole principle Jesus is about to teach in this passage.

Redefining Family

Jesus' Surprising Response

31 ... they sent for him, calling him.

Mary and Jesus' brothers get up to the fringe of the crowd outside the door, and they grab someone, "Hey, can you please get word to Jesus that his mother and brothers are here to see him?" And that guy says, "Sure," and he passes it along, word moves through until the ones close to Jesus gets it.

32 A crowd was sitting around him, and they are telling him, "Behold. Your mother and brothers are outside looking³ for you."

The **behold** means the disciples think it's a fairly big deal that his mom is here. And so they interrupt whatever Jesus was saying to let him know.

And Jesus, as always, allows the interruption. Which is good, because whatever he had been teaching didn't even make it into Scripture, but this interruption did. Some of his most wonderful teachings came in moments of interruption.

And this is one that only Jesus could see as a teachable moment. It's about the most ordinary circumstance you can have in life (Hey Jesus, your family is here). But Jesus, the master teacher, could see teachable moments when no one else could. So look at his answer:

33 "Who are my mother and my brothers?" he asked. 34 Then he looked around at those seated in a circle around him and said, "Behold! ...

He uses the word they just used. They said, "Behold, your family is here." He says, "You want to behold something? Behold this: **34 ...Behold, Here are my mother and my brothers! 35 Whoever does God's will is my brother and sister and mother.**" Meanwhile Mary and the brothers are outside waiting ... waiting. Finally someone squeezes out the front door. "Is he coming out?" "Um, I don't think so." "Well, what did he say?" "He, uh, made a remark about family." "Why isn't he coming out? Tell him his mother is here." "We did. But when we said that, he pointed to his disciples and said '**Here are my mother and my brothers.**'" Mary's face turns white. "I'm sorry Mary – I don't know what got into him." They stand there in stunned silence. The importance of family, and the shame associated with any kind of disowning of family in that culture. This was a shock to say the least.

Finally one of them turns, starts walking, the others follow, and they head back to Nazareth. Must have been an interesting 30 mile walk home.

³ Some have noted that when it says they were looking for him, the term for looking is always used in Mark in contexts where the one looking is making some effort to subvert Jesus' ministry.

Jesus Establishing a New Family

So what is Jesus doing here? He's doing the same thing here with the family that he did right before this with the nation of Israel. In appointing the 12, Jesus was recreating the nation of Israel. And here he is doing the same thing with an even more basic institution – the family. This kingdom Jesus has been proclaiming – it's a holy nation, and it's a family.

Water is Thicker than Blood

34 he looked at those seated in a circle around him and said, "Behold. Here are my mother and my brothers! 35 Whoever does God's will is my brother and sister and mother."

Now, was Jesus completely disowning his family? No. The physical family still matters—we'll see that later on. But he is also creating a much, much greater family that supersedes the physical family.

More Important

People think they are Christians because they grew up in a Christian home. No one ever grew up in a home that was more Christian than Christ's siblings. But none of them were included in the kingdom until they placed their faith in Jesus. If not even Mary herself could play the family card, no one can.

A lot of Christians have made much of Mary's relationship with Jesus as his physical mother. But Jesus corrected that attitude in Luke 11.

Luke 11:27 As Jesus was saying these things, a woman in the crowd called out, "Blessed is the mother who gave you birth and nursed you." 28 He replied, "On the contrary. Blessed are those who hear the word of God and obey it."

If you think Mary was special because she gave birth to Jesus, anyone who follows Jesus is more special.

Who Are the Insiders?

So who qualifies as a member of Jesus' family? Everyone? No, it's only the insiders. At first it seems kind of harsh, when we see Jesus' family walking away. But Jesus isn't shutting them out. In fact, in the very next breath Jesus throws the doors of his household wide open not only to them, but to anyone in the whole world who is willing. And after his resurrection, his brothers walk through that door. Out of the ashes of his earthly family, a new family bursts out of the limits of blood relations that will gather in millions.

1) Will of God

So who are the insiders? Jesus describe them in two ways. One is that they do the will of God.

35 Whoever does God's will is my brother and sister and mother.

2) Follow Christ

So that's one way of describing the insiders. The other way of describing the same group is in v.34.

34 Then he looked around at those seated in a circle around him and said, "Here are my mother and my brothers!"

He points to all his followers and says all of them are his brothers and sisters and mothers. So the true family of God is made up of those who do God's will, or, to say it another way, those who follow Christ, which means being a follower of Christ equals doing God's will.

No doubt both the Scribes thought they were doing God's will. But nobody is doing God's will if they are not a follower of Christ. And everyone who is following Christ is doing God's will. If you are a follower of Jesus, you are doing God's will for your life, and he is not ashamed to call you his brother or sister.

Jesus Our Brother/Son

Relationship to Jesus

As Christians, our relationship with Jesus is multifaceted. As your Savior, you look to him for salvation and forgiveness of sins. As your King, you bow before his authority. As your Creator, you submit to him as the owner of your life. As your Mediator, you look to him for your justification. As the Son of God, you worship him. As the Word of God, you look to him for truth and light and guidance and instruction. As the perfect Man, you look to him as your example. Those are all important, but there is one aspect of your relationship—your relationship as his brother or sister or mother.

Companionship

He's still our Lord and God and King and Owner and Master. But there are aspects of family love that he also wants to share with us. And you can see that if you watch his friendship with his disciples. Most big shots are only friends with other big shots. But these guys were anything but big shots. They weren't even medium shots. They were nobodies, but when Jesus took some time off for rest, it was with them. **John 13:1 He loved them to the end.** And in his darkest hour, the night before he died, he longed for their companionship.

Jesus Wants Your Companionship

And if you're a follower of Christ, did you know that Jesus desires that kind of love from you? There is a special bond between brothers and sisters that doesn't exist in other relationships. Jesus wants that part of your love too. He wants your worship and fear and awe and reverence and obedience—but he also wants you as a sister or brother. He wants that unique kind of familiar, warm, comfortable, close, life-long love from you, where you share the really little things of life. That the bond of brotherhood, camaraderie, family loyalty, family priority.

Jesus Loves Us That Way

And more importantly, not only does he want that kind of love from us, but he loves us that way—like a brother. He's the perfect older brother. When I was a kid, my big brother was a unique combination of companion, teacher, and protector. We shared a bedroom, and we talked about things I never talked with anyone else about. He protected me from bullies.

And I had that same protective instinct toward my younger siblings. I remember one time when my little sister got hurt and she cried so hard, the pain I felt in my heart was almost unbearable. To this day I can't stand to even think about it.

That's the natural kind of protective love and compassion that God planted in elder brothers for their siblings. If you're one of Jesus' followers, did you know that he has that kind of love for you? When something lands on your toe, or something threatens you, he feels that special, brotherly compassion, and he will put himself between you and danger.

Another thing I remember about my brother was all the things he taught me. I remember the day we were in a tent at camp and he warned me about temptations to various sins, and that they are a trap. Older brothers teach their younger siblings in times and places where their parents can't reach. No one can reach

into those moments and contexts of life except an older brother. Jesus does that for us. He's right there beside you in the events of life, teaching you how to think about them.

Loving Jesus as a Mother

And not only that, but Jesus also says his disciples are his mothers.

33 “Who are my mother and my brothers?”

34 ... “Here are my mother and my brothers! 35 Whoever does God’s will is my brother and sister and mother.”

Jesus loves us like a man loves his mother. A typical man—if you so much as insult his mother, you get a black eye, right? And I can tell you, no one has access to me like my mom does. If my phone rings and it's her, I pick up. If she's in trouble, I drop what I'm doing and go help. And I'm just a natural, sinful man. Imagine what kind of love the perfect man has toward his mother. How do you think Jesus would respond if Mary was in danger and was screaming for help? Whatever the natural response of love that a man has for his mother, crank that all the way up to perfection, and you know how Jesus loves his mother. And what he's saying here is that he has that kind of love for anyone who is one of his followers. *He loves you like his own mother.*