

Two *Horrific* Warnings; Two *Glorious* Promises – Mark 3:20-35
Series: Look and Live #13

Illustration: mom coming to get you and call you out of class. **Read Mark 3:20-35.**

Jesus' family decides one day, they need to pack their things and they need to get to Capernaum (where Jesus was) to get him and take him home. They think he's lost his mind. So they set out to get him. (vv. 20-21) While his family was on their way, there was a very tense interchange between Jesus and a delegation of scribes sent all the way from Jerusalem to deal with Jesus. Apparently he's ministry has been creating quite a stir.

They show up to the home Jesus was staying in and immediately start saying, "Well *yeah* he can do miracles and cast out demons, but he's doing it in the power of Satan!" (Beelzebul = nickname for Satan) They couldn't deny his great power and authority, so instead they maligned and slandered him by saying that his authority and power were from Satan.

Jesus answers the scribes in verses 23-27. Basically he's saying, "That doesn't make any sense." Then in vv. 28-30 he gives them a very serious warning that if they continue in this course of action they will be eternally guilty of blaspheming against the Holy Spirit.

Now Mark picks back up the story of Jesus' family. When they arrive at the house, it's so packed full that the family can't even get within earshot of Jesus. In their minds, they had to get to him somehow; they were thinking, "If we don't stop him, something terrible is going to happen." So they send him a message. Jesus doesn't respond like they'd hoped. He finishes up our section with another principle about where his allegiance lies and about who is his ultimate family.

There are four main points in this text: two of them are *horrific warnings*, and two are *glorious promises*. We'll start with the horrific warnings.

- 1) First, Jesus' family is not *okay* spiritually just because they're Jesus' family.
 - a) It's a little shocking that his own family doesn't get him. After 30 years with him they still don't understand. Even worse, they actually accuse him of being crazy. (Verse 21: he's "out of his mind"; he's insane.) They heard the things he was teaching about being the coming Messiah. They heard he was calling men to follow him and saying that he was the establishment of the final Kingdom of God. They heard those things and rejected them as the musings and imaginations of a lunatic.
 - b) Their intention was to "seize him" once they got to him(v. 21).
 - c) Contrary to the teaching of Roman Catholicism, Mary clearly was not without sin.
 - i) Mary and Jesus' half-brothers come to Jesus saying, "We don't believe you! Not only are we unclear about what you're saying, but we completely disbelieve what you're saying and we think that you have fallen off your rocker!" **That's sinful blindness.** That's a sin. Mary was not perfect; she was fallen. Mary needed her *Son* to save her.
 - d) So again the warning is, Jesus' own earthly family is not okay just because their Jesus' family.
 - e) There's a principle here: there is no such thing as **privileged status** when it comes to salvation.

- f) If anyone would have had a backstage pass to salvation, it would have been Mary right? (**Illustration:** Michelle Obama and passing through security.)
 - g) If anyone should be able to kind of “by-pass” this whole having to repent from their sins, believe on Jesus Christ, and follow him as his disciples it should have been Mary! The one who carried him, trained him, changed his dirty diapers, bathed him, and even breast-fed him.
 - h) But in actuality, when she denies him he looks around and says, “Who is my mother? Or my brothers? Is it not the one who does the will of God?” The will of God is that she repent and believe on Jesus as the King of the Kingdom of God.
 - i) Even Mary didn’t have special privileged status in terms of salvation.
 - j) I don’t have special status because I’m a Haider; Haider’s will only be saved if they admit their helplessness, repent from their sins and cling to Jesus as their only hope. That’s it! And you, reader. That’s it! It doesn’t matter who your parents were, how long you’ve been going to which church, how many times you’ve done the read the Bible in a year plan. You could even be the *mother* of the Son of God, and if you don’t repent from your sins daily, take up your cross and follow Jesus as his disciple, you will go to Hell.
 - k) A *horrific* warning indeed.
- 2) Second horrific warning, verse 28, “[A]ll sins will be forgiven the children of man, and whatever blasphemies they utter, but whoever blasphemes against the Holy Spirit never has forgiveness, but is guilty of an eternal sin.”
- a) Jesus says that that person, “whoever” it is, “never has forgiveness.” Their guilt is an eternal guilt for an eternal sin.
 - b) But what is “blasphemy against the Holy Spirit”? Let’s start with what it doesn’t mean, with what it *can’t* mean first.
 - i) As popular as this understanding is today, Jesus **cannot** be saying that anyone who ever called God to damn something by saying God damn as a curse word, that they’ve committed an “unpardonable sin.” That is *not* what this passage means.
 - ii) Furthermore this cannot mean that if you’ve denied Jesus (or at some point denied that the Holy Spirit worked in him as the Son of God) therefore you’re eternally condemned. The Apostle Paul committed that very sin before God saved him.
 - c) So what does it mean? Primarily Jesus is warning the scribes, so the best thing to do here is to look at what the scribes were doing that made them dangerously close to blaspheming against the Holy Spirit.
 - i) The scribes knew that Jesus wasn’t possessed by Satan, but they deliberately trumped up charges to slander him and to reject the work of the Holy Spirit in and through Jesus.
 - ii) So Jesus warns them, “*Slandering* the Holy Spirit (that is, blaspheming), deliberately and persistently denying his work in me will leave you dead in your sins and guilty of eternal guilt!”
 - d) The Holy Spirit is the one who gives repentance. We don’t muster repentance in ourselves out of nowhere; repentance is a *gift* of God’s Spirit. A person could mock the work of the Spirit, refuse the work of the Spirit, and slander Christ, and at some point the Spirit says, “Alright, so be it.” And he’ll never give that person the gift of repentance. That’s blasphemy against the Holy Spirit and the eternal guilt that it brings.
 - e) There is a way to put off or push away the Holy Spirit of God such that you will never find opportunity to repent.

- f) Jesus' warning to us is that, if we deliberately deny the work of the Holy Spirit, or if we slanderously or arrogantly reject the conviction of sin that he gives us in our hearts, if we sluff off the need to repent and believe and embrace Jesus Christ as the only Way, Truth, and Life, there might come a time when we have some desire to repent but we cannot. We are dead. We are, at that point, forever dead.
- g) That seems to be what the author of Hebrews has in mind in chapter 12 when he's talking about Esau...
- h) This passage is a warning to us this morning: don't play around. Don't mess with conviction or repentance. If you're struggling with sin, if you're telling yourself, "I'll worry about this later," or if you're under the conviction that you don't know Christ and that you're cut off from him and you're saying, "I'm not in a point in my life right now where I want to think about that," you need to be aware that repentance is a gift of the Holy Spirit. And if you go on rejecting him, if you go on spurning him, if you go on mocking him and deliberately shoving him off, you need to know that at some point, you may have a desire to repent but you will not be able to. It will be too late.

There are also two glorious promises in this text.

- 3) The first promise is in Jesus' answer to the scribes, starting in verse 23.
 - a) They say, "Well yeah he's casting out demons, but he's doing it in the power of Satan."
 - b) Jesus' response is, "That's stupid! It doesn't make any sense. How can Satan cast out Satan?" That would mean that Satan was fighting against himself and was simultaneously working to build his kingdom and to destroy his kingdom; that's ridiculous.
 - i) In verse 27, he tells them what is really happening since he knows that they know that he's not doing this in the power of Satan. So how's he doing it then? Verse 27. "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."
 - ii) Jesus' point was two-fold
 - (1) His actions should be understood as plundering the house of Satan (the strong man, the mighty man). He was taking away his goods, casting out his little minions, defeating his servants, overcoming his power, and thwarting his sinful purposes.
 - (2) That means, therefore, far from doing all of this in Satan's strength, Jesus had *bound* the devil.
 - c) That's a glorious truth. When Jesus comes, Satan is bound and is losing his grip on his kingdom.
 - d) So contrary to some popular Pentecostal, Charismatic practices, we don't go around today "binding" Satan. He has been decisively bound, and as we proclaim the Gospel and Jesus advances his Kingdom, Satan is progressively bound more and more and his kingdom continues to unravel before him.
 - e) May the Strong Man be bound, and may Jesus continue to plunder his goods in Hickory Hill.
- 4) The second promise: Jesus is building a new, eternal, spiritual family in the Gospel.
 - a) Jesus has just been given the message that Mary and his half-brothers are there, and he knows that they're there to take him away because they think he's crazy.

- i) His response is pretty powerful. Very strongly he continues to sit there and says, “Who is my mother, and who are my brothers?” Then speaking to his followers around him he says, “Here are my mother and my brothers. *Whoever* does the will of God, he is my family.”
- ii) It’s pretty obvious what Jesus has in mind here by referring to the will of God: his ministry in Mark so far has big one big proclamation that God’s final Kingdom has come, that Jesus *is* that Messiah King, and that we must repent from our sins and trust in him to enter in to that Kingdom. That’s the will of God.
- iii) His mother and his brothers weren’t doing that.
- b) (CLARIFICATION: the Bible says a lot of things by way of praise and honor of earthly families.)
- c) But, (and this is something we, as a small country church need to hear) in the Gospel there is a bond that runs deeper and that is more essential than even earthly familial ties.
- d) Jesus teaches us here that in the Gospel, there is a new family that, if it must, takes priority over earthly family. His commitment to his Father’s plan was supreme. Sitting there with other people who had that same commitment, Jesus was *closer* to them than he was to his own mother.
- e) There is a spectacular new spiritual bond and relationship that those have who have repented from their sins and who together trust in Jesus as our Messiah-Redeemer-King. Family is awesome! Loving family, being with family, honoring family is wonderful, and it’s God’s desire for our nation. The last thing we ever want to do is undermine family.
- f) So without lowering the importance or value of earthly families, this passage forces us to *raise* the value and importance of our new spiritual family in the Gospel *even higher* than our genetic ties.
 - i) When we repent and believe, the Gospel creates a new set of relationships that are more essential and permanent than any relationship we’ve ever had (even marriage).
 - ii) The family is God’s provision for our flesh (to keep, protect, and provide for our flesh). The church, the *local church*, is God’s provision for our soul (to keep, protect, and provide for our soul).
- g) Think about your first day of kindergarten. You met that day the group of people who would see you and be with you all the way through to graduation. And of course, even though you didn’t know them all at the time, you were also becoming part of something much bigger than just your class. You were becoming a part of a new school, and you were just one class among many classes.
- h) When you join this local church you become part of this class. Just like your kindergarten class, we’re going to be with you to the end (except in this case, it’s eternity)! What a glorious, amazing thing the church is, the *set of relationships* that you join when you join a local church.
- i) Nothing, not Satan himself, not the gates of Hell themselves will ever prevail against our relationships.

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