

6-10-18 Sermon Mark 3:20-35

Easter, Jesus' return to God's side and Pentecost are in the rear view mirror as we join him once again at the *beginning* of Jesus' public ministry. Emphasis on the word *beginning*! I'm feeling brave so I am going to wrestle with a passage that is not my favorite. I usually preach on one of the other offerings this Sunday because this is messy scripture. **What is messy scripture?** Not sure who asked, but thank you none the less. Messy scripture is scripture that needs to be handled with care and with great focus otherwise it is easy to end up somewhere the scripture doesn't actually go.

It starts out innocently enough. Early on Jesus was quite the attraction and drew sizable crowds so it should not be a surprise that when he enters a house – not sure whose house it is but that doesn't matter. What does matter is the house is full and the yard are so full Jesus and his disciples can't even eat. That is the definition of a full house – when there isn't enough room for a plate or to get your hand up to your mouth.

Jesus has been out of his home for some time and there was a lot of talk about him and what he was doing and saying. Needless to say – his family got an earful. Now how accurate that earful was we don't know but – it sounds like what they heard about Jesus was not good. So not good that Jesus' family and friends are concerned. I doesn't sound like his family thinks he has lost it – but others have been reporting it.

The scribes – those fine folk who wanted to hang Jesus out to dry last week for gathering grain to eat and healing the man with the withered hand on the Sabbath near

the end of Jesus' ministry are present here at the beginning as well. The law folks have decided that Jesus is possessed. It would have been ok, if they stopped there because if you think about it – Jesus was indeed possessed. Possessed by the Holy Spirit though not by the Devil!

Jesus is a very good listener and he hears the rumblings in the crowd that must have been very much like the ones that made their way to his family so he tells them a story – a parable . . . Asking, “*How can Satan throw Satan out?*” and his following commentary is truths about civil war – the fate of a house divided and a bit about burglaries.

Now Jesus gets to the point. Since I cannot improve on the scripture, here are verses 28 and 29 again. “*I assure you that human beings will be forgiven for everything, for all sins and insults of every kind. But whoever insults the Holy Spirit will never be forgiven. That person is guilty of a sin with consequences that last forever.*” You may be more familiar with the words Blasphemy in this passage rather than insults. To insult or to blaspheme someone or something is throw major shade on it – to slander – to treat with contempt. In any case, Jesus lays out the one unforgivable sin – insulting the Holy Spirit! **What do you think about there being one unforgivable sin? Scary? Comforting? Why?????**

I believe in this case Jesus is speaking to the ones who accusing him of being possessed by the devil because they are calling the Holy Spirit – the Devil. Meets all

the criteria for the unforgivable sin. You don't get in this hole by being blind or not knowing – you put yourself in this hole by going out of your way to insult and impugn!

Moving right along we get to the family part which for years was the most dreaded part for me – until I actually read it instead of thinking I knew what it said. People do that a lot. They will tell you what they think the bible says without know what it actually says. A perfect reason for everyone to read and study the bible for themselves rather than taking what someone says is gospel as gospel! Rant is over!

Now the Family Matters or Family Values part of Jesus' teaching for today. And for the record – families are messy! Right off the bat I love that Jesus' family didn't believe everything they heard, but they were concerned enough to go see for themselves – or because of the crowds at least try to see for themselves.

Word has filtered in to Jesus that his family was outside. Please listen – really listen to what Jesus says in response to hearing they are out in the yard or in the street.

³³ *He (he being Jesus) replied, “Who is my mother? Who are my brothers?”*

³⁴ *Looking around at those seated around him in a circle, he said, “Look, here are my mother and my brothers. ³⁵ Whoever does God's will is my brother, sister, and mother.”* And what is God's will? That we love the Lord God with all that we are and that we love others as we have been loved.

Now I ask you, “**Who we missing from those Jesus named as family?**” Yes, there was no mention of his father of Joseph **which indicates?** And, “**Did Jesus say or**

do anything that disrespects in any way his family?” To my understanding he did not but he did do something else. Jesus drew a much larger family circle than anyone else had.

Lord Jesus, thank you for telling us what the one unforgivable sin is because with those very same words you also told us all other sins can be forgiven by you. This day we also thank you for drawing the family circle of a size that challenges how we think and offers us a goal and a picture of family of your own design. Amen.

Mark 3:20-35

²⁰ Jesus entered a house. A crowd gathered again so that it was impossible for him and his followers even to eat. ²¹ When his family heard what was happening, they came to take control of him. They were saying, “He’s out of his mind!”

²² The legal experts came down from Jerusalem. Over and over they charged, “He’s possessed by Beelzebul. He throws out demons with the authority of the ruler of demons.”

²³ When Jesus called them together he spoke to them in a parable: “How can Satan throw Satan out? ²⁴ A kingdom involved in civil war will collapse. ²⁵ And a house torn apart by divisions will collapse. ²⁶ If Satan rebels against himself and is divided, then he can’t endure. He’s done for. ²⁷ No one gets into the house of a strong person and steals anything without first tying up the strong person. Only then can the house be burglarized. ²⁸ I assure you that human beings will be forgiven for everything, for all sins and insults of every kind. ²⁹ But whoever insults the Holy Spirit will never be forgiven. That person is guilty of a sin with consequences that last forever.” ³⁰ He said this because the legal experts were saying, “He’s possessed by an evil spirit.”

³¹ His mother and brothers arrived. They stood outside and sent word to him, calling for him. ³² A crowd was seated around him, and those sent to him said, “Look, your mother, brothers, and sisters are outside looking for you.”

³³ He replied, “Who is my mother? Who are my brothers?” ³⁴ Looking around at those seated around him in a circle, he said, “Look, here are my mother and my brothers.

³⁵ Whoever does God’s will is my brother, sister, and mother.”