

Mark 3:20; 31-35

Jesus' Kin

Today's passage raises a serious question: Is Jesus a Crazy Relative or a Tool of the Devil?

We'll take the first part today.

We may not all have one, but we probably know what is meant by "the crazy uncle or cousin" who shows up at the holidays and ruins everything or at least creates a stir.

You may have someone like that in your family..... maybe it's you.

What we learn in this text is that in the minds of his own family, Jesus is the crazy relative.

It can be awkward and embarrassing when the family of a public figure must try to reign in the family member who some might say is "out of his mind." Here the family of Jesus arrives after making the trip from Nazareth and they can't get in to see him.

The wording is such that it is sort of hard to read knowing that they are talking about Jesus.

This is the Jesus who has been teaching with authority, healing the sick, and showing power by freeing those who are captive to demonic influence. Now we see his family coming to do some sort of 'intervention.'

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."

31 Then Jesus' mother and brothers arrived. Standing outside, they sent someone in to call 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."

For me, this comes out of the blue. Yes, Jesus has been doing some unusual things and attracting all sorts of attention, but he hasn't been doing anyone any harm.

v. 21 is so sad as the family goes out to "take hold of him" i.e. to seize or retain.

You can hear the apology in their voice, "He's out of his mind." i.e. 'Don't mind him, we're so sorry; we'll take care of it.'

**SIDEROAD – Matt 12, 123, Luk 8 Jn 2, Gal 1 all speak of Jesus family – brothers and sisters.

THIS IS HIS FAMILY and it seems a bit messy. It's nice to see that scripture doesn't airbrush the portrayal of the family of Jesus. He is the Son of God, the Son of Man and as a man he has a real family – mother and siblings. It would appear that at this point Joseph is no longer around.

Those were challenging times for the people of God as the Roman occupation would push anyone to raise questions about who Jesus was and what he was doing. We've seen the hostility of the religious leaders, and now we see the family of Jesus doesn't understand what is going on. For this family, things were getting messy.

When it comes to a complicated messy family life, "Jesus gets us. "

We might be surprised that Mary is in on this. After all that she experienced in the conception, birth, and presentation in the Temple we'd like to think that she was totally on board and in tune with her son. But Mary wasn't perfect. She was a mother...a Jewish mother who would be concerned for her first-born son.

We'd normally think the family must be proud of Jesus, the eldest son. When folks ask Mary, "How's your oldest boy, Jesus? What's he up to? Is he married?"

"Well, he's on the road a good bit, not married yet, but he's really out there seeking to serve Yahweh. ...Oh that incident?? Yes, it did get some notoriety. I'm not sure where he learned to do that. He was always a good student of the Torah, and he kept the rabbi on his toes...honestly, it's been a bit distracting."

The publicity and pressure is such that the family is out making excuses and apologies in public because they say Jesus is “out of his mind. “

I believe the word used in the classic film “Harvey” is ‘pixilated’ i.e. behaving as if mentally unbalanced, very eccentric. In that film, the lead character Elwood Dowd, played by Jimmy Stewart, has a friend that only he can see – a Pooka, resembling a large anthropomorphic rabbit. Elwood’s family found the situation quite embarrassing.

Here in Mark 3, we find the family of Jesus in that same boat – worried and embarrassed. It’s as if they are ready to have some sort of intervention. It is an odd scene considering the overall message of Jesus and the Gospel.

It’s not the last time that a believer is said to be crazy for following Christ.

In Acts 26, Paul is being held and as he makes his defense of Christ and his own ministry, the king’s assistant Festus says, “Paul, much learning doth make thee mad. You’re beside yourself” “

*** Vertical peace with God may mean horizontal friction, if we follow God first. Jesus is exhibit A on this...He Gets Us.

Paul is not the last believer who has been considered ‘mad’ for following Christ. Some of you may have experienced that when you came to faith. A skeptical family member may have given you a hard time the way I did with one of my sisters during her first year in college. A few years later the tables were turned when I came to faith, and she was moving away from the faith. And we were RAISED going to church.

Sometimes it is the child raised in a religious home who really comes to faith that gets the most criticism. They might hear something like this, “I’m glad you’ve found religion, but let’s not get carried away with this Jesus thing.”

If you’re from an unchurched family you’re likely to get a different set of comments or questions, but they’ll still think you’ve become a religious nut, especially if you talk about Jesus.

If you’ve never been called a religious fanatic, you might not want to wear that as a badge of honor. **If we take the faith seriously and speak on behalf of Christ, there is a good chance that someone will accuse us of fanaticism.**

But that is far better than remaining silent before men.

Jesus sets up the scenario in Matt 10 when He says,

32 “Whoever acknowledges me before others, I will also acknowledge before my Father in heaven.33 But whoever disowns me before others, I will disown before my Father in heaven.

If a religious fanatic is simply someone who is faithful to Christ and is not ashamed of Him and the gospel, then we should all be fanatics. Paul sets the pace when he says in Romans 1

16 For I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God that brings salvation to everyone who believes: first to the Jew, then to the Gentile. 17 For in the gospel the righteousness of God is revealed—a righteousness that is by faith from first to last, just as it is written: “The righteous will live by faith.”

** If family or friends don’t understand your commitment to follow the will of God rather than the crowd, remember that Christ gets you. He is our refuge. He understands, and we can go to Him.

FRIENDS, The gospel is free, but following Christ involves paying a price – the love and esteem of those in this world.

The opposition comes because the world doesn’t like the message of the righteousness of God that comes by

grace alone through faith alone. WE Like a righteousness that WE CAN EARN AND CALL OUR OWN.

The Judaizer Prayer...

Lord, please restore to us the comfort of merit and demerit. Show us that there is at least something we can do, that we can even in a small way keep some small earning power in our own hands. Tell us that in spite of all our nights of losing there will be at least one redeeming card of our own.

Lord, let your servants depart in the peace of their proper responsibility. If it is not too much to ask, Lord, send us to bed with a few shreds of self-respect upon which we can congratulate ourselves. But whatever you do, do not tell us about grace. Give us something to do, anything, but spare us the indignity of this indiscriminate acceptance.

Robert Farrar Capon, *Between Noon and Three*

Jesus came and through his preaching the gospel of the Kingdom and his healing, he demonstrated the indiscriminate acceptance of God. That was puzzling to a people steeped on a strict system of laws and commandments. To them, Jesus was out of his mind.

Jesus and the eternal family

Jesus sets the terms of the conversation.

His family is sending word to Jesus and He gives a response that forces the issue... Who is my mother, brother, sister??

“Here are my mother and brothers. ...

The message is relayed back out. That had to hurt, to sting to some degree. “Others are your family and Your mother?”

Whoever does the will of God... meaning?? Many things are in the category of “the will of God.”

-turn to him, follow him, repent, etc.

Jesus’ forever family were those who sat around Him. In chap 5 Jesus heals a demonized man. The people see the man sitting with Jesus.

Luke 10 Mary and Martha story. Martha is frazzled and Mary is sitting. Women usually didn’t do that with Rabbis. After Martha complains to Jesus, he responds that “Mary has chosen the good part” – listening and receiving from Jesus.

Mt. Transfiguration – The glory of Christ is revealed, and Peter reacts with a desire to DO SOMETHING, build an altar, etc... But God’s voice says, “This is my son, Listen to Him.”

We’re all listening to someone – friend, podcaster, pundit, guru, pastor(s),

How do we listen to HIM? In community and in private?

The plumbline is whether we Are listening to God through the Word?

Self-Assessment Question...

Is what I’m doing or feeling true and in line with His will as revealed in the Word? Ps 139

If not, why not?

Is listening too passive for you?

Beware of getting out in front of God with your own agenda. Our action for God is not real fruitful when it doesn’t flow out of the sense of relationship with God. Jn 15: Apart from me you can do nothing..

Jesus wants us to ABIDE in Him so that the love he has with the Father will be real in our lives – Jn 17. How does that happen? As beloved adopted children we need to stay near to Him and listen.

Listening to His Word and abiding in Him may be the HARDEST thing YOU DO.

Jn 6 the work of God is that we would believe in His son.

LISTENING NOT LOITERING

This is one of the most interesting phrases in VoV...Christlikeness

"May loiterers be quickened to greater diligence by my example!"

We are connected in such a way that our example will have an impact on others – in a good way or a bad way.

I'm struck by the word 'loiterers'.

I guess some would call them backsliders or those whom Jesus refers to in Rev 3 as "lukewarm".

It makes me think of the signs in public places that read "No Loitering".

What if churches posted those signs i.e. "No Spiritual Loitering."

It wouldn't be 'welcoming', but it might make a point - we can't follow Christ by loitering.

This would really apply to professed believers who just hang around but don't intend to really engage i.e. they are loitering. This seems to be what Jesus is saying in Rev about being lukewarm.

The non-Christian who hangs around the church is fine and welcome, but it is no place for spiritual loitering.

If tickets for loitering were to be given out by some special angels in every church next Sunday, how many folks would be getting a ticket? Probably more per capita in the States than in most other countries of the world.

GRACE LEADS TO LIVING FOR Christ. IT does not lead to spiritual loitering. Titus 2:11 ff

When we perceive the love of God as relational, not just judicial, we are launched into living for Christ even when we face opposition.

As those adopted by the Father of Jesus, it means that Jesus is your brother, and he puts us in an eternal family.

EX: nothing closer to God on earth than a good big brother, and Jesus is the epitome of that truth.

No matter how dysfunctional our earthly family may be, all that we've longed for in terms of family will be ours in our eternal family

Heb 2 - not ashamed to call them brothers.

11 For both He who sanctifies and those who are sanctified are all from one Father; for which reason He is not ashamed to call them brethren,

That is the good news for those who know Christ by faith.

Come to the Table – a family feast – our Common Union

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