

Mark 3:7–35

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[0 : 0 0] of God's word. Mark chapter 3, verses 7 to 35. Jesus withdrew with his disciples to the sea, and a great crowd followed from Galilee and Judea, and Jerusalem and Ediomaea, and from beyond the Jordan and from Tyre and Sidon.

When the great crowd heard all that he was doing, they came to him, and he told his disciples to have a boat ready for him because of the crowd, lest they crush him. For he had healed many, so that all who had diseases pressed around him to touch him.

And whenever the unclean spirits saw him, they fell down before him and cried out, You are the Son of God. And he strictly ordered them not to make him known.

And he went up on the mountain and called to him those who he desired, and they came to him.

And he appointed twelve, whom he also named apostles, so that they might be with him, and he might send them out to preach and have authority to cast out demons.

He appointed the twelve, Simon, to whom he gave the name Peter, James the son of Zebedee, and John the brother of James, to whom he gave the name Boenergis, that is, sons of thunder.

[1 : 1 9] Andrew, and Philip, and Bartholomew, and Matthew, and Thomas, and James, the son of Alphaeus, and Thaddeus, Simon the zealot, and Judas Iscariot, who betrayed him.

Then he went home, and the crowd gathered again, so that they could not even eat. And when his family had heard it, they went out to seize him, for they were saying, He's out of his mind.

And the scribes who came down from Jerusalem were saying, He is possessed by Beelzebul, and by the prince of demons he cast out demons. And he called them to him, and said to them in parables, How can Satan cast out Satan?

If a kingdom is divided against itself, that kingdom cannot stand. And if a house is divided against itself, that house will not be able to stand. And if Satan has risen up against himself, and is divided, he cannot stand, but is coming to an end.

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. Truly, I say to you, all sins will be forgiven, the children of man.

[2 : 2 8] And whatever blasphemies they utter, but whoever blasphemes against the Holy Spirit never has forgiveness, but is guilty of an eternal sin. For they were saying, He has an unclean spirit.

And his mother and his brothers came, and standing outside they sent to him and called him. And a crowd was sitting around him, and they said to him, Your mother and your brothers are outside seeking you.

And he answered them, Who are my mother and my brothers? Looking about at those who sat around him, he said, Here are my mother and my brothers.

For whoever does the will of God, he is my brother and sister and mother. This is the word of the Lord. Thanks be to God. You may be seated.

Father, you are a help. And so in these moments, we ask that you would be our help to hear. That you would be my help to speak.

[3 : 3 3] That you would be our help to act and live in ways that please you. We ask these things for Jesus' sake. Amen. Residing in Chicago, there are various cultural benefits.

One of them is access to the performing arts. Whether your interest be music, theater, dance, or another art form, Chicago certainly has it.

The hurdle for many is usually securing the tickets at reasonable prices. Thankfully, theaters may offer discounted or even sometimes lottery tickets to some shows.

Every now and then, if you go look, you'll come across these tickets. Discounted tickets.

Substantially cheaper tickets. And you'll zoom in and you'll see the little asterisk.

The fine print that says, Seats may have obstructed views. My mind is how big of an obstruction could it possibly be?

[4 : 45] Well, in other words, these tickets may have poles, pillars, structural supports, production equipment, set design.

That may somehow block, impede, or limit one's view of the show. There is an obstruction. An obstruction that will prevent you from enjoying the fullness of the presentation.

Something standing in the way. An obstruction. We have now spent four weeks in Mark's gospel. And God's kingdom has arrived in the person of Jesus.

The kingdom is now at hand and it's being established in his life and his teaching. The amazement of his authority. Healing of the sick. The eradication of evil spirits.

Paralytics walking. Sins forgiven. Lives changed. New wine for a new day. But the establishment of a new kingdom will not come with ease.

[5 : 53] Rather, it's a collision of two kingdoms. The confrontation of two different ideologies. The clashing of values, priorities, and allegiances.

And we would be foolish to think that the kingdom of God enters with little difficulty or no obstructions. This morning we come to a passage that will present obstructions to the kingdom. And if you're helped by titles, I've simply titled it in this way. Obstructing Jesus. What happens when someone stands in the way of the mission?

There's two obstructions that we'll see this morning. Two ideas or objections that stand in Jesus' way. And it comes as a huge surprise. Because they come from two groups.

That of all people should be on Jesus' side. His family. And the faith leaders of Israel. Despite the plot against him, Jesus has continued to draw crowds.

[7 : 03] They've already concluded in chapter 3, verse 6. The Pharisees and the Herodians. They have now colluded together and conspired on how to destroy Jesus.

But his popularity continues. We've seen it in earlier chapters. Everyone is looking for you, Jesus. He could not go into a town because the crowds were too large.

They were coming to him from every quarter. Literally, homes were being deconstructed to meet him. He is constantly being approached, followed, and sought.

And he withdraws in verse 7, possibly to get away from the crowds. Possibly just to rest. Possibly because the religious leaders have intensified their opposition.

Regardless, he cannot escape his immense popularity. Mark is sure to let us know in verse 7. And again, in verse 8, that great crowds followed.

[8 : 06] What's noteworthy are these crowds are not just local. They're coming from quite far away. He is, Jesus, presumably at the Sea of Galilee. And they are coming from the region.

The capital city of Jerusalem. Regions of Judea. Roughly, and Idumea. Roughly 120 miles to the south. Tyre and Sidon.

50 miles to the north. East of the Jordan River. So people who are crossing the, somehow crossing the Jordan, are walking around to get to him. This is all before the invention of cars or airplanes or horse carriages.

Unmentioned is the makeup of these people. Certainly comprised of both Jew and Gentile alike. Different people from far off places were finding their way to Jesus. And the people are gathering. And what is drawing them doesn't, Mark doesn't seem to conclude that it's his teaching ministry. Though he's certainly preaching.

[9 : 07] Rather, when the great crowd heard all the things that he was doing, they came to him. The crowds are now gathered. It's his mighty, miraculous works that serve as their motivation.

And it's one thing to stand within a crowd. Perhaps you've been in a large crowd. A sporting event. A concert. A crowded beach. But it's an entirely other thing when you are the object of desire of that crowd.

When the entire crowd, according to the text, wants to put their hands on you. To touch you. So intense is the crowd that Jesus is worried about being literally crushed to death.

And so he orders a boat to be readied as an escape plan of sorts. Or a buffer. And the crowds have come. His popularity is unmatched. The gates of the kingdom seem to be swung wide open.

He is the main attraction. He's the center of tension. He is, he has gone viral. That's what young people say. And as Jesus ministers, Mark makes it known that even unclean spirits would openly acknowledge him.

[10:20] They would not only announce his identity, but they would fall down before him. They would, they fall down before him and they cry out, you are the son of God. And interestingly, the, Jesus did not permit the demons to disclose who he was.

It was unwanted publicity. It's, it was not welcome. He did not invite it and certainly did not need it and didn't want it, unclean spirits or the demons to be his heralds.

And the natural question is why? Well, there's several possible explanations. Perhaps it's premature revelation. This is too early in my ministry. I have too much to do.

I don't want people to know who I am. Perhaps he knows. Not all publicity is good publicity, especially if it's coming from the mouth of an evil source.

Public recognition may be good, but it would be ominous if it were coming from the devil himself. It's not helpful. Troubling, actually. But more plausible is that the muting of the unclean spirits is a demonstration of his authority over them.

[11:32] His strict order should be understood as a rebuke, a command, a show of authority even over his enemies. In the same way he speaks and stills a storm, he now commands even devils and they obey.

They have been nuisances and obstructions long enough. The devil, his evil minions, the unclean spirits would no longer harass and harm now that the king has arrived and his kingdom is being established.

They are, as we'll see in the language of the text, bound. The chains in which Satan employed would now bind his efforts to thwart the kingdom.

The son is supreme even over Satan and his schemes. God's purposes would not be foiled. There would be no obstructions to his cause. And the demons recognize their foe, their adversary, the one that they must even bow before.

[12:35] The son is supreme even over Satan and his minions. And as James reminds us, even demons believe in shudder. Well, this morning, no long introduction, but it got us here.

I want to show us two things. That following Jesus gives you a new king and sets you in a new family. Well, there's what we begin to see in verse 20.

I'm going to jump down and I'll get to verse 13 at the end. But verse 20, you see a concerned family. Concerned family. Jesus' family gets wind of all this.

And they are alarmed. There's concern. Presumably, Jesus has now returned home and the intensity of the crowds has not subsided. The demands and the needs of the people continue. It's to such a point that Jesus appears to neither have the physical time nor the physical space to even eat. Yes! Jesus was skipping meals.

[13:42] I know it's a foreign thought for me, but word had reached his family. And it's not hard to imagine the conversation between family members. I was in town today. And you know what I heard?

He healed this leper of his disease. You know what I heard? I heard in Capernaum they actually opened the ceiling and dropped the paralytic in. And Jesus healed the paralytic.

He not only healed the paralytic, but then forgave his sins. Who does that? Who could forgive sins but God alone? And the family conversations would go along those lines.

This has gotten out of hand. Who does he think he is? He's full of himself. He's neglecting himself. His well-being.

His health. It's chaos. This is unreasonable. Unsustainable. This ministry thing has made him crazy. He's gone mad is the accusation.

[14:43] And let us go and rescue him. Let's go and get him and talk some sense into him. And there you see it in verse 21. Let's seize him.

For they were saying he is out of his mind. His family. Now it's not too far-fetched. If you're a student of the Bible, you read John chapter 7. And it tells us that his very brothers didn't believe him.

See, the wording is strong. To seize means to take control by force. It's what Mark uses later in chapter 6. When Herod the king is displeased with John the Baptist.

He says, go get him and throw him in jail. That's the same word. Seize him. Take control of him. With force. And so the family, in verse 21, sets out to control Jesus.

From our vantage point, it's a bit humorous. You're going to try to seize the son of God. And this is the human agenda. To impede and obstruct heaven's plan.

[15 : 55] Yeah, there are certainly earthly expectations on a human son. Certainly familial ties and mother's requests should be heeded. But his role as God's son would transcend any of these earthly responsibilities.

The kingdom that he now ushered in would even disrupt the very fabric of biological family. We'll see this shortly. You may have observed that Mark doesn't actually resume and resolve the family's actions until verse 31.

And just by way of passing by, Mark employs this, they call it a Markin sandwich. But he will introduce a story. He will interrupt himself.

And then return to the story. Sandwiching a scene in between. And here we see it. He's talking about family. He's going to talk about the faith leaders of Israel. And then he's going to resume family.

[16 : 57] And he's going to sandwich them together. And together they are actually supposed to communicate a single truth. Convey a unified idea.

You'll see this nine times in the book of Mark. And you can imagine at verse 21 that now the family exits the stage. And they're off to retrieve Jesus.

And next enters a group of critical faith leaders. You see a concerned family and critical faith leaders.

Well, the delegation now arrives from Jerusalem. They are scribes. Protectors of Israel's sacred scriptures. Teachers and preservers of Israel's law.

They have likely heard of Jesus of Nazareth. The miracles. The exorcisms. The healings. And word has certainly gotten out that he teaches with authority. They have not come to investigate.

[17 : 56] They have not come to examine. To hear or even learn. They come with a scathing accusation. See, they knew they couldn't debunk what Jesus had already done.

We know this is what he's done. And because they cannot alter what he had done. They're going to now provide an explanation of how he did it.

How does he do the things he does? You see it there. The religious leaders accuse him of being evil.

There is no earthly explanation. Who can heal a leper? Who can heal a paralytic? Who could cast out unclean spirits?

There's no earthly explanation. So it must be demonic. The scribes were saying in verse 30, he's possessed by Beelzebul. Likely another name for Satan.

[18 : 56] It appears in extra biblical Jewish literature as the ruler of demons. He has an unclean spirit in verse 30. He's possessed in verse 22.

His family accused him of being mad. And now the religious elite accuse him of being bad.

Israel's faith leaders resort to explain in a way Jesus by attributing his works to the devil. And Jesus responds using a parable. A poignant story that will illustrate a truth.

Particularly towards the faith leaders. Really saying that you're nonsensical. Illogical. You're absurd. Why would Satan attack himself?

You know that a nation that launches an attack on herself inevitably will fall. In the same way a sports team or a science project group or a lab group or business or classroom or home or social groups.

[20 : 04] If any of them are divided from within, they'll fail. Inner division and attack from within will result in a great fall. If Satan ran his kingdom in that way, it certainly could not stand.

Satan ruled his house in that way, it would certainly fall. What Jesus says is actually not civil war going on here. I'm not fighting from within Satan's house.

Let me tell you how I'm fighting. So he moves to another parable. Allow me to explain what's going on here. Imagine you're about to enter a strong man's house.

To take all their valuables. You would be foolish to do so unless you somehow first bound and restrain the strong man. You enter the house or you're only able to plunder the stuff in your bag or your suitcase or your hands.

What you want to take. Once the owner, the strong man of the house is bound. You think that I'm Satan because you attribute all that you don't know and cannot understand to the domain of darkness.

[21 : 20] Jesus is saying, I am not Satan. I am far stronger. I'm far more superior. I'm far greater. I'm far mightier. This is no civil war.

This is a takeover. Satan is the strong man. And I've come, Jesus is saying, I've entered his home to plunder his goods.

I've come to take what he's claimed to be his. This is a picture of a cosmic battle. Jesus is asserting, as I said, this is no civil war. I have come to overthrow the prince of the power of the air.

I am not Beelzebul. I am not the devil. I am his conqueror. I am his destroyer. I have bound him. I have restrained him.

I have constrained him. His minions I have already cast out. His minions I have already silenced. And he is bound. And I am on a rescue mission. I'm setting free the prisoners.

[22 : 23] Those held by the captive, by captive by his schemes. Those entrenched in their sins. Those entangled in evil. Those who sit in darkness. Those who need good news.

And if you haven't connected the dots up to this point, I'm here to tell you that you are. I am. We are.

His plunder. We are his precious plunder. And he has come for you. This is the rescue mission of the king.

That he has come to free me. To free you. To free all who might call out to him for rescue. Satan is bound. And Jesus is plundering the souls of men and women.

To this I hold. My sin has been defeated. Jesus, now and ever is my plea. Oh, the chains are released.

[23 : 25] I can sing. I am free. Yet not I. But Christ in me. Is it you this morning?

Could it be you? Why not you? Is there a burden on your back that you cannot bear? Is there a guilt in your soul that you cannot shed?

Are you disheartened by your own self-absorption? Are you fed up with your malicious thoughts towards others? Are you irate by the impurity of your own mind? Is your heart deeply concerned with your lack of compassion for others?

Is your conscience accusing you? Then you have one who can free you this morning by forgiving you. His name is Jesus. And he can rescue.

His love is vast. His compassion is great. He is rich in mercy. And there you see the astounding line of verse 28 that ought to cause your heart to erupt in celebration.

[24 : 32] All sins. All sins. All sins. Can be forgiven. All.

I know what you're thinking. But Bing. There's one sin. That won't be forgiven. What do we do with that one?

There's an exception right there in verse 29. There's a sin that if committed, God will not pardon. There is an unforgivable sin. It's none of the Ten Commandments.

It is a violation. And a category all by itself. According to verse 30, it's attributing to Jesus.

Attributing to his spirit. The works of God. Being done by the devil. It is you saying, raising your fist to heaven.

[25 : 42] And saying, this Jesus is no son of God. He is the devil himself. And to Israel's faith leaders, this rings as a solemn rebuke. You have to imagine the religious community of Israel.

Those memorizing. Those reciting. Those copying the law. Those transmitting it. Teaching it. Passing it down. What Jesus is saying is, you have beheld all my goodness.

All of God's goodness. All of God's love and mercy in the history of your nation. And you are consigning it to the devil. It's an offense. And it is you, if you dare, go to the grave with such a hardened and cold heart that the very mercies of God have become a menace to you.

It's horrific. For the sake of time.

It's worth reflecting on. It's there as a warning. It's there as a warning. From Jesus himself. That there is. There is.

[27 : 04] An eternal. Everlasting condition. Whereby one can forever be at odds with God. There is a condition.

That at the point of death. One can enter into eternity. And forever be God's enemy. Subject to his wrath.

Rightfully deserving his indignation. Jesus is saying, beware. Beware. Be warned. That there can be a heart so stubborn.

So settled against God. To accuse him of being the devil. And so. You come to indict me. You come to judge me.

You come to reject me. Then what Jesus is saying. Is I reject you. The writing is already on the wall. Pharisees. Herodians.

[28 : 07] Scribes. Have now pronounced their final verdict against him. We don't want Jesus of Nazareth. We don't want the son of God. The great irony.

Is the scribes. Did you catch this? The great irony is the scribes. Accused Jesus of being an unclean spirit. While the unclean spirits.

Acknowledged Jesus. To be the son of God. Did you catch that? They call him Satan. Jesus you're Satan. Satan calls Jesus.

The son of God. How grave must that blasphemy be. If even Satan himself. Doesn't commit it. Whoa.

Oh man. The camera now returns home. To the crowded home. Where Jesus is presumably teaching. His mother and his brothers. And sisters are outside.

[29 : 16] And the message is now relayed to him. Your mom. Your brothers. Are outside. Seeking you. And Jesus responds. With such a perplexing question. Well who are my.

Who is my mother. Who are my brothers. And he gives an explanation. They are those who are with me. Around me.

And here. And with this statement. Jesus redefines. What family is. In the kingdom of God. It is not a biological. Identifier. It becomes a spiritual reality.

There will be a new family. That arises even above. The natural family. And Jesus. What Jesus is saying. Is I don't. He's not saying. Jettison the natural family.

Or discard our biological families. No. We certainly have responsibilities. To love. And tend to our homes. However. Allegiance to Christ. Submission to his will.

[30 : 15] May require one. To choose. Christ. Over. Family. The faith family. Ought to reorient.

Our priorities here. For some. It will challenge. Your bloodlines. Jesus. I'm very aware. There are. Some in this room. That when they came to faith. Mom and dad said. See ya. If you're going to do that.

We want no part. With you. And here Jesus. Offer. Says the kingdom of God. Will now be defined. In this way. It will be defined. By those. Who sit. With Jesus.

[31 : 12] And commit themselves. To doing. His will. And perhaps. This is where. It turns into. Appropriate. Mother's Day sermon. For some. This is the most beautiful news.

Being I'm single. I'm alone. I know. I just learned this morning. Some are orphaned.

Whether literally. Or figuratively. Then there is a family. For you. In this. Place. I am barren. And I am childless.

Then there is a family here. To which you belong. I may never. Know. Or meet. By biological. Mother. Mother. But that does not exclude you.

From. Having. Spiritual. Mothers. This is the beauty. And the wonder. And I'll close. Of. A lady in my life.

[32 : 10] Named Auntie Sandy. She was strange. Because growing up in a Chinese church. She was the only non-Chinese person there. She was in our house. Routinely for dinner.

No husband. No children. And yet. On Saturday nights. She would fling open. Her front door. And receive. A group of. Chinese youth. Saturday nights. She had no formal theological education. She had no ministry title.

But she had a commitment. To the family. Of God. And for several years. Until we hired. Our church. Hired. A youth pastor. She would.

Open up her home. Open up the Bible. We had no guitarist. So we would just play CDs. CDs existed before. MP3s. And streaming music. And if you led worship.

[33 : 11] You were the CD changer. And that's what I. I was a worship leader. Though I played. Only the play button. From. From that little band.

Of probably 2,000 youth. Or 2,000 youth. Would emerge. Seminary president.

Seminary president. Multiple pastors. A couple biblical counselors. Successful partners. The firms. And many more.

What Auntie Sandy does for me. Is. Depict. This. I have nothing. Biological. In this world. But her spiritual family.

Extends to you. Because she was a spiritual mother. To me. Family that God nurtured. She was part of a family.

[34 : 11] That God nurtured. In a young. Immature. Faith. Through the faithful commitment. To those who do the will of God. And Auntie Sandy lived out.

That reality. And continues to live out. That reality. In her 80s. Following Jesus. Not only gives you a new king. No longer the devil.

Or yourself. And sets you in a new family. And this is the Markin sandwich. His family asserted.

That he was out of his mind. He was mad. Religious leaders asserted.

That he was evil. He is bad. And all of the groups. That should have welcomed him. Instead. Have rejected him. And finally.

These people. Find them on the outside. Looking in. I'll close with this. Because this is. This is the wrestling. I could not figure out. Why the list of 12 apostles.

[35 : 08] Was here. When you read the Bible. You're out. I was like. Why here? Why now? Why this? This is unrelated. Until. You zoom out.

And you look at these scenes. This is why the 12 finds its list. Finds its place here. Two kingdoms have collided. And only one will emerge.

Those who have readily accepted. Jesus as king. Should have readily accepted him as king. Have rejected him. And so. We have an appointment.

Of a new 12. And what I think Mark wants us to see here. Is that those who reject. The king. And his kingdom.

Have been replaced. Family. You don't get it. It's okay. Faith leaders. You don't get it.

[36 : 08] Create a new. Family. A new set. Of faith leaders. And so. Surrounding Jesus. Was now a new family. Accompanying Jesus. Was now a new religious community.

Of faith leaders. Known as apostles. Appointed by God. Be with him. To witness his works. To hear his words. And what we'll see.

To be sent out to preach. And confront evil. No obstruction. Will thwart this king. And his kingdom. No obstacle. Will stand between him.

And his mission. The saving of sinners. The rescuing of the wretched. The gathering of God's new family. Jesus has arrived. And following him.

You have a new king. And you have. A new. Family. Father. We. Thank you for your word. And it's. Reality.

[37 : 08] There is nothing. That will stop you. From assembling. And gathering to yourself. A people. That none can number. And so Lord.

I pray. Particularly this morning. That some would find. Deliverance. From the grass. And the chains. And the bonds. Of their sin.

The condemnation. Of Satan. Because. Jesus has come. And now as we close in song. Strengthen our hearts. As we go. We ask these things. For Jesus sake. Amen.