The King's Community

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Date: 03 March 2018

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[0:00] If you have a Bible, please turn with me to Mark chapter 3. If you don't have one, you can put your hand up and we'll have someone give you a Bible. Today I'll be preaching in English, so if you want to make sure you know what I say, we actually have an English transcript so they can read along as well, just in case my accent's too strong for you.

And if you need Chinese translation, we also have that prepared for you as well. We have been looking into the Gospel according to Mark in the last few weeks, which is the good news about Jesus, the Messiah, the Son of God.
Messiah is referring to the person expected by the Jews to come and set them free. The Jews were told about the Messiah when they go to the temple, and they hear it from the teachers of the law.
This is a very important point of today's sermon. We have only looked at two chapters of Mark, and already we can see a lot of events have happened, and people were amazed at what Jesus has said and done.
As today's passage points out, Jesus was drawing a large crowd of people wherever he goes. In verse 7 to 8 it says, As Jesus' popularity grew, we can also see that sentiment of resentment and opposition is growing among a group of people.
[1:41] They were the teachers of law, the religious heathies. Their resentment most likely started back from Mark 1.22, because people were comparing them with Jesus.

The people were amazed at his teaching, because he taught them as one who had authority, not as the teachers of the law. What Jesus said and done has a direct impact to the teachers of the law, because his arrival will fill their spiritual condition in their heart.
Jesus is pointing out something that is different to what they have been teaching. Jesus wants everyone to go deeper to understand their spiritual needs, because in Matthew it says, Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.
Today, let's go deeper to find out who belongs to the kingdom of heaven, who belongs to this new community of the king. At the beginning of chapter 2, Jesus was setting up a showdown with the religious heathies.
Steve was reminding us that last week. This showdown is necessary because the teachers of the law were the link between God and his people. We can even say that they present themselves as an earthly representation of God before Jesus came into the scene.
[3:11] From the showdown between Jesus, we can see that they are misrepresenting and giving out wrong information about who belongs to the kingdom of heaven. They were busy concerning about things that weren't that most important.

When they challenged Jesus about blaspheming, showing that they're concerned about whether one is saying the right thing at the right time. When they challenged Jesus about fasting, showing that they're concerned whether tradition and ritual have been followed.
When they challenged Jesus about his disciples picking grain, so that they would suppress basic human needs to ensure law has not been broken.
Their interpretation of what the law said was far from accurate, because when the teachers of the law promoting, what the teachers of the law promoting is you belong to the kingdom of God based on how well you follow the law, how religious you are, as if you can get into heaven by your own efforts.
What they're promoting is if you look right from the outside, you'll be right with God. All of their concerns are superficial. Mark, we call it in chapter 12, 38, it says, as he taught, Jesus said, watch out for the teachers of the law.

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[4:40] They like to walk around in floating robes and be greeted with respect in the marketplace and have the most important seat in the synagogue and place of honor at banquet.

If you read how Matthew recorded about the teachers of the law, you would think that Mark had been very kind to them. In Matthew 3, while talking about John the Baptist in verse 7, it said, They think that they belong to the kingdom of God because they are in the right bloodline.
They have Abraham as their ancestor. Jesus had this to say to them in Matthew 23, starting in verse 2, The teachers of the law and Pharisee sit in Moses' seat, so you must be careful to do everything they tell you, but do not do what they do, for they do not practice what they preach.
They tied up heavy, cumbersome loads and put them on others' shoulders, but they themselves are not willing to lift a finger to move them. Jesus' fall in verse 13, lay out some roles.
Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisee, you hypocrites! You shut the door of the kingdom of heaven in people's face. You yourself do not enter, nor will you let those enter who are trying to.
[6:33] On the outside, you are pleased to people as righteous, but on the inside, you are full of hypocrites and wickedness. Jesus said clearly that because they do not practice what they teach, appear to be righteous only on the outside, they do not enter the kingdom of heaven.

They are misrepresenting God and misrepresenting who belongs to the kingdom of God. And the worst misrepresentation is in our passage today, in Mark 3.22, when they say that Jesus is possessed by demons and is driving out demons by the prince of demons.
For their knowledge, they should know who Jesus is, but they speak against him. They thought they were speaking against Jesus, but in fact, they are speaking against God.
They are speaking against God because they do not believe who Jesus is, which means they do not believe in God who sent Jesus. When we are looking at this passage, when Mark mentioned about this incident, he seems to have interrupted what he was saying in verse 20 to 21.
If you turn there and have a look, Mark was talking about Jesus and his family in that two verses, but he jumped on to the incident between Jesus and the teachers of the law, especially this group of people from Jerusalem, between verse 22 and 30.
[8:06] He then jumped back to Jesus' interaction with his family in verse 31 to 35. Mark did this on purpose to show us that there is something similar between the teachers of the law and Jesus' family.

Let's read again from 22 to 21, and then we go down to 31 to 33 to go deeper into this issue. Verse 20, Then Jesus entered a house and began a crowd gathered so that he and his disciples were not even able to eat.
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.
Sending outside, they sent someone in to call him. A crowd was sitting around him and they told him, your mother and brothers are outside looking for you. Who are my mothers and my brothers? He asked. Who are my mothers and my brothers? He asked. Such shocking words to have said to your family, especially to a Hebrew family that placed so much value in their family tradition.
[9:26] Where their sense of worth, their personal value, ties tightly with what approval they get from their family. With culture, their emphasis collective value, such as most of Asian and African culture, Greek and Italian and Middle Eastern, and sometimes even some Australian when they say, your home is a castle.

You guys know where they're from. That shows how old I am. This is unthinkable that Jesus gave such a reply. I said that Mark had inserted this incident about the teachers of the law from Jerusalem to indicate there's some similarity between them and the family.
Family often thinks that they have privileged access to their family member. So Jesus' mother and brothers waited outside, waiting for people to make way for them to get in.
The older or senior members often think that they know better and they took on an authoritative position and they will not listen or will not not willing to listen.
Scenorality, the ranking order determines who have the final say and decide who should be followed or who should lead. A lot of emphasis has been put on the outside adherence of family reputation concerning only the outside appearance.
[11:05] It's often very hard to convince family member of anything because they think they know better. The most similar thing between the teachers of the law and the family is they both do not believe who Jesus said who he really is.

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Verse 21 said that Jesus' family think he is out of his mind. He had gone mad. Verse 22 say that the teachers of the law think that Jesus is a bad person and uses demon to achieve his popularity. They both have the wrong response to Jesus which means they sat at the outside circle instead of the inside circle of God. after Jesus asked that unthinkable question he provided the answer in verse 34 to 35.
Then he looked at those seated in a circle around him and said here are my mothers and here are my mother and my brothers whoever does God's will is my brother and sister and mother.
to those seated in a circle around him here are my mother and my brothers. Who are these people? We know from earlier in the passage that these are his disciples.
[12:32] These are people that he called and came to him. In Mark 3 13 Jesus went out on a mountainside and called to him those he wanted and they came to him.

We were given account of how five out of these twelve disciples that Jesus had chosen were called and how they responded at the time they were called.
So let's go back and look at it again. From chapter 1 verse 16 chapter 1 verse 16 as Jesus walked beside the sea of Galilee he saw Simon and his Peter Andrew casting a net into the lake for they were fishermen.
Come follow me Jesus said and I will send you out to fish for people. At once they left the net and followed him. When he had gone a little farther he saw James son of Zebedee and his brother John in a boat preparing their nets.
Without delay he called them and they left their father Zebedee in a boat with the high man and followed him. After that we were reminded that Simon's mother was sick and after Jesus raised her from the sickness she started to serve them.
[13:54] Then we go to chapter 2 chapter 2 verse 13 Once again Jesus went out beside the lake a large crowd come to him and he began to teach them.

As he walked along he saw Levi son of Alphaeus sitting at the test called Letters booth. Follow me Jesus told him and Levi got up and followed him.
Levi was so eager to introduce Jesus and his disciples to his friends. He holds a dinner at his house afterward. Their response was immediate.
They stripped away, put aside their career and livelihood as well as their family to respond to Jesus' call. They did not look at Jesus and think that he is a mad man.
And they did not look at Jesus and think that he is a bad man. They had the right response. They looked at Jesus as someone they can entrust their life. They put aside everything to follow and to serve him.
[15:01] At the time of their response, they were not yet exactly sure he is the Messiah, but they came along and they see for themselves. In verse 14 said, they were called so that they will call so that they will be with Jesus and that he might send them out to preach and to have authority to drive out demons.

As they respond to Jesus calling, they are willing to let Jesus be the center of their life and live their life circling Jesus. Because they have the right response, they are seated in a circle around him.
Who are my mother and brothers and brothers and brothers and brothers and brothers and brothers and mother.
So what is the will of God? In 2 Peter 3, 9, often when we have communion, we actually talk about these verses.
It says that God is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance. In Jesus' very first word in Mark, also reiterated the will of God.
[16:24] The time has come, the kingdom of God has come near, repent and believe in the good news. God has been patient in waiting for us to come to a right response to who Jesus really is.

He warned everyone to come to repentance, to have us seated in a circle around him, to listen to his teaching and to have life circle around him.
Who belongs to the kingdom of God? Those that have the right response will be in it. The right response is to believe and follow him. The right response is to listen to his teaching.
The right response is to obey the will of God. The right response is to repent and believe in the good news of the kingdom of heaven. Having the right to respond will get into the community of Jesus.

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It sounds so simple, isn't it? But it's that simple because God has done all the works and fulfilled all the requirements for us through Jesus. In our passage today, we're in the middle, in chapter 27, it says, no one can enter a strong man's house without first tying him up.
[17:41] Then he can plunder the strong man's house. Through Jesus, God has already tied up Satan, the one that we think is strong. It's impossible to try to get into the community of Jesus in your own effort by being religious or by relying on your lineage.

God made the impossible possible in Jesus. Believe in him is all we need to be part of heaven. Believe Jesus is God.
Follow him, listen to his teaching and obey the will of God. If you have not responded to Jesus calling before, today is an opportunity to put your trust in him.
If you have responded to his call but followed some misrepresentation and no longer seated around Jesus, God is patient with you. Repent and turn back to Christ today.

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