

The King's Community

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 03 March 2018

Preacher: Takeshi Shibuya

- [0 : 0 0] Konbanwa. Good evening, everyone. My name is Takeshi, and I'm one of the student ministers at St. Paul's. If you are a first-timer, I would like to say a big thank you for coming to church tonight.
- Hope you enjoy our time together. Yeah, they mentioned about that. Tonight is a special night for me because this is my first time preaching at St. Paul's.
- So please make sure be good audience. So not this way, this way, okay? Don't fall asleep.
- Before I dive into the passage, let me pray for us. Heavenly Father, thank you for revealing yourself through the Bible, through your words.
- Lord, we wouldn't know without your words. We wouldn't know who is Jesus. We wouldn't know how much you love us.
- [1 : 0 4] Tonight, as we continue in Mark's gospel, please help us to hear your word clearly so we can follow Jesus. I pray these things in your mighty name.
- Amen. We'll be reading Mark's gospel in our new series, The Servant King. The gospel of Mark has two significant messages.
- Number one, who is Jesus? And then number two, what did he come to do? Chapter 1 to 8 focus on who is Jesus.
- And chapters 9 to 16 focus on what did he come to do. In chapter 3, Mark gives us progress summary of Jesus' ministry.
- In verse 8, it says, Jesus has become so extremely popular with the people.
- [2 : 2 2] People are coming from everywhere just to see him. Not just Chatsut, not just Croydon, not just Central Coast, not just from the entire of the Central Coast kind of things.
- They've heard of the many miracles and healings and the casting out of demons. However, at the same time, the hostility of the religious leaders towards Jesus is increasing.
- So much so that they have began to plot how they might kill him. Chapter 3, 6. It is at this point that Jesus calls his disciples so that he can expand his ministry.
- In verse 13 to 19, his 12 disciples, his all 13, are finally chosen. Today, I'm going to focus on verse 20 to 35.
- I wonder, is it just me or did you notice something odd here with the structure of these verses?
- [3 : 4 1] Mark began by talking about Jesus' family in verse 20. Then, in verse 20, the topic changed to the teacher of the law.
- And then, suddenly, the focus turned back to Jesus' family again in verse 31. It's like a commercial on TV.
- Your favorite TV show starts, but after a few minutes, all of a sudden, just jump to commercials with the typical too loud music. Na-na-na-na-na.

And then, you return back to the TV show again, just as a commercial, an interruption. In between, so here, this seems to be an interruption in the story.

This is called Mark's Sandwich. Mark's Sandwich, it is true. As everyone knows, a sandwich has two pieces of bread with a filling in the middle.

[4 : 44] In the same way, Mark intentionally plays the story of the teacher of the law in between the story about Jesus' family. You could say that Jesus' family story in the bread and the part with the teacher of the law is like the BLT, or whatever the filling you like.

Mark uses this technique. A number of, through his gospel. So why does he use it here?

Last year, Katie and I got into the famous TV series, 24. I know we are a bit behind of the times. You know, original TV series started more than 15 years ago.

So, just in case, who's seen it? He has seen it. Oh, very encouraging. Yeah. For those who haven't, I will explain.

It's basically about the government counter-terrorist unit who try to protect America from terrorist attacks. What made us slightly quite addicted to the series, in that the plot of the story is really, really well written.

[6 : 01] The most thrilling part of the drama is when it's the surprising reversal. For example, a character who you think is a goodie turns to be a buddy in a complete and unexpected reversal.

Unfortunately or fortunately, since our baby girl arrived, we haven't had much time to watch 24 anymore. But I wish I could continue to watch.

Anyway, likewise, Mark here used in his sandwich technique to demonstrate a surprising and unexpected reversal.

Those who seem close to God or insiders are, in fact, outsiders who are far from him. Tonight, I'm going to talk about the reversal of the king's community.

Tonight, I'm going to talk about the reversal of the king's community. We will have a look at who is the true insider in Jesus' family.

[7 : 15] I will start with the teacher of the law, and then coming back to Jesus' own family. And at the end, we will think about what this means for us today.

So, number one, teacher of the law. Can you come with me to verse 22? If you have your Bible, please open your Bible.

And the teacher of the law, who comes down from Jerusalem. So, my question is here. Who were the teacher of the law? In short, they were experts in Old Testament law.

In this passage, the teacher of the law were the Pharisees. The name Pharisees comes from an Aramaic word, meaning separation from uncleanness before God.

The Pharisees believed in eternal life and that people would be punished by God in accordance with their behavior. This is why, in Jesus' day, they memorized Old Testament law as well as their oral traditions.

[8 : 31] More than 40, more than 400. To live righteous lives. They were like walking human Bible.

They were especially passionate about keeping the service. And lived by very strict rules on many aspects of their lives.

Such as how to wash their hands, what to eat or not to eat. Even how many steps they were allowed to walk on the service.

Or how many steps today? Like this? So, because of their expert knowledge of the work law and their outward appearance, they were seen by themselves and others are very kindly, a spiritual elite, if you like.

Can you have a look at verse 22 again? The religious people come down from Jerusalem. Religious people come down from Jerusalem.

[9 : 43] At this point, Jesus now in Galilee, that's a long way from Jerusalem. It's almost a three-day journey. In the world, Jerusalem gives us a sense of temple authority.

It's sort of like the company boss who comes back to check on his employees to see if everything is okay. The religious leaders come down to Galilee to check and accuse Jesus of wrong teaching or unclean behavior.

Now that Jesus was healing the sick on the service and giving people a very different interpretation of the Old Testament, the Pharisees are starting to get fed up with Jesus.

They believed that they were the only ones who understand the law. And so they thought that this guy, Jesus, who had no proper education, shouldn't be teaching the people.

This is why the teacher of the law came to and yelled out in verse 22, He possessed by Beelzebub, by the prince of demons, he's driving out demons.

[11 : 00] They come all the way to exclaim to everyone that Jesus was demon-possessed. It's unclear what the meaning of Beelzebub is because ancient Israel records don't mention it much.

However, it is very clear that the religious leader used this word to judge Jesus and make the claim that he definitely wasn't Israel God's messenger or prophet.

If he was, then he most definitely wouldn't break the service law. This is kind of an offshore announcement from the religious leaders to point out Jesus was an outsider.

So, how does Jesus respond to them? Can you look at verse 23 with me? So, Jesus called them over to him and began to speak to them in parables.

How can Satan drive out Satan? Jesus said to them simply, Jesus points out the flaw in their argument by using a parable about the kingdom.

[12 : 35] He said, If a kingdom is divided, it won't stand. In fighting along with destroy it, without the enemy even need to come against it.

The same is true of the house. When a husband and a wife and children are divided against each other, their house will fall.

Then Jesus points out the foolishness of the religious leaders. He explains that Satan isn't divided in verse 27.

But no one can enter the strong man's house and plunder his property unless he first binds the strong man. And then he will plunder his house.

This is what Jesus has done. He has come into enemy territory and has bound the strong man. This is evident in Mark's gospel.

[13 : 39] First miracle story in chapter 1, which was an exorcism. And then there is a healing of the paralytic in Mark chapter 2, which also illustrates what Jesus is saying here.

And that is the mission of Jesus is invade and conquer Satan and plant his possessions.

Jesus is God, so he is stronger than strong man. Finally, Jesus stands at the table on the religious leaders in a damning statement.

Have a look at verse 28-29 with me. Truly, I tell you, by the way, when Jesus speaks like this, Amen, Amen, Jesus is making a point that these are not human words, but come from divine God's self.

People can be forgiven all their sins and every slander they utter, but whoever blasphemies against the Holy Spirit will never be forgiven.

[14 : 51] They are guilty of an eternal sin. So why does Jesus judge them so harshly? Although the teacher of the law recognizes Jesus has power to perform miracles, they deny the source of his power and claim it to be from Satan rather than God.

Jesus points out that it is his accused who are guilty of blaspheming because of their hardness of heart. Sure, they understand the law and theology, including the coming Messiah, but they still refuse Jesus.

Jesus' accusation of blasphemy by the religious leaders was absolutely shocking to both the leaders themselves and to the people listening.

Because, as I talked earlier, everyone thought the religious leaders are insiders who were accepted by God. However, here Jesus points out that isn't so, they are actually outsiders in God's eye because they don't believe Jesus as God and they didn't follow him.

This is a complete and unexpected reversal of the king's community. family. So, let's move on to next point.

[16 : 37] Number two, Jesus' own family. Let's now look at Jesus' own family. Can you have a look at verses 20 to 21?

And then, 31 to 32 with me. This is what I said, Mark's sandwich, two bread. verses 20 to 21.

Then, Jesus entered a house and again 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 say, he is out of his mind.

And jump to 31 to 32. Then Jesus' mother and brothers arrived. Standing outside, they sent someone in to call him.

[17 : 34] A crowd was sitting around him and they told him, your mother and brothers are outside looking for you. Jesus' mother and brothers came to take him home because they heard from people that he was crazy.

Now, if you are of Asian heritage or know about Asian culture, this thing probably makes more sense. Generally speaking, in Asian culture, family members are responsible for other family members.

For example, in Japan, probably Kihon might know, famous celebrities sometimes commit really bad acts such as drug use or violence.

And then, almost 100% of the time, their parents hold a press conference to apologize for their son's or daughter's criminal offense.

Of course, with a 45 degrees bow at the maximum apologize. This is important for Japanese people.

[18 : 49] Their child's behavior is so intertwined with the family reputation that the parents feel responsible for what their child has done.

Likewise, Jesus' own family probably felt a big responsibility for Jesus' behavior. Unfortunately, Jesus' own family members didn't believe that he was God.

Because they knew of Jesus' previous life in Galilee, they just saw him as just a family member, ordinary compentor, and thought he was human just like them.

So what did Jesus say to his own family? Let's go back to verse 33.

Jesus says, Who are my mother and my brothers? Jesus' statement is an absolutely shocking response in Jesus' day.

[19 : 59] As Steve mentioned previously, it was not like today's Australia. In Jesus' family relationship were the foundation of the society.

Jesus' own family and everyone around him thought that Jesus and his family were within the same circle. In other words, that they were insiders.

However, Jesus exclaims that they were in fact outsiders. Jesus' family members were standing outside, but Jesus is not just referring to them being outsiders physically, but being spiritually outsiders.

Because they didn't believe that Jesus was God. Jesus tells his natural family that their broad relationship with him does not claim any privilege.

This is another unexpected and shocking reversal of the king's community. both the teacher of the law and Jesus' own family are not actually insiders, but outsiders.

[21 : 29] Through marked sandwich technique, the reality of their status is emphasized more shockingly and draws the reader's attention to consider one question.

If the Pharisees and Jesus' own family are not Jesus' insiders, then who then are the insiders?

Who are Jesus' true family? If the Pharisees and Jesus' own family are not Jesus' insiders, then who then are the insiders?

Who are Jesus' true family? So my final point, Jesus' true family. Please have a look at verse 34 to 35 with me.

Then he looked at those seated in the circle around him and said, Hear my mother and my brothers. Whoever does God's will is my brother and sister and mother.

[22 : 40] Jesus points out that real insiders are in fact his disciples. However, Jesus isn't only referring to the 12 disciples that he has just appointed, but everyone who does God's will.

That's great news. But what are Jesus' followers expected to do? The Gospel of John gives us the answer.

So please open your Bible. John chapter 6, 28 to 29. John chapter 6, 28 to 29.

The religious people asked.

Then they asked him, What must we do to do the works God requires? Jesus answered, In short, Do you remember that Jesus' disciples come from all different backgrounds?

[24 : 31] They aren't perfect religious people, But just ordinary people like us. Jesus even called tax collectors who lost money.

They were absolutely considered outsiders in religious sense. But they are loved by Jesus. Jesus' family members are simply those who respond to his calling with a repentant heart.

So what about us? Are we insiders or outsiders? Are we like the Pharisees who thought that their righteous acts, That our status gives us special standing with Jesus?

Or are we like Jesus' disciples who were ordinary people, But who obeyed and followed Jesus? Jesus makes it clear that it is only by repentance and faith that you are welcomed as an insider into Jesus' family, Into the king's community.

If you haven't decided to follow Jesus yet, Jesus is calling you tonight. Jesus doesn't just give us the fancy title, Jesus' family.

[26 : 04] He actually cares for his family. We know this because Jesus died on the cross and rose again to forgive our sins.

Through his sacrifice, We too can have eternal life. One day, Our lives will continue to an end.

Come to an end. One day, We will have to say goodbye to our parents, Brothers, Sisters, Even our wife and husband.

But if you are a member of Jesus' family, You will continue to have fellowship in heaven.
What a hope.

What a hope. And great news, This is for us. If you decided to follow Jesus a long time ago, But now you are not sure whether you are still following him tonight, Jesus is calling you too.

[27 : 15] Jesus' invitation is open to everyone. No matter who you are, What language you speak, How well you know the Bible, Or how many times you have failed to walk with Christ, I encourage you to make a commitment to follow Jesus tonight.

Jesus is calling you to follow him. Jesus is inviting you into his family tonight. Let's pray.

Heavenly Father, Thank you for teaching us through your words. We were far away from you And didn't know who you are. We were completely outsiders.

But now we know that you are the one true God Who sent your only son, Jesus Christ, For us. And tonight, You are still calling us to follow you And to be part of your family.

Father, If there is someone here tonight Who is wanting to follow you, Please help them to do so. If someone is struggling to make a decision, Please continue to lead them by your spirit.

[28 : 39] Thank you for your care and love. I pray this in your mighty name. Amen. Amen. Amen.
Amen.