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INTERNATIONAL

TEACHING THE WHOLE COUNSEL OF GOD

Mark - Lesson 3E

Chapter 3:31-35

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- Last week, we took some time to walk through one of the most controversial topics in scripture and that is “The unpardonable sin.”
 - We discovered that this sin is something that was specific to a generation and a particular nation and not something that believers can commit today.
 - If you still have particular questions regarding the unpardonable sin, I encourage you to read our ministry article in the Q&A section of the website regarding “Blasphemy of the Holy Spirit.”
 - We realized that this eternal sin was beget from Israel (nationally) rejecting their Messiah and King.
 - The reality was that if they would have received Jesus as their Messiah as He had demonstrated time and time again, the Kingdom would have arrived at that time.
 - However, because they credited Jesus’ powers regarding the second Messianic Miracle to Satan, they forfeited their opportunity to the Kingdom for that generation forever.
 - It would only be by God’s grace those who were being called by God, in His remnant, who would have the opportunity to experience the Kingdom.
 - This moment completely redefined Jesus’ teaching ministry as it began to weed out those who had eyes to see and ears to hear versus those who didn’t.
 - He would begin to use parables as a means to separate the outsiders from the insiders.
 - Tonight, we will find verses 31-35 closely connected to the beginning of our study from last week, more specifically, verses 20 and 21.
 - If I were to put a tag on the text tonight it would be: Jesus’ True Family.
 - Pick me up at Mark 3:31-35 as we read the text together.

Mark 3:31 Then His mother and His brothers * arrived, and standing outside they sent word to Him and called Him.

Mark 3:32 A crowd was sitting around Him, and they * said to Him, “Behold, Your mother and Your brothers are outside looking for You.”

Mark 3:33 Answering them, He * said, “Who are My mother and My brothers?”

Mark 3:34 Looking about at those who were sitting around Him, He * said, “Behold My mother and My brothers!

Mark 3:35 “For whoever does the will of God, he is My brother and sister and mother.”

- Let’s Pray
- Growing up I would always hear this quote used, “Blood is thicker than water.”
 - To provide context, it would be used regarding relationships and loyalties of blood relatives as much stronger than relationships from “outsiders.”
 - However, as I grew older, I began to struggle with that proverb.
 - It created this false narrative that somehow earthly familial connections outweighed external relationships.

- And this could not be further from the truth!
- **The reality is that within scripture, the power of the Gospel completely redefines relationships to the fullest extent.**
 - The gospel takes people from different backgrounds, countries, native tongues, cultures, and the like and through Jesus Christ makes us all one.
- And sometimes through these Christian communities, they often prove to be more family oriented than even earthly biological families, themselves.
 - Tonight, we will see that through Jesus' words and actions just how the Gospel of God is making a new community of believers like never before.
 - And that this relationship and new community goes beyond biological or ancestral familiarity and into an eternal family.
- Jesus' dialogue regarding who His true mothers, brothers, and sisters are will unfold in the following ways:
 - **1. A familial request**
 - **2. A familial retort**
 - **3. A familial recalibration**
- Check out the first two verses, verses 31 and 32.

Mark 3:31 Then His mother and His brothers * arrived, and standing outside they sent word to Him and called Him.

Mark 3:32 A crowd was sitting around Him, and they * said to Him, “Behold, Your mother and Your brothers are outside looking for You.”

- As we approach the last few verses of Mark 3, we face what seems to be a pick up from last week's teaching.
 - If you recall, last week we discussed the unpardonable sin as I mentioned in our recap.
 - That teaching began in v.21-22 where Jesus' family received word that Jesus was behaving a bit different than before.
 - There seemed to be a lack of Him eating and a sense of hyper focus on ministry and meeting needs.
 - What seemed as Jesus being distressed, to the point of not eating, was really another pivotal moment in Jesus' ministry.
 - It would be assumed by Jesus' biological relatives that He was somehow “losing His mind.”
 - And as a result of this misunderstood assumption, Jesus' family makes the decision to travel from Nazareth to take custody of Jesus in the Galilee.
 - It was at this point in the narrative that Mark pauses the scene and switched over to the scene which led to discussions of the unforgivable sin.
 - We now arrive to verse 31, where Mark resumes the scene that began earlier in v.20-21.
 - And Jesus' family has arrived to the Galilee with the intention to take custody

of Jesus, based upon the news they have received.

- The text tells us in verse 31 that “His mother and His brothers arrived...”
 - This phrase simply confirms the line that Mark uses in verse 21, where he says “His own people heard of this.”
- What is interesting to note in Mark’s account is that he doesn’t begin his account with Jesus’ family lineage.
 - Within Matthew and Luke’s gospel accounts, both include genealogical information of sorts that speak to Jesus’ familial connections.
 - However, Mark chooses to begin his account omitting familial lineages and ancestral connections.
 - And I find that reasoning to be purposeful in my personal assessment.
- The reason being is because at the start of Mark’s gospel, more specifically, Mark 1:1, he begins the account by saying: “The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God.”
 - **I believe this starting point plays a key role in understanding gospel priority for Jesus and His ministry.**
 - And we will see this idea of gospel priority will be key throughout the next few verses.
- We arrive to our first section of the text that deals with what I call the “**Familial request**”.
 - Notice the wording that Mark uses in part b of verse 31.
 - It states, “**and standing outside they sent word to Him and called Him.**”
- The use of the word “standing outside” plays a very crucial role here.
 - It is clear that Mark is making a distinction of placement between where Jesus’ relatives are versus where Jesus, the Twelve, and the other disciples (followers/learners) are.
- Remember, that the context of verse 20 and 21 must be considered for us to understand, potentially, why this distinction is happening and what it is addressing, specifically.
 - The context in verse 20 begins with the fact that there is a large crowd of people who are with and around Jesus, presumably while He is teaching.
 - So, with this crowd surrounding Jesus, there seems to be a barrier that prevents Jesus’ mother and His brothers from getting to Him.
- On one hand, there is much amazement from those who have heard about what Jesus has done and some are wondering if He is in fact the “Son of David.”
 - Most assuredly there is growing wonder regarding the person and works of Jesus.
- But on the other hand, He is not only being defamed and His character assassinated by the scribes and Pharisees,
 - **But, His own family members think that He has lost His entire mind.**
- If anyone was to be considered cheerleaders for Jesus and His ministry, one would expect it to be Jesus’ family.

- If not His brothers, most assuredly it would be Mary.
- For she has been visited by angels who have informed her that her very Son will be called “Son of the Most High” (Luke 1:32).
- However, Mark 3:31 seems to allude to the reality that either the family, especially Mary, was in fear for Jesus’ life, or there was not complete certainty into His true person as King and Messiah.
 - In one way, Jesus’ family and the Pharisees see Jesus in one particular light, whereas those who are following Him, including His disciples, see His uniqueness and His works.
 - The evidence and His claims are visible and worth following Him to know and learn more.
- This distinction between who has eyes to see and ears to hear is made ever so clear in v.23 of Mark Chapter 3.
 - This is where Jesus’ teaching approach drastically changes due to Israel (nationally) having rejected His claims and proof that He is Messiah.
 - However, not every Jew in the area has rejected His person and work for there are many who still seem to follow Him.
- From this point on, Jesus speaks in parables.
 - Just as a reminder, this is what Mark 4:10-11 says regarding the significance of parables versus the teaching Jesus was doing before.

Mark 4:10 As soon as He was alone, His followers, along with the twelve disciples, began asking Him about the parables.

Mark 4:11 And He was saying to them, “To you has been given the mystery of the kingdom of God, but for those who are outside, everything comes in parables,

- As you can see, the use of parables for Jesus in His public teaching would distinguish the “outsider versus the insider.”
 - Parables would be used to “denote those privileged with the mysteries of the Kingdom versus those in whom it was not given at that time” (Mark 4:11, Matthew 13:11, Luke 8:10).
 - So we can safely assume, Mark’s use of the phrase “outsiders”, twice, goes beyond a simple means of physical proximity, but rather it speaks to revelatory proximity.
 - In other words, those who are “inside” and close to Jesus represent God’s revealing work by His Spirit as those who follow and learn more from Him.
 - **There is reception of this Kingdom revelation by way of the King Himself!**
 - Although their understanding is not fully realized, there is an **openness of their hearts to receive this knowledge and new way of life that Jesus offers.**
 - One more observation that we can see from the text regarding outsider versus insider is the actual language Mark uses both in a literal and figurative sense.
 - For example, in verse 31, Mary and Jesus’ siblings are “standing” outside whereas those following Jesus are “sitting” around Him.

- This simply confirms that the learner, the one who's heart is open to the Kingdom program, is spending time at the very feet of Messiah to learn.
- Most importantly it shows the results of how the Father draws men and women to Himself. It moves them from spiritual blindness (outside) to spiritual clarity (inside).
- Check out verse 32.

Mark 3:32 A crowd was sitting around Him, and they * said to Him, “Behold, Your mother and Your brothers are outside looking for You.”

- As we arrive to verse 32, notice the distinction between those outside versus inside is further expressed.
 - We now see that those who are inside, sitting around Jesus, share with Him that His mother and brothers are looking for Him.
 - If you can imagine for a moment, the crowd is so large and so compact that Jesus' family has no physical way to get in.
 - So, the only best option to get word to Jesus that they have arrived is by sending a message to Jesus by word of mouth.
 - This scene, upon initial reading, should cause a bit of confusion, and at best it would seem problematic on a familial level.
 - You would think that Mary, being Jesus' mother, would have had instantaneous access to her baby boy.
 - Maybe a red carpet of sorts would have been rolled out for Jesus' mother to make her way to Jesus, her Son.
 - It's this idea that because someone is related to you on a personal familial level that it gives them complete and total access to you.
 - Something like a VIP pass is owed to them or something. “Jesus, because I'm your mother, you should let me in to see you.”
 - However, this is not the perspective Jesus has. We will see later on tonight as we proceed to the remaining verses.
 - Really quickly, if you recall the Wedding at Cana, Jesus did not give His mother the benefit of familial favoritism based on her request of Him turning water to wine.
 - Check out John 2:3-4.

John 2:3 When the wine ran out, the mother of Jesus *said to Him, “They have no wine.”

John 2:4 And Jesus *said to her, “What business do you have with Me, woman? My hour has not yet come.”

- In verse 4 of John 2, Jesus uses a Jewish idiom.
 - To best translate what He said in English would be to say “Your concerns are not my concerns.”

- In other words, the temporal concerns of this wedding feast have nothing to do with the eternal purpose for His earthly ministry.
- Jesus' miracles always pointed to His message and that was for people to see Him as Messiah and to repent to receive the Kingdom of God.
 - Mary's purpose in her son turning water into wine was focused on a temporal need and not God's eternal plan.
 - So, we see Jesus flex His authority as deity in this situation with His mother to let her know what the gospel priority truly is and provides proper rebuke.
 - Yet, at the same time with her request, Jesus still fulfills it to obey His mother and not sin Himself.
- So, as Mary and Jesus' brothers call out for Jesus seeking to see where He is, as word gets to Jesus, His response in verse 33, comes as a bit of a shock.
 - Check out the text.

Mark 3:33 Answering them, He * said, "Who are My mother and My brothers?"

- We now arrive to the "Familial Retort."
 - The text tells us that upon receiving word that Jesus' family is looking for Him that He speaks verbally and says "Who are My mother and My brothers?"
 - Some scholars suppose that this may have been something that Jesus mutters to Himself as if a soliloquy. This could be the case.
 - However, I am of the belief that if these are the very words of Jesus and that Mark is documenting the Apostle Peter's experience with Jesus, that these words were heard verbally to those near Jesus.
 - One would have to imagine that with this message circulating in the crowd there potentially could have been several individuals letting Jesus know the exact message.
 - Matthew's gospel lets us know it was one person who directly tells Jesus His mother's request.
 - So, from receiving the message loud and clear from those around Him, Jesus asks a question: "Who are My Mother and My brother?"
 - Clearly, there was a recognition of Mary and the brothers being related in an earthly sense.
 - **However, Jesus' line of question brings about a challenge of what has been deemed an urgent familial matter at hand.**
 - Jesus knew who his family was; however, He was making a clear distinction regarding true spiritual family versus earthly family.
 - Understand that within Jewish culture, there was much emphasis on valuing natural (earthly) family relationships.
 - **However, it seems that Jesus' priorities here have placed importance on another set of "family values."**
 - It seems as though Jesus is making a point here through His question.

- Alistair Begg mentions in his teaching on Mark that Mary and the family, in a way, reflect the very mentality of the average Jew in that day.
 - That because they are descendants of Abraham (Matthew 3:9) somehow they have “primary (VIP) access” to God.
- However this is not the case, and this, I believe, is the point that Jesus is making in stating this rhetorical question aloud.
 - **That just because you are related in an ancestral sense doesn’t give you access to God or a free pass from hell.**
 - And, in that same way, Jesus is letting those around Him know that His own family does not have precedence over this spiritual family that He is establishing.
- **Our relationship with Jesus Christ is solely based upon the Father opening our eyes by the Holy Spirit and not any sort of earthly (temporal) bonds or familial connection.**
 - In other words, although earthly familial relationships are important, they do not supersede the eternal bonds of our spiritual family.
- Recognize that when we leave this world as believers of Jesus, we will see those in whom are our spiritual brothers and sisters in Christ here.
 - Check out how Jesus brings this understanding of Kingdom focus and priority to a head. Here’s our last 2 verses for tonight.

Mark 3:34 Looking about at those who were sitting around Him, He * said, “Behold My mother and My brothers!

Mark 3:35 “For whoever does the will of God, he is My brother and sister and mother.”

- Notice Jesus’ answer to the question He posed earlier to those within this crowd,
 - He tells them “Behold My mother and My brothers.”
 - **To put it another way, “Those of you whose hearts are open to who I Am and the will of God are my family!”**
 - Once again, Jesus makes this emphatic point, that those earthly temporal relationships do not equate to eternal ones.
 - It is those who have eyes to see and ears to hear and become doers of His word, those people are His true family.
 - This relational demarcation is fully explained in verse 35.
 - Jesus states, “**For whoever does the will of God, he is My brother and sister, and mother.**”
 - Really quickly, in Luke’s account there is a scene where a woman complimented Jesus by complimenting His mother.
 - The compliment was in the sense of a natural (earthly connection) but check out how Jesus responds:

Luke 11:27 While Jesus was saying these things, one of the women in the crowd

raised her voice and said to Him, “Blessed is the womb that bore You and the breasts at which You nursed.”

Luke 11:28 But He said, “On the contrary, blessed are those who hear the word of God and observe it.”

- We get even more understanding of what doing the will of God means in Luke 8:21.

Luke 8:21 But He answered and said to them, “My mother and My brothers are these who hear the word of God and do it.”

- The word “hear” in the Greek is *akouo* which means to hear with intention and to follow carefully based upon what has been received.
 - **So who are those “whomevers”?**
 - **Those who see the revealed truth and power of Jesus Christ through the Holy Spirit’s illumination and respond in faith.**
 - Jesus’ words in Luke’s account tells us in a few short words that obeying the Father is doing what’s in His word (James 1:22).
 - And this can only come about by God Himself giving us the ability to believe the Gospel and to respond.
 - Whereas, those who do not respond to the Gospel message are unbelievers because there is no response.
 - This distinction of the outsider versus the insider points to a reality of the very Gospel of Jesus Christ, itself.
 - **The Gospel makes clear distinctions! There is no room for men and women on the fence.**
 - **There is either belief or unbelief and as we will see next week, true belief will render fruit.**
 - Once again, Jesus makes it clear that those who are of the spiritual family exceed any earthly and temporal relationship.
 - And this distinction transcends even relational “earthly” boundaries.
 - If you don’t believe me, read the text for yourself in Matthew 10:34-36. This is what it reads:

Matthew 10:34 “Do not think that I have come to bring peace to the earth. I have not come to bring peace, but a sword.

Matthew 10:35 For I have come to set a man against his father, and a daughter against her mother, and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law.

Matthew 10:36 And a person's enemies will be those of his own household.

- Here is the reality, if one has earthly relatives who are not believing, your relationship ends with them eternally once you die.
 - However, those who are your brothers and sisters in Christ, those relationships go

beyond this life and into the next.

- The fundamental question that comes to bear as it pertains to your relationship with Jesus Christ is: “Where and in whom does your identity lie?”
 - Is it found in Him simply being a “good teacher”, “great healer”, but that’s as far as it goes?
 - Can you only see Him as what those in Nazareth saw Him as: “Simply the carpenter, whose mother is Mary,” according to Mark 6:3?
 - Maybe you identify Jesus only as the historical figure who stirred up much controversy in the Galilee who claimed to be Messiah.
 - **Or is your identity found in Christ as your Suffering and crucified King who in Him reigns full deity, perfect humanity, and glorious power!**
- If you do not know Jesus as Messiah, King of Kings, Lord of Lords, the better Adam, the Holy One of God, then you have misunderstood who He is and are not in the family.
 - **Here is where we see the familial recalibration.**
 - There is a cost that comes in following Christ versus following the world. Are you doing the will of God or the will of man?
- Remember what the disciples gave up for the sake of following Christ?
 - But, most importantly, that God Himself was drawing them to make them His people.
 - These men gave up their careers, they left their fathers and family all for the sake of following Jesus.
 - They left what was familiar for who was eternal, even when they didn’t fully realize it yet. There was this compelling draw to Jesus!
- Matthew’s gospel provides this sense of abandoning the familiar for the eternal. Matthew 10:37-39:

Matthew 10:37 **Whoever loves father or mother more than me is not worthy of me, and whoever loves son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me.**

Matthew 10:38 **And whoever does not take his cross and follow me is not worthy of me.**

Matthew 10:39 **Whoever finds his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life for my sake will find it.**

- **Doing the will of God by obeying His word (the Gospel) is how those who are of God stand out from those who are not, and that obedience yields fruit.**
 - And, it is clear that doing His will comes with great cost.
 - When my wife came to faith in Christ years back, her life was dynamically changed.
 - Growing up in her home she was raised as a Jehovah's Witness.
 - As a matter of fact, her family was deep within this religious organization, so much so that her grandfather was a high ranking elder.
 - When the Lord opened her eyes, her family cut her off and completely distanced

themselves from her.

- Her decision to follow Jesus and making it known to her family cost her greatly.
 - To throw fuel on the fire, when she married me, it made matters worse.
- By God's grace, between the time my wife came to faith in Christ to the time we got married, my wife had grown close to an entire community of believers who became her true family.
 - They took her in, loved on her, and became the very family she needed.
 - These believers to this day remain her big brothers and sisters in Christ and will continue to be in her life now and in the life to come.
- To the world, my wife being alienated from her family would be considered an outsider situation, however to the family of God she was truly an "insider."
 - The reality is there is much risk with being an insider. It comes with great cost.
- We see this reality, as well, with the rich young ruler who was seeking to obtain eternal life.
 - He failed to realize that eternal life is not found in what you can do or what earthly relationships you have or possessions you flex.
 - **But, truly coming to know eternal life is in fact losing one's life to find it and it can only be found in Christ alone.**
- Jesus makes it known that your family ties do not secure you a spot in the Kingdom.
 - **Only repenting before Holy God, recognizing you are a sinner, and turning to the Only One that can forgive you of sins, Jesus Christ, is the only means by which one can be saved.**
 - And this reality can only become reality if you have personally been drawn to Christ by the Father and the Spirit having opened your eyes.
- And our text shows us tonight that Jesus' own family at that time did not fully see the truth of who He truly was.
- They were so close to Him in a familial sense but yet could not see who He truly was.
 - It's not until after Jesus' resurrection that His brother James believes and becomes a great leader in the early church.
 - **Knowing Jesus and His person can only be revealed through personal encounter and not familial connection.**
 - And along with this divine revelation comes a draw to obedience to His word and His works.
 - The true mark of Kingdom family is their response to their King in the here and now.
 - And the reward in it all is that those in whom you serve alongside now, who are in Christ, will be those in whom you will serve with in the Kingdom that is to come.
 - **The question is: which group are you?**

- Are you the “outsider” trying to pull the family card because a friend from work or a loved one has a personal relationship with Jesus, but not you?
- Or are you the “insider”, the one who is sitting at the very feet of Jesus so that you may be taught and to grow in your love of His word in obedience to His will and way?
 - Next week, we will observe just how this process of being inside versus outside truly plays out in a practical way as we learn about the parable of the sower.
 - Let’s Pray.