

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^[a] heard about this, they went to take charge of him, for they said, “He is out of his mind.”

²² And the teachers of the law who came down from Jerusalem said, “He is possessed by Beelzebul! By the prince of demons he is driving out demons.”

²³ So Jesus called them over to him and began to speak to them in parables: “How can Satan drive out Satan? ²⁴ If a kingdom is divided against itself, that kingdom cannot stand. ²⁵ If a house is divided against itself, that house cannot stand. ²⁶ And if Satan opposes himself and is divided, he cannot stand; his end has come. ²⁷ In fact, no one can enter a strong man’s house without first tying him up. Then he can plunder the strong man’s house. ²⁸ Truly I tell you, people can be forgiven all their sins and every slander they utter, ²⁹ but whoever blasphemes against the Holy Spirit will never be forgiven; they are guilty of an eternal sin.”

³⁰ He said this because they were saying, “He has an impure spirit.”

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.”
(Mark 3:20-35 NIV2011)

An Out-of-His Mind Savior

“Family is everything...Blood is thicker than water...If you don’t have family, what do you have? If you don’t have anyone else to rely on, there’s always family...There’s nothing more important than family.” You’ve heard someone say things like that; maybe it was you. There is something special about family. It can fulfill that desire and need we all have to belong. It’s a support system. They are people who just get it when no one else does. They see a different side of you that others do not. There’s things that other people don’t understand because they aren’t part of the family. Family is special. At the same time, there’s also a lot of people who don’t have that type of relationship with their blood-family. Sometimes you just aren’t close, as a family. They don’t get it. You are at different places. You grow apart. Family might be the reason why life is difficult. It’s family who often struggle to understand and take advantage of us. Family can be sorely disappointing.

Talking about disappointing blood family, look at what Jesus deals with in Mark 3. He had barely made it home when a huge crowd gathers around his place. There’s so many people cramming themselves around Jesus that there isn’t enough room eat. This place is packed. People want to be with Jesus. He had been saying some very intriguing things. They want to hear what he had to say. He had been doing some extraordinary

things. They want to see what he could do. Who could blame them? If you hear about someone healing back pain, curing cancer, healing the sick, making the lame walk, you would probably go looking for him too.

Jesus' family had heard about it as well. But they were less than impressed. They didn't show up to listen and to watch. No, they tried to grab Jesus. **They were saying, "He's out of his mind!"** His family thinks he's crazy. And, to a certain point, it kind of looks like it. His close band of followers include a tax collector (someone very much looked down upon in that society because of their connection to the Roman government), a Zealot (someone very much against the Roman government), fishermen, a couple of brothers with hot tempers known as the Sons of Thunder, and a guy who would betray him. He does kind of crazy things like go off on his own for hours on end to pray. He approaches people with contagious diseases to heal them. Here's a young adult—for all intents and purposes—who calls out the well-established religious elders and corrects their interpretation of God's Word. He eats with sinners, tax collectors, sex-workers and people you generally didn't want to be associated with. And now he has this huge crowd following him like he's some fanatic. He must be out of his mind!

The teachers of the Law weren't going to stop with that. They couldn't ignore the fact that Jesus was doing some incredible things. He's healing people. He's driving out demons. They had to say something. **"He is possessed by Beelzebul! By the prince of demons he is driving out demons"** (v.22). Not only is Jesus possessed, he's in league with Satan. They are in cahoots with one another! That's how Jesus is able to do all this stuff.

What's the issue for both the family and the teachers? They don't know what do about Jesus. They can see the work that is being done. They hear what Jesus has to say. And, yet, because they refuse to listen and believe they call what is good, evil.

We're still doing similar things. We see the blessings that God gives with house, home, money in the pocket, protection, food on our tables, the air that we breathe. But then when it's not the type of house that we want, the amount of money we would prefer, the food we would like to eat, we grumble and complain, become frustrated and upset at our place in life. If only God would give us *this*, then we wouldn't act that way. So we blame God, as if he did something wrong—we call the good blessings evil because they weren't what we expected. He's out of his mind that he doesn't just do *this* for me.

We hear God's promises. We even see the evidence of him fulfilling those promises in life. But then we blame him for our lack of trust because he hasn't given us the proof, the numbers, the data, the physical evidence we think we need. He's out of his mind that he just calls us to trust him above all.

We hear how Jesus calls us to live as his people, apart and different from this world. But it's hard. And when fall into sin, do we try and convince ourselves, "It's because he's asking too much from me." He's out of his mind if he thinks we can live like this in the

world today. We rationalize our decisions and our sins, ignore the consequences and seriousness. He's out of his mind, crazy if he thinks I had any other choice.

We might not take seriously his Word, really hear and listen to it, but instead run hiding in the numerous other obligations. He's out of his mind if he thinks I have that sort of time.

So who is Jesus to you? Someone who can be ignored and brought out when it's convenient on your time? Is he a hard task-master demanding too much from you? Is he the one to blame for our struggles and difficulties in life? Is he out-of-his mind?

Jesus knows what's going on so he calls the teachers over and explains: **“How can Satan drive out Satan? If a kingdom is divided against itself, that kingdom cannot stand. If a house is divided against itself, that house cannot stand. And if Satan opposes himself and is divided, he cannot stand; his end has come”** (vv. 23-26).

We've seen this play out in history. A kingdom divided against itself will fall. A house divided will fall. If Satan fights against himself; the same thing happens: “He cannot stand; his end has come.” This is pretty straightforward logic.

But Jesus isn't just addressing some faulty logic. He gives a serious warning, **“Truly I tell you, people can be forgiven all their sins and every slander they utter, but whoever blasphemes against the Holy Spirit will never be forgiven; they are guilty of an eternal sin”** (vv.28-29). These teachers of the Law are getting dangerously close to this rightly-called, “Sin against the Holy Spirit.” At first you might think, “Wait a minute, I thought all sins are forgiven in Jesus.” Yes, you are correct. That's what makes this sin so dangerous. This sin refuses the forgiveness that Jesus gives. This isn't regular unbelief. This is rejection of God's gift—both of God's Son, Jesus, and Jesus' work. It recognizes God's work and calls it evil. It knows the truth but rejects the Spirit's work. And those guilty of such a sin, **“will never be forgiven; they are guilty of an eternal sin.”**

“What if I've committed that sin?” You might wonder. A few things to keep in mind: 1) As with all sin, it is by God's grace alone who delivers us from evil that keeps us from it. So, pray that God continue to bless and keep you from this sin. 2) If you are concerned that you have committed this sin, you have not. Someone who has committed this would not care. Finally, 3) as the early Church Father, St. Augustine said: “It is not that this was a blasphemy which under no circumstance could be forgiven, for even this shall be forgiven if right repentance follows it.”

So, who is Jesus? Someone to be taken seriously. He will not be mocked. He cannot be ignored. At the same time, maybe he is out of his mind. I mean, it's crazy that he would forgive someone who at one time completely rejected him and his work. And, yet, after turning even from that sin he welcomes him with open arms, no questions asked, or dredging up the past. After all, that's what he did with you and me. He's out of his mind that he chose to leave the glories of heaven to be born into a family that would call him crazy. He's out of his mind that he would live in a world wrestling with the same

temptations and deal with the weaknesses that come along with a flesh and blood body. He's out of his mind that he knew he would suffer physical, mental humiliation and abuse and still allow himself to be betrayed, arrested, and tried. He's out of his mind that he would count himself amongst sinners as he hangs from that cross and become sin for us. He's out of his mind that he would let his hands be pierced for our transgressions. Only someone who is out of his mind would take the punishment that we deserve so that we would have peace with God. He must be out of his mind that he would die to bring us into his family. Us who make a mess of our lives. Us who ignore his Word. Us who are such great disappointments.

And, yet, with sound mind and a heart full of love, he willingly does. Jesus follows God's will to bring you into his family. Yes, Satan is the strong man. Yet, Jesus is the stronger man, the Lord over all, including the prince of this world, Satan. Every time Jesus drives out demons he breaks into Satan's house, binds up that strong man, puts him in his place, and robs Satan of another soul. Jesus is the one promised in Genesis 3:15, the seed of the woman who came to save. With his perfect life and innocent death Jesus crushes Satan's head and destroys his work. With his rising from the grave, Jesus frees you from the devil's power and gives you the victory with Him.

That's what he did at your baptism. When the water and Word pour over your head all the angels in heaven rejoiced because Jesus snatched your soul from Satan's grasp. The Stronger Man Jesus robbed Satan again claiming you to be his family. All your sins, every slander is forgiven from that day until your last day. You are not just part of God's kingdom; you are family, written into God's will with eternal life with Jesus as your inheritance.

Because that is what you are: Jesus' family. When Jesus' mother and brothers want to talk to him, Jesus says, **“Who are my mother and brothers? 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”** (v.34-35). You, seated before Jesus and listening to his Word today, he points to you and doesn't see disappointments or anyone of whom he is ashamed. He says, “Here is my brother. Here is my sister.” You have a family here that may or may not be flesh and blood and, yet, they are your family in Jesus. As family does, so we do: we eat together. So come, take and eat, take and drink as family Jesus' body and blood poured out for you in the Lord's Supper. As family comes together to visit and support each other; so we gather here in God's house to encourage each other. Go out to your brothers and sisters in Christ, invite them to come back. Go out to those who are not part of the family and bring them in. Encourage one another to keep things in proper perspective and follow God's Will. And when we fall, be ready to forgive quickly. This bond we have in Jesus transcends time and space, flesh and blood. We are united together in Christ our out-of-his mind Savior who makes us part of his family. Amen.