

Mark 3:20-35  
God Has the Strongest Claim on Our Lives  
2/13/22

**QTT:** *CONTEXT: Jesus tests His Followers' commitment. Luke 14:25–33 (NASB95)*

<sup>25</sup> *Now large crowds were going along with Him; and He turned and said to them,* <sup>26</sup> *"If anyone comes to Me, and does not hate his own father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters, yes, and even his own life, he cannot be My disciple.*

<sup>27</sup> *"Whoever does not carry his own cross and come after Me cannot be My disciple.* <sup>28</sup> *"For which one of you, when he wants to build a tower, does not first sit down and calculate the cost to see if he has enough to complete it?" <sup>29</sup> *"Otherwise, when he has laid a foundation and is not able to finish, all who observe it begin to ridicule him," <sup>30</sup> *saying, 'This man began to build and was not able to finish.'***

<sup>31</sup> *"Or what king, when he sets out to meet another king in battle, will not first sit down and consider whether he is strong enough with ten thousand [men] to encounter the one coming against him with twenty thousand?" <sup>32</sup> *"Or else, while the other is still far away, he sends a delegation and asks for terms of peace.* <sup>33</sup> *"So then, none of you can be My disciple who does not give up all his own possessions.**

RN: **Who** has the strongest claim on our loyalty? To Whom do we owe the greatest obligation? When it's all said and done, do we owe anyone in Heaven or on the earth more loyalty than God, our **Creator** and Jesus Christ our **Savior**?

AN: B/c, God our Creator and Jesus Christ our Savior have rescued us from eternal **Judgment** through Their **Grace and Mercy**, our Loyalty to them **must surpass** our Loyalty to anyone or anything else in Heaven or on the earth

**BI:** Jesus doesn't let anyone control Him, b/c God has the strongest claim on His life, so like Him, only God should control us. **Please turn in your Bibles to Mk 3:20-35.**

- I. Today, we'll see why Jesus' Family believes that He's **crazy**.
- II. And, we'll see what makes Jesus **warn** the **Scribes**.
- III. Finally, we'll see Who has the **strongest claim** on Jesus.

God has the strongest claim on our lives. **[PRAY]**

*In (3:20-35), Mark uses a storytelling tool called a "sandwich." IOW, he inserts one story into the middle of another story to make a point using both. In this case, the **inner** story says that Jesus' enemies are calling Him demon possessed. While, the **outer** story says that Jesus' Family is calling Him **crazy**.*

*Now, in both stories, people in opposition to Jesus are trying to bind Him in some way. But, Jesus forcefully makes this point: He's One Who does the binding—**not they**—b/c God's Holy Spirit works through Him, and God has the strongest claim on His life.*

(TRN) In (20-21), Jesus' Family thinks that He's **crazy**.

**Mark 3:20–21 (NASB95)** <sup>20</sup> **And He came home, and the crowd gathered again, to such an extent that they could not even eat a meal.** <sup>21</sup> **When His own people heard [of this], they went out to take custody of Him; for they were saying, "He has lost His senses."**

**(20-21)** Jesus and His Followers go back to **Capernaum**, and huge **Crowd** shows up. And, the Crowd's so demanding that they won't even let Jesus and His Followers eat.

A. Now, Jesus' Family hears about all of this, and they panic. They think that Jesus has flipped out, so they decide to bring Him back home to **Nazareth** for a rest.

1. IOW, they think that Jesus is a **crazy** religious fanatic! So, they're going to take Him into protective custody.

B. Jesus' Family only sees Him as an **ordinary** man. Even **Mother Mary**, who knows that He's special, **won't accept** how God is moving in Him and through Him.

1. Jesus is still her baby, and to the rest of the Family Jesus is still just their elder brother. And as such, His siblings think that Jesus needs to care for Mom. Joseph has long since died. And, as the eldest, Jesus is supposed to step into Joseph's shoes.

C. So, Jesus must build up the Family business or find apprenticeships for His brothers. And, Jesus must save up dowries for His sisters.

1. Jesus must do what's expected, not schlepp around, preaching about **Repentance** and **Judgment Day**, not healing people with incurable disease, and certainly not liberating demonized, men, women, and children whom no rabbi can liberate.

2. No, sir, this is about Family values! It's about being what your **Family**, and **Society**, and **Tradition** tell you to be. It's about being normal, **not supernatural!**

D. Besides, all of this supernatural stuff is **way** scary, b/c it can lead to riots and then Roman reprisals—**"Good golly, Miss Molly, can't we just all get along?!"**

1. IOW, the Family is saying, **"Jesus can't you just come home and let somebody else be the Prophet Who saves Israel (Dt 18:15-19)?"**

**E. ILL:** *CONTEXT: Jesus acknowledges God's supremacy in His life. Luke 2:41–52 (NASB95)* <sup>41</sup> *Now [Jesus'] parents went to Jerusalem every year at the Feast of the Passover. <sup>42</sup> And when He became twelve, they went up [there] according to the custom of the Feast; <sup>43</sup> and as they were returning, after spending the full number of days, the boy Jesus stayed behind in Jerusalem. But His parents were unaware of it, <sup>44</sup> but supposed Him to be in the caravan, and went a day's journey; and they [began] looking for Him among their relatives and acquaintances.*

<sup>45</sup> *When they did not find Him, they returned to Jerusalem looking for Him. <sup>46</sup> Then, after three days they found Him in the temple, sitting in the midst of the teachers, both listening to them and asking them questions. <sup>47</sup> And all who heard Him were amazed at His understanding and His answers.*

<sup>48</sup> *When [His parents] saw Him, they were astonished; and His mother said to Him, "Son, why have You treated us this way? Behold, Your father and I have been anxiously looking for You." <sup>49</sup> And He said to them, "Why is it that you were looking for Me? Did you not know that I had to be in My Father's [house?]" <sup>50</sup> But they did not understand the statement which He had made to them.*

<sup>51</sup> *And He went down with them and came to Nazareth, and He continued in subjection to them; and His mother treasured all [these] things in her heart. <sup>52</sup> And Jesus kept increasing in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men.*

**F. APPL:** Sometimes, being "normal" means putting a supernatural commitment to God **on hold**. But, putting God first make every other commitment **subordinate**.

God must always come **first**, b/c God has the strongest claim on our lives.

(TRN) In (22-30), Jesus **warns** the Scribes to stop insulting the Holy Spirit.

Mark 3:22–30 (NASB95) <sup>22</sup> *The scribes who came down from Jerusalem were saying, "He is possessed by Beelzebul," and "He casts out the demons by the ruler of the demons." <sup>23</sup> And He called them to Himself and began speaking to them in parables, "How can Satan cast out Satan? <sup>24</sup> If a kingdom is divided against itself, that kingdom cannot stand. <sup>25</sup> If a house is divided against itself, that house will not be able to stand. <sup>26</sup> If Satan has risen up against himself and is divided, he cannot stand, but he is finished! <sup>27</sup> 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. <sup>28</sup> Truly I say to you, all sins shall be forgiven the sons of men, and whatever blasphemies they utter; <sup>29</sup> but whoever blasphemes against the Holy Spirit never has forgiveness, but is guilty of an eternal sin"— <sup>30</sup> because they were saying, "He has an unclean spirit."*

**(22)** Now, here's the beef in Mark's **sandwich**. Some experts in the **Law of Moses** called **Scribes** come from **Jerusalem** and claim that Jesus is demon possessed, s/t they can publicly condemn Him.

A. In fact, these **Legal Beagles** keep saying that Jesus keeps performing miracles that He has struck a deal w/ Beelzebul AKA Satan prince of demons.

B. So, that makes all Jesus' miracles, especially the casting out of demons, tricks of a sorcerer who's palsy-walsy w/ Satan.

1. IOW, these Legal Beagles **can't deny** Jesus' miracles. But, they can throw **mud** at the power behind Jesus' miracles to **discredit** them.

C. And, here's an ironic point to remember: Although these men are **eyewitnesses** to Jesus' miracles, they still don't trust in Him. In fact, they **hate** Him!

1. IOW, Jesus' miracles bounce off a hard heart like BBs off a battleship. But, His miracles deeply pierce a soft heart, b/c Faith and obedience have prepared the way.

**(23-26)** So, Jesus confronts the Legal Beagles and uses **3** wise sayings to show the foolishness of their criticisms.

A. Jesus says, **"Now look, how can Satan give Satan a black eye? Satan's always going to be on his own side, isn't he? It's ridiculous to think otherwise."**

1. Then, Jesus says, **"Think of it this way, if a powerful nation destroys itself in a civil war, won't it be impossible for that powerful nation to survive?"**

2. He also says, **"And, if a powerful Family destroys itself w/ hatred, won't it be impossible for that powerful Family to survive, too? So, if Satan destroys himself, won't his power go *phhht!* as he commits suicide?"**

B. IOW, Jesus says that if any fact is True about Satan, it's this: Satan is never going to destroy himself, b/c he lives for **absolute power** and **unlimited control** (Rv 13).

**(27)** Jesus goes a step further w/ another comparison. He says, **"In fact, Satan is like a savage warlord who uses his demon army to fill his fortress of demon possession w/ conquered men, women, and children."**

A. **"Satan just loves to enslave people, so he bars every fortress gate, window, and door from the inside and the outside to make sure that they can never get free."**

1. **“So, no one can break into Satan’s impregnable fortress and free these overpowered people unless He’s stronger than Satan and his army.”**

B. Then, Jesus says, **“But, I Am stronger than Satan and his army, so I Can plunder his fortress and free all these agonized captives from their cages.”**

1. IOW, Jesus has proven that He’s stronger than Satan **1<sup>st</sup>** by **beating** Satan’s desert temptations (Mk 1:12-13) and **now** by **exorcising** demons through the Holy Spirit’s might.

2. So, Jesus clearly comes to destroy Satan, not cooperate w/ him. IOW, Jesus isn’t Satan’s bosom buddy; He’s Satan’s mortal enemy, and His miracles—**prove it**.

C. But, more than this, Jesus’ miracles predict the Day when He will destroy Satan’s kingdom—**once-and-for-all**—and replace it w/ the fullness of **God’s Kingdom**.

**(28-30)** Then, Jesus gives these Legal Beagles a bloodcurdling warning: He says, **“I’m telling you the Truth, God will forgive any sin, except blaspheming His Holy Spirit. God will never forgive anyone who misrepresents His Holy Spirit’s work as Satan’s work!”**

A. **READ THAT** God will never forgive any person who says in his heart that Satan inspires and empowers Jesus instead of God’s Holy Spirit.

1. IOW, blaspheming the Holy Spirit means a person has rebelled against God for a long time. And, as a result, he now totally rejects Jesus’ saving work through the Holy Spirit’s power.

B. Blaspheming God’s Holy Spirit is a **set** attitude. Blaspheming God’s Holy Spirit is a **once-for-all** attitude. And, blaspheming God’s Holy Spirit is an **irreversible** attitude.

1. What’s more, blaspheming God’s Holy Spirit results from a person loving the darkness of Satan’s lies **instead of** the light of God’s Truth.

2. Now, there’s an odd reality about people like this: They love those whom they should reject, and they reject those whom they should love.

C. What’s more, people who blaspheme God’s Holy Spirit commit an eternal sin, b/c they’re eternally unrepentant. IOW, they’re damned, b/c they prefer it that way.

1. And, this morbid, macabre, and malignant thought of God damning them doesn’t faze them one little bit. **And, here’s why**—Separation from God seems **normal** to them.

D. Now, Jesus hasn’t said that the Legal Beagles are blaspheming God’s Holy Spirit yet. But, their toes **are** hanging over the cliff, b/c they call Jesus’ work Satan’s work.

1. IOW, Jesus is giving these arrogant, foolish, envious men time to repent. But, He's also making it crystal clear that even God's patience has **limits**.

**E. ILL:** During a crusade, a **Heckler** stood up at the back of the **Crowd** and shouted: **"God, if You exist, strike me dead w/ a bolt of lightning right now!"** The **Audience** sat in stunned silence for a few minutes. And, after nothing happened, the Heckler gloated, **"See? God doesn't exist! I just proved it."** And, the **Evangelist** answered, **"No, my friend. You've just proved is that God is very patient!"**

**F. APPL:** God's patience has a limit. So, He doesn't immediately consume blasphemers in His wrath. Instead, He **waits** for them to repent.

God **expects** a Blasphemer's repentance, b/c God has the strongest claim on our lives.

(TRN) In (31-35), Jesus clarifies Who has the **strongest** claim on Him.

Mark 3:31-35 (NASB95) <sup>31</sup> *Then His mother and His brothers arrived, and standing outside, they sent [word] to Him and called Him.* <sup>32</sup> *A crowd was sitting around Him, and they said to Him, "Behold, Your mother and Your brothers are outside looking for You."* <sup>33</sup> *Answering them, He said, "Who are My mother and My brothers?"* <sup>34</sup> *Looking about at those who were sitting around Him, He said, "Behold My mother and My brothers!"* <sup>35</sup> *For whoever does the will of God, he is My brother and sister and mother."*

**(31-32)** Mark **again** takes up the story of Jesus' Family coming to arrest Him. Only this time, they're standing outside of **Peter's** house trying to contact Jesus.

A. The **Crowd** is packed around the house like sardines, so the Family must send a messenger to Jesus and ask for a private meeting. They want to arrest him quietly.

B. IOW, Jesus' Family wants to put their claim on Him into effect, but Jesus isn't about to go along w/ their program. God has a higher claim on Him.

**(33-35)** Jesus' Followers tell Him that His Mom and brothers are looking for Him. Then, Jesus asks His Followers this **strange** question, **"Who are my Mother and Brothers?"**

A. So, Jesus scans the room, looking into everyone's puzzled face. Then, He points to each person and says, **"Look at each other, you are My Mom and My brothers, b/c whoever does God's will is My brother, My sister, and My Mom!"**

B. And, His words knock everybody for a loop, b/c Jesus clearly states that His new **spiritual** Family has a stronger claim on Him than His **biological** Family.

1. IOW, when Jesus' spiritual Family trust in Him, they obey God's will. And as a result, they're **closer** to Him than His kin who don't trust in Him.

2. But, this really isn't so strange when you see that God has the highest claim on Jesus' life. So, anyone who thinks the same way has the most in common w/ Jesus.

3. But just the same, this is **unheard of!** This is **unthinkable!** This is against all **Tradition!** Blood is **thicker** than water. So, Men will **lie** for their families. Men will **kill** for their families. And, Men will even **defy** God for their families.

4. And as such, Mark plainly illustrates the differences b/t **Insiders** and **Outsiders:** Insiders trust in Jesus, so they're closer to Him than His own kin. While Outsiders don't trust in Jesus, so they're as far away from Him as His kin are now.

C. And, many who follow Jesus will see that this new intimacy and distance will be true of them, too. Christians will be their new Family, b/c their doubting kin will reject them.

1. In fact, Jesus predicts that some of their kin will reject them so extremely that their kin will murder them (Mt 10:35-36).

D. But, these Truths can also give us powerful hope as well as sobering advice. They can give us powerful hope, b/c anyone who believes in Jesus can become an Insider.

1. And, they can give us sobering advice, b/c anyone who takes Jesus for granted can never be anything more than an Outsider to Jesus.

**E. ILL:** *Saving Private Ryan* is the **1998** movie blockbuster about the **Normandy Invasion of WWII**. It's the graphic and bloody story of a squad of **US Army Rangers**, under the leadership of **Capt. John Miller**, who search for **PFC James Francis Ryan of 101<sup>st</sup> Airborne**, b/c Ryan is the last-surviving brother of **4** servicemen killed in action.

At the end of their deadly search, Miller's squad finally find Private Ryan in a **French** town called **Ramelle**. When Ryan hears about the squad's reason for finding him, the news about his **4** brothers deeply saddens him, but he **refuses** to leave.

And, Ryan says to Miller, "Tell my **Mother** that I intend to **stay** w/ the **only brothers** I have left<sup>ii</sup>."

**F. APPL:** Jesus states that God and His new **spiritual** Family have a stronger claim on Him than His **biological** Family. And, so can we when we **trust and obey** like Him.

We can be **Insiders**, b/c God has the strongest claim on our lives.

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<sup>i</sup> Student Leadership Journal, Winter 1996, 10.

<sup>ii</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Saving\\_Private\\_Ryan](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Saving_Private_Ryan)

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