

Several weeks ago I was having dinner with my wife and son at Chick Fil a. They were across from me in the booth. Behind us was a mom and little girl around 3 or 4 yrs. old. At some point the little girl began looking over my shoulder at my wife. She said, “Hi, what’s your name?” Priscilla said, “my name is Mrs. Carr”

Then the little girl looked at me from the side and said, “**Is this your dad?**” Ouch, but that was her perception and in all honesty, I did marry a younger woman. That said, I’d like to think her perception was off just a little bit.

Like mine was in my mid-20’s when I attended a national prayer breakfast in Washington D.C.. Elizabeth Dole gave the main address from the book of Esther. Afterwards, I recognized her husband, Senator Bob Dole coming toward me in the hallway. I said, “hello, Senator Dole, that was a good message from your wife” and put out my right hand to shake his. But he grabbed my hand with his left hand and said, “thanks.”

I thought to myself, that’s weird, he didn’t really shake my hand. **At the time my perception was that he kind of dismissed me-**

But perceptions can be wrong – I was young and just learning about politics – I didn’t know that Bob Dole had virtually lost the use of his right arm in WW2. So there was a man with 2 purple-heart awards and a bronze star trying to shake my hand as best he could and I took it **negatively**. My perception was off! And that’s precisely what we see in today’s passage in Mark 3.

The perception of Jesus by his family and the Jewish leadership was way off..... Today’s message has a simple outline with 3 simple words: **Crazy, Collusion, Christ**

Let's start with **Crazy** in **vv. 20 & 21**. Jesus' family thought he was crazy at this moment in time...**[Let me review those verses]**

[Read]

So His family thinks He's crazy or to use the modern vernacular
- cre, cre/ nuts/ losing it

And why were they thinking that? Well, surely they had heard of His spectacular healings & exorcisms. But as we noted at the beginning of ch. 2 and into ch. 3 – conflict and opposition are growing. The religious establishment is taking notice of Him, confronting Him and even accusing Him.

In addition, He is drawing great crowds, potentially crushing crowds **[vv. 7-10]**, which is drawing even more attention to Jesus

In **v. 20**, the crush of the crowd forms once again at his home.

More than likely, this is the home of Peter & Andrew in

Caesarea.

Regardless of the location, the crowd was so large and so intrusive that Jesus [and his disciples] couldn't eat in peace. And so Jesus' family members were concerned about the *crush of the crowds* and the *criticism of the powers that be*.

And this made them concerned about one more thing – Jesus' mental state. **“Don't you see that you're stirring up trouble?”**

“Don't you hear the accusations coming your way?” **“Don't you realize the danger you're in?”** We don't think you do - so we're going to step in and take you home.

John-Mark uses the word **“seize”** here – the same word used to describe the arrest of John the Baptist [and later the arrest of Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane]. So they were willing to tie him up and bring him home if need be because they didn't think he was thinking straight. They thought he needed a straightjacket!

It's stunning! Jesus' own family had a monumental misunderstanding, a profound misperception of who Jesus was and what He came to do. Unknowingly [Unbelievably], they wanted to take him off the mission field & thwart God's plan of salvation.

So one of the big questions coming out of today's passage is this question of Jesus' identity. **Who is He?** His own family thinks He's crazy. Others think He's a pretender, a false messiah. I have an uncle who thinks of him as a good man.... but nothing more.

C.S. Lewis takes on that idea in Mere Christianity, but there are a few men who predate his Liar, Lunatic or Lord formula.

A Scottish preacher named **John Duncan** said this around 1860 "Christ either deceived mankind by conscious fraud [a Liar], or He was Himself deluded and self-deceived [a Lunatic], or He was Divine [Lord]. There is no getting out of this trilemma. It is inexorable."

In 1936 **Watchman Nee** wrote this in his book, Normal Christian Faith *First, if he claims to be God and yet in fact is not, he has to be a madman or a lunatic. Second, if he is neither God nor a lunatic, he has to be a liar, deceiving others by his lie. Third, if he is neither of these, he must be God.*

You can only choose one of the three possibilities.

For Jesus' family, they think Him a Lunatic and intend to seize Him. **Mark brackets this w/ v. 31ff - here they come to get Him [read]**

Do you see how Jesus turns things around?

He uses the ill-advised agenda and unbelief of His family as an opportunity to talk about a spiritual family. His spiritual family is composed of those who sit around Him, who do God's will, believe in Him > His message, His miracles and follow Him.

[Notice his family is outside the house, his "spiritual family" is inside]

Now I believe Mary & His brothers eventually come to their

senses about who Jesus is. But it begs the question – **who do you think Jesus is?** Liar? Lunatic? Religious Myth? or Lord? And here's the thing, your family background & affiliations don't automatically mean that you are a follower of Christ. My son James has told me that he became a Christian 4 months ago on November 3rd. That's when Christ truly became personal to him, saved him from his sins and became Lord of his life thru confession, repentance and faith. No, he didn't think Jesus to be a Liar or a Lunatic, but neither did he know Him as Lord. James said "*He was convenient to mention depending on the situation.*" **A situational asset, but not Lord!**

In Mark 3, Jesus' family thinks He's **crazy**, but..... the scribes from Jerusalem think He's in **collusion** w/ Satan. Mark's structure is fascinating. He builds a **sandwich** in ch. 3. -Jesus' family are the two pieces of bread [**vv. 20-21 & vv. 31-35**] -But there's some important ingredients inside.... [**vv. 22-30**]

v. 22 opens the scene [**read v. 22**]

Why did they come down from the heights of Jerusalem to Galilee? They heard of Jesus' healings, the swelling crowds, the provocative words, and the exorcisms. They couldn't deny what was happening, but they could put forth a theory....

He's possessed by Beelzebul, by the prince of demons.
That's His source of power. He's a liar, a deceiver,
an instrument of Satan.

Beelzebul means "*master of the house*" and may picture the ancient pagan god Baal as the prince/the master of demons.
in his house of horrors.

Jesus' response reminds me of a phrase coined by the great Martin Lloyd-Jones who gave a lecture series on preaching back in 1969. In it He referred to preaching as "***logic on fire.***"

Well, Jesus lights up these scribes w/ logic on fire in this series of parables starting at v. 23. [read vv. 23-26]

I can imagine Jesus thinking, “seriously, that’s all you got?”
I’m possessed? I’m in collusion with Satan? I’m a demonic deceiver? It doesn’t make sense... and so w/ piercing logic He puts them in their place. Satan doesn’t fight against Satan. He divides & conquers, but He doesn’t divide against himself.

And then Jesus tells them what’s really going on here [v. 27] **Read** Jesus is mightier than Satan. He has invaded his stronghold [his house] and He is plundering it. *It started back in ch.1 when Jesus was driven into the wilderness by the Holy Spirit to be tested by Satan [and Jesus passes the test]. He overcomes Satan and we see this in ch. 1 when Jesus comes into the synagogue at Capernaum to teach [look back at Mk. 1:21-27] [read]*

Who’s greater – Satan & his demons or Jesus? Who has final authority? It’s **Christ, the Son of God**. He has bound the strong-man. The king is present. His kingdom is breaking in and can’t be stopped. Jesus even confers authority on his disciples to cast out demons in ch. 3, v. 15.

So Jesus is not in cahoots with Satan. He’s not secretly empowered by an unclean spirit. No, He is filled with the Holy Spirit. He’s plundering unclean spirits/reclaiming souls/setting captives free
One of the ironies is that the demons knew who Jesus was, but the scribes did not. **Mk. 3:11 “And whenever the unclean spirits saw him [Jesus] they fell down before him and cried out, “You are the Son of God”**

It was also ironic that Jesus’ family wanted to bind Him when He came to bind Satan and set people free thru the loving power of the Holy Spirit & the forgiveness of sins.

That said, Jesus now warns these scribes that they are skating on thin ice. Their souls are in peril. [vv. 28-30] [Read]

This is a difficult passage. What is the **blaspheme** of the Holy Spirit? In this context it is the willful, purposeful slandering of *God the Holy Spirit* by saying that His work in Christ is demonic.

It is calling light>darkness, good>evil, the Son>Satan when that is plainly not the case. Jesus was teaching & healing & cleansing & setting people free of unclean spirits in the power of the Holy Spirit! That's a good thing, not an evil thing.

It would be like a thief coming to know Christ [baptized, cleansed & transformed by the Holy Spirit] then turning himself in, returning everything he's stolen and someone saying, "that's Satanic."

That could be the sign of a hardened, unbelieving heart that is never going to repent. And if these scribes continued in this blasphemous narrative of Jesus being possessed they would never be forgiven [v. 29]

Were their fates sealed? Their hearts encased in the granite of unbelief? Possibly so, and yet Jesus issues them a warning,

a scary warning

But is this applicable to just these scribes? Don't people today need to be warned about rejecting the work of the Holy Spirit thru Jesus Christ? Don't people today, even religious people like these Jewish scribes, need to be warned about hardened, unbelieving hearts? I think so...and it comes down to who you

think Jesus is - A liar? A lunatic? A moralistic teacher? A religious ideal? A one hour a week consideration? A conduit of narrow-mindedness? Don't know, Don't Care, Doesn't matter?

Or is He Lord & Savior?

That said, today's passage stirs up concerns about unforgivable

sins. In Catholic theology suicide can disqualify you from a Christian burial. It's considered a gravely mortal sin.

But many people are haunted by past sins or ongoing sins – an abortion, a divorce, an addiction to alcohol or pornography, adultery, using the Lord's name in vain and the list goes on.... dark, embarrassing things..... sometimes even murder.

“Will God forgive me?.... I've committed some serious wrongs.”

And this is where **v. 28** is important **[read]**

That's a hopeful verse and that's why Jesus came – He came to make the forgiveness of all sins/my sins/your sins possible thru Him living a perfect life, making a perfect sacrifice on the cross and rising on the 3rd day [victorious over sin & death].

And He offers that as a gift to whoever will believe!

Next weekend the movie I Can Only Imagine comes out. The son in that story described his dad as a monster/an abusive father. But thru the transforming power of the Holy Spirit in Jesus Christ, that dad was forgiven and changed.

Same is true in the prison where **Billy Graham's casket** was made. Angola, LA is the site of a large maximum security prison and yet there are 29 Christian congregations in the prison and a bible school. Most of the prisoners are serving life sentences without the possibility of parole, but Jesus Christ, the Son of God is alive in the hearts of many of them thru the Holy Spirit - showing that all sins can be forgiven **[including murder]**. God's grace is greater than your deepest, darkest sin so look to Him in faith, confess your sin, acknowledge Christ as your sin-bearer and risen king. If you're a Christian, ask for His forgiveness. If you're not, ask for His forgiveness, trust His payment, come into His family. **Receive Jesus Christ today!**