

Lenten Devotional March 15, 2022

Scripture

Mark 3:19b-35

19b Then he went home; 20 and the crowd came together again, so that they could not even eat. 21 When his family heard it, they went out to restrain him, for people were saying, "He has gone out of his mind." 22 And the scribes who came down from Jerusalem said, "He has Beelzebul, and by the ruler of the demons he casts out demons." 23 And he called them to him, and spoke to them in parables, "How can Satan cast out Satan? 24 If a kingdom is divided against itself, that kingdom cannot stand. 25 And if a house is divided against itself, that house will not be able to stand. 26 And if Satan has risen up against himself and is divided, he cannot stand, but his end has come. 27 But no one can enter a strong man's house and plunder his property without first tying up the strong man; then indeed the house can be plundered.

28 "Truly I tell you, people will be forgiven for their sins and whatever blasphemies they utter; 29 but whoever blasphemes against the Holy Spirit can never have forgiveness, but is guilty of an eternal sin" – 30 for they had said, "He has an unclean spirit."

31 Then his mother and his brothers came; and standing outside, they sent to him and called him. 32 A crowd was sitting around him; and they said to him, "Your mother and your brothers and sisters are outside, asking for you." 33 And he replied, "Who are my mother and my brothers?" 34 And looking at those who sat around him, he said, "Here are my mother and my brothers! 35 Whoever does the will of God is my brother and sister and mother."

Devotional

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Mark's Gospel shows us Jesus in a whirlwind of activity—healing, teaching, calling disciples and collecting crowds—and now, in today's passage, turning up at home again. His family doesn't know what to do with him. *Is he having a mental break, needing to be controlled? How can we get him to settle down and be more "normal"?*

The Jerusalem establishment also doesn't know what to do with him. *Is he getting his power from Beelzebul, the evil one? What else would explain the healings and the charisma? How else to understand someone who calls into question the structures of faith and of family?*

If we're honest, we don't always know what to do with Jesus either. How are we to follow a Lord who pushes back on the definitions of correctness, someone who argues with and calls out the religious leaders, someone who violates deeply-held norms about the role of the family, and even redefines what family is?

The Lenten fast calls us to self-reflection, to repentance. As we walk these 40 days, what are we being called to give up? What are the assumptions of value, of people or actions, we need to ask questions about? And what are the new directions we are being called to go? What are we being called to say yes to?

Who belongs to our family?

Prayer

Lord Jesus, open our eyes this day to see where you are leading us. Break down our easy assumptions about worth and about structures, to see how God's reign, that Kingdom you spoke of, turns us in new directions. Make us channels for your healing and hope in all the corners of our lives and the world. Amen.