**Mark 3:20-35**

Then he went home, and the crowd gathered again, so that they could not even eat. **21**  And when his family heard it, they went out to seize him, for they were saying, “He is out of his mind.” **22** And the scribes who came down from Jerusalem were saying, “He is possessed by Beelzebul,” and “by the prince of demons he casts out the demons.” **23**  And he called them to him and said 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 is coming to an end. **27** But no one can enter a strong man’s house and plunder his goods, unless he first binds the strong man. Then indeed he may plunder his house. **28**  “Truly, I say to you, all sins will be forgiven the children of man, and whatever blasphemies they utter, **29** but whoever blasphemes against the Holy Spirit never has forgiveness, but is guilty of an eternal sin”— **30** for they were saying, “He has an unclean spirit.” **31**  And his mother and his brothers came, and standing outside they sent to him and called him. **32** And a crowd was sitting around him, and they said to him, “Your mother and your brothers are outside, seeking you.” **33** And he answered them, “Who are my mother and my brothers?” **34** And looking about at those who sat around him, he said, “Here are my mother and my brothers! **35**  For whoever does the will of God, he is my brother and sister and mother.”

**“Freed From Satan”**

 Grace, mercy and peace be unto you from God our Father and our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, Amen. With the conclusion of Holy Trinity Sunday last week, we now settle into the long season of Pentecost. Yet, this first “ordinary” Sunday of the church is anything but settling. We face Jesus head-to-head with His own family, the Jewish scribes, and at last calling out, “Satan.” St. Mark reveals how the 4th commandment, honoring family and other authorities, can easily get in the way of the 1st commandment. God is not against earthly relationships that He designed for our good. Yet, the temptation is always for us to worship these above God. To make the present life of more value than the eternal gift God has won for all that is alone in Christ.

 As we continue to consider the strife and fear caused by terrorism. The divide is a much wider gap than most fully appreciate in the western world. We still see and live within the remnants of a cultural Christianity that others never had. For instance, a person notes about the Lutheran church in Liberia, “It is very difficult for muslims to convert to Christianity. When a muslim converts away from Islam, he is considered dead to the family. To convert to Christianity means to lose your family.”[[1]](#footnote-1) This is a sad and lonely fact, but not when God fights for us by the Gospel. The stronger Christ bound Satan to deliver us back to the kingdom and family of God.

 **Family intentions are never as “pure” as planned.**

* Jesus’ family was only looking out for Him.
* They saw His ministry as irresponsible to family. They wanted to “seize Him” before He went too far. They were not afraid to say, “He is out of His mind.” They did not realize their intentions were standing in the way of God.
* Family looks out for one another.
* Sin is not restricted to an individual. It infects family. Consider how sexual abuse, domestic violence and child abuse are more among families than a stranger! God put enmity or hatred between Satan and the Woman’s offspring. Do we realize the intentions of God? (Parents/children, cohabitation, addictions, grief, fighting)

 **Kingdoms of man buy into the lie that twists the truth**.

* A private affair turned into a public conflict!
* Scribes came down from Jerusalem representing Israel as a family of families. They added fuel to the fire against Jesus claiming Him demon-possessed. His work that appeared good in casting out demons they actually called, “evil.”
* Plenty in public positions work against Christ and His Word. The church contends against its own false spirits at war with the truth. Likewise, the political sphere even attacks the church with the goal to keep religion private and away from the public square.

 **What is the cause for such disruption in the family and kingdoms of the world?**

* Someone else wants to make a home in this world.
* Jesus changed the conversation from demon-possession to Satan. He is the strong man that stands over sinful humanity. As consistent as kingdoms and families are, so Satan is not a chaotic mess. His power even offered Jesus all the kingdoms of the world in their glory! (Adam/Eve, Noah, Abraham, Dynasty of David)

 **Yet, Jesus’ parable has the whole goal to reveal how this strong man Satan is to be overpowered**!!!

* Christ the stronger Savior is to bind Satan.
* This is what God promised Adam and Eve telling Satan, “He will bruise your head and you will bruise His heel.” Binding Satan meant Christ would bind Himself to the cross for all. Satan in his strength used the families and kingdoms of the world to crucify Christ. God finally silenced this strong man, by the conquering sacrifice of His Son.

 **Christ’s kingdom possesses the truth of forgiveness.**

* The Gospel goes out into the kingdoms of this world.
* Jesus said, “Truly, I say to you, all sins will be forgiven the children of man, and whatever blasphemies they utter…” The Scribes of Israel were to see how broad the love of God is for sinners. Only rejection of Christ bore an eternal weight of sin against the Spirit.
* Rather than public leaders accommodating for sin, Jesus brings freedom by His answer of forgiveness. Guilt is gone for God’s Son holds out His defeat of the Devil, it is even to eat and drink! If you have concern over the unforgiveable sin, take comfort because you would not be concerned about it if you did.

 **Christ’s family is alive with the intention to listen to Him.**

* By baptism, a new relationship with God and others outlasts above all.
* In response to His family looking in Him, Jesus made it a teaching moment about what truly lasts. He said, “Here are my mother and my brothers! For whoever does the will of God, he is my brother and sister and mother.” Of course, faith in Christ is God’s will for all in His Son. It does not deny the Law, but can only live by the saving hope any has in Christ.
* God does not belittle human relationship we have at the present. Christ on the cross even cared for His own mother by handing her over to John. However, Jesus also showed by baptism His true family goes beyond familial relations. The Church belongs to an eternal community stretching throughout time and into heaven. This bond is unbroken for it rests in the blood of Jesus Christ. It is a family alive by faith with love for those where there is a loss of family.

 The stronger Christ bound Satan to deliver us back to the kingdom and family of God. By the cross, we are safe and secure against all sin, death, and the Devil. This brings conflict, but our celebration is always in Christ. His forgiveness stands as truth, His sacrifice is sufficient, and His love endures. Amen. Now may the peace of Christ that passes all understanding be with your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus to life everlasting. Amen.

1. http://wmltblog.org/2012/01/page/3/ [↑](#footnote-ref-1)