

The in-crowd

Mark 3.20-35

Where Jesus's family and friends are concerned by his behaviour and think he is possessed by a demon. He teaches them about forgiveness but warns them not to sin against the Holy Spirit. Jesus announces that those who obey God are part of his family.

Now read Mark 3.20-35 see p.2 for text.

A note on the passage

Jesus is not behaving in a way that is socially and culturally acceptable. He is different, and so he is judged not only by those he opposes but also by his family and friends. Are there ways in which we expect people to behave? How do we react when people do things in a different way?



Ask yourself: How does this image make you feel?



Look at the www.mind.org.uk website for the mental health charity, Mind. The crowd called Jesus 'possessed', and, in contemporary terms, we might say that they were pronouncing that Jesus had mental health problems, and judging him accordingly.

How would that judgement have made him feel? How does that relate to how people today with mental health problems feel? Find out more about the work of Mind. Seek help for yourself if you are struggling. You may also be able to think of a way you can help support this charity.

Make a List

Think of a member of your family and write two lists: one of their similarities with you and one of how they are different. Cover a whole range of things, e.g. appearance, preferences, attitudes, skills/hobbies.

First look at the similarities; how do these similarities make you feel? Now look at the differences, how do you feel about the differences between you? Reflect on any differences that frustrate you. Thank God that we are all unique and pray for those who are treated badly because they are different.



LISTEN

Play the track 'All by Myself', Eric Carmen on *Eric Carmen*. As you listen, think about those who are excluded, isolated or lonely and bring them to God in prayer.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iN9CjAfo5n0>



EVENING REFLECTION

Each evening this week, ask yourself:
Have I done the will of God today?

Has all that I have done been loving?

Think about the people you have seen and met, and how you have reacted to those who are different or who have different opinions.

Ask yourself:
Have I treated people differently because of a difference I see in them?

How have I been treated by others?

Ask God to forgive you for times when you have done wrong, and to help you in the days to come.



Tell a member of your family that you love them, and show care for them this week.

Tell someone who is not a member of your family that you love them, and show care for them this week.

Choose a version of the passage to read. The first is the ROOTS version for children, the second is the NRSV text which may be suitable for older children, young people and adults.

After choosing his twelve apostles, Jesus returned home. He didn't even have time to eat before a crowd gathered to see him. Jesus' family were worried about him, because people were saying he was crazy, and they tried to stop him. The scribes who came from Jerusalem said, 'He has Satan's power and he's using it to cast out evil spirits.'

But Jesus told them a parable. 'How can Satan get rid of Satan? If the people in a kingdom fight against each other, they will destroy their own kingdom. If members of the same family fight against each other, they will destroy their own family. And if Satan fights against Satan, he will destroy himself.'

Jesus said, 'Let me tell you another story. No one can enter the house of a strong man, and steal all his possessions, without tying him up first. Once he is tied up, then the house can be robbed! Listen carefully. There is nothing that you can do or say that can't be forgiven. But if you speak against God's Holy Spirit, you will never be forgiven.'



Then Jesus' mother and brothers arrived and sent a message for him to come. The crowd sitting with Jesus said, 'Your mother, brothers and sisters are waiting outside for you.' Jesus asked, 'Who are my mother and brothers?' He looked around at each person there and said, 'Here they are. Each one of you who lives according to the will of God is my brother and sister and mother.'

Mark 3.20-35

Did you know?

- The apostles were the eleven disciples (plus Matthias) sent out to share the gospel.
- Scribes were writers who copied the Scriptures and helped people understand them.
- Satan is the devil, a personification of evil.

Mark 3.20-35 (NRSV)

And the crowd came together again, so that they could not even eat. When his family heard it, they went out to restrain him, for people were saying, "He has gone out of his mind." And the scribes who came down from Jerusalem said, "He has Beelzebul, and by the ruler of the demons he casts out demons." And he called them to him, and spoke to them in parables, "How can Satan cast out Satan? If a kingdom is divided against itself, that kingdom cannot stand. And if a house is divided against itself, that house will not be able to stand. And if Satan has risen up against himself and is divided, he cannot stand, but his end has come. 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.

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

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