

Sunday 10th June
Genesis 3:8-15 2 Cor 4:13 - 5:1 Mark 3:20-35

Intro:

Over next few weeks our focus is going to be on Gospel reading

Suggested last week you read through or listen to whole Marks Gospel

Fast paced, action packed and helps fill in some of the gaps because the Sunday readings don't include the whole of each chapter

The crowds have once again gathered around Jesus

- Why? We know crowds gather for different reasons... Trooping the Colour yesterday, accidents..
- These people had seen / heard about
 - Healings- 1:32 Peter's Mother in law 1:42 man with leprosy 2:12 paralysed man
3:5 last weeks man with withered hand
 - Teaching with authority 1:22 in the synagogue
 - Casting our demon 1:25
 - Forgiving sins 2:5 he forgave the sins of the paralysed man
- So many people that Jesus and his disciples could not stop for something to eat

His family set out to see him too

- Why? because they had heard people saying he had gone mad
- They wanted to restrain him Restrain = word for taking charge / arresting / tie up
- Jesus was being labelled MAD by some

The Scribes / religious scholars came down especially from Jerusalem

- Why? They said he was of Beelzebul = Name of a Philistine idol a name for satan / evil
- They could not deny that Jesus and cast out demons from the man so accused him of doing it by the power of satan

Calling or labelling the work of God as the work of the devil was because they were blinded to the truth, or did not want to acknowledge the truth. They were refusing to see things through Jesus perspective.

Calling Jesus MAD and BAD were both labels / names that could be used to publicly try and dis-empower Him

So how did Jesus respond to the situation?

In the way that, when we read the gospels, we so often see.

He responded with a question and then some stories / parables to teach those listening

He was accused of being possessed by Beelzebub and casting out / exorcising satan s

So he asks 'How can satan case out satan?'

Then he gives a few parables

a divided kingdom cannot stand

We only have to look at our world and we know this to be true
Rwanda - close to my heart Currently working on re-building unit BUT key
perpetrators may soon be released early from prison
a divided house cannot stand
Yesterdays wedding Mother of groom sat on her own
Not a judgement at all. I don't know circumstances but division
a divided satan cannot stand
Jesus says satan rising against himself he cannot stand and his end has come

United we stand: divided we fall!

Then vs 27

to enter a strong mans house and plunder it you must first tie him up
the word 'plunder' here is a forceful word, often used in time of war or civil disaster

What is Jesus saying through this illustration?

That there is the power of evil at work in the world and to overcome it evil must be bound up

And Jesus has come to do that

Mark 1:7 Mark quotes John the baptist as saying 'After me will come one more powerful than I'

And then Jesus gives some straight teaching.

He says 'Truly I tell you, people will be forgiven for the sins and whatever blasphemies they utter...'

All people can be forgiven whatever their sins

Jesus has already given his mandate, his mission statement back in Mark chapter 1...vs 14+15

Jesus says 'The time has come, The Kingdom of God is near. Repent and believe the good news.'

And he is telling them clearly

True then and true now

We can all receive total forgiveness for whatever we have done. But we do need to repent and believe

But His direct teaching also says

'whoever blasphemes against the Holy Spirit can never have forgiveness, but is guilty of eternal sin'

What does this verse mean? It has been used unhelpfully at different times

The Message helps here 3:28-30

"Listen to this carefully. I'm warning you. There's nothing done or said that can't be forgiven. But if you persist in your slanders against God's Holy Spirit, you are repudiating the very One who forgives, sawing off the branch on which you're sitting, severing by your own perversity all connection with the One who forgives." He gave this warning because they were accusing him of being in league with Evil.

Then Jesus' mother and brothers arrive. standing outside the house where Jesus is with the crowds

When the crowds tell him his family are here Jesus asks a question which was shocking to the core for those listening

Who are my brothers and my mother?

A pillar of the Jewish faith is their loyalty to family

Jesus slices through that (like his teaching on Sabbath last week) and says that 'Whoever does the will of God is my brother and sister and mother'

I bet you could have cut the atmosphere with a knife

He is not denying His family, His mother and brothers

Whilst on the cross he ensures that ongoing care for his mother

But he is saying that all who follow His teaching, who do the will of God, are called in to his family, into his Kingdom

Jesus came to herald in a new Kingdom

His purpose was to confront and overcome the power of evil

Jesus warns that 'The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. '

But He 'came that they may have life, and have it abundantly.' John 10:10

His message was to all - forgiveness is available to all

Conclusion

The destructive forces of evil are real

They need to be recognised and confronted

Jesus, the Son of God, came to earth to do this

If we give Him labels such as 'mad' or 'bad' or even just 'an interesting historical figure' then we neutralise who He actually is

We need Gospel of Jesus to expose the sin on our lives and in our world so that it can be 'tied up and plundered'

And then we can live in freedom and unity, ALL who do the will of God being forgiven for their sins and included in God's family as mother, brother and sisters.