

## Written Copy: Mark 3:31-35 "Who Is Jesus' Family?"

Proper 5: 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday @ Pentecost

Sunday, June 9<sup>th</sup>, 2024

### Text: Mark 3:31-35

<sup>31</sup> And his mother and his brothers came, and standing outside they sent to him and called him. <sup>32</sup> And a crowd was sitting around him, and they said to him, "Your mother and your brothers are outside, seeking you." <sup>33</sup> And he answered them, "Who are my mother and my brothers?" <sup>34</sup> And looking about at those who sat around him, he said, "Here are my mother and my brothers!" <sup>35</sup> For whoever does the will of God, he is my brother and sister and mother."

### The text's intent

Jesus family hears about the miraculous healing, His authoritative teaching, His opposing the Pharisees, and His calling disciples like a Rabbi, and believe He has gone crazy. The scribes have a different assessment, that He does all these things under the power and authority of Satan. Jesus points out that if that were true, Satan would be casting out his own workers from people and would operating as a divided kingdom, which could not stand. But since he is very much active and at work, this can't be the case. What is happening is that Jesus is the stronger man who breaks into the where the demons are dwelling and casts them out because He is binding Satan, neutralizing his power over people by paying the price of redemption to free them from Satan's grasp. When his family comes to the house where He is teaching, they take their stand outside and send a messenger to call Him to come out. But to Jesus, those who assume the intimate position of family are those who are listening to His words and thereby obeying the will of the Father.

### Focus Statement:

Just as God came into the Garden and called his fallen children back through repentance, He sent His only Son to open the way for our repentance. Through His life, suffering and death, and resurrection Jesus pays the price to redeem us out of the devil's grasp and place us back under His reign and rule as His forgiven children, back into His family. Through faith in Him all sins are forgiven and Satan's power over us is destroyed. Christ has bound Satan who is under His control and can only do what He allows Him to do, which always works to further His reign and rule, and bring people to faith now and to His eternal rule to come.

### Function Statement:

#### Why it's important to know:

We are born into Adam and Eve's sinful state, outside of God's reign and rule, choosing to be our own lord and obeying our own will, instead of living as His children. After baptism we choose to sin by opposing Christ's reign and rule, making and following our own agenda of what is right and wrong according to our sinful heart. Those who ignore and deny the Spirit's work of repentance commit the unforgivable sin and will perish eternally.

#### What the hearer should do as a result:

Live obediently as His redeemed child doing the will of the Father by partaking of the means of grace in the company of His redeemed family so that we live with Him now and forever in His eternal reign and rule, the home for all God's saved and redeemed family.

### Subject Sentence: Jesus' Call to Repentant Faith Keeps us as His Family

## **Introduction: Membership In Human Families**

Who is your family? Who is your mother? Your father? Your sister and brothers? Family is God's gracious gift as the building block of society. It is His means to bring up children to know and love Him as Creator and Redeemer and form them to be good obedient citizens. That's the ideal. But in a broken fallen world that ideal is not always the reality lived out.

There was a mother and father who raised their kids in a Christian home, sending them to Lutheran School so that knowledge and faith in Jesus Christ might be reinforced there as well as at home. However, their son had an independent spirit. He fell in with the wrong crowd and began to rebel against the values mom and dad had taught him and fell away from faith in Jesus Christ. Mom and Dad both worked. And he wasn't overtly rebellious to them. He would do what they asked for the most part. He graduated from Lutheran High School. But after graduating filled his free time that summer doing things he shouldn't be doing. He had a friend from High School who he used to go and spend the night and weekends with. Together they would drink and get high. Unknown to his parents he had a couple run-ins with the law but got off with a warning. But then out with his friend one day, while high, he decided to shoplift an I-phone case from a store at the mall. He was caught, and the store called the police. He was arrested and the store pressed charges. So it was that mom and dad found themselves sitting in a courtroom, and watched their son be sentenced to three months in prison at the County Jail.

It was heartbreaking. They felt anger at the judge, feeling that he was being too harsh on a young man who they knew was more of a troubled kid than a criminal. But the judge felt that tough love was needed. While they could bring and drop off certain things to him, and talk to him on the phone, they couldn't go see him for 4 months. It was the longest 4 months they ever lived through. It was heartbreaking to walk by his bedroom, and not see him there, not have him around the table for meals, not have him join them for family outings. It was as if he had been taken away and separated from the family. While they admitted he had broken the law and needed to learn a lesson, they never once considered kicking him out of the family. They still loved him as their precious son. But they were afraid what that time in jail might do to him, how it might serve to change him for the worse.

As children grow it's natural for them to eventually choose to leave their parents and venture off into a life of their own. While there are exceptions to the rule, such as when abuse is involved, or intense and constant fighting and arguing mark the relationship, most children leave knowing they always have a place to return to. Mom and dad make sure they know they are always welcomed back, especially if their first foray out into the world doesn't go as expected. Mom and dad's house is a place where they can regroup and try again.

## **Adam and Eve Leave God's Family and He Restores Them**

Sin and the dysfunction it causes mark all families to some extent since Adam and Eve. They were the originator of it. They chose to leave God's family when they chose to break the rules and violate the one and only command they had been given: do not eat from the one tree in the middle of the garden. Their life in the Garden was a peaceful one living at peace with one another, the rest of Creation, and with God. He created them to have a relationship with Him. He came and walked with them in the Garden, spending time with them.

But that all ended when they chose to leave their place as His obedient children. It changed when they chose to change the rules, when they chose to no longer live under God's gracious and loving reign and rule and instead live by their own rules. Things changed forever when they decided to break that one rule, eat from that one tree, and live according to their own sinful selfish desires. They fell from God's grace and into sin. They fell from God's gracious reign and rule and landed under the control of God's enemy, that serpent who is Satan, who could accuse them and claim them as living as God's enemy just as he was.

But the LORD couldn't bear to leave them lost under Satan's control. So, He came to them and called out to them. He asked, "Where are you?", not because He didn't know where they were in the Garden. Instead, He was asking them to realize where they were spiritually. He was working to get them to see that they were lost, separated from Him. He came to call them back into His family, back under His gracious reign and rule. And in order to do that He was moving them to repent of their sin.

Because of what sin had done to them, the LORD had to prompt them to confess by asking them, "Did you eat of that tree I told you not to eat from?" But instead of just saying, "Yes, we disobeyed! And we are sorry!", they did the same thing we sometimes do, they blamed someone else. Adam blamed the "woman whom You (LORD) gave me". Eve blamed "the serpent who deceived me." Sound familiar? Your kids, when they get in trouble blaming someone else for getting them angry or hitting them first, or even you for being unfair and too restrictive. And while we realize there must be discipline so they learn, we would never dream of kicking them out of the family. So it is with God. The wages of sin is death. Adam and Eve would no longer live on this earth forever. They would be sent away from the Garden, but not banished from God's presence. They would not be banished from His reign and rule, from His family. The LORD came to call them back.

The one who was punished was Satan. He was cursed. And in his curse is found the promise of complete redemption for mankind. The LORD had the plan of salvation that would forgive His disobedient children and welcome them back into His family, into His gracious reign and rule. This would be paid for by the work of Eve's descendent as His heel would be bruised by the serpent, but He in turn would bruise the serpent's head, a blow that would remove his claim to Adam and Eve and their offspring. And of course, that offspring is the One who was at work in our Gospel Lesson dealing blows to that serpent, Satan, by casting out his demons.

## **Jesus Work Restoring Us to God's Family**

Jesus work on earth was all about restoration. He taught them who God really is as the Holy, sinless, yet gracious Father. He taught them who they were as disobedient children who in their desire to rule their own lives had chosen to walk away from God's gracious reign and rule. He showed them the ways this was evident in their lives, how they sinned. Then He presented Himself as their Savior, their Redeemer, the One who was promised, who had come to bruise the serpent's head with the blow that would cause His eventual demise.

He showed Himself to be the One who had the power to invade Satan's reign and rule and save God's precious children from his grasp. He foreshadowed this by casting out demons from those who were afflicted with them. They had to leave because Jesus operated with the power and authority that belong to the Creator God who is far stronger than these created fallen angels and the devil.

These exorcisms foreshadowed and pointed toward the greatest saving act for God's children, the place where Satan would be allowed to bruise Jesus' heel, but He would bruise Satan's head and end his claim to all mankind because of sin. They foreshadowed Jesus' work of redemption and salvation that was His perfect life, His suffering and death on the cross, and His resurrection. In the suffering and death of this One descendent of Eve, Jesus paid the price to redeem all mankind from the devil's grasp. His body broken and blood shed paid the price of forgiveness for all mankind's sin and thereby removing Satan's claim that all humanity should join him in living apart from God's gracious reign and rule now, removed from His family as His precious children, and exist apart from Him forever in eternal hell. Because of Jesus suffering and death in the place of all men no one should ever have to live apart from God's family, but can be welcomed back into His household, His reign and rule, His Church.

And that call back into God's family happens in baptism. All are born with original sin, that propensity of the heart to be our own god, to make our own rules for what is right and wrong, while disobeying God's rule and will for us. Because of this we are born into Satan's domain, under his influence, doing his will by disobeying God. We cannot stand against him, nor can we save ourselves from his grasp, or the eternal future of suffering that he is destined for.

But in baptism the Stronger One, the Holy Spirit invades Satan's territory he has claimed, which is our sinful hearts. Working through the Gospel that details the victory Jesus Christ won over Satan in His life, death, and resurrection, the Spirit applies that work of redemption to you specifically. He installs Jesus as your Redeemer and Savior, and you hold Him as such by the faith He works in your heart. He makes that forgiveness Jesus won on the cross your forgiveness for all of your sins. With no sin to accuse you of Satan has no power to hold you or call you to be condemned to His eternal punishment. Jesus' life, death, and resurrection are the price paid to redeem you out of the devil's reign and rule and place you back under the gracious reign and rule of Christ our Lord. Because of Jesus salvation victory Satan is a like a bound and chained animal. He can still do damage, he can still tempt us, but he can only do what Christ allows him to do. And all that he does works for the playing out of God's will that the Gospel be proclaimed, and more people come to faith in Him, so that more might be redeemed by the work of Christ as witnessed by the Spirit in the Gospel.

## **Living As a Member of Jesus' Family**

Who are Jesus' family? Through Jesus earthly mother Mary, He had half-brothers and half-sisters. But He made it very clear that this blood relationship did not give them any special power, or pull, or advantage over Him. Who are Jesus family? Who are His brothers and sisters? In our Gospel Lesson Jesus pointed out that it was those who sat around Him in a circle doing the will of God, listening to Him and believing in His words. Who is Jesus' family today? You are! You who are here listening to His word preached read and sung. You who are confessing your faith in Him as your Redeemer and Savior. You who are taking His real body and blood through the bread and the wine into your body and your soul in the Lord's Supper. You who were called back into His family in your baptism and are kept in His family through the work of the Spirit moving you to repent of your sin and hold fast to the promised forgiveness you have in Christ.

We do continue to sin. We continue at times to choose to obey our sinful desires instead of God's word. But the Spirit, who is stronger, is at work showing you your sin and keeping you in God's family through the repentant faith by which you confess your sin and hold fast to the forgiveness you have in Christ.

But what about that unforgivable sin Jesus mentioned? What if we slip up and commit that? You who live in your repentant baptismal faith will never commit that sin. It is the sin of unbelief. It is denying the work of the Holy Spirit to show you your sin and present Jesus Christ as your Savior. It is the life-long denial of faith in Jesus Christ. If you don't believe you have any sin, then you don't need a Lord and Savior, and so there is no forgiveness. But the Holy Spirit is at work in you right now to prevent you from ever committing that sin. He is at work showing you your sin and showing you your Savior. And you work with Him every time you confess your sin and ask forgiveness of God through faith in Christ.

## **Conclusion**

That young man I told you about served his four-month sentence and was released from jail. His dad was there at midnight to pick him up. He walked out of there a changed man. He apologized and asked forgiveness of his parents for what he had put them through. And they forgave him and welcomed him back into their home and into their family. They loved him and treated him as the precious son he was in their hearts.

Our Lord did the same thing for Adam and Eve. In their disobedience they walked away from God's family, but He never gave up on them. He came to them and called them back. And He gave them the Gospel promise of the One who would come to redeem them and all their offspring. And that One is Jesus Christ. He came to defeat the devil's power and hold over you in your life through His life, death, and resurrection. And He sends the Spirit into your heart and life to cast out the work and influence of Satan. He is the stronger man who works to keep you as a precious child of the Heavenly Father, and the beloved brother and sister of Jesus Christ your Savior. Jesus' mother, half-sisters, and half-brothers may have thought Him crazy, because at that time they stood outside His reign and rule. But the Spirit was at work in them through the Gospel too. After the resurrection His mother and half-brother James were an important part of His Church, His family. His goal for you and me is that we leave this world in repentant faith that will place us in God's eternal home to come. Amen.