

8-9-25

## **Insanity, Blasphemy & Majesty**

### **Mark 3: 20 – 35**

There is a wonderful chorus we're going to sing at the end of the service today entitled "Majesty". It's a chorus that modern-day churches have been singing for nearly fifty years.

I was first introduced to the song in the mid-eighties because that's when I first started feeling the gravitational pull of Christianity on my life.

Before that time, I may have gone in and out of its orbit, but it was mainly unplanned, unscheduled, and at least from my perspective, inconsequential. I guess I sort of viewed Christianity like a cloud of space dust. There were no defined borders – nothing to really grab onto.

Again, maybe it was sort of like fog to me. I knew it was there. I could see its effects, but I had no idea what to do with it – or if I was even supposed to do anything with it.

I knew Christmas had something to do with Christianity and Easter too, so it was there, circling around me whether I liked it or not at least during a couple times of year.

It wasn't that I was opposed to Christianity, I just didn't understand it. And it never really dawned on me that I had to engage it or wrestle with it on some deeper level.

To me, Christianity – or religion in general - was like water and oxygen. On some level, I knew that I had to acknowledge its existence, but I never really thought that I had to do anything with it –

I took a very passive approach to it like breathing or sleeping or aging. I figured it would just happen automatically.

But that all changed in 1984, when I was invited to study the Bible. For the first time, I was challenged to wrestle with what the Bible was trying to communicate to me. No longer could I just brush it off as some religious jargon that were supposed to make me – for lack of a better term – more religious.

To me, becoming religious meant becoming abnormal. In other words, if I became religious, I could no longer be considered normal – and I understand that normal means something different to everyone – but to me, if I were to give up normalcy, that meant I would give up those things that I had come to cherish and prize and made me who I was, whether that was sports or nature or my interest in girls or ice cream.

Granted, I'll be the first to admit that I had a very skewed idea of what religion meant and it was totally based on ignorance and fear of losing that which was familiar. In my thinking, if religion was going to turn me into someone or something I disliked or did not recognize, I wanted no part of it, and was, quite frankly, scared of it.

Could it swirl around me and enter my orbit on occasion? I guess this was okay with me as long as I didn't have to commit to it. I didn't want to hook my wagon up to something that later I could not escape.

These were my subconscious and worldly thoughts 40 years ago, and I'm here to tell you that I'm in a much better place today simply because the light of God – his word – dispelled the darkness and illuminated my soul. God now dwells in me and is teaching me,

guiding me, and empowering me and is living in me. I'm a new creation and I'm being transformed into Christ's likeness, and I'll be with him for all eternity.

This sanctification process is far from over, but I am convinced that I am on the path of righteousness that God has put me on and has shared with me through his son Jesus.

How about you?

What is your story?

I know each of us - if we're Christians - have a unique, personal story to share about how the truth and light of Christ broke into your life. I encourage you to share your testimony with others. It can be a great encouragement to your Christian brothers and sisters and an effective evangelistic tool when sharing your faith with others who are seeking God.

But the reason I share a bit of my testimony today is because I see the progression of me coming to faith in the events of Mark 3: 20 – 35.

First, we read about people who consider Jesus to be mentally unstable. The NIV uses the phrase "*out of his mind.*" And these people happened to be his own family members!

Granted, Jesus' family in Nazareth had been informed about his exhaustion from dealing with the crowds, and they were concerned about his well-being and distressed over the fact that people are pressing in on him so much so that he was not even able to eat.

But this alone does not account for the urgency they felt causing them to travel 30 miles from Nazareth to Capernaum to take charge of him. In doing so, they had no qualms about publicly declaring Jesus' rapidly deteriorating mental condition. Oh, He's just confused and talking out of his head. We'll get him straightened out.

In their view, Jesus was behaving oddly according to their own expectations and was not only doing strange things but saying strange things. They considered him on the verge of a mental breakdown and were on a mission to take him back to Nazareth for some R&R.

Well-intentioned as their plan may have been, it was completely based on a misunderstanding of Jesus' kingdom mission. In other words, it wasn't Jesus who was out of his mind, it was family! And it was us!

I am reminded of the powerful words Paul wrote in 2 Corinthians 5 when people were accusing him of being out of his mind as he continued to boldly proclaim God's plan of salvation for humanity:

*"If we are out of our mind, it is for the sake of God. For Christ love compels us, because we are convinced that one died for all, and therefore all died. And he died for all, that those who live should no longer live for themselves but for him who died for them and was raised again. So, from now on we regard no one from a worldly point of view. Though we once regarded Christ in this way, we do so no longer."*

Jesus was not out of his mind; his family was because they had yet to understand the mission his Jesus was on. Likewise, Paul was not out of his mind; the world is because it has yet to receive Christ!



We are all out of our minds until we finally understand, embrace and believe in Christ.

Recall the words in John's Gospel describing the world's response to Christ coming into the world starting at 1:10 and following:

*"He was in the world, and though the world was made through him, the world did not recognize him. He came to that which was his own, but his own did not receive him."*

Do you see the progression – more than that – the transformation of Paul's thinking about Christ and the Gospel?

It went from a worldly erroneous and hostile view of Christ to a truthful and transformative view of Christ – not that Christ changed - we were changed because our hearts were illumined - made alive by God's Holy Spirit and the truth of his Word.

Let us never forget what Paul wrote in the first chapter of 1 Corinthians: *"The message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to those who are being saved it is the power of God ... we preach Christ crucified: a stumbling block to the Jews and foolishness to Gentiles, but to those whom God has called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God."*

Here is good litmus test for you if you've ever wondered about your own salvation and your relationship with Christ: If you read God's word or hear the Gospel message from this pulpit or any pulpit or witness a worship service and you walk away thinking that it was a bunch of nonsense and completely irrelevant to your life, then chances are, you have not yet entered the kingdom of God.

And I don't say this to scare you or judge you. I say it to you because I'm genuinely concerned about you and your future with God. Jesus said this in John 5:25: *"I tell you the truth, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life and will not be condemned; he has crossed over from death to life."*

So, this concludes the first part of my message which in summary goes something like this: Until we finally believe in Christ, his person, his message, his divine work on the Cross and his resurrection, we, for all intents and purpose, consider Christ insane!

We view him from a worldly, humanistic, erroneous point of view like so many have done before us and so many continue to do. But it's not Christ who is insane. It's us and our unwillingness to let go of our unbelief.

This is why Paul is so adamant about his call to us to have our minds renewed after 11 chapters of helping us understand God's plan for mankind's salvation.

In Romans 12:2 he writes, *"Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is – his good, pleasing and perfect will."*

In other words, if you think that the arguments I just laid out over the last 11 chapters of Romans is hogwash, then God help You! You need your mind transformed!

And this transformation of our minds isn't so much about stuffing more knowledge into our heads. It's about setting aside our pride, our obstinance and unbelief and allowing the light of Christ to shine

into the dark places of our hearts so He can do a mighty transformative work in us so that we can truly become who God has designed us to be:

Beholders and worshippers of God and partakers in his glory, members of his family. Romans 12:1 Paul writes, *“In view of God’s mercy, offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God – this is your spiritual act of worship.”*

So, let’s go on to part 2 of my message where Christ’s accuses the teachers of the law of blasphemy. Well, the first thing we should ask is what exactly does blasphemy mean in this context?

It’s not a word that we typically use on a daily basis, so if we can learn about it, we will better understand why Christ said what he said.

In the classical Greek sense, blasphemy primarily meant defamation or evil-speaking.

In the New Testament it often had the meaning of impious or irreverent speech against God. Some Bible translations may use the word revile, curse, despise, discredit, scorn or slander. But whatever term is used, blaspheming had very serious consequences. In the Old Testament, the penalty for blasphemy against God was death by stoning. See Leviticus 24:16. And certain people in the Old Testament were accused of blaspheming including the sons of Eli who was high priest and judge of Israel for forty years.

So, when Jesus says that the teachers of the law have blasphemed against the Holy Spirit, he’s basically accusing them of giving an evil spirit credit for doing something the Holy Spirit did!

In other words, they were calling good evil, and in so doing were denying the person and work of God done through Jesus and the Holy Spirit.

Now we can see why blasphemy is the unpardonable sin.

How can a person ever receive Christ's mercy, grace and forgiveness if he or she continues in a state of unbelief and denial of the work God that has been done and continues to be done through his Son and the Holy Spirit?

They will remain under God's judgment until there is repentance – a confession of sin and plea for forgiveness as 1 John 1:9 describes so clearly and succinctly: *“If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.”*

So, blasphemy – denying Christ and his power and the divine nature of the Holy Spirit is the unpardonable sin, if we choose to continue in this state – a state of unrepentance and pride.

And when you think about it for a moment you will realize that blasphemy is really just another form of insanity. For how could we study the life of Christ and then look upon the sacrifice of Christ and then walk away cold-hearted, unmoved and unbelieving, denying the facts? It should never be!

As Paul writes in 2 Corinthians 4:6, *“For God who said, ‘Let light shine out of darkness,’ made his light shine in our hearts to give us the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ.”*

And this is why we Christians can sing with transformed minds, full hearts and clear eyes of faith the wonderful words of the chorus entitled Majesty.



The words of the chorus are as follows:

Majesty, worship his majesty.

Unto Jesus be all glory honor and praise.

Majesty, kingdom authority flow from his throne unto his own.

His anthem raise.

So exalt, lift up on high the name of Jesus.

Magnify, come glorify the Christ Jesus the King

Majesty, worship his majesty

Jesus who died now glorified King of all kings.

Matthew 12:28: *"If I drive out demons by the Spirit of God, then the kingdom of God has come upon you."* Amen.