

WHOEVER DOES GOD'S WILL IS JESUS' FAMILY MEMBER

Mark 3:20-35 (Key Verse: 3:35)

“Whoever does God's will is my brother and sister and mother.”

At this point in the book of Mark the evidence is clear who Jesus is. Jesus can forgive sins, can heal the sick and is lord of the sabbath. Jesus is also glorified in some instances because of who he is. However, in this passage we shall see two groups of people persecuting Jesus, family and religious leaders. You would expect that family will be in support because the evidence was clear, however they too lacked faith. All along the religious leaders have been persecuting Jesus, however today's persecution just goes over the limit as we shall see. Ultimately we see that it does not matter what Jesus does or what he claims to be, if we are not willing to do the will of God. We will persecute Jesus one way or another. In this passage his family thought they were doing a good thing, thinking they would rescue Jesus from madness. However, what they were thinking and planning to do was not in line with the will of God. Last week through shd Desmond's message we learned how Jesus chose the 12 disciples and raised them as shepherds for wondering souls. These 12 men chose to do God's will, which was to respond to Jesus calling as their lord and saviour, as such became Jesus family members. Are we Jesus family? Or are we simply religious people who meet Sundays and do bible studies during the week? I pray that through this passage and message we may receive one word of God and do God's will. Amen!

Lets us first look at how Jesus family looks at him. Look at verse 20-21, “Then Jesus entered a house, and again a crowd gathered, so that he and his disciples were not even able to eat.” 21When his family heard about this, they went to take charge of him, for they said, “He is out of his mind.” Jesus family thought he was out of his mind, they thought he had lost his senses, that he was actually a lunatic, madman. Why would Jesus family think that Jesus had lost his senses? Jesus had a large crowd that was even preventing him and his disciples from having a meal. It was almost like a stampede. This was as a result of Jesus miraculous healing powers and his claims that he was God. In chapter 2 it says, Jesus healed a paralytic but more importantly Jesus did something which was only believed God could do. Jesus forgave the paralytic his sins and later said he was Lord of the Sabbath. “The Son of Man is Lord of the Sabbath.” He is superior to the law. Sabbath represents the law; He is over the law; He is above the prophets. He is the Holy One of God; the demons know it, and the people should know it by testimony of His miracles. ~~which are laid out in these opening few chapters, and His power over Satan.~~

All this attracted large crowds before Jesus such that him and his disciples could not even eat. This very odd child, this child with whom they cannot relate, to whom they cannot connect, the one who's very presence sat in righteous judgment on every childlike sin they ever committed, has gone over the edge. He has now lost His mind. He is now declaring Himself to be God. He is now proclaiming that He has supernatural powers, and He's going to get Himself killed because He's literally creating a stampede coming right at Him. Instead of his family members developing faith over Jesus teachings and the evidence of who he was, they rather decide to rescue him because he has gone mad and is about to get killed from the large crowd. What Jesus family was thinking was not out of bad intentions but rather good intentions. They genuinely believed Jesus had gone mad and needed rescuing. However, though their hearts and thoughts were not meant for evil but good, their thinking and actions were not in line with the will of God ultimately. Intentionally or non intentionally, they were persecuting Jesus. They were going against the will of God. Imagine, they were actually calling the creator of the universe, the one who will judge everyone a madman. In fact looking all that he had done, it actually did not make sense how Jesus could be a madman. People who have lost their senses do not heal others, do not drive out demons and return those who were outcast of society back into society. ~~This could only be as a result of a heart that not in line with doing the will of God. Such people one way or another develop all kinds of nonsensical things in their minds, their world view gets distorted. Such that even Jesus Christ is called a madman simply because Jesus had come to do the will of God.~~

Let us now look at the second group that also persecuted Jesus. Look at verse 22, “And the teachers of the law who came down from Jerusalem said, “He is possessed by Beelzebul! By the prince of demons he is driving out demons.” The religious leaders all along had been looking for ways to trap Jesus especially on the sabbath days. Trying by all means to discredit Jesus authority and what he stood for. Now they could not ignore the fact that Jesus could heal the sick and drive out demons, that he had power to do miracles. Instead of rather repenting and doing the will of God by believing in Jesus they chose the worst. They now claimed Jesus was possessed by Beelzebul, who is the prince of demons. What they said did not even make sense, how could Satan drive out Satan [23]. Jesus through parables reasoned with them, that a kingdom divided against itself will not stand. Look at verse 27, “In fact, no one can enter a strong man's house without first tying him up. Then he can plunder the strong man's house.” The strong man in this case is Satan and Jesus is pointing out that he is stronger than Satan, and that he had overpowered

Satan in people's lives and that is why he could drive demons out of them and heal them. All of this was the work of God, who is the father, the son and the holy spirit all working in oneness.

Take note that, this time around the religious leaders had now gone bit further, they were now claiming God, the Holy Spirit was the prince of demons. They were blaspheming against the Holy Spirit. That is why Jesus in verse 28 warns them, look at verse 28, "Truly I tell you, people can be forgiven all their sins and every slander they utter, 29but whoever blasphemes against the Holy Spirit will never be forgiven; they are guilty of an eternal sin." For they were saying Jesus had an impure spirit [30]. The stubbornness of the religious leaders had made their hearts very dark. They were now calling the spirit that worked in Jesus, the prince of demons. Jesus tried to help them so many times, after Jesus had told a man that his sins were forgiven, the religious leaders said Jesus was blaspheming, then Jesus trying to help them repent asked them, "Which is easier, to say your sins are forgiven or to say, get up pick up your mat and walk? But so that you may know that the son of man has authority on earth to forgive sins..." He said to the paralytic, I tell you pick up your mat and walk and the man got up picked up his mat and walked. However, with all this grace and mercy shown to the religious leaders on 1:1 bases, they resorted to call the spirit that worked in Jesus the prince of demons. Indeed this is a result when a heart is determined to refuse to do the will of God. [we shall later on look at what is really the will of God].

And now while Jesus is busy warning the religious leaders, his family begins to implement their plan to take charge of Jesus, to seize him. Look at verse 31-32, "Then Jesus' mother and brothers arrived. Standing outside, they sent someone in to call him." 32A crowd was sitting around him, and they told him, "Your mother and brothers are outside looking for you." Since Jesus was surrounded by a large crowd they struggled to access Jesus, so they sent someone to call him. Upon hearing this, Jesus then asked, who are my mother and my brothers? Of course Jesus new the answer to this, however he asked to arouse this curiosity among the people. To make them alert of who indeed what his family members. Let us all read verse 34-35, "34Then he looked at those seated in a circle around him and said, "Here are my mother and my brothers! 35Whoever does God's will is my brother and sister and mother." []The Lord seized the moment to speak of salvation truth. He was not concerned about the human relationships; they were not the relationships that mattered. There was no particular privilege for Mary that set her apart from the need for a Savior. She said that in Luke 1: "God my Savior." She was not sinless; she needed a Savior. She was His mother in the earthly sense, but not in the kingdom sense, until she had trusted in Him as Savior, which surely by now she had done.

They knew Jesus, but they couldn't make the step to the reality that He was actually the Son of God; and Jesus, here, is pushing them past their temporal limitation: "I'm not concerned about physical relationships, I'm concerned about spiritual ones." And spiritual ones are defined by "[doing] the will of God": "Whoever does [that] is My brother and sister and mother."

In Luke chapter 11 there's another very similar conversation, just a brief one. Luke chapter 11, listen to verse 27. While Jesus was speaking to a crowd, "one of the women in the crowd raised her voice and said to Him, 'Blessed is the womb that bore You and the breasts at which You nursed.'" Right out of the crowd, this woman shouts that. What is she trying to say? This is a Jewish compliment. This is something in the Jewish vernacular. This person is so impressed with Jesus that she says, "Blessed is the womb that bore You and the breasts at which You nursed." "how marvelous to be Your mother! How wonderful to be Your mother!" Not that she knows Mary, this is just an expression.

And then Jesus says in verse 28, "On the contrary, blessed are those who hear the word of God and observe it." He's saying, it does not profit anyone anything to be related to him earthly or naturally related to me. Either a half brother, half sister its all meaningless, there is no blessing in that unless one is related to Jesus spiritually. And now those who are spiritually related to Me obey the word of God, do the will of God." So Jesus always moved to the salvation issue, even declares that Mary had no special relationship to Him apart from salvation and doing the will of God. She needed a Savior who could transform her life.

So Jesus says to the crowd, in verse 34, "sitting around Him . . . 'Behold My mother and My brothers! . . . [Anybody who] does the will of God.'" And so what is "the will of God"? A good place to start in understanding the will of God is in John 6:40: "For my Father's will is that everyone who looks to the Son and believes in him shall have eternal life, and I will raise them up at the last day." "This is the will of My Father, that everyone who beholds the Son and believes in Him will have eternal life." That's the will of the Father. So those who believe in Him as the Son of God are doing the will of God, and they are members of His spiritual family. Jesus has a forever family of those who believe in Him and have received eternal life. Mary surely had that relationship, but Jesus' siblings did not. John 7:5 says, "His brothers did not believe in Him."

I remember growing up, we were not rich in my family. We used to what bo Mopheme, bophelo ke semphekgo, bo Lesilo and other series at our neighbours houses, we had no TV. So on the same street I had a friend whose family was rich. There will always be food at his house, breakfast, lunch and supper. Whereas for me, sometimes I had to catch some birds [Maphoi] to have good lunch with some meat. And so I always wished I was born as part of a rich family with a car. I was of course left with that question, how could I become their family member so I too could enjoy the benefits of being a part of their family. However, the answer was clear, I simply could not be a member of their family no matter how much I wished. It was simply impossible. However, Jesus is even bigger than that rich family, even if I became a member of that family I would not be guaranteed eternal life. I would still be in my sin. That rich family had no power to deliver me from the power of sin and death. What would it profit me to enjoy the food and the cars while I am heading to hell. However, unlike the rich family, I can actually become family member with Jesus. Jesus says, in verse 35, "Whoever does God's will is my brother and sister and mother." And God's will is that we believe in Jesus who will grant us eternal life.

We are then confronted with a couple of options. Our generation today would easily accept a good moralistic Jesus. That Jesus was a good person who helped the poor and healed the sick. Even Muslims accept that Jesus was a prophet of God. In Dubai in 2023 they made the most expensive Christmas tree amounting to estimated amount of R203mil rands. This is a muslim country celebrating Christmas. Easter as well has become about easter eggs and rabbits, children playing games of finding an easter egg. Everyone is alright until the main question is asked, who is Jesus really. And this is where Jesus earthly family members and the religious leaders got it wrong. His family said he was a madman, which did not make sense. The religious leaders said, he operated from the spirit of Satan. This is where we too in this generation get it wrong. Because when we look at the evidence of scripture, we find Jesus claimed to be God.

He once said to his disciples, when they asked him, show us the father. Jesus response was, if you have seen me you have seen the father [John 14:10]. And so if Jesus claimed to be God, then he is no longer that good moralistic person because no moralistic and sane person would ever claim to be God. Jesus is more than just a good moralistic person, he is more than a prophet, he is the Son of God, God incarnate. We are not doing God's will by simply seeing Jesus as a good moralistic person.

In conclusion, Jesus says in verse 35, "Whoever does God's will is my brother and sister and mother." What matters is our spiritual relationship with Jesus. Are we truly His family members? Or are we simply relating with Jesus as a good moralistic person. Is Jesus lord over your life? Or is Jesus an option for you? Jesus said what matters, those who are indeed blessed are those who have accepted him as their lord and savior and he will grant them eternal life. It is good to work hard, to study hard and desire good things in life. However, non of these things have any bearing towards granting us eternal life and being counted as God's family. What matters most as of first priority in all we do in life, is to do God's will. It is to believe in Jesus as your lord and savior. Amen!