

(Through the Bible) Mark 2-3

by Chuck Smith

Chuck Smith's sermon on Mark 2-3 highlights Jesus' authority to forgive sins and His mission to reach the marginalized while emphasizing the importance of spiritual over physical needs.

Duration: 1:03:14

Scripture: Matthew 12:13, Mark 2:4-5, Mark 2:10, Luke 5:18-19, Luke 5:24, John 5:8-9

Topics: "Faith And Works", "Religious Hypocrisy"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker begins by offering a prayer for the congregation and asking for God's guidance and protection. He encourages the listeners to continue studying and meditating on the word of God throughout the week. The speaker then shares a personal anecdote about his childhood desire for attention and praise. He emphasizes the importance of doing good works in a way that brings glory to God rather than seeking attention for oneself. The sermon concludes with a discussion of Jesus' actions in the temple, highlighting his anger towards religious hypocrisy and his desire for a genuine relationship with God. The speaker encourages the listeners to obey God's commands, even when they seem impossible, and to trust in His power to bring about transformation.

Transcript

Now again, he entered into Capernaum after many days. And it was noise that he was in the house. So word went around, Jesus is in the house over there.

And immediately, many were gathered together insomuch that there was no room to receive them, not so much as even about the door. And he preached the word unto them. I like that.

He preached the word unto them. What else is there to preach? Well, all you have to do is listen to television, the radio, you'll find there's a lot of things being preached. Experience, often preached.

Wild experiences. But oh, how important that we just preach the word. And they came unto him, bringing one who was sick of the palsy.

He was being carried by four men. And when they could not come near to Jesus because of the crowd of people, they climbed up on the roof and uncovered the roof where he was. And when they had broken it up, they let down the bed wherein the sick of the palsy was lying.

So Jesus was sitting there in the house, the place was packed. Outside you couldn't even get near the door because of the multitude of people. And here came four fellows carrying a friend who was sick with a palsy.

And they were desperate to see Jesus. Not being able to get near the house, they probably went around back, climbed up on the roof, hoisted the guy up and began to tear off the tiles or the thatch or whatever it was. And as Jesus is sitting there talking, suddenly here comes this guy on a pallet down in front of him.

And Jesus, when he saw their fate, said to the sick of the palsy, Son, thy sins be forgiven thee. Now I imagine at this point, these four friends were very disappointed. Lord, we didn't bring him to get saved.

We brought him to get healed. But Jesus is taking care of the most important thing first. What is really the most important thing? A person's salvation or a person's healing? And in reality, we realize that the most important thing for any man is his salvation.

Better to go into heaven maimed than whole into hell. Salvation is by far the greatest need that any of us have. The greatest miracle that God can work in any of our lives is that miracle of freeing us from the power of sin and transforming us into the kingdom of light.

God's great miracle. And so Jesus was doing first things first. But also, I'm certain that he was seeking to make a statement to the people, which the Pharisees immediately caught.

For when Jesus said to this man, Son, thy sins be forgiven thee. There were certain of the scribes that were sitting there and they began to reason in their hearts. Immediately it flashed on them.

This man is speaking blasphemously. For no one can forgive sins but God. They are absolutely correct in the second statement.

Wrong in the first. Jesus wasn't speaking blasphemy because Jesus was God. They were correct in the second statement.

No one can forgive sins but God. You remember David in the 51st Psalm as he had been faced by the prophet Nathan with his sin against Bathsheba cried out, Have mercy upon me, O God. According to the multitude of thy tender mercies, blot out my transgressions.

For against thee and thee only have I sinned and done this great wickedness. Only God can forgive a man's sins. And so they were correct in that assessment.

Only God can forgive sins. But they were incorrect in the first assessment that he's speaking blasphemously. But in reality, he was just showing that he was God.

Just as we dealt the other morning with the rich young ruler who came to Jesus and said, Good Master, what must I do to have age-abiding life? And Jesus said, Why do you call me good? There is only one good and that is God. Jesus wasn't saying I'm not good. He was saying, You've recognized the truth.

You've recognized the truth about me. You've recognized that I am God. Why did you call me good? Because you recognize that I am God.

He's trying to help the young fellow to really realize what he had subconsciously come to realize. Bring it out into the conscious. Why did you call me good? There's only one good.

That is God. You call me good because I am God. Now here, again, is an assertion.

He knew, Jesus knew, that only God could forgive sins. And he was acting in his divine nature as he said, Son, thy sins be forgiven thee. And Jesus knew that this would rise up in the minds of the Pharisees.

And immediately when he perceived in his spirit that they were reasoning these things in themselves, he said unto them, Why is it that you reason these things in your hearts? Now what is easier to say to this sick man with a palsy? Thy sins be forgiven thee or to say to him, Arise and take up your bed and walk. Now what's easier to say? Well, they're probably both easier. You know, as far as to say it, they're just, you know, you can say whatever you want.

But to prove that you, that what you said was true. It would be difficult to prove that when you say, Thy sins be forgiven thee, that they are really forgiven. There is no visible outward sign that we can discern that a fellow's sins have been forgiven him.

To say, take up thy bed and walk, that's putting it on the line. That is difficult to say because you can prove pretty quick whether or not there's any power in the words that you spoke. If you say, take up your bed and walk, and the guy still lies there, then you're exposed in a hurry as a fraud.

But if you say, take up your bed and walk, and the guy takes up his bed and begins to walk, then it's quite obvious that he has great power. So Jesus said, in order that you may know that the Son of Man has power on earth to forgive sins. Again, showing who he is.

He said to the sick of a palsy, I say unto thee, Arise, take up your bed, and go thy way into your house. Go home. And immediately he arose, picked up his bed, and went forth before them all, in so much that they were all amazed and glorified God, saying, never seen anything like this before.

It's glorious. Now, they were all amazed and they glorified God. Jesus had said in the Sermon on the Mount, Let your light so shine before men that when they see your good works, they glorify your Father which is in heaven.

There are two ways to let your light shine. There are two ways by which you can do your works. You can let your light shine in such a way that when men see your good works, they say, oh, what a glorious person he is.

Isn't he marvelous? My, he is so great. Drawing attention and praise to yourself. Or, you can let your light so shine that when men see the good works, they say, oh, isn't God good? And so Jesus was doing the work in such a way that people were glorifying God.

That's the way we should do our works. In such a way that we don't draw attention to ourselves. Somehow within this perverse nature of mine, I desire to draw attention to me.

When I was a little tiny kid, I used to get out on the school ground all by myself with a football under my arm. And I'd run through all of the team and everybody was cheering. And the announcer was saying, and Chuck Smith has the ball and he's running, he's down to the five, across the goal, touchdown! Hooray! Hooray! And everybody's cheering and yelling and I was walking around, you know.

When I was four and five years old doing this kind of stuff. Declaring the greatness of this tremendous athlete. Wanting the attention.

Wanting the praise. Wanting the cheers of the crowd. And so it was only natural as I grew older, I continued playing football and all and living for that cheering of the crowd.

Living off the cheers of the crowd. Fulfilling my early fantasies. Something within man's nature.

Something within man's old nature. But when we come to Jesus Christ, we must reckon that old man to be dead with Christ in order that we might be alive unto God. And live now not for our glory, not for our recognition, not to receive praise for ourselves, but do our works in such a way that when men see the good work, they glorify our Father which is in heaven.

Jesus set the classic example for us for they were all amazed and glorified God. Saying, we've never seen like this. And he went forth again by the seaside.

And all of the multitude resorted unto him and he taught them. And as he passed by, he saw Levi or Matthew, the son of Alphaeus, sitting at the receipt of customs. So there in Capernaum, Matthew was a tax collector.

It is interesting that so many of the disciples were drawn right from that area of Capernaum. And as they were passing by, there was Matthew sitting at his little tax house, toll booth. And he said unto him, follow me.

And he arose and followed him. And it came to pass that as Jesus sat at meet in his house, so Matthew prepared a great meal for Jesus. But he invited a lot of his sinner friends because he wanted to expose them to Jesus.

It is interesting that the Gospels tell us that Matthew was the one who fixed this dinner for Jesus. Where Matthew just tells us about the dinner, but he didn't tell us that he was the host. But the other Gospel writers point out that Matthew was the host of this meal.

It came to pass as Jesus sat at meet in his house, many publicans and sinners. Not republicans, but there's not much difference. Someone said never vote for a democrat because they're all crooks.

But then the republicans are crooks too, but they do it with more finesse. Never discuss politics with your friends. I'm looking for a new kingdom wherein dwelleth righteousness.

I'll tell you, that's the kingdom. When Jesus heard it, and we jumped a little bit here, didn't we? And they sat also together with Jesus and his disciples. For there were many and they followed him.

And when the scribes and the Pharisees saw him eating with the publicans and sinners, they said unto his disciples, how is it that he eats and drinks with publicans and sinners? Now, you have to understand Jewish culture to understand their chagrin and their shock at this. According to their whole cultural concept, if you would sit down and eat with someone, you were becoming one with that person. Because you see, you had a common sort of a soup.

And a loaf of bread on the table. And they didn't have knives and forks and that kind of stuff. You just picked up the bread and you pulled off a hunk.

And then you dip it in this common bowl of soup out there and you'd eat it. So, you'd hold out the bread to me and I'd take and pull off a chunk and you'd pull off a chunk. And we'd both dip together in the soup out there and then we would eat the bread.

But we are both eating from the same loaf of bread. We are both dipping in the same soup. And we know that as we eat that bread, our body is assimilating it and it's becoming a part of my body.

It's becoming a part of me. But that same loaf of bread is becoming a part of your body and becoming a part of you. So, mystically, we are becoming a part of each other.

We're becoming one with each other when we eat with each other. I'm becoming one with you as I eat together with you. Now, that is why the Jew would never eat with the Gentile.

They didn't want to become one with the Gentile. And so, when Jesus was eating with these publicans and sinners, in their cultural mind, He was becoming one with the sinners. Identifying and becoming one with the sinners.

But God made Him to be sin for us who knew no sin. That we might be made the righteousness of God through Him. He identified with us in order that He might redeem us.

And so they were amazed. They said, Hey, how is it He's eating with publicans and sinners? And Jesus heard it and He said unto them, They that are whole have no need of the physician, but they that are sick. I did not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.

Now the disciples of John and of the Pharisees used to fast. And they came and said unto Him, Why is it that the disciples of John and of the Pharisees fast, but your disciples do not fast? And Jesus said unto them, Can the children of the bride chamber fast while the bridegroom is with them? As long as they have the bridegroom with them, they cannot fast. But the days will come when the bridegroom shall be taken away from them, and then shall they fast in those days.

Now fasting is a spiritual right in which there is that denial of the flesh. It is a self-abnegation type of a thing or a self-mortification. It's a part of denying self.

And while Jesus was with His disciples, He did not command them to fast as a spiritual right. He said the days will come as long as the bridegroom is here. We're going to rejoice.

We're going to party. But then I'll be going, and in those days they'll fast. In the Old Testament, we read of Daniel fasting, afflicting himself as he was waiting upon God and praying.

Daniel's fast comprised of not drinking wine, not eating meat or pastries. So there are many things that you can deny yourself. Swenson's for a while.

There are different types of fast that you can engage in. Total abstinence, drinking just water, keeping the liquid level of your body up, or just denying certain things for a period of time as you deny the flesh to spend time in prayer and to wait upon God. Prayer and the Word feed the spirit just as food feeds the body.

We are extremely faithful in feeding the body. We see that He has meals three times a day. But so often, we're careless about feeding the spirit.

Now the flesh is warring against the spirit and the spirit against the flesh. And so often, the flesh is overcoming the spirit. Well, that's quite obvious.

Why? Because I am so faithful in feeding the flesh and so negligent in feeding the spirit. So, fasting and prayer are a reversal of the normal. I begin to neglect the feeding the flesh and I take the time to feed the spirit.

And as a result, as my spirit is warring against my flesh and the flesh against the spirit, my spirit begins to become strong and overcome and I become victorious. And so that's really where fasting comes in and the purpose of fasting. Now, they're talking about the disciples of the Pharisees and so forth.

The old religious system with its fast days and all of the rites and so forth. And Jesus said, No man also sews a piece of new cloth on an old garment, else the new piece that filled it up takes away from the old and the tear is made worse. Now, Jesus was talking in the days before they had sanforized clothes.

So, you have a robe that you've been wearing for a long time. It's been through many washings. All of the shrinking is out of it because it's been through so many washings.

And you rip that old robe. Now, if you would take a new piece of cloth to sew up the hole that you have in your robe, the first time you washed it, that new cloth that you put in would shrink and, of course, pull out the old because the old robe is just, you know, already had the shrinkage out of it. The new cloth shrinking would just rip the thing all the more.

So, you don't use new cloth to patch an old garment. You just make the tear worse. Neither do you put new wine in the old skins because the old skins will just burst and the wine will spill out.

What is Jesus saying? He's saying that the religious systems get so set that to revive or to restore them is next to impossible. That when God desires to do a new work, He usually moves outside of the boundaries of the established religious systems because they can't handle the new wine. They can't handle that new work of God.

And how true this is. And how we have seen the truth of this in personal observation. How God, when He desires to move with a new work of His Spirit in the hearts of people, unfortunately, has to move out beyond the boundaries of the organized religious systems and has to start up something new to contain that new work of His Spirit, that fresh work of God that He is seeking to do in the world.

So God wanted to save a bunch of hippies and the old systems couldn't handle those long-haired, barefooted kids. So God raises up a new work in order that He might reach those that He is desiring to reach. Now, this is where my prayer is that God keep us flexible.

I don't want to get in a rut, a pattern, a routine that we would say, well, this is the way we've done it. This is the way Chuck did it. I really don't want that.

I want to ever stay flexible and free to move as God's Spirit moves. Blessed are the flexible. They shall not be broken.

I mean, you get rigid. God wants to move. No, that's not the way we do it.

Well, God is going to move. And you'll get snapped. But if you just learn to be flexible, God wants to move, alright, you know, move with it.

Be flexible. The interesting thing about God is His refusal to be patterned. Well, God did it this way.

Well, maybe He did the last time, but He wants to do it a different way this time. God does not confine Himself to patterns, and man always makes the mistake when he tries to pattern God, tries to make the groove for God to flow in. God is always overflowing our banks.

And always coming up with some new way of working in the lives of people. And so, God keep us open and flexible and ready to move as the Spirit of God moves in different ways. Now it came to pass that He went through the cornfields, and that would be wheat fields.

They called the little kernel the corn of the wheat. On the Sabbath day, and His disciples began as they were going through to pick the ears of corn. Now, during the months of May, early June and all, as the wheat is getting ripe, you take and pick off that little top part, the corn of the wheat.

And you take and rub it in your hands. And you knock the chaff off of it, the little bran off of it. And then you blow it and you rub it and blow it and you get just a handful of wheat.

And then you eat it. The kernel is soft enough that you can chew it with your teeth. And as you chew it for a while, it makes sort of a gum, actually, and you can chew it all day if you want.

When we were kids, we used to pick the wheat out of the chicken feed. And we didn't have enough money for gum, so we'd go out and get the chicken feed and pick out all the wheat. And we'd chew it until we got our gum and we'd go chewing the wheat gum all day long.

But it's, of course, extremely helpful. And it was something the disciples, going through the wheat field, and they just grabbed some of these little corn of the wheat and began to rub it in their hands and eat it. And the Pharisees said unto him, Behold, why do they on the Sabbath day that which is not lawful? And he said unto them, Have you never read what David did when he had need and was hungry, he and those that were with him? How he went into the house of God in the days of Abiathar, the high priest Abiathar, and he did eat the showbread, which is not lawful to eat, but for the priests.

And he gave also to those which were with him. And he said unto them, The Sabbath was made for man and not man for the Sabbath. Therefore, the Son of Man is Lord also of the Sabbath.

Human need takes precedence over the law. They're hungry. There's a human need.

Now, according to the law, when you went through a man's cornfield, you could pick the corn and eat it, but you couldn't carry any out. You weren't to take a sickle and cut it down and carry out the sheaves of corn. If you were going through an orchard, you could pick the fruit and eat it, but you couldn't carry any fruit out.

Human need, hunger, God made provisions for it. If you're hungry, go and pick an orange. You can't do that here.

Now, I'm not telling you to do that here because sun-kissed growers will slap you with a \$500 fine. But God had made provision for hungry people to go in and to take what they needed to satisfy their hunger. You couldn't take any out.

You could not set up a little stand and sell the produce at the edge of the field. But you could eat to your own need and satisfaction. And so the disciples were doing that.

They were walking through someone's wheat field and they just began to pluck the little kernels and eat them. And it was the Sabbath day. Now, to the Pharisees and the scribes, that constituted a violation of the Sabbath day law.

You're not to do any work. But Jesus said they're hungry. They're only taking care of their needs, their hungers.

David, whom you admire, don't you remember how he, during the time when Abiathar was a high priest, went in and he and his men were hungry. They were fleeing from Saul. And they went in and David said, Do you have any of these? No, I don't have anything but this showbread here.

David said, I'll take that. And he took the showbread and he fed his men and all. And that was against the law.

Only the priests, according to the law, were to eat that showbread. But again, human need, hunger, is a higher law. And then he announced himself as the Lord of the Sabbath.

Making that statement that we need to remember, Sabbath was made for man. It's for man's benefit. Really, we would all be wise to observe the Sabbath.

To give our bodies a chance to recuperate. If you spent every Saturday in bed, you'd be a healthier person. Just kick back.

Spend the day in bed. Do nothing. But we are so geared up that we press and push all the time.

But God made it for you. Take advantage of it. Kick back.

He entered again into the synagogue. This was on the Sabbath day. And there was a man there which had a withered hand and they watched him whether he would heal him on the Sabbath day that they might accuse him.

And he said to the man which had a withered hand, Stand forth. And he said unto them, Is it lawful to do good on the Sabbath days or to do evil, to save a life or to kill? But they held their peace. And when he had looked round about on them with anger, being grieved for the hardness of their hearts, he saith unto the man, Stretch forth your hand.

And he stretched it out and his hand was restored whole as the other. Sabbath day. Jesus came to the synagogue.

There was a man there with a withered hand and so immediately it created a stir as the Pharisees watched him to see if he would violate their traditional interpretation of the Sabbath day law or according to the interpretation, their interpretation of the law, it was unlawful to heal a person on the Sabbath day. You could save a person's life, do what was necessary to save the life, but do nothing towards healing. Apply a tourniquet, stop the flow of blood to save his life, but don't put a band-aid on or don't wrap it up, don't wash it, don't put any salve on, because that's ministering towards his healing and you can't do that until the sun goes down.

You can't do that until the Sabbath day is over. Nothing to heal a person on the Sabbath day, only to save the life. Now, they understood Jesus even better than his own disciples because they knew that Jesus would immediately be interested in the man with a withered hand.

They knew that Jesus could never face any crippling area in a person's life without desiring to minister to that person and to help them. They knew instinctively that Jesus always sought to heal the blight of man when he came face to face with it. And they knew that he would be interested in the man in the synagogue with the greatest need.

And so they watched him to see if he would heal him because it was the Sabbath day. So many times we feel that Jesus isn't interested in us because our needs are too great. Jesus only likes to chum with the beautiful people, with the successful, with the prosperous.

But the person that Jesus is always most interested in is the person who has the greatest need. And so it was when he came into the synagogue, they were correct. In their assessment of Jesus, they were absolutely correct.

He was immediately interested in that man in the synagogue who had the greatest need. He was immediately interested in that man with a withered hand. And Jesus said to him, Stand up.

The man stood up. And Jesus then asked them two questions. Is it lawful to do good or to do evil on the Sabbath day? Naturally, it's lawful to do good.

They could not answer him. He had them trapped. They could not say it's lawful to do evil and yet it would be evil not to help this man if he had the capacity to do so.

Is it lawful to heal or to kill? Well, it's never lawful to kill a person. And so, again, they're trapped. They can't answer and they don't answer.

And he looks upon them with anger because of the hardness of their hearts. Because of their religious traditions would keep this man from experiencing the power of God in his life. They would keep him from the work that God wanted to do in setting him free because it was not according to their religious traditions or their theological positions.

There are people today who would hold back the work of God in needy lives because it doesn't fit with their theological position. They would hold back God's power. God's healing power.

Because it doesn't fit with their theological position that all miracles ceased with the apostles. And so, they would hold back the work of God in needy lives just because it doesn't fit with their theology. And this upset Jesus.

That they, by their rigid traditions, would actually hold back the work of God for this needy man. Looked upon them with anger. An emotion you seldom relate with Jesus.

And yet, we find him angry when they were selling the doves and all in the temple precincts and exchanging money and all. And he was angry, made a scourge, and drove them out. Angry always with the blind religious fervencies of man, really.

How it would upset him that man could be blinded by his religion when God is seeking to establish a vital life-changing relationship. People try and formalize it into a religious system. Jesus said to him, Stretch forth your hand.

It's impossible. The man knew it was impossible. Jesus knew it was impossible when he told him to do it.

And because it was impossible, the man can do one of two things. He can either argue with Jesus and tell him that he can't and tell him why he can't and tell him how many times he's tried and failed and tell him of all his past failures. Rehearse his life story of failure.

Or he can obey Jesus and stretch forth his hand. He has a choice. He chose to stretch forth his hand and immediately, as he did, it was made whole just like the other.

Four, a basic law. The moment you choose to will to obey the command of Christ, in that very moment, he will give you everything necessary for you to obey. The Lord many times says to us things that to us are impossible.

As he faces that blighted area in our life, that thing that has been destroying us and keeping us from real victory, that attitude, that temper, that weakness of our flesh, that area of our failure. And that's the thing that Jesus wants to address himself to in our lives. Jesus didn't talk to him about his good hand and, you know, how well he was able to use the good hand.

He was interested in the hand that wasn't working. He's interested in your life, those things that aren't working properly. That's the thing that he wants to address himself to.

And he says to you, you now be free and be delivered from that character and that part of your nature. You say, oh, but Lord, you don't know how hard I've tried and you don't know how long and you don't know, you know. Hey, he's not looking for an argument or looking for an excuse.

He's telling you to do something. Don't argue with him. Don't rehearse your past failures.

Do it. You say, but I can't. Of course you can't.

But do it anyhow. For if you will will to obey the command of Christ, he'll give you everything necessary. In the moment that you will to do it, you say, I won't do that anymore.

Because he said, now don't do that again. Oh, but Lord, you know, I don't want to do it again, but you don't know, Lord. Hey, no.

He said, don't do it again. Will to obey. All right, Lord, I won't do it again.

And the moment you will to obey, he will give you the capacity and the ability to obey. He will never command you to do anything but what he will give to you, the power to obey that command. And he commands all of us to be victorious.

He commands all of us to overcome. He commands all of us to be free. He commands all of us to be filled with his Spirit and to live that new life.

And if you will, will to do it. Yes, Lord, I will. He'll give you the capacity.

Now the Pharisees went forth after that. That was enough. They'd had it.

And they took counsel with the Herodians how they might destroy him. Look how blind religion can make people. When God works, they want to destroy it.

They can't stand to see God work outside of their boundaries, outside of their prescribed borders. They've actually organized who can organize better than us. After all, we've been to seminary and we've got the

education, and we know how God can work.

And this is how God works. And when God begins to work outside of their little prescribed boundaries, they get upset and want to crush it. Let's destroy it.

But Jesus withdrew Himself with His disciples to the sea. And a great multitude from Galilee followed Him and from Judea and from Jerusalem, from Idumea, and from beyond Jordan. And they that were around Tyre and Sidon, a great multitude, when they had heard what great things He was doing, they came unto Him.

And He spake to His disciples that they should take a little ship and wait on Him because of the multitude, lest they should throng Him. For He had healed many insomuch that they were pressing upon Him just to touch Him. And as many as had the various plagues.

And so this great surge of people wanting to get near Jesus, wanting to touch Him. And of course, if you were there and you had a problem, a disease, a plague, you would be pushing too. You'd be trying to get up close enough just to touch Him.

And so it became difficult for Jesus to move around. So they took this little boat and they just dropped anchor a little ways offshore. And unclean spirits, when they saw Him, fell down before Him.

And they cried saying, Thou art the Son of God. And immediately He charged them, or strictly He charged them, that they should not make Him known. Now the demons were crying out, Thou art the Son of God.

He said, quiet. Don't tell anybody. Now He went up into a mountain and He called unto Him those whom He would and they came to Him.

And He ordained twelve that they should be with Him that He might send them forth to preach and to have power to heal sicknesses and to cast out devils. And Simon He surnamed Peter. And James the son of Zebedee and John the brother of James.

He surnamed them Bonergies, which is the sons of thunder. So Jesus had His own little nicknames for these fellows. And Andrew and Philip and Bartholomew and Matthew and Thomas and James the son of Alphaeus and Thaddeus, which is also known as Judas, not Ascariot.

He's often said Judas, not Ascariot. That's Thaddeus. And Simon the Canaanite and Judas Ascariot, which also betrayed Him.

And they went into a house and the multitude came together again so that they could not even eat bread. The crowds were getting around Him so much. And when His friends heard of it, they went out to lay hold on Him for they said He's beside Himself.

They figured He had flipped. He didn't even have time to eat bread. And His friends, because He was just giving Himself so completely, so completely to the needs of the people, they thought, oh, He's flipped.

He's beside Himself. Beside Himself is a term sort of used for the schizophrenic who talks to himself. So, alright, quit it.

Okay, wait a minute, I'll be with you. Alright. You're talking back and forth to yourself.

And so He's beside Himself, conversing with Himself. And they actually thought that He had flipped probably under the pressure of all of these people gathering around. His friends, His family and all.

And the scribes which came down from Jerusalem said, He has bells above. And by the prince of the devils, He's casting out devils. And He called them unto Him and He said unto 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 cannot stand. And if Satan rises up against himself and is divided, he cannot stand but has an end. No man can enter into a strong man's house and spoil his goods, except he will first bind the strong man and then he will spoil his house.

Verily I say unto you, All sins shall be forgiven unto the sons of men, and blasphemies wherewithsoever they shall blaspheme. But he that shall blaspheme against the Holy Spirit has never forgiveness, but is in danger of eternal damnation. And this was because they said, He has an unclean spirit.

Now, their declaration, He has an unclean spirit, He's doing this by the power of the devil. They were attributing the works of God's Holy Spirit to Satan. This was not the unpardonable sin.

This was a sign that they were getting close to the unpardonable sin. The unpardonable sin, the sin for which there is no forgiveness, is the sin of rejecting Jesus Christ. Jesus said, God so loved the world, He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believed in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.

For God sent not His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved. And he that believes is not condemned. But he that believes not is condemned already, seeing he hath not believed on the only begotten Son of God.

And this is the condemnation, that light came into the world, but men would not come to the light. That's the unpardonable sin. A man's failure to come to the light, to receive God's provision for his sins.

God has made only one provision for man's sins, and that is the blood of Jesus Christ, His Son. If you refuse to come to that, then you are committing the unpardonable sin. If you do not receive Jesus Christ as your personal Savior, there is no other forgiveness in this world or in the world to come.

God has provided one way for man to be saved. For you to reject that, there's no other way. That's unpardonable.

Now, when a person has rejected Jesus over and over and over again, and he is faced with the indisputable evidence that Jesus is indeed the Son of God, you have to somehow explain away the miracles, the power, and the life of Jesus Christ. And so people, in explaining it away, say, oh, he's doing that by hypnosis or something else. And that's just as bad as anything else, you see.

That is an indication that you are trying now to rationalize against the plain facts that you can see. You're trying to, with irrational arguments, destroy the evidence concerning Jesus Christ. And that you are doing because you have set your position and your heart against Jesus.

I will not believe in Him. I will not receive Him. And you set your heart and your position, but now you've got to explain away the evidence.

And any time a man starts to, by irrational argument, set aside Jesus Christ, that man is close to committing the unpardonable sin because he's not even believing his own intellect at this point. And so

when they began to try to explain away this evidence of His power by saying, oh, He's doing it through the Lord of devils, they are now irrationally rejecting that evidence that is right there before them because they have set in their heart the position of we're not going to believe in Him. And you're getting close to the unpardonable sin when you set yourself in such a way that you refuse the obvious evidence before you.

So there came then His brothers and His mother. And they were standing without. And they sent unto Him and called Him.

Now there's a huge crowd of people. And outside, you know, they said, oh, He's beside Himself. He's gone crazy.

Let's go down and save Him. And so His brothers, James and Jude and Simon, and His mother were outside. And they sent a message in.

And they said, tell Jesus we're out here. Come on out. And the multitude sat about Him.

And they said unto Him, Behold, your mother and your brothers are outside and they're seeking You. And He looked round about on those which sat around Him and He said, Behold, My mother and My brothers. For whosoever shall do the will of God, the same is My brother and My sister and My mother.

What Jesus is saying is that there is a bond that comes in the family of God that is deeper than the bond in the human family. When we are followers of Jesus Christ, we come into this deep, beautiful interrelationship with each other. So that a person can have a closer relationship with some native in New Guinea who a few years ago was a cannibal than you can have with your own blood brothers or sisters or maybe even an identical twin who isn't saved.

If that native is saved. I was over in New Guinea and I had this native chieftain come up to me and he had to speak to me through an interpreter. And he had these spears in his hand.

He said, I use these to kill men. But he said, now that they have brought me this. Holding up his Bible.

He said, I don't need these anymore and I want to give them to you. And there came an instant bonding between this chieftain and myself. My brother in Jesus.

Though we could not communicate linguistically, we communicated spiritually. As he grabbed hold of me and I grabbed hold of him and we began to embrace each other in the love of Jesus Christ. And how I felt God's love just pouring out from that man to me.

And how I was bonded to him in the Spirit. As I realized, this man is my brother in Jesus. And it was a tremendous spiritual experience for me being bonded by the Spirit to this native who just not too many years ago was a cannibal.

But now because of the work of God's grace in his life, he's a brother in Christ. And though we are culturally worlds apart, though linguistically we cannot communicate, yet there was such a spiritual communication and a spiritual bond that I have never felt quite that experience of bonding before as I did with that native chieftain as we stood there in the village and embraced each other. My brother in Jesus Christ.

And that's what Jesus is saying. Hey, these are my brothers. These are my sisters.

These are my mothers. Whoever does the will of the Father. Whoever is walking with me.

The same as my mother, my sister, my brother. We're the family of God. We've been bonded to each other through that common relationship with Jesus Christ.

We're one together in Him, the body of Christ. Oh, may God help us to realize this beautiful bond that exists as we are one in Jesus. Bonded together in the family of God by His love for us.

Now, inasmuch as Jesus took this attitude towards Mary, for another gospel he said, Who is my mother? Who are my brothers? And this he did here also. Who is my mother? Who is my brother? I think it's rather chancy to ask Mary to do favors for you. Holy Mary, Mother of God, have mercy on us sinners in this our hour of death.

Wait a minute. Who is my mother? Hey, why not go directly to the source? Therefore, let us come boldly to the throne of grace to make our requests known, seeing that Jesus has opened the door and made the way. Oh, how glorious it is that we can come directly to God through Jesus Christ.

So, next week we'll begin with chapter 4. May the Lord be with you. Watch over and keep you in His love. May the Spirit of God just take the Word of God and continue to refresh our minds and our hearts in God's truth.

This week, may the Lord bring back to us in our times of need that Word that we have put in our hearts and have studied together. And may we grow together in the family of God into that fullness, into that completeness that He would have us to experience and know in Jesus Christ. God bless you.

God keep you. And may He use you this week to spread abroad through all the land that work of Jesus Christ that He has wrought in your life.

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