

**Responding to Jesus**  
**Mark 3:20-35**

As we turn to Mark chapter 3 to finish our chapter for the morning, I'd like to ask you to think about this question as our title demands, how do people respond to Jesus? How do people respond to Jesus? I'm sure, immediately, when you think of that, you have actual faces that might come to mind. There's people that you've interacted with, there's family members, there's friends, and you know that they have some knowledge, some interaction with the Bible and the concept of who Jesus is. How do they respond? Maybe your own life when you were young and introduced to Jesus or later in life and introduced to Jesus, how did you respond? We have a range of responses as we can just survey the landscape of culture and society. The people that are completely antagonistic are against Jesus, and they're open about it. They declare that. They make that very clear, and everything they speak about and every action that they get behind to remove religion, to remove Jesus from society and all that... There's other people that are confused about Jesus. They just don't know what to think yet, and they, really, don't have enough information, still. Or the information they do have, they have not acted upon, and they don't know what to do with it exactly.

I'd like to draw our attention to, actually, a quote from C. S. Lewis, and how he categorized the different responses to Jesus. And this quote, actually, interacts with the people that view Jesus as a good moral teacher... to call Him a good moral teacher and to maybe not totally commit to Him, but to not totally hate Him and just put Him in that middle ground. And C. S. Lewis has something to say about that in this quote where he identifies that there's only three options in your response to Jesus. He says the three options are you're either believing Jesus is a lunatic, or he's a liar, or He is the Lord. This what C. S. Lewis says, "I am trying here to prevent anyone saying the really foolish thing that people often say about Him: 'I'm ready to accept Jesus as a great moral teacher, but I don't accept His claim to be God.' That is the one thing we must not say. A man who was merely a man and said the sort of things Jesus said would not be a great moral teacher. He would either be a lunatic--on a level with the man who says he is a poached egg--or else he would be the Devil of Hell. You must make your choice. Either this man was, and is, the Son of God: or else a madman or something worse. You can shut Him up for a fool, you can spit at Him and kill Him as a demon; or you can fall at His feet and call Him Lord and God. But let us not

come with any patronizing nonsense about His being a great human teacher. He has not left that open to us. He did not intend to.” C. S. Lewis obviously speaking and writing with a lot of wisdom. The way he approaches this, and how people respond to Jesus, does intersect our text today and what we’re seeing as far as how Mark approaches Jesus.

We’ve seen a lot about Jesus so far, and it’s almost as if in our text this morning, Mark comes up for air, and he allows us to survey and see - what do people think about Jesus? Look over the society around Him, and what are people doing with Jesus? How are they responding to Him? Because we’ve seen Jesus doing a lot; we’ve seen Him busy in ministry, and we’ve seen crowds, but we don’t really know how people are responding to Him. This is the point of the text today. We see these different responses unfold. Think about all that we’ve seen Jesus do so far. He’s been so busy with teaching with authority in the synagogues and casting demons out of these people that are oppressed and demon possessed, and He’s gone about healing people. He’s shown the mercy and compassion to even interact with a leper and declare him cleansed. He’s been willing to go about and to even make such claims that He has the authority to forgive sins. He’s associated with tax collectors and sinners, the outcasts of society. He’s claimed to bring something completely new to Israel, and He’s been willing to go toe-to-toe with the leaders in talking about the Sabbath and explaining the true intent of God’s Law. Last thing we saw - Jesus establishing His followers, the twelve that He appointed to be His apostles.

Jesus has been busy about all of this, but we still need to ask the question, how do people respond to Him? How do people respond to Jesus? And in our passage today, verses 20-35, we see that same three things unfold that C. S. Lewis talked about. We see those that view Jesus as a lunatic, those that view Jesus flat out as a liar, and those that worship Him as Lord. Join with me; we’ll look at our text right now, verse 20 of Mark chapter 3; “Then he went home, and the crowd gathered again, so that they could not even eat. And when his family heard it, they went out to seize him, for they were saying, ‘He is out of his mind.’ And the scribes who came down from Jerusalem were saying, ‘He is possessed by Beelzebul,’ and ‘by the prince of demons he casts out the demons.’ And he called them to him and said to 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 will not be able to stand. And if Satan has risen up against

himself and is divided, he cannot stand, but is coming to an end. But no one can enter a strong man's house and plunder his goods, unless he first binds the strong man. Then indeed he may plunder his house. Truly, I say to you, all sins will be forgiven the children of man, and whatever blasphemies they utter, but whoever blasphemes against the Holy Spirit never has forgiveness, but is guilty of an eternal sin'— for they were saying, 'He has an unclean spirit.' And his mother and his brothers came, and standing outside they sent to him and called him. And a crowd was sitting around him, and they said to him, 'Your mother and your brothers are outside, seeking you.' And he answered them, 'Who are my mother and my brothers?' And looking about at those who sat around him, he said, 'Here are my mother and my brothers! For whoever does the will of God, he is my brother and sister and mother.' ”

We see this interesting sandwich in our text this morning, verses 20-21, discussing and talking about the biological family of Jesus, and then this gap for the next several verses until the family comes back in at the very end, verses 31-35. So, this all comes together to show us how these different people groups are responding to Jesus. The first people group we see is His family as we've stated, and in verses 20-21, we see they're ashamed - Jesus' ashamed family. They're ashamed of Him. Jesus has, in an attempt to withdraw from this massive crowd to get with His disciples, been pressed by this crowd, back in verse 7. This crowd was pressing against Him, and He, actually, had the disciples get a boat for Him just in case He needed to separate physically from them since they might even harm Him with their crowding and pressing in on Him. This initial attempt to withdraw was followed by another attempt where Jesus took the followers that were with Him up upon the mountain, and that's where He finally was able to get away, and that's where He was, actually, able to appoint the twelve who'd be His disciples following after Him in the rest of the gospel.

It's after this, Jesus successfully withdrawing on the mountain, that He comes back down, and in verse 20 we read, "Then he went home..." And so we think where is home for Him? And this is, actually, a reference to the home we've already seen Him interacting with, which is the home of Peter and Andrew - and in Capernaum. This is back in Capernaum. This isn't in Nazareth. This is Capernaum, that city right on the Sea of Galilee. So, they go back home, and they're at this place, and what do we have? The crowd shows up again in verse 20; "...the crowd gathered again, so that they could not even eat." This isn't just a kind of a lower level of crowd that comes this

time. This is the same type of crowd. This is the same determined crowd that was pressing in on Him. It was so overwhelming that they can't even eat. They don't even have time to sit down and get space and, actually, eat some food. They are once again overwhelmed by the popularity of Jesus. This is what takes place, and it's almost like we go right back to the way things were back in chapter 3:7.

Notice the family is now introduced in verse 21; "And when his family heard it, they went out to seize him, for they were saying, 'He is out of his mind.'" Jesus' biological family, the ones living in Nazareth, not in Capernaum, not right on the Sea of Galilee, but a little off the Sea of Galilee, still in the region of Galilee in the north, but they hear of this, the word of Jesus' ministry and these crowds and the popularity and the fame is swarming Him, and they decide we need to act. We need to do something about this. And so your first thought is, well, yeah, if someone in your family becomes popular, don't you just jump on the bandwagon, enjoy it. That's a pretty amazing thing. That's what happens to the people now in our culture is they get popular, the family gets all excited because now they get to ride the train with these people to fame and success and money. As people go on these talent shows and these TV programs where they're singing and they're making their way to the top becoming famous, the family's right there endorsing, supporting, and riding the train to success with them. Not the case here. That's not what's happening. His family hears of this crowd and this popularity, and their action is to seize or to arrest Jesus "...saying, 'He is out of his mind.'" It's not quite the typical response.

As a reader, you're obviously curious. You're wondering, Jesus has done so much, what does His family think of Him? How are they responding to Him? We don't see a ton of mention of His biological family. What's going on? And Mark finally gives us a glimpse into that, and it's not what you would expect, and it's not excitement, it's not this joy. Instead, there's so much controversy in Jesus' ministry. There's these scribes and Pharisees and other people that're all back and forth on what they think and believe, and Jesus is making many people mad as well as happy; and all this controversy is, actually, not a good thing for the family. The family views this all negatively. And some people try and argue, well, maybe the family's coming to arrest Jesus and get Him out of there and protect Him for His own physical good, His own physical wellbeing. It sounds nice, but that's, really, not what 's taking place here. more than likely, the family is coming to seize

Jesus, arrest Him, because of the shame that He's bringing upon their name as a family. In a society where honor and shame were a big deal, this is how people operated. This was massive and of utmost importance to them. This was not acceptable. Jesus was on a path that would make them look bad. The more He was stirring the pot in His ministry, the more concerned His family becomes. So, they decide; this is what we need to do - we need to go - we need to remove Him from that situation because He is crazy. He's gone off the deep end. He's a lunatic.

And to be even more convinced of this, John chapter 7 gives us another interaction with Jesus and His family later on in His ministry. Here's how John 7:2-5 describes it; "Now the Jews' Feast of Booths was at hand. So his brothers said to him, 'Leave here and go to Judea, that your disciples also may see the works you are doing. For no one works in secret if he seeks to be known openly. If you do these things, show yourself to the world.' For not even his brothers believed in him." John tells us, "...not even [Jesus' own] brothers believed in him." They knew of His works. They knew what He was doing, and they said, yeah, why don't you go down to Jerusalem? Do some more miracles there. That's really cool - have fun, get more popularity. They make fun of Him. They mock Him. They're not excited for Jesus. They're not following Jesus. They're against Him. They view Him as a crazy man, a lunatic. This is the shortcoming of Jesus' biological family. They have this shortcoming of not being willing to accept all of who Jesus is. It's embarrassing. It's shameful, and so they decide we need to get away from this. Maybe there's aspects of Jesus - we want Him to just be a normal man, a normal carpenter in society, but when He starts to do these things and stirs up the pot and gets this controversy going, we can't have that. That's too far. They're not willing to accept all of who Jesus is, much in the same way many Christians are acting today in this world as well.

Are you willing to accept all of Jesus? And I don't just mean some aspect of Jesus that's really winsome because, surely, there are people that call themselves Christians, and they say I love Jesus - He has the best model of love and mercy and compassion - I mean, what an amazing person and mentor to look up to. Or, I love Jesus because He taught us tolerance; "Judge not, that you be not judged." Don't judge - I love that part of Jesus. Or, I love Jesus - He had the wonderful ethic of the Golden Rule; "And as you wish that others would do to you, do so to them." These are wonderful things about Jesus - so, yes, I love Jesus. The problem with just taking those

aspects of Jesus is even the world does that. You don't have to be a believer to like those things about Jesus. The world runs down that very same path and admires Jesus and puts Him on a pedestal for those things. They like those parts of Jesus, but will they accept all of who Jesus is, everything that Jesus does, everything that Jesus teaches? That's the rub. You must be willing to accept all of Jesus, not just a part of Him - the Jesus that loved others enough to tell them they need to repent, they're going to hell - the part of Jesus that preached this exclusive message that only through Him is there salvation, that He is the "...way, and the truth, and the life..." and no one else - the part of Jesus that was willing to actually suffer persecution and die. So, too, may His followers follow after that example and suffer.

These are the parts of Jesus that people don't want to talk about. These are the parts of Jesus that people don't want to accept, and for that reason, their logical conclusion is Jesus is a crazy madman. He's a lunatic. I'll except the nice things about Him, but these other things that are just a little too much for me, I can't accept. Well, in that case, you can't accept Jesus, at all. You're just like His family. You're no different than His family saying I'm ashamed of Jesus. I'm ashamed of parts of who He is and what He says. I'm ashamed of what He calls me to do. I'd rather brush that aside. I'd rather cover it up and make sure people don't see that. You're just like His family wanting to arrest Jesus, to suppress Him, to get Him out of the way, because He was out of His mind. You need to be willing to accept all of who Jesus is. If you can't, then you become just like this, where you believe Jesus to be madman, a lunatic.

At this point in our text, we have the break. We have the explanation of His family, and now in verse 22, we shift to a different response from a different people, and we'll come back to the family in verse 31. So, verse 22, we learn of this new group responding, these scribes - Jerusalem's accusing scribes as verse 22 states, "And the scribes who came down from Jerusalem were saying, 'He is possessed by Beelzebul,' and 'by the prince of demons he casts out the demons.'" This is a new group, and they are scribes from Jerusalem. In verse 22, we see their accusation. Their accusation is declared boldly, publicly, in front of all. This is their accusation in verse 22. We've seen the scribes before. We've talked about them, briefly so far in the gospel of Mark. These scribes are the experts in the Law, the lawyers. They're the ones that know everything and the meticulous details of following the Law. They set the tone spiritually for the nation of Israel. All right. They were the

ones that were the guides, the spiritual guides, of the nation. These were the go-to men as far as religious matters were concerned.

So, we've seen scribes before, but these scribes were different because we see they come from Jerusalem - they come from Jerusalem. We've seen scribes up in Galilee. We've see scribes up in the region up there where the synagogues are. But in Jerusalem, you have the temple. In Jerusalem, you have the priesthood. In Jerusalem, we have much more of prestige, a higher class there, that is dwelling in Jerusalem. So, it's these people in Jerusalem, and they send this delegation of scribes, and these scribes had a task to go up and to examine Jesus. We hear of this man drawing crowds in Galilee. Go up to Galilee. Watch Him. Take note, and decide what we think of Him. This was the delegation of scribes that went up to Jerusalem, and after examining Jesus, examining all these miracles that are recorded (and aren't even recorded that we know He did on top of this), after seeing these things in Jesus' Galilean ministry, this is the conclusion - this is their accusation that they make, " 'He is possessed by Beelzebul,' and 'by the prince of demons he casts out the demons.' " It's a bold claim - a bold claim from these Jesus leaders, these scribes, that are from Jerusalem. You see the term, "...Beelzebul..." The title, "...Beelzebul..." that's mentioned there really is synonymous for Satan, another title for Satan as the verse goes on to say, "...the prince of demons..." as he's labeled which we also know to be Satan.

And, as Jesus even responds in verse 23, "How can Satan cast out Satan?" ...He acknowledges their accusation correctly for what it is, that is, they're accusing Him of working with Satan, doing everything He's doing through the power of Satan and his demons; Jesus is demon possessed in this regard. It's interesting that they, actually, acknowledge the supernatural nature of Jesus. These scribes went up to Galilee, watched Jesus, and they didn't come away and say He's got some slight-of-hand. He's tricky. He knows what He's doing. He has His doubles in place. All right. He has His people lined up for His magic tricks. He knows what He's doing. No, their conclusion is He's doing supernatural things. Here is no naturalistic way to explain the miracles and the deeds of Jesus. So, they acknowledge the supernatural work of Jesus, but their conclusion is that this ability, this power, these miracles, are not done by the Holy Spirit working through Jesus, but by Satan, Satan working through Jesus. That is the bold accusation they throw publicly against Jesus.

Of course, we have a response from Jesus. In the following verses, Jesus responds, and He dismantles their accusation - the accusation dismantled - in verses 23- 27; “And he called them to him and said to 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 will not be able to stand. And if Satan has risen up against himself and is divided, he cannot stand, but is coming to an end.’” Jesus begins by just logically dealing with their claim. They’ve made this accusation that He’s working in league with Satan. Jesus says, okay, let me respond to that first. Let me just... let’s just talk about the logic of that for a second. Does that make sense that logically, something that actually upholds itself? And His response is obviously not. “How can Satan cast out Satan?” This would probably be the worst strategy ever. Satan - here he is - Satan, trying to rule over the world and blind people from seeing the gospel. Satan who’s causing people to be demon possessed, distracting them left and right, to give into their flesh, to follow the course of the world, to not see salvation found in God, and now he’s going to work against himself? He’s going to sabotage himself? It’s illogical.

It makes absolutely no sense; thus Jesus asks, “How can Satan cast out Satan?” And He brings up this picture, some images for us; think about a kingdom that’s divided against itself. Is that a good kingdom? Are those the most successful kingdoms ever? The ones that are divided, or the houses and the dynasties that are divided, are those the ones that live on forever? Absolutely not. A little bit of logic helps us understand. This is ridiculous, the claim that they’re making. Jesus is doing miracle after miracle. This isn’t just one miracle. These are multiple miracles of casting out demons and healing people, and you’re going to say all of that work is in tandem with Satan? He’s working with Satan? It makes no sense - absolutely against the work of Satan. You think about even in Old Testament history, how did the kingdoms do when they were divided? It’s terrible. They fell. Even think about Israel - David’s sin almost bringing the nation to a place where they divide. And then Solomon, his son, multiplying his sin so that the nation does, in fact, divide, and you have a northern and southern kingdom. And it’s not much longer after that, that both the northern and southern kingdom would be punished and taken into exile.

And people joke about this concept. I mean, how are you going to have a household with USC and UCLA fans? It’ll never work. All right. It’s a



divided household. It will never stand. Or, people even reference and think about Abraham Lincoln and leading our nation through a difficult time, and how Lincoln even drew on this logical concept unifying the states rather than dividing. Doesn't make any sense. First, this is Jesus' approach, let me just speak to the logic of your accusations scribes. Doesn't make any sense. It's ridiculous. How am I working with Satan when I'm doing everything that's completely against him? Doesn't add up at all. But also, notice in verse 27, Jesus states what actually is taking place. Clearly, Jesus's not in league with Satan. Instead, what is taking place is verse 27? "But no one can enter a strong man's house and plunder his goods, unless he first binds the strong man. Then indeed he may plunder his house." Satan is the strong man in this second parable here that Jesus sets up. Satan is the strong man that has all this authority over the world, that is leading nations and peoples astray. This is Satan and his work of deceiving unbelievers, and Jesus says, here I am invading this world and doing this work that is completely against Satan and his scheme and strategy. How is this happening? Is it because I made a treaty with Satan, and we're working together? No. It's happening because I bound Satan. I set him aside. I'm more powerful than him is what Jesus's saying. I bound Satan and set him aside so I can plunder his house and plunder his goods. As Jesus has come to set captives free, He has come to those who have been ensnared by Satan and these demons, to those that have been plagued by this illness and unbelief.

And Jesus has now set Satan aside, being stronger than him, to set these captives free as was prophesied about Him in the Old Testament, and as He continues to do that this day. Think of Colossians 1:13-14; "He has delivered us from the domain of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of his beloved Son, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins." We were all enslaved and captives in the domain of darkness, really, serving ourself in sin, but He yanked us out of that darkness and brought us into light, the kingdom of the Son. 2 Timothy 2:24-26 describes how we all were ensnared, ensnared by the devil. We've been captured by him to do his will, but God is about the business of releasing those captives from their sin, releasing those captives, those prisoners, from Satan, and that is how Jesus explains His ministry. My ministry is not one of compliance and working with Satan. My ministry is directly opposed to him. I'm demonstrating My absolute power and authority over him and this world as I set people free, as

I heal them, as I bring them forgiveness of sins and grant them salvation. Jesus obliterates their accusation and the logic behind it.

He continues though. There's more to His response that we find in verses 28-30. We see the danger of this accusation, the danger behind this accusation that has been made. Verses 28-30; " 'Truly, I say to you, all sins will be forgiven the children of man, and whatever blasphemies they utter, but whoever blasphemes against the Holy Spirit never has forgiveness, but is guilty of an eternal sin'— for they were saying, 'He has an unclean spirit.' " Jesus once again... just to begin in verse 28, He's speaking about the forgiveness of sins. We've already seen Him do this. Back in chapter 2, He made the claim that He has the authority to forgive sins. Jesus came demonstrating that in everything He did, and then speaking as well to the paralytic and forgiving him of his sins. Jesus has this authority. Jesus is God. He's not just mere man. He is God and has the authority, as God's Messiah, sent to the people. And He speaks in verse 28 again about this; "...all sins will be forgiven the children of man, and whatever blasphemies they utter..." Halleluiah! There is forgiveness. This is a reminder of who Jesus is - One who brings forgiveness. Despite the stupid things and the sinful things we've done, despite the wrong and careless words we've spoken, He brings forgiveness, and all sins will be forgiven. I mean, what a comforting thought. This reminds us of the verse and the hymn, "*It is Well*," where it states, "My sin, oh, the bliss of this glorious thought! My sin, not in part but the whole, is nailed to the cross, and I bear it no more, praise the Lord, praise the Lord, O my soul!" Jesus begins with this comforting thought of how forgiveness is offered no matter what's been said and what's been done. This is true for all the children of man. This is true for you and I. We enjoy this forgiveness because of Christ giving Himself up at the cross - Christ making the statement, knowing what He would do, to be the substitute on our behalf.

However, we have this shift in verse 29 that's troubling; "...but whoever blasphemes against the Holy Spirit never has forgiveness, but is guilty of an eternal sin..." See it doubly stated there. There's something for which there will never be forgiveness, and instead, guilt of eternal sin. This is concerning. This is the classic passage that is the unforgivable sin, the unpardonable sin, and many people have been troubled by this. What does this mean? Have I done this? ...today? ...last week? Have I done this at some point in my life? Am I guilty of this now? I will never have

forgiveness because of this blasphemy against the Holy Spirit? I'm guilty of this eternal sin? Is that true? This is the troubling text for many. As you work through it, just notice first, what causes Jesus to say this in verse 30. Why does He talk about this blasphemy of the Holy Spirit? In verse 30, He says, "...for they were saying, 'He has an unclean spirit.'" The entire context of all this is due to their accusation and explanation for what Jesus was doing. Their explanation for Jesus' amazing miracles and ministry is not the Holy Spirit, it's Satan. That was the claim they made, and Jesus had to warn and address them of this.

Keep in mind everything that had happen leading up to this statement. This delegation of scribes has been sent to go witness and to take part in watching Jesus' ministry; and Jesus has done miracle after miracle, countless miracles, there's no questioning. That's why they come to a conclusion that it is supernatural. That's why they don't come up with some other solution of some sort. Oh, yeah, that Jesus guy, he's just all about tricking people with his wording and the way he sets up in props. They don't go that route. They acknowledge that this is all supernatural in what He has done. Jesus has provided ample evidence of all these miracles, deeds, His power, His authority, that clearly shows He is the Messiah sent of God. There's no question about that and these scribes acknowledge all the supernatural in all of these evidences. Jesus is even willing to be patient and allow for misconceptions regarding who He is, and that happens throughout His ministry. Throughout His ministry, He understands that people will mistake Him. They won't understand. He even talks to His disciples about it over and over again, and He says, "Who do the crowds say that I am?" And the people are mixed. They think Jesus is another prophet. They think He's Jeremiah. They think He's John the Baptist come back from the dead.

There's all these different misconceptions, and Jesus says I will forgive all these people for their misconceptions about me, but when there is a misconception about the power by which I am doing My ministry, that is unforgivable. That is inexcusable. There should be no question about the very power by which I am doing My ministry and works. It should be a slam-dunk. You don't have to be a scribe. You don't have to be a Pharisee. You could be a simple fisherman. You could be a child. To watch Jesus and see His ministry unfold, there is a simple solution for what's taking place in front of your eyes. It's the Holy Spirit. It is God's Spirit working through Jesus, doing these things, and to think anything differently is inexcusable.

It's unpardonable. It's not forgivable. This is Jesus's statement to them because here are these men with all this evidence, more than they needed, more knowledge than they needed, witnessing Jesus doing this, and what's their best conclusion? "He has an unclean spirit." He is in league with Satan. He's working for the Prince of Demons. That's their conclusion? The scribes have made a decision. This isn't a careless word that was spoken that they wish they could take back. Oh, no, we didn't mean that. We really didn't. This was a settled condition. This was a mind-set that they had adopted and concluded. It was settled for them. We've examined this Jesus, and we want to go take the report back to Jerusalem, and here is the report. He's working with Satan. They've had the light right in front of them, and rather than taking time to consider and say we need to see more of Jesus, and we need more time to decide... they have the light, and they turn their back on it completely and embrace the darkness. They've made their decision. They've made up their mind.

The question now comes back to us. Can you... can you be guilty of this same unforgiveable blasphemy? Can you be guilty of this blasphemy against the Spirit today? I want to propose that the answer is no, you cannot. There are massive hurdles that we have to get past. First being, we don't live in the time of Jesus Christ. Jesus came to this earth two thousand years ago, and we have a two-thousand-year gap between Him and us. We were not these scribes. We weren't in their sandals to go and watch Jesus do miracle after miracle. We didn't witness the work of the Spirit specifically through the Son of God on this earth. That's not the case. We don't have that. There's this gap between us and this audience. Additionally, we don't have the luxury of Jesus with us to say when someone has committed the blasphemy of the Spirit. Jesus knowing the hearts of people, Jesus knowing what they're thinking and what they're deciding and concluding, He's able to actually say this one, this group, these people have committed this blasphemy, and they will not be forgiven. Only Jesus could do such a thing. In fact, even if someone has a concern today that they have committed this sin, this blasphemy against the Spirit, shows the very fact that they probably have not. Because the sin is a settled conclusion (it's a settled matter in one's mind) that Jesus and everything He did and is doing is through the power of Satan and not the Holy Spirit; but if someone questions and is concerned they might've done that, that shows they actually care, and they're not settled. So, how could this be for them.

Also, we need to ask several questions. If someone were to say that this blasphemy that's mentioned here could occur today, there's still a lot of questions we need to answer. For example, how much exposure to the Spirit does this person need before they can, actually, be qualified to commit this blasphemy? Do they need to come to church once? Do they need to come to church for over a year? ...to a Bible study? ...an active member of a Bible study? ...ten Christian friends? What's the level of involvement where they have ample exposure to the Holy Spirit, where, if they turn their back, then we can say, ah ha, there it is, they've committed the blasphemy of the Spirit? And what exactly needs to be done in order to commit this blasphemy? Is it just a statement that's made? Is it turning their back for extended period of time? And, how long is that time? If someone rejects God, how do we know it's not just temporary? How do we know it can't just be for a season of life, and all of a sudden God in His grace brings them back? We don't know these things. You're not Jesus. I'm not Jesus. We don't have the ability to see people's thoughts and hearts and decisions and know where they're at. It seems clear that, based on what Jesus is stating here, it is directly to the audience that was right there witnessing what He was doing.

But before you get so comfortable and think, whew, not me. You need to realize that the New Testament and the Bible speaks very strongly about this in a very parallel sense. Dale's been taking us through the book of Hebrews, and the book of Hebrews has very strong warnings that parallels this type of warning that Jesus gives. Just listen to Hebrews 6:4-6; "For it is impossible, in the case of those who have once been enlightened, who have tasted the heavenly gift, and have shared in the Holy Spirit, and have tasted the goodness of the word of God and the powers of the age to come, and then have fallen away, to restore them again to repentance, since they are crucifying once again the Son of God to their own harm and holding him up to contempt." The author of Hebrews still warns that people who have been exposed to the gospel, have been exposed to the work of the Spirit, and then they turn their back on it, they're in danger. That's a dangerous position to be in. No one should feel comfortable in that spot because they are in danger of falling completely from grace, being denied repentance.

Hebrews 10:26-27 was recently covered; "For if we go on sinning deliberately after receiving the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins, but a fearful expectation of judgment, and a fury of fire that will consume the adversaries." Not just the statement that might

be made, but someone that might even be in the midst of the church or still attending or still interacting and being exposed to the ministry of the Spirit, yet going out and sinning deliberately. You must beware. There is danger in that position. You should not feel comfortable in such a position. It's a fearful and terrible thing to fall into the hands of the living God. So, while you may not commit the exact blasphemy of the Holy Spirit that Jesus is speaking of here, the New Testament gives us plenty of warnings where we need to be on guard against our exposure to the work of the Spirit, to the word and the lives around us and what we do with it and how we respond. We must "...take heed lest [we also] fall." We are all candidates for such warnings because we've all been exposed to this. We need to decide. We need to land. Where will we be? Will we just take a part of Jesus and not the other parts, essentially calling Him a madman? Or, will we completely blaspheme Him and just come and show up and speak it on a Sunday and go away and sin deliberately - go down the path that we know is wrong and willfully continue down it, declaring Jesus essentially a liar. Those are the options. The final and correct option that we must strive for as a church is the option of actually bowing down to Jesus as Lord and Master of our lives.

And that's what we find in the end of our text. We see Jesus' actual family - Jesus' actual family - the actual family of God. You remember in our verses, verses 20-21, we discussed the family of Jesus biologically. How they viewed Him as a madman. Well, we pick up that family in verse 31; "And his mother and his brothers came, and standing outside they sent to him and called him. And a crowd was sitting around him, and they said to him, 'Your mother and your brothers are outside, seeking you.' And he answered them, 'Who are my mother and my brothers?' And looking about at those who sat around him, he said, 'Here are my mother and my brothers! For whoever does the will of God, he is my brother and sister and mother.' " Jesus takes this opportunity to declare those who have truly ordered and directed their life in such a way, view Jesus as Lord, as Master of all things - they're the ones here, the ones following Him, the ones that are there in the house before Him, hearing His teaching, dropping everything else in their life to be with Jesus - those are the ones that are truly in the family of God - those are the ones. He uses this as an object lesson. Who is My family? Right here, you guys, the ones that've made this decision, the one that have actually sacrificed and done something to change and reorder your life to follow Me, God's Son the Messiah. This is the object lesson of who the true family of

God is. Jesus' biological family comes to try and protect His social status, prevent further shaming of His name and their name as a family, selfishly.

And then, Jesus uses the opportunity to highlight those who are truly in the family of God, those who do the will of God. So, what does it mean to do the will of God? First of all, it's impossible to do the will of God if you're not saved. Hebrews 11:6 makes this clear; "And without faith it is impossible to please him, for whoever would draw near to God must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who seek him." This is the foundation. You cannot be in the family of God - you cannot be considered a brother or sister of Jesus - you can't be in this family, and you can't do His will if you have not come to the place where you are surrendered before God. You need to acknowledge that you, on your own, can do nothing, and you need Christ. You need Christ to cover you. You need Christ to forgive you of all of your sins. You need Christ's life, and you need His death on your behalf. When you surrender everything you are to who Christ is, at that moment, you can now live in such a way as to do the will of God.

And what does it look like to do the will of God? In a parallel account in Luke 8:21, we see Luke's version of this text; "But he answered them, 'My mother and my brothers are those who hear the word of God and do it.' " If you truly have bowed your life before Christ, if you have exercised faith and surrender in who He is as your Master, then you will be this person who does the will of God by hearing His word and implementing it as well, doing it in your life. How will you respond to Jesus? Are you just going to continue to pick and choose, take parts of Jesus that you like and ignore the other parts? If you do that, you're declaring Him a madman and a lunatic. Are you going to continue to be a part of this club of the church and then go out and sin willfully and deliberately? If you do that, you're declaring Him to be a liar. Or, will you give up everything of who you are in order to come before Him, follow after Him, hear His word and do His word, performing His will? May you choose to affirm Christ as Lord, not just today, but every day from here on out.