

“Who is Jesus?”

Mark 3:20-35

Introduction - Who is Jesus??? – Your opinion?

- All of us have strong opinions
 - We love to pretend that we are real open minded
 - But in reality we are only open minded about that which we really don't care about

Now - don't yell out, don't embarrass yourself - don't raise your hand, just search your heart

- Coke or Pepsi???? – you have an opinion! – “I do not - I don't drink either of those two poisons” – and you prove my point – you have an opinion
 - Myself – Diet Coke – I feel so strongly about that - If I was stuck on a deserted island with a case of diet Pepsi I would rather dehydrate – I have nothing against the company or people that work for it – its just a taste thing with me – I have an opinion
 - Some of you feel strongly the opposite

Again no showing of hands but I know

- some of you think it is too hot in here right now
 - and yet some of you think it's too cold – those of you fanning yourself must think – no one could think that – but you don't see what I see – I see the people, the people who brought in blankets
 - I hear both after almost every service

Is the music too loud? - or do we need to turn it up?

- Again, I hear both after almost every service
 - And I won't even dare start asking opinions about sports teams or politics

Yeah pastor Jason you shouldn't, the diet coke thing was funny, but if you have a different opinion that I do on my favorite sports team or political candidate, then I will start another opinion poll – “who would rather hear from Pastor Rob right now – raise your hand”

- Don't actually raise your hand, this is an illustration – now you are just hurting my feelings – (a name??)

We have opinions – and your opinion will be very different than someone else's

- I will never forget the day two families left the church in Paris Texas
 - The first sent me a very nice email that said, we have been visiting for a couple of months, but have decided that you are just not energetic enough for us – I still have this email if you don't believe me – because I didn't believe it – not energetic enough? – Where do you normally go to church was my question?
- But that same day a family took me out to lunch and said, look we believe in what you are doing here, we love your commitment to the Word, but

we just can't handle all the energy from the pulpit, we know you are not trying to disrespect the pulpit, but it's hard for us to get over our traditions of a what a pastor is supposed to look like and act like

- Too much energy, not enough energy

That is why personally I have given up trying to change

- maybe you have sent me an email about something I do that you don't like and I keep doing it, and you wonder why, "didn't he listen to me", but what you don't realize is probably I got another email for someone else who said, I love it when you do that
 - because all have opinions

Now, it doesn't matter eternally what your opinion is on Coke or Pepsi

- it matters to me, but eternally I don't think it makes a difference
 - It doesn't really matter your opinion on worship styles, preaching styles, who you want to win the world series (Dodgers)
 - But – it does matter on who you believe Jesus to be
 - That is an opinion that is so critical

And this morning as we open up the Word of God, we are going to see three opinions of who people believed Jesus to be?

- and it is so important this morning, to not just listen to the study and think, "oh, good points" – it is critical that you think through, what is your opinion of Jesus? - Who do you say Jesus is?

3 Opinions

#1 – Jesus was Crazy – Mark 3:20-21

#2 – Jesus was Evil – Mark 3:22-30

#3 – Jesus was Lord – Mark 3:31-35

- let's consider these one at a time this morning

3 Opinions

#1 – Jesus was Crazy – Mark 3:20-21 – He is crazy!!!

- the indication of the text especially when you compare this to parallel passages in Matthew and Luke is his "own people" as it says in Mark 3:21 were his family members
 - they came to **"lay hold of him" – this means they came to arrest Him**
- his brothers, his sisters had heard the things He has said, they were watching the crowds begin to swell as well as the anger of the religious leaders –
 - they had come with a plan to take Jesus away

They wanted to let Him live out his delusional fantasies somewhere where He wouldn't be hurt

- Now this brings up a couple of questions – first of all why would Jesus' own family do this to him?
 - And I think the answer is – they loved Him, they worried about Him

- I can just hear his Mom right now, “What?? Jesus didn’t even get to eat, He is going to kill Himself with all of this – James, Jude, go and get him, bring Him to Momma”
- Can’t you hear it too? You can because most of you have a momma who would say the same thing

I remember when Christy and I were leaving doing youth ministry here to go plant the church in Texas, Christy’s parents, my wife’s parents, who at the time had just left to plant a church in Israel was harping on us

- What are you going to do for job?
 - What are you going to do for insurance?
 - And Christy would say to her Mom – I don’t know, you guys who had enough money to live for two months in Israel and going on two years now – what did you do about all those things?
 - But to Momma – logic doesn’t apply – because that is her baby
- Same thing happening here – they love Jesus – they don’t want Him to be overworked by the crowds or persecuted by the religious leaders

But even this brings up another question – why didn’t His family believe in Him

- I mean if anyone is going to know whether you are really God or not, wouldn’t it be your brothers, those who shared a room with you?

Well – first of all understand that they would come to believe in Him

- most Bible scholars believe that James who wrote the New Testament books of James and Jude who wrote that little one chapter book toward the end of the bible were Jesus’ brothers
 - same guys who here in chapter 3 of Mark are trying to get Jesus under wraps, thinking He is crazy
 - they would later become great leaders of the early church

But why not at first?

- well – can you image growing up with Jesus as a brother?
 - oh – it would be so wonderful – no, you that really had brothers, think that through
 - your mom always saying to you – why can’t you be like Jesus? – ah Mom why are you comparing me to Him, its not like he’s God– well – oh come on Mom, my brother is God
- Jesus would have never done anything wrong, that would wear on you as brother
 - And we know Jesus could wrestle, just ask Jacob in the book of Genesis – did Jesus ever pull that move on James or Jude
- I have got you now Jesus – ah my hip, Dad, he touched my hip again – “he just touched it” – yeah, but it came out of joint, “by Him just touching it” – Joseph must have said - Hey Jude, take a sad song and make it better, man up

It would have been frustrating to grow up with Jesus as your older brother - And so it is not amazing to me that James and Jude had problems at first believing in Jesus, their pride, no doubt got in the way

- But what is amazing to me, is that one day they did

Because again if anyone could say, “He is not the son of God, I remember when he stole that money from Mom’s purse. I remember when He got drunk when Mom and Dad were out of town” – His brothers could have said that

- but they didn’t, because they knew, as much as it must have irritated them as young men, Jesus never sinned

So they would eventually believe in Him, serve Him

- but here in our story, they still think He’s crazy, they think He is out of His mind
 - and I point that out to you, because I think though we don’t phrase it that way, that this opinion is where most people are at concerning their opinion of Jesus

It is so common to hear people say, “Christ was good man, the greatest of men, a wonderful teacher of moral principals, but God? – I don’t think so

- and when you point out passages where Jesus clearly says He is God
 - then you get responses like – well He was just “mistaken about who He was”
 - which is a nice way of saying – He is crazy!
- I mean if I said to you – Hi I’m Jason, I created the Universe, made it in my basement – none of you would say – ah Jason is just mistaken about who He is – that is so cute
 - No – you would say “He is crazy”
 - And you probably wouldn’t want to hear any of my good moral teaching
- Because if some think they are God, they are not mistaken, they are crazy!

And that was opinion of Jesus’ family at this point and though we may sugar coat it, it truly is the opinion of those in our day who say, ah Jesus was good moral teacher, a great man, He was just mistaken when He said He was God

- what they are saying in my opinion – Jesus was crazy! – Some have that opinion
 - Now that wasn’t the only opinion of Jesus that day

3 Opinions

#1 – Jesus was Crazy – Mark 3:20-21

#2 – Jesus was Evil – Mark 3:22-30

- the religious leaders came – oh man, not these guys again

- you remember these guys – they were the experts on the law of God
- They were the ones given the commission to check out the teaching of Rabbis, like Jesus
- And they have come with a verdict
 - Now they already made up their minds, because there was no interview with Jesus, no checking up with His disciples
 - No – they just decided – Jesus is possessed and He is doing these miracles by the power of Satan
 - they believe He is possessed and being controlled by the ruler of demons

The reason they had this opinion though if you think about was because they could not deny the miracles

- The context of Mark chapter 3 is given more detail in Matthew 12 - Jesus had just healed blind man and loosed the tongue of one who could not speak – and He did in front of everyone
 - They could not deny what they had seen

In fact it is one of the great apologetics concerning Jesus that His detractors didn't ignore him – we have people come around here all the time who believe they are Jesus, but we don't make a big deal of it, because we know they are not

- we don't bring up on stage and declare, this man says he is Jesus, what do you think, congregation
 - we don't do that, because we know, so we don't make a big deal – oh, you're Jesus okay, love you buddy, let me pray for you – that is what we do

But in Jesus' case, they didn't just ignore Him, because they couldn't deny the works they saw

- they couldn't ignore Him, so they attacked Him, saying that what Jesus did, He did by the power of Satan
 - and the indication of the text is they were saying Jesus was whispering under his breath, "Beelzebub" which is a name they had for the ruler of demons
 - so basically they are accusing Jesus of being a common sorcerer of dark arts
- We can't deny the powerful miracles we see, but Jesus is doing them by the power of Satan

Now Jesus answers their verdict by doing two things

- First of all He shows how ridiculous their logic is
 - Why would Satan cast out Satan?
 - Why would Satan say, I know how to defeat God, I will cast all my evil demons out of people setting them free – that will do it

- Jesus must of have been thinking – and they think I’m crazy – these cats are crazy – a house divided against itself can not stand – that’s not going to work

Jesus goes on to say to them, if you are going to bind the strongman, which is what He was doing in casting out demons, then you have to be stronger than the strong man

- I mean doesn’t that make sense?
 - If some muscle bound thug comes up to you in the parking lot, demanding your wallet, what do you want at that moment?
- I don’t know what you want, but I would want about five bigger thugs who love Jesus to come and help

I want someone stronger

- and by the way, I just believe this is the Word for someone here today
 - do you realize this is what Jesus is saying, He is saying - I am stronger than the strong man
 - I am able to deal with what you are up against
 - Jesus is saying – I’m the real strong man!

Now that strikes some of you as strange because you grew up with this image of Jesus as a long haired hippy who wears a dress

- And when you need a strong man Jesus doesn’t seem to fit the bill
 - He can come and pray for me after the strong man beats me up – but stronger than the strong man – I don’t know about the guy in the dress

But we need to change our thinking

- When my family and I were on vacation, we drove passed this church that had on the outside of building a picture of the stereotypical emaciated Swedish Jesus who looks like if you sneeze on him He would die
 - And my son says – who is that? – and I said, well that is supposed to be Jesus
 - And Jonathan says – No it isn’t! – I love that because he is absolutely right

No it isn’t

- Jesus is the strong man
 - And some of you need to know that – because I don’t know what you are up against
 - I don’t know what sin or addiction
 - I don’t know what trial has you against the wall
 - I don’t know what demonic force is ragging against you and your family
- But you listen to me – you don’t need holy water, some man made system or ghost busters – you need the real strong man, you need Jesus

- You need to say – Jesus I can't deal with this sin
- Jesus I can't deal with this addiction
- Jesus I can't deal with this trial that is before me
- Jesus I can't deal with the demonic oppression I sense against my family
- So Jesus – You are the strong man – would You come and deal with this for me
- And I will worship, I will honor You – I need You Jesus to be strong in my life!!!
- Some of you need to hear this today
- You are trying to deal with sin on your own – what are you doing? - you need a Savior
 - You are trying to overcome addiction by your great self discipline – ah hello, there is a reason you are addicted – you have no self discipline – you need a Savior
 - And friends that is who Jesus is – He is strong!

Jesus shows these guys the ridiculousness of their verdict and then He gives them a warning

- He warns them not to commit the unforgivable sin
 - He warns them not to blaspheme the Holy Spirit
 - Now what in the world is that? Because it sounds like something none of us want to do

What is the unforgiveable sin? – Easy to understand, write this down – drinking Pepsi

- just kidding, some of you guys get so intense about me teaching, I just like to mess with those of you who have heresy detectors out
 - no – the unforgiveable sin is not drinking Pepsi
 - but what is it? – we need to understand

I have heard so many different teachings on this I don't know where to start

- I have heard the unforgivable sin is suicide because you can't ask forgiveness for your sin, therefore it can't be forgiven
 - I have heard that divorce is the unforgivable sin because it is the one sin God says He hates (which that isn't true, Proverbs 6 has a list of seven things the Lord hates, and that list is not exhaustive, just poetic to have seven)
 - God hates all sin, loves sinners, but hates all sin because of what sin does – anyway– but that is what I have heard taught before
- I have heard people say that when you attribute miracles to man instead of God, then God will not forgive that – for example when you watch certain TV evangelist healing people and you question is that God or are they faking it – be careful, you are about to commit the unforgivable sin

Now don't misunderstand me – each of those things, suicide, divorce, being quick to dismiss works of God without checking into what is really going on, all of those are things we want to avoid in our lives

- but as far as those things being the one unforgivable sin I don't see the basis for that in Scripture
 - So then what is the unforgivable sin, what is the blasphemy of the Holy Spirit???

To understand what the blasphemy of the Holy Spirit is, we need to understand what the Holy Spirit has been sent to do in this world and in our hearts

- in John chapter 16 Jesus is comforting His disciples at the idea that He is leaving

“Nevertheless I tell you the truth. It is to your advantage that I go away; for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you; but if I depart, I will send Him to you. And when He has come, He will convict the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment: of sin, because they do not believe in Me;” – John 16:7-9

- Jesus lets His disciples know, it is actually to your advantage that I leave, because when I go, I am going to send the Holy Spirit, not to be just in the world as He has been, but to actually dwell in your hearts and to lead you from within
 - but in this explanation Jesus lets the disciples and us know what the purpose of the Holy Spirit is in the world, to everyone, not just Christians
- And that main work of the Holy Spirit in the world, is to convict the world of sin
 - Now notice not sins, (plural) not the sins of divorce or suicide or lying - But sin – singular

In other Words the Holy Spirit's mission to the world is to convict them of their sin, the sin that they are separated from God, that they don't have a Savior

- that is the Holy Spirit's mission in this world, to lead people to Jesus and a relationship with Him and the forgiveness His death on the cross affords
 - so then to blaspheme the Holy Spirit is to reject that work in your life, or in other words to never receive Jesus as your Savior

And that makes sense to me, that is a sin that can not be forgiven - “the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin.” – I John 1:7

- you see it says in I John 1:7 that the blood of Jesus Christ, cleanses a man from all sin
 - and in Greek all means all and that is all that all means

- all sin – when you received Jesus as your Savior, His blood cleansed all your sin, the sin that was in the past, the sin in the present and the sin in your future

Of course we need to repent, but the reason we need to repent is the word repent is “homolego”, homo meaning the same, lego meaning word, it means to agree with God that what I did was sin

- Repentance is protection from future sin, it is restorative to a relationship with God that has been hindered, but it does not save you a fresh
 - The Blood of Jesus Christ has cleansed you and me from all our sin

And so it makes sense that as long as you have not resisted the Holy Spirit’s work to lead you to a genuine relationship with God, meaning you have asked for God to forgive your sin by the blood of the cross

- there is no sin that can not be forgiven
 - except that one, not doing that in the first place
- you see precious men and women – when you get to heaven you are not going to have to explain why you took that candy bar when you were 8 or why you lied to your Mom when you were 16 – the issue will not be your sins, it will be your sin, whether or not you have yielded to the Holy Spirit’s work in your heart to ask Jesus to cleanse you from all sin
 - to not do that is truly unforgivable!!!!

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Jesus’ mother and brothers are still trying to get to Him

- and the crowds pass the word along
 - Jesus – Your mother, Your brothers, they are looking for You

And Jesus says something that would have been shocking to that audience

- “who is My mother or My brothers?”
 - These would have been shocking words in any culture, dismissing your mother, but in Hebrew culture, that so emphasized the family, it was even worse

So what did He mean?

- #1 - He was not cutting family ties – for at the cross Jesus arranged for the care of His mother – He cared for His biological family deeply

What He did mean is there is a deeper kinship than blood, there is a spiritual kinship characterized by obedience

- Jesus said of His relationship to His heavenly Father in – **“My food is to do the will of Him who sent Me” – John 4:34**
 - Every beat of the heart of Christ was given to perform the Father’s will. This was essential to His experience of “family”
- And the same thing is true for us

Alexander Maclaren paraphrases this verse as, “Whoever does God’s will is and feels himself to be my brothers and my sister” – Alexander Maclaren

You see - obedience to the Lordship of Jesus, doesn’t save you, doesn’t produce grace, but what it does produces in us a sense of family

- You are my Father in heaven
 - You are my Lord
 - Because I am following Your will for me

And you see church here is the lesson

- we all have to come to an opinion of who Jesus is to us?
 - We must decide!!!! – Jesus asked His disciples – “Who do you say that I am”
 - To quote the often quoted words of CS Lewis on this subject...

“I’m trying here to prevent anyone from saying the really silly 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’s the one thing we mustn’t say. A man who was merely a man and said the sort of thing Jesus said wouldn’t be a great moral teacher. He’d either be a lunatic, on the level with the man who says he’s a poached egg – or else he’d 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 as a demon; or you can fall at His feet and call Him Lord and God. But don’t let us come with any patronizing nonsense about His being a great human teacher. He hasn’t left that open to us. He didn’t intended to.” – C.S. Lewis – “The Case for Christianity”

We have to make a choice!

- Who was Jesus?
 - Was He crazy? – I wouldn’t say that – well if you are saying, He was just mistaken, you are

Is it your opinion He was Evil?

- Oh I would never – well if you infer that Jesus did know He wasn’t God, but lead people to believe that He was
 - Wouldn’t you say that would be pretty evil and sinful?
 - Friends it is pretty clear

Jesus was either Crazy, or Evil

- or if you like me say, no way, not those two things
 - well then – if He wasn’t crazy, self diluted
 - if He wasn’t purposely misleading people
 - then there is only one more option
 - then He was Lord

The Lord wants you to have an opinion on this

- and just like that day in Capernaum Jesus looked around the circle
 - and the indication of the text is Jesus was searching their hearts
 - Who are My brothers sitting here, who are My sisters?
 - Who is really with Me?
- Not just those who say religious stuff
 - But Jesus said, those who do My will

You see gang, we need to have an opinion

- and we will express our opinion
 - not in words, but in actions
 - So don't be like those whose opinion was Jesus was crazy
 - He was not crazy – He knew exactly who He was
- Don't be like those religious leaders who said, He is evil, He is doing these things by the power of Satan
 - Jesus was not evil, He was not deceiving folks

And so there is one more option – He is Lord

- and He is worthy for you to have that opinion and express it by doing your Father's will