

Accusations**Mark 3:20-30**Children's Message: Finger Pointing

How does this picture make you feel?

What do you think this picture is about?

Blaming, Accusing.

We know how it feels to have a finger pointed at us.

We need to think twice before pointing our finger at someone else.

Adults: Mark 3:20-30

²⁰ Then Jesus entered a house, and again a crowd gathered, so that he and his disciples were not even able to eat. ²¹ When his family heard about this, they went to take charge of him, for they said, "He is out of his mind."

²² And the teachers of the law who came down from Jerusalem said, "He is possessed by Beelzebul! By the prince of demons he is driving out demons."

²³ So Jesus called them over to him and began to speak to them in parables: "How can Satan drive out Satan? ²⁴ If a kingdom is divided against itself, that kingdom cannot stand. ²⁵ If a house is divided against itself, that house cannot stand. ²⁶ And if Satan opposes himself and is divided, he cannot stand; his end has come. ²⁷ In fact, no one can enter a strong man's house without first tying him up. Then he can plunder the strong man's house. ²⁸ Truly I tell you, people can be forgiven all their sins and every slander they utter, ²⁹ but whoever blasphemes against the Holy Spirit will never be forgiven; they are guilty of an eternal sin."

³⁰ He said this because they were saying, "He has an impure spirit."

Misunderstood by Family & Friends

Jesus has become very well known

He can't even sit down for a meal with his disciples.

It's like paparazzi.

But something worse happens.

Some translations call them "family" others say "associates"

The Greek is "those who were beside him" implying those close to him.

They thought he was "beside himself", meaning he was out of his head.

It is painful when people not only misunderstand you

but make assumptions about you.

It hurts when it's a stranger but perhaps even more when it is family or friend.

Jesus knows how this feels like.

Share a time when you were misunderstood and how it felt.

But we too make assumptions, misunderstand.

We too need to be careful and caring of others in this way.

To have all the facts and not assume we know and give unsolicited advice.

Accused by Enemies

We also know Jesus had enemies.

Ever since he started giving a different understanding of the Sabbath.

When he started healing and driving out demons and teaching.

We don't necessarily make enemies.

They make themselves.

The Pharisees were insecure, proud, threatened, controlling.

And so they did what any person would do when feeling threatened.

They made accusations.

They spread lies and rumours.

They said Jesus was in league with the devil.

Ouch.

We too lash out at those we feel threatened by.

This is a two way street.

We vilify what makes us uncomfortable.

It is easier to do that than to try to understand.

It takes more energy, more thoughtfulness, more patience, more love.

But enemies never spend extra time to do that

- they simply justify their attitude by labelling and writing off and bringing others onside. It makes them feel they are in the right.

"Jesus is in league with the devil"

Sometime we are also tempted to say things about others, even of God.

Children say to their parents: "You hate me!" when they don't get their way.
 We may say, "God you don't care about me!"
 It is our way to stay in the right.
 It is something we do and it is something that is done to us.

Response to Misunderstanding, Assumptions and Accusations

Jesus keeps a level head and simply, logically responds.
 "A house divided against itself cannot stand."
 In other words, "Why would the devil fight himself?"
 It makes no sense.
 He exposes that they are really reaching and making things up.

For us too we need to handle accusations in the same way.
 We aren't Jesus!
 Sometimes correction and constructive criticism can sound like accusation.
 The only way to sort this out is by taking what is said
 and honestly reflecting on it.
 We need friends who will tell us the truth.
 We need elders and mentors in the faith who we can go to.
 "Am I really that irresponsible, immature? Is that really a sin?"
 We don't need people to make us feel good.
 We need people who will love us, have mercy on us but tell us the truth.
 It doesn't help to fly off the handle.
 The we are able to determine whether there is merit to what is said.

Understanding the "Unforgivable Sin"

Jesus also comments that there is grace for a lot of slander and sin.
 But that sinning against the Holy Spirit is "unforgivable" and will face "eternal judgement."

This is known as the unforgivable sin.
 The word unforgivable in Greek is literally, "Not let go"
 Another way to read this is to say, this will not be allowed to pass.
 The NLT translates the second part nicely too, "has eternal consequences."
 Saying the work of God is in fact the work of the devil
 is not something that is tolerable and it will be addressed.
 If you are going to say that God is the devil,
 those words are so wrong, corrupt and perverse the one who believe them
 cannot ever be in relationship with God.
 In other words, to say good is evil, precludes themselves from forgiveness.
 In practical terms it is this:
 A person who refuses to speak the truth or face the truth,

Who insists on telling a lie or even believing a lie,
is unsalvageable.

But also this: only when they remain in that state of incorrigibility.

Satanism is one such religion.

Satan is the hero and God is the villain in Satanism.

But I know of people who have been saved out of Satanism.

While they are in the state of belief that cannot be saved.

Only when they let go of that delusion are they able to be saved.

We need to stop assuming about others and be more inquisitive.

This actually means getting to know what is in the heart of another person.

This is what makes us friends, brothers and sisters.

I will, however, also add this:

There are certain people I cannot have as friends.

Our relationship is impossible because they do not see me.

They continue to assume, to misunderstand and even accuse wrongly.

This I will not and cannot abide.

Neither can God.

Ultimately, God never assumes nor misunderstands.

When he brings conviction to us, he does it out of love and concern.

A Prayer of St. Francis

Lord, make me an instrument of Thy peace;

Where there is hatred, let me sow love;

Where there is injury, pardon;

Where there is doubt, faith;

Where there is despair, hope;

Where there is darkness, light;

And where there is sadness, joy.

O Divine Master, grant that I

May not so much seek to be consoled as to console;

To be understood, as to understand;

To be loved, as to love;

For it is in giving that we receive,

It is in pardoning that we are pardoned,

And it is in dying

That we are born to Eternal Life.

Amen.