

**First Baptist Church Merritt Island**  
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**Two Essential Questions**  
**Mark 3:13-35**

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Life is filled with questions. Every day of our lives, we are asking and answering questions.

- What am I going to eat for breakfast?
- What am I going to wear to church?
- What am I going to eat for lunch?
- How can I get there without driving on Courtenay Parkway?

We are constantly asking and answering questions. And some questions are significantly more important than others. Take the question, “Will you marry me?” The implications of that question are massive. Few things impact our lives more than the person we choose to marry. So, while life is filled with questions, some questions are more important than others.

And there are two, essential questions that are infinitely more important than any other questions we will ever ask or answer. More important than where you will live or what job you will have or if you will get married. The two essential questions are:

- Who do you say Jesus is?
- Who does Jesus say you are?

Nothing will have a greater impact on your life and your eternal destiny than those two questions. Every significant thing in life and death hinges on your answer to those two questions. And the reason I bring them up is that they are at the center of our text for this morning. As a matter of fact, those two questions are so central to our text, they help us form our big idea:

**Big Idea: Nothing is more important than what you think about Jesus and what Jesus thinks about you.**

So, as we read our text, I want to encourage you to look for how those two dynamics are present...what people think about Jesus and what Jesus thinks about people.

**Mark 3:13–35 (ESV)**

**13 And he went up on the mountain and called to him those whom he desired, and they came to him. 14 And he appointed twelve (whom he also named apostles) so that they might be with him and he might send them out to preach 15 and have authority to cast out demons. 16 He appointed the twelve: Simon (to whom he gave the name Peter); 17 James the son of Zebedee and John the brother of James (to whom he gave the name Boanerges, that is, Sons of Thunder); 18 Andrew, and Philip, and Bartholomew, and Matthew, and Thomas, and James the son of Alphaeus, and Thaddaeus, and Simon the Zealot, 19 and Judas Iscariot, who betrayed him. 20 Then he went home, and the crowd gathered again, so that they could not even eat.**

**21 And when his family heard it, they went out to seize him, for they were saying, “He is out of his mind.” 22 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.” 23 And he called them to him and said to them in parables, “How can Satan cast out Satan? 24 If a kingdom is divided against itself, that kingdom cannot stand. 25 And if a house is divided against itself, that house will not be able to stand. 26 And if Satan has risen up against himself and is divided, he cannot stand, but is coming to an end. 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. 28 “Truly, I say to you, all sins will be forgiven the children of man, and whatever blasphemies they utter, 29 but whoever blasphemes against the Holy Spirit never has forgiveness, but is guilty of an eternal sin”— 30 for they were saying, “He has an unclean spirit.” 31 And his mother and his brothers came, and standing outside they sent to him and called him. 32 And a crowd was sitting around him, and they said to him, “Your mother and your brothers are outside, seeking you.” 33 And he answered them, “Who are my mother and my brothers?” 34 And looking about at those who sat around him, he said, “Here are my mother and my brothers! 35 For whoever does the will of God, he is my brother and sister and mother.”**

In this section of Mark’s account of the life of Jesus, he is stacking several stories together to make a point. The stories have to do with what people are saying about who Jesus is and what Jesus is saying about certain groups of people.

As a matter of fact, there is a famous statement from C. S. Lewis’ book, *Mere Christianity*, that I almost shared a few weeks ago. And as I studied our text this week, I felt certain it was the foundation for what Lewis had to say about Jesus.

*“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 the 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, *Mere Christianity**

Lunatic, Liar, or Lord. There’s really no other choice. And all three are found in our text.

## WHO IS JESUS?

1. Some say Jesus is a Lunatic.

**20 Then he went home, and the crowd gathered again, so that they could not even eat. 21 And when his family heard it, they went out to seize him, for they were saying, “He is out of his mind.”**

This is wild. Jesus' earthly family members hear that the crowds are gathering around Jesus and evidently, they are hearing the claims that Jesus is making. And they think He has gone crazy. Now, I take this to primarily be a reference to the earthly half-brothers of Jesus. Mary knew that Jesus was the Messiah who had been conceived by the Holy Spirit as the Son of God. But John 7:5 tells us her other children didn't believe in Jesus.

So, they head out to deal with Jesus. Verse 21 says they intended to seize Him. That word "seize" means to take control of, or forcibly take hold of something. It's a word that was used to refer to arresting someone. His brothers thought He was so far off base that they wanted to take control of Him and confine Him to their designated space.

And I realize few people in this room would come right out and say that they think Jesus is crazy or that He needs to be put in His place. But I want to caution you not to dismiss this mindset too quickly as though you couldn't possibly have anything like this in your heart toward Jesus.

There are plenty of things Jesus says in the Bible that people are tempted to respond to like He's crazy.

- Jesus says that it's better for us to give away a generous portion of our income rather than keep 100% for ourselves...and plenty of people live like that's crazy talk...are you one of them?
- Jesus says that sexuality is only to be expressed between one man and one woman in the covenant of marriage...and plenty of people live like that's crazy talk...are you one of them?
- Jesus says that children should honor and obey their parents, that employees should honor and obey their bosses, and that citizens should honor and obey their governing leaders so long as those people aren't commanding you to dishonor or disobey God...and plenty of people live like that's crazy talk...are you one of them?

We might not come right out and say that Jesus was a lunatic, but plenty of things Jesus said seem crazy to our natural way of thinking. Even more, many people act like they care about Jesus but live like He needs to be put in His place. Are there any things or decisions or dynamics about your life where you don't want Jesus to completely and totally tell you what to do or how to live? If so, then you're attempting to say that's a place where Jesus doesn't belong, in other words, you're attempting to put Jesus in His place. Don't assume that you are immune to living like you think Jesus was out of left field and needs to be put in His place. Let's keep reading.

2. Some say Jesus is a Liar.

***22 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."***

From the beginning of our study of Mark, we've seen how Jesus cast out demons and miraculously healed people of their diseases. And we've seen how that put the religious leaders on the spot. They had to respond to Jesus because they couldn't deny His miraculous power. And rather than acknowledge that He was working in the power of God's Spirit, they said He was working under the

power of the Devil himself. In other words, they were saying Jesus was a complete fraud who was in cooperation with Satan. And notice how Jesus responds.

**23 And he called them to him and said to them in parables, “How can Satan cast out Satan? 24 If a kingdom is divided against itself, that kingdom cannot stand. 25 And if a house is divided against itself, that house will not be able to stand. 26 And if Satan has risen up against himself and is divided, he cannot stand, but is coming to an end. 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.**

Jesus says that’s absolutely ridiculous. Why would Satan empower someone to defeat him? No kingdom, not even the kingdom of darkness, would be able to stand in opposition to itself. In verse 27, He says that if a strong man has been bound and defeated, it’s because a stronger man has entered the picture. Essentially, Jesus is saying that the reason He can defeat demonic powers is because He is stronger than Satan Himself. He’s God, which means it is blasphemous to say that He is in any way evil or satanic. We’ll come back to this in a minute.

And I know it might sound like a stretch to say that anyone would treat Jesus as though He is evil. But just think about what we are seeing all over our world.

- Billions of people live in nations where it is illegal, and often a capital crime, to become follower of Jesus. What is that but treating Jesus like He is evil?
- All over our world, Christian ethics and biblical morality are under attack.
- Abortion access...in many polls, it seems the majority of Americans think it is wrong to remove access to abortion. So, people who fight to protect the lives of the unborn are spoken of and treated as though we are evil or hateful.
- Just last month, Minnesota passed a law that opens the door for children to be taken from parents who hinder their kids from receiving “gender-affirming care” – which includes everything from hormone treatments to surgeries. So, parents who hold to the ethic Jesus taught in Scripture - namely that God has made children male or female...and that God has given parents the sacred responsibility and God-ordained authority to raise their children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord – those parents will be treated as though their commitment to Jesus is morally wrong, or evil.

Listen, the closer we get to the return of Christ, the further down this road we are sliding. Our world will more and more look at things Jesus says are good and see them as evil. That’s essentially calling Jesus a liar. And the heart that pleases God is a heart that says, “Let Christ be true and every man a liar...I’ll follow Jesus.” That brings me to the third response to Jesus.

3. Some say Jesus is Lord.

Let me show you where you see this. This section begins and ends in an interesting way.

**13 And he went up on the mountain and called to him those whom he desired, and they came to him. 14 And he appointed twelve (whom he also named apostles) so that they might be with him and he might send them out to preach 15 and have authority to cast out demons.**

So, here's a group of people Jesus has called to Him. They are His disciples, or His followers. His desire is that they would be with Him so that He could send them out as apostles to tell others about Him. We'll talk more about the apostles in a couple of chapters. But, for this morning, I just want you to see that Jesus called them to come to Him and be with Him. And notice how they respond. What does verse 13 say: "and they came to him." They did what He said. They obeyed and followed Jesus. They lived in glad submission to Him. In other words, they yielded to Jesus as Lord. Now, notice how this chapter ends.

**34 And looking about at those who sat around him, he said, "Here are my mother and my brothers! 35 For whoever does the will of God, he is my brother and sister and mother."**

Most scholars believe Jesus is pointing directly to the disciples when He looks at those sitting around Him because He specifically says the people He is referring to are the ones who have done the will of God. They've acknowledged Jesus as Lord and answered His call to be with Him. And just like in verses 12 and 13, they are still with Him, sitting at the feet of Jesus – following Him to the very ends of the earth. That's the will of God, that we would bow before Jesus as Lord and follow Him for the rest of our lives.

So, who do you say Jesus is? Is Jesus Christ your Lord? Let me ask that another way: Does the life you live say that Jesus is your Lord? What do you need to lay down before Him? What is He calling you to do? Who do you say Jesus is? Nothing in your life is more important than the answer to that question. It determines every significant thing about your life and your eternal destiny. And our text reveals that it's the basis for who Jesus says you are.

### WHO DOES JESUS SAY YOU ARE?

There are two specific designations that Jesus talks about in our text.

1. Jesus says some who will never be forgiven.

**28 "Truly, I say to you, all sins will be forgiven the children of man, and whatever blasphemies they utter, 29 but whoever blasphemes against the Holy Spirit never has forgiveness, but is guilty of an eternal sin"— 30 for they were saying, "He has an unclean spirit."**

Now, this could be a sermon all by itself, but this is a passage that is sometimes referred to as the unpardonable sin. Jesus is saying that there is a sin that will never be forgiven. And, throughout time people have debated what that specific sin is. But notice that Jesus names the sin. He calls it "blasphemy against the Holy Spirit." So, the unpardonable sin, or the sin that will never be forgiven, is blaspheming the Holy Spirit. And notice what is attached to that in verse 30 - for they were saying, "He has an unclean spirit."

Although Jesus is God, He laid aside certain rights and privileges as God in order to become a man. So, in chapter 1, we find that Jesus is filled with the power of the Holy Spirit so that He could be the manifest presence and power of God on this earth. That means it was blasphemy against the Holy Spirit to say that the Spirit in Jesus was unclean. And, since you can't be forgiven unless you trust in the work of Jesus as your Lord and Savior, persistently refusing to turn to Jesus as your Lord and Savior is an unforgivable or unpardonable sin. It will result in being cast for eternity into hell.

And for those who worry that you have committed the unpardonable sin, take heart. Verse 28 holds a promise for you: Jesus forgives every sin for those who turn to Him in faith and repentance. As a matter of fact, the Apostle Paul was someone who once thought Jesus was evil. He persecuted the church and had Christ-followers put to death.

*1 Timothy 1:12–13*

*12 I thank him who has given me strength, Christ Jesus our Lord, because he judged me faithful, appointing me to his service, 13 though formerly I was a blasphemer, persecutor, and insolent opponent. But I received mercy because I had acted ignorantly in unbelief,*

Jesus forgives every sin for those who turn to Him in repentant faith. So, those who will never be forgiven are those who persistently refuse to acknowledge Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior and die in their sins.

So, what about you? Are you trusting in Jesus? Has there come a point in time when you have placed your faith and trust in person and work of Jesus? If you will trust in Jesus, He has something to say about you.

2. Jesus says some will forever be His family.

***31 And his mother and his brothers came, and standing outside they sent to him and called him. 32 And a crowd was sitting around him, and they said to him, "Your mother and your brothers are outside, seeking you." 33 And he answered them, "Who are my mother and my brothers?" 34 And looking about at those who sat around him, he said, "Here are my mother and my brothers! 35 For whoever does the will of God, he is my brother and sister and mother."***

At first blush, this sounds really offensive to Jesus' earthly family. But we know Jesus isn't being cruel or unkind. He's simply pointing to a spiritual reality. As special as our earthly families are, there is a kind of family that is even more eternally significant: the eternal family of God.

*John 1:12*

*12 But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God,*

If you are trusting in Jesus, He says you are part of God's eternal family. You aren't just forgiven. You're family.

Just think about that for a moment. Your family of origin doesn't define you. Your past failures and personal weakness don't define you. Your fears and anxieties don't define you. You are who Jesus says you are. And, for everyone who has turned to Jesus in repentance and faith, Jesus says you are His family.

You are loved and accepted and wanted. You are an heir of everything that belongs to God. You are watched over and cared for by your Heavenly Father. You are destined for heaven and secured by God's power. Every trial in your life is filtered through the love of your Heavenly Father. God is for you so who can stand against you? You are a member of the family of Almighty God.

My prayer is that you would rejoice in that truth today. And nothing in all of this world is more important than that. No matter what is going on in this world or your life today, nothing is more important than that.

So, who do you say Jesus is? And who does Jesus say you are? Friend, do not leave this place today without settling, once and for all, the answers to those two essential questions.

Who in your life needs to know?