

No Turning Back

Living the surrendered life

Lesson 3

This morning I decided to preach on Jesus' teaching about family. We hear a lot about family in our world today don't we? From our politicians to self help books encouraging us to strengthen the family to preserving the integrity of the family. So I thought maybe it would be good for us to see what God's son thinks about family.

Jesus has been through a lot of stuff. He's been baptized, led to the wilderness to struggle for 40 days and deal with Satan. His dealings with Satan prove to be no match for the people he would have to deal with for the rest of his life. He's heavily criticized by his religious world and now finds himself going up on a mountain with his 12 disciples in order to prepare them for the continuation of his work.

Mark 3:13-19 Jesus went up on a mountainside and called to him those he wanted, and they came to him. 14He appointed twelve—designating them apostles—that they might be with him and that he might send them out to preach 15and to have authority to drive out demons. 16These are the twelve he appointed: Simon (to whom he gave the name Peter 17James son of Zebedee and his brother John (to them he gave the name Boanerges, which means Sons of Thunder 18Andrew, Philip, Bartholomew, Matthew, Thomas, James son of Alphaeus, Thaddaeus, Simon the Zealot 19and Judas Iscariot, who betrayed him.

It's like Jesus never stops. But, there is talk of family in Chapter 3. The NASB simply says "And he went home."

I remember a few years ago, Michael, a Christian ex-biker— biker. He bought a new 1500cc Polaris (fat boy bike), blue and heavy. Mike loved this new bike. One day he drove over to my office for us to go for lunch and to let me drool on his bike. Amazingly, after showing me the bike, he threw me the keys and said... take a spin. So I did. Mike is not only an ex-biker kind of guy; he's huge and evidently quite strong. As I began to turn the bike around, I was going to slow and the weight of the bike was too much for me to handle, and in slow motion the bike tipped over onto my leg, thus to prevent any damage to the bike or further damage to my body at the hands of Michael. Mike had to come over and pick up the bike, and did so with such ease. I thought for sure that I was a dead man. And I thought for sure that I would never get to drive his bike. However, Michael plugged his ipod in to his speaker system and pulled up a little ditty that the hard rocker Ozzy sings, "Momma, I'm coming home!" And off I went with my khakis and loafers with Ozzy screaming to the world around me... Momma, I'm coming home!

It's always good to be home. Going home is about being with family. And for me, thoughts of going home are always good thoughts. Something I've always tried to teach

my daughter is... no matter what trouble you're in, know you can always go home.

And so I figure that this must be the same thing for Jesus. Already he's done so much. He's changed so much. He offended so many. He's challenged so often those who are in high religious places. In fact he's been so active that Mark tells us in 3:6 that **The Pharisees went out and immediately began conspiring with the Herodians against Him, as to how they might destroy Him.**

Jesus, coming down off that mountain with the disciples is... coming home. But Jesus is more famous than Shaquille O'Neil. Jesus is the big preacher in town! Jesus is the human healer! I mean there ain't no demon strong enough to stop him for scoring points for God! I mean there ain't no human authority big enough to keep him from showing the authority of God's reign by the way he lives!

Mark tells us that people are coming from all around to be touched and taught and transformed by Jesus. In fact there are so many in verse 20, that Jesus and the disciples can't even eat. Imagine that... Jesus hasn't been doing this ministry thing for very long and now he's the big celebrity. This is the man, the great man who is coming home. And you would think that this would be a good place for him to rest, get some peace and comfort. But it doesn't happen.

These religious leaders we've talked about have way too much at stake to give Jesus any peace. They certainly agree that he's a great man. They can't deny the great things he does. And they know they can't turn the crowd around. There's no denying his power.

So what are they to do? They attempt to show that his undeniable power comes from Satan. They say that **He casts out the demons by the ruler of the demons (3:22b)**. What they're saying is if you side with Jesus, if you believe in Jesus, if you follow Jesus, then you'll find yourself following the demonic as well.

Jesus shows that these religious leaders once again do not know what they are talking about. Jesus shows that every exorcism, every healing and every teaching comes from God in order to destroy the hold that Satan has in this world. You know what else he's saying? If you fight against me, as I fight for God, then it's you whom are the ones fighting on Satan's side. It doesn't matter how religiously you go to church, or how many times a day you fall to your knees and pray, if you're fighting me then you're fighting God. If you are fighting God, you will pay a heavy, heavy price.

Mark 3:23-30 And He called them to Himself and began speaking to them in parables, "How can Satan cast out Satan? 24" If a kingdom is divided against itself, that kingdom

cannot stand. 25 "If a house is divided against itself, that house will not be able to stand. 26 "If Satan has risen up against himself and is divided, he cannot stand, but he is finished! 27 "But no one can enter the strong man's house and plunder his property unless he first binds the strong man, and then he will plunder his house. 28 "Truly I say to you, all sins shall be forgiven the sons of men, and whatever blasphemies they utter; 29 but whoever blasphemes against the Holy Spirit never has forgiveness, but is guilty of an eternal sin"-- 30 because they were saying, "He has an unclean spirit."

Jesus is in a fight! And this will prove to be a fight to his death. But it's good that Jesus is home now. It's good that Jesus is in place where he can get some family support. No matter how much trouble you're in Jesus, you can always go home.

And yet, home is where it seems to get worse. With all the people pushing in on him, and the powers-that-be who are coming down hard on him, even his relatives, his mother and brothers and sisters and kin find their way through the crowd in order to lay hands on him.

v. 21 When his family heard about this, they went to take charge of him, for they said, "He is out his mind."

This is what Jesus gets when he goes home. His own people, his family thinks he's crazy.

Is he crazy because he teaches about the reign of God? I guess it's unusual that he's preaching what he's preaching... but it's not crazy. John the Baptist preached the same thing. People didn't think he was crazy! (a little different or a little eccentric perhaps) Maybe a little dangerous, but not crazy.

Jesus isn't crazy because he heals and casts out demons. There were others in his day that supposedly did the same things. Why would you think that someone with such gifts was crazy? Healing and teaching are good things! So what is it? What's up with his family?!

I'll tell you why they think he's crazy. They think he's crazy because he does the kinds of things that shake up the world and get people who are powerful in this world angry with him. Not only does Jesus do this himself, but he also creates a family with his 12 disciples to do the same thing he's doing. Knowing that all the while that the scribes, Pharisees and the Herodians and chief priests are planning to destroy him because of what he does.

Any sane person would stop under these circumstances. Any sane person would lay low for a while. Any sane person would stop trying to change the world until the world changed a little bit. But not Jesus. The problem with Jesus is he thinks he's working for a

God who works overtime in this world. And so even though there is great threat, Jesus continues to preach God's coming reign and he's still talking about changing people and changing the world. Jesus will not let up! And that's why his family thinks he's crazy!

And in Mark 3:31,32 his family is calling for him. **Then Jesus' mother and brothers arrived. Standing outside, they sent someone in to call him. 32 A crowd was sitting around him, and they told him, "Your mother and brothers are outside looking for you."**

Notice though that Jesus doesn't do what a good son would do... he doesn't say, "hey wait a minute people, my mom and family are outside... I'll be back." Instead Jesus says, **"Who are my mother and my brothers? I'll tell you who they are. My real mother is not the one who gave me birth—my real brothers and sisters are not the ones who grew up around me."** Jesus is saying it's "You, you who are willing to give up everything to do the will of God. You who are willing to change this world so that it looks like God has been here. You who are willing to do right and make right where there is wrong." Jesus is saying with these words, "you are my mother and brothers and sisters.

3:34-35 Then he looked at those seated in a circle around him and said, "Here are my mother and my brothers! 35Whoever does God's will is my brother and sister and mother."

Wow! Do you see what Jesus has done? Jesus has redefined family. Family is not about blood tradition, or rites. Family has everything to do with God's reign in a world that needs to change. For Jesus, families unite and reunite so that they can be strengthened, and support one another, and love one another, and encourage one another so that when Satan attempts to bind us, we will have the power to stand and tear his forces down.

But we face a potential problem. Church families can become somewhat like Jesus' own family, or like those in Jesus' familial heritage (church family). We can forget the purpose of God's family. And **the purpose of family is to extend the family**. When families get turned in on themselves, when families get into themselves, and focus too much on themselves, unhealthy things begin to happen. Bad habits form. Unsavory personality traits appear. Unusual thoughts start to be expressed. Sometimes church families get this way. They get way too into themselves. Some church families may say they are welcoming— but in order to fully gain membership in the family though, you have to do this and follow that, and don't get caught acting this way or that way. In other words, a family that says **"if you're not like us you can't be in this family"** can be a powerful, life-denying family.

Could it be that people's obsession for church family can become so entrenched that they actually become inhibitors to the very change that God is working towards? **The purpose of family is to extend the family**. But some times "family" can get in the way

of “being” and offering the gift of family to the world.

Sometimes churches can spend a lot of time talking about Jesus. Let me be clear here, family conversation is a good thing. Having talk time is a good thing. Some of the best moments we can have in this church will involve a lot of talk. My point is we can talk about Jesus and what he wants. We talk about Jesus and what is kosher and what is not. We talk, and we talk and we talk. But, like natural families, sometimes church families constantly talk but have trouble moving from talk to action. Jesus calls us to “hear his words and to **put them into practice.**”

Daren and Leanna Lugafet’s story-- Shandra & Tyler

As one preacher says: “Jesus crafts a family not for celebration, not for warm hugs and kisses, but for-- transformation.” **(Brian Blount)**

Family, we are called to let the reign of God be in our lives and to let his reign shine in this world that so desperately needs to change.

So the question this morning is: If we are a church that is **not turning back** and willing to **live the surrendered life**--then who are we going to be?

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