

Sermon Title: "Did I Miss Something?"

June 6th, 2021 – 2nd Sunday after Pentecost

Text: Mark 3:2--35



Theme:

What's in it for me?

Sermon Text:

Grace and Peace to you from our Lord, Jesus Christ. Amen.

Have you ever been in a situation where the emotional response of the person you were dealing with seemed totally out of place from the situation? Good. For a moment, I thought I was the only one. At the airport as a supervisor, I routinely get to deal with the difficult and unruly passengers. I just love dealing with these people. "Do you know who I am?" "Why, sir? Did you forget?" "No, you can't take your loaded .38 special on the plane, even if you are Bill Russell." "Even if you have a concealed weapons permit." "Sir, how much protection are you getting from your firearm when you don't even know where it is?" Aside from the folks who get arrested for firearms violations, we do get people who just seem to fly off the handle for no apparent reason and getting those people to cooperate are much more challenging and require much more finesse. I had to deal with one lady who was refusing screening, blocking the lane, and acting like a two-year-old throwing a temper tantrum just because she needed a pat down. There was no apparent reason for her behavior. After a brief conversation, she disclosed that she was a rape victim, and the screening experience was triggering a flash back. Now that I had the whole story, I was able to work with my female peers and negotiate her cooperation in order to complete the process and get her on her way, but without knowing the backstory, she probably wouldn't have been able to fly and would have received a hefty civil penalty.

While Jesus never displayed inappropriate and uncontrolled displays of emotion, the same could not be said for the people around him, but unless we look at the context, it makes as much sense as a 20-year-old lady acting like she was two.

In our Gospel text today, we have one of Mark's accounts of Jesus being rejected by His family. The other one occurs in Mark 6, and Luke's version has both occurring in one instance.

While Jesus dealing with the rejection of His family is no doubt painful, I think we forget about the context.

Every year at Christmas, we read Luke and Matthew's accounts of the birth narrative. Neither Luke nor Matthew were around for those events, so they obviously interviewed someone who was, namely Jesus' mother Mary. Luke in particular details all of the amazing events that Mary and Joseph encounter, from Elizabeth's pregnancy, the angelic visitations, Joseph's dreams, and her own immaculate conception, "My soul magnifies the Lord," etc. I have learned that women never forget what it's like to be pregnant. So, given all of these events, it just blows my mind that Jesus' own family, his own flesh and blood, would try to shut Him down, given the history. How can you forget those earlier events?

I do have a theory, that may explain some of it, but keep in mind, it's just speculation on my part, but it seems to fit. We know from Scripture that the last time Joseph appears is when Jesus is twelve years old, and by the time Good Friday occurs, the text indicates that Mary is a widow. So sometime within that twenty-year window, Joseph died. Jesus, as the eldest son, according to the Old Testament, would have been expected to provide for His Mother, and siblings. Instead, Jesus is out preaching the Gospel. If Joseph's death occurred recently and the family was still grieving his death, Jesus' family's reaction in this passage makes a little more sense. Have you ever encountered someone who was grieving the loss of a close family member lash out at you, even if it was out of character or uncalled for?

Jesus does something amazing here and makes this a teachable moment. Until this time, you were a child of God if and only if you were a descendant of Abraham. Your inheritance to the Kingdom of God was tied to who your parents were, not anything that you did. In our text today, Jesus changes this standard to whoever does the will of God inherits the Kingdom, namely anyone who responds to Jesus' call by faith. Faith, not bloodlines determine your ability to be part of God's family. Even though our Gospel selection starts out with Jesus' family accusing Him of being crazy, and the Pharisees pounce on it, Jesus reminds us that our sins will be forgiven. The only sin that will not be forgiven is blaspheming against the Holy Spirit and that is basically the complete and utter refusal of the Holy Spirit and the Gospel. Other than that, Jesus reassures us that our sins will be forgiven. (Gee, I wonder where Abraham Lincoln got the idea for his "House Divided" speech at the Illinois Statehouse?)

As amazing as this invitation is to become a child of God by faith is, here is another amazing thing Jesus is doing in this passage; Jesus understands the pain of familial rejection. He

understands your pain. We have a God who understands what it is like when your family doesn't approve of your career choice or think you are making enough money. We have a God who understands what it is like to have family members reject the Gospel, despite God uniquely blessing them throughout their lives. We have a God that patient with seekers and sinners. Even Mary stumbled in her faith here, but she quickly rebounded. It's nice to know we aren't the only ones with those high and lows. We have a God who understands you and your pain.

Do you have friends and family who don't come to Church? Do you have friends or family who don't follow Jesus and are even antagonistic about your faith? Jesus had to deal with it too. Jesus showed great patience with His family. It wasn't until after His resurrection that Jesus' brothers and sisters came to faith. Two of Jesus' brothers wrote epistles that are in our Bibles today and they both died as martyrs for the faith.

Pastor David Hinz once told us about one of his parishioners in Japan. For thirty years she tried to get her husband to come to Church and hear the Gospel. For thirty years, he refused, instead going fishing. If you didn't know, Christianity has many challenges in Japan, given that Buddhism and Shintoism are so deeply ingrained into everyday life. Conformity is also highly valued and non-conformity is strongly discouraged. So, this guy was very resistant to the Gospel and his wife's faith, and he had all the excuses for being that way. Well, one Sunday, he knocked over his wife's favorite vase as he was walking out the door to go fishing. He was beside himself. How was he going to explain this to his wife? What could he ever do to make up for what he did to his wife? Then his wife forgave him. What kind of love brings that kind of forgiveness? 30 years. That was the event that brought that man to faith. Just like Jesus' family, that man resisted the Gospel for a long time, but Jesus forgave him all of his sins, too. Even though it took more than thirty years.

Most of you know my family situation. You know my wife is also from Japan and is not a Christian. You know that only my son Kent, even attempted to go through confirmation, only to run out of gas so to speak at the end of the course. Stories like David's parishioner and today's Gospel lesson keep me going. They are reminders that we must remain patient with our loved ones, that Jesus still loves them and forgives them of their sins, and that we have another family here. We are all brothers and sisters in Christ and having that Church family is important, sometimes even more important than our biological one. I know some of us have recently lost family members and have said some things to the effect that they don't have any other family.

While it may be true in a biological sense, I would like to remind you that you are not alone. You have us. I know no better way to conclude this message than with Jesus' own words,

*³³And he answered them, "Who are my mother and my brothers?" ³⁴And 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.**"*

Various Authors. *The Lutheran Study Bible*. Concordia Publishing House. Kindle Edition.

In Jesus name,

Amen.

Timothy Quindt,
Licensed Lay Deacon
(503) 358-0770
tquindt@hotmail.com

Quotations from Scripture come from:

Various Authors. *The Lutheran Study Bible*. Concordia Publishing House. Kindle Edition.