

3.15.15 **Mark 3:20-35**

O. Intro: one of my great sources for good articles, Prof Stan sent me a NY Times article by David Brooks, "The cost of relativism."

*He gives some distressing stats and stories about the breakdown of family and society.

*He then says sympathy is not enough, money and better policy are not enough...what is missing is "norms."

"The health of society is primarily determined by the habits and virtues of its citizens."

*Bear in mind this is not a Christian magazine, its the NY Times.

"In many parts of America there are no minimally agreed upon standards for what it means to be a father. There are no basic codes and rules woven into daily life, which people can absorb unconsciously and follow automatically."

"Reintroducing norms will require, first, a moral vocabulary. These norms weren't destroyed because of people with bad values. They were destroyed by a plague of nonjudgmentalism, which refused to assert that one way of behaving was better than another."

*Relativism...the absence of absolutes or standards...or the absence of foundation for life...has not worked...ever.

***Not trying to build a house on sand...it's trying to build a house in midair.**

Mark 3:20 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."

*The Lord's family gets word that He is not taking care of himself (not true...but that is what they think).

*They believe that he is so caught up in his grand vision that he is not attending his physical needs, and so "he is out of his mind."

*They think that they should go "take charge of him."

*Word means to "arrest"...this was an intervention.

*Think about it, you have a family member who you believe is a danger to himself...

*You make a plan, show up and aggressively "take charge of their life because they are unable to handle it themselves."

*Sounds absurd to think that Lord's family could come to this conclusion but it helps us understand how much and how often he was misunderstood.

*So they set out from Nazareth to Capernaum to bring him back home.

*They were right to care for him, no critique there...but they were very wrong in their assessment of him.

*As you read the scriptures, like this historical narrative... Remember they are not just to inform of us of facts..."here's what happened."

*They are to make a theological point..."Here's why it happened"

*And to lead to personal action..."Here's what needs to happen next."

*So one good way to do this is to put our selves in the shoes (sandals) of the appropriate character in the story.

*Hint...the appropriate shoes for us to wear in this narrative...are not the shoes of Jesus.

*"Yeah, I can relate to Jesus, because people are always misjudging and criticizing me too!"

*Its not that we are not going to be misunderstood or misjudged at times.

*Or even that we can't take heart from the fact that Jesus was often treated this way...and learn from how he handled it.

*It's more that we should be on the lookout for the tendency to turn ourselves into "martyrs".

*We want to avoid as much as possible any "poor me" applications from Scripture.

*The best application is: "How am I misunderstanding Jesus myself?"

*"How am I, like his family... misapplying his purposes and his actions in my own life?"

*I think it's most appropriate to put ourselves in the shoes of the family of the Lord in their lack of understanding than in those of the Lord himself, being misunderstood.

*The religious leaders were more harsh in their assessment of Jesus...they said he was in league with Satan.

*Or least that is the attack they threw his way...but it seems more like an ad hominine attack than a real one.

*If you can't defeat someone using logic and if their life is unassailable...you can always just call them a name.

22 And the teachers of the law who came down from Jerusalem said, "He is possessed by Beelzebub! By the prince of demons he is driving out demons." 23 So Jesus called them and spoke 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 and carry off his possessions unless he first ties up the strong man. Then he can rob his house.

Jesus answers their accusations with a couple of parables:

1. Satan is not going to fight against his own self-interests...this is irrational.

-Clearly since I am opposing him I am not in collusion with him.

2. Since I am opposing him and I win every single fight, clearly I am the stronger one in this fight.

-I'm coming in to the house (people's lives) where he was in control and I am taking away his former possessions (people)...then clearly I am stronger than he is.

*I don't work for him & he doesn't control me...I am the king and I control him.

*Then a very strong warning.

28 I tell you the truth, all the sins and blasphemies of men will be forgiven them. 29 But whoever blasphemes against the Holy Spirit will never be forgiven; he is guilty of an eternal sin.” 30 He said this because they were saying, “He has an evil spirit.”

*When Jesus says "I tell you the truth"...it doesn't mean other times he has not been telling the truth...it means this is a "foot stomp" moment...pay close attention here.

*The words of v.29—“**will never be forgiven; he is guilty of an eternal sin**”—have caused great anxiety and pain in the history of the church.

*People have wondered if they have committed this "unpardonable sin"

*Rule of thumb here: No one who is actually worried about having committed such a sin is going to be guilty of having done so.

*The person capable of having such a "ruined soul" is unconcerned about the glory or the wrath of God.

*Some have suggested that a one-time choice like "suicide" is the unpardonable sin...

*This is a strange conclusion since suicide is nowhere in sight in this passage

*What Jesus is speaking of here is not an isolated act but a settled condition of the soul.

*Jesus is not accusing these people of having committed this sin, he is warning them against it.

*It is not a "point in time" action rather it is ongoing condition of a heart that refuses to acknowledge Jesus as the Christ...or going farther...attributing his work to Satan.

*If the person involved in such a sin, cannot be forgiven it is not so much that God refuses to forgive as it is the sinner refuses to allow him to.

*So his family finally arrives to enact their "intervention"

31 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.”

*The Lord is at work ministering to people and he is told, "Jesus, your family is outside, they are looking for you."

*The presumption is...they are your family so you must drop what you are doing and go to them...or allow them to come to you.

*The person delivering the notice as well as his family did not understand who Jesus was and how relationships with him really worked.

*So he uses this as an opportunity to teach.

33 “Who are my mother and my brothers?” he asked. 34 Then he looked at those seated in a circle around him and said, “Here are my mother and my brothers! 35 Whoever does God’s will is my brother and sister and mother.”

*Jesus is redefining who constitutes his family...it is those who respond positively to him rather than those who are physically related to him.

*He is not saying that physical relationships are unimportant...he is making a statement of what is "most" important.

***This entire passage sets up C.S. Lewis' famous: lunatic/liar/Lord... argument.**

*BLUF: bottom line up front: Jesus claimed to be God, this means he was either lying or crazy or he really was God.

1. Lunatic:

*Jesus was "crazy"...he sincerely believed that he was God...but he was out of his mind and couldn't really be the Savior of the world.

*The problem is Jesus acted like the sanest man on the planet.

*He consistently baffled the wisest of his time.

*He was consistently and perfectly situational aware...always doing the right thing, saying the right thing...with brilliant precision.

*He was not a lunatic.

2. Liar: The folks who accused him of being demon possessed knew this was not a rational explanation.

*Jesus pointed this out in his response.

*They had seen him expel demons and heal the sick.

*They knew he was not in cahoots with Satan...but they believed he was lying about who he really was.

*They did not believe he was truly the Messiah...how could he be?

*The Messiah would be a "King" he would smash the Romans, set up the Jewish nation...he would look nothing like this "nobody from nowhere."

*"We may not be able to figure out how you do what you do...but we have figured out you are not who you say you are."

*But, again, there is no evidence he is a liar...look at the facts of his life.

*He makes claims...then backs those claims up with actions.

*Tells the truth even when it is not advantageous to him.

*Dies rather than back down from the truth.

3. Lord:

*He has authority over demons because he is more powerful than they are...no mere human can make this claim.

*He has authority to heal the sick...because he is Lord of life.

*He says he is the true King, Lord of heaven and earth...and he is not a liar, nor is he crazy...so that leaves a choice.

Conclusion:

*If he is not crazy or lying he is the Lord...and the choice to be made is...

*Follow him as Lord or reject him as Lord.

*Everyone must make a decision regarding Jesus...what will they do with him.

*I've heard some say..."Not, I'll just do nothing with him."

*That is still a decision...it is in effect saying "I will make up a fourth category for Jesus...he irrelevant."

*So maybe we could add:

1. He was crazy
2. He was a liar
3. He is irrelevant.
4. He is Lord

*If he is not crazy and not a liar...and claimed to be the way, truth and life...he is the most relevant person in history.

*So a choice is to be made and that choice is brought out in two ways in this passage:

1. The unpardonable sin conversation:

*This was the Lord's warning to those who consistently choose to deny that he is Savior.

*The Holy Spirit is the one who calls us, who convicts us of sin...and whose primary role it is to point us to Jesus.

John 15:26 “When the Counselor comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth who goes out from the Father, he will testify about me.

*To respond to the Holy Spirit by saying...Jesus was crazy, or evil, or irrelevant...and to do this consistently is to set one's path in a direction away from God.

*This choice or this series of choices...is unforgiven precisely because it is unrepented of.

2. True family Conversation

*The second example of the need for choice is demonstrated when his family shows up and because they are biological family it is assumed they have special privileges with the Lord.

*They have had the blessing of knowing Jesus longer and in more intimate family roles than others.

*But in terms of his position as Jesus Christ the Savior...all have equal access to him and equal responsibility to respond to him.

*No special treatment is given to anyone based on their human roles and relationships.

*WWII, General Eisenhower's college buddy, 2 star general Henry Miller was endangering the D-day landing (and lives) by blabbing classified information at an English pub.

*He tried to presume on his personal relationship with Eisenhower but Ike sent him home in disgrace, demoted two ranks.

*This man thought that his relationship with the Commander somehow exempted him from having to obey the commander's orders.

*Eisenhower was his former roommate and still a friend of this man...but his role as supreme allied commander meant that all relationships to him must recognize that reality first.

*In our narrative Jesus does not say his family is unimportant to him.

*He is revealing his primary role as Lord, not biological son or brother...and how everyone must relate to him in that primary role.

*Who are what you are in some human relationship does not eliminate your need for personal choice.

***33 “Who are my mother and my brothers?” he asked. 34 Then he looked at those seated in a circle around him and said, “Here are my mother and my brothers! 35 Whoever does God’s will is my brother and sister and mother.”**

*He is saying everyone must choose...even my own biological family.

*My "real family" are those who live in the realm of my Father's will.

*One application for this is that growing up in a Christian home does not exempt us from our own choices in regards to Jesus.

*This helps explain the mystery of why some children can grow up in a home that is full of authentic faith and walk away from the faith as adults.

*Relationship with Jesus is volitional (never automatic) and personal (I make the choice).

*Otherwise how could it really be considered a relationship of love and friendship?

*Here's where we are going to land this morning in terms of our main personal application:

APPLICATION:

*Our relationship with Jesus is ultimately revealed by our willingness to live in the realm of his will for our lives. (otherwise known as: obedience)

*Main point of this application:

-We need to see obedience as an opportunity for relationship.

-Disobedience is not merely an opportunity for guilt; it is a missed opportunity for relationship.

***Obedience=opportunity**

***Look again at what Jesus said...**

***35 "Whoever does God’s will is my brother and sister and mother....MY FAMILY....Those closest to me."**

*We spent a lot of time on this principle back when we went through Galatians.

*To recap: "Grace is not opposed to effort but earning. Earning is attitude, effort is action."

So first let's rehabilitate the word, or recover the meaning of the word "obey."

*"Obey" in religious terms has come to mean: following a check list.

-Duty, obligation...anything but opportunity.

*It means I have a set of rules, dos and don'ts, and maybe some ceremonial stuff that needs to be followed through on...

*If I don't follow these rules...then I'm in trouble with God.

*Furthermore most often...obedience is not tied to any practical reality.

*It is more like God rolling a dice and putting arbitrary rules on us.

*Its not like "gravity", absolutes, it's more like God's preferences...his favorite "ice cream."

*Remember when we talked about the difference between "Gravity" and "ice cream?"
- fixed realities vs. personal preference.

*So "obedience" for the merely religious merely following God's preferences...rather than lining our lives up with reality.

*God says..."I'll make you like sex, then forbid all of it except in a very narrow and specific context...just to see if you can...just because I can."

*"But I know you can't, so if you go to church, do some ceremonial stuff, be nicer to some people and I'll give you a pass on the sex thing."

*If this is what "Obey" means...no wonder it begins to look silly, or stupid, or irrelevant, or outdated to people.

*No wonder some have began to believe that people made this stuff up in order to control other people.

*But what if "obey" meant something like "obey the law of gravity" if you want to stay alive.

*What if "obey" meant...stay close to me if you would like to have relationship with me, my peace, my power, my presence...clearly you can't walk away from me and be with me at the same time."

*What if "obey" was a description of what is real, how God made the world and how to best operate in his world?

*"Here is how and why I designed you and the purpose for which I made sex, operate within the design parameters and it will bring great joy, operate outside them and it will bring misery."

*What if when God said "obey me" it was the very same as if he said "Enjoy me and the world I have made for you."

*Look again at what Jesus said..."**Whoever does God's will is my brother and sister and mother...my family.**"

*Another analogy...a family one.

*"I want to be in this family, I want to experience this love, this peace, this safety...all that goes with being with you."

*"I love what your family relationships have produced in your lives...I want that."

*"However...I don't want to live here within the walls of this house, I'd rather live with other people.

*"I don't want to have dinner with you people...I want to do what I want to do...when I want to do it and not be confined by your relationship rules."

*Silly...right?

*Processes=products.

"I want your relationship with God...tell me the secret."

"Well, I try to find out what is important to God and do it." (obedience)."

"Ugg, you legalist, you rule keeper...I want relationship, not your religion."

"Uh, okay...I thought you wanted me to tell you how I have the relationship with God that I do...it is tied to the processes of relationship."

*I obey him...I live within the realm of his will for my life in order that I can live within the realm of his power for my life and relationship with him.

***John 15:10 If you obey my commands, you will remain in my love, just as I have obeyed my Father's commands and remain in his love.**

*What a minute...Jesus is obeying **in order** to remain in his Father's love...sounds conditional.

*Of course this is conditional...all relationships have conditions.

-The most basic condition is you need to actually spend time with someone if you want to have relationship with them.

*The condition for relationship with Jesus (not salvation but growth in relationship) is obedience.

1 John 5:3 This is love for God: to obey his commands. And his commands are not burdensome.

*Love for God=obey

*Obedience does not equal burden.

*Obedience equals opportunity.

***Questions:**

1. What about the sin patterns that take us out of the realm of his power in our lives and relationship with him?

-Why do they look good to us?

*Sure we should work on eliminating negative habits and reflexes.

*But we must also work on the source for what gives those things power...what we actually believe about obedience and God's will.

*Is obedience burden or opportunity?

*Can we reframe it that way in our hearts and minds?

2. Why is it that the very things (processes) that are designed by God to enhance our joy and build relationship (disciplines, habits, choices) are not appealing to us?

-Why don't they look good to us?

*What are the reasons why these good things are seen as burdens and not opportunity?

***I am convinced that God doesn't want us to merely "suck it up and choose obedience" over the long haul.**

*Of course it is better to suck it up and choose obedience than to choose disobedience.

*But I believe as in any relationship his dream for us, and our great opportunity is to learn to love obedience not merely to choose it.

*To see the limits of his will as being the walls of the "house" of relationship with him.

*I love the limits of my relationship with my wife and children...I thrive on them, enjoy them, treasure them...it is these limits that give me the freedom of relationship.

*Without these limits that I impose on myself and we impose on each other...we would lose all that is most dear to us...

*The realm of God's will for our lives is a garden not a desert.

*Obedience is the realm of his will for your life and it is the realm of his joy in your life.

1 John 5:3 This is love for God: to obey his commands. And his commands are not burdensome.

1. Love (relationship)=obedience

***"I know what you are thinking...no, no, no!"**

2. This is not burden this is opportunity.

SMALL GROUP NOTES

March 15, 2015

Mark 3:20-35

Intro:

*C.S. Lewis first articulated what has been called the "Lunatic, Liar, Lord" argument.

*Jesus claimed to be God, this means he was either: "Crazy, Lying, or actually the Lord."

*Discuss these three possibilities and the implications for each. Many non-believers have tried to refute this argument. No one has been able to rationally do so.

*This doesn't mean that many have not concluded he was either "deluded" or "lying" but they have not been able to refute the flow of the argument. In addition it is hard to make a case for Jesus being either deluded or a liar.

*Another fairly frequent argument made has been that "Jesus didn't really exist." This is not a rational claim to make based on the weight of historical evidence that he did.

*The argument (reasoned defense, not being "argumentative") concludes with the reality of a need for a decision. If he is not crazy, or a liar, and he is Lord then people must either reject him or accept him as such.

*How might you respond to someone who answered that conclusion with the following...

"I am not forced to make any decision...I neither reject him or accept him, I will do nothing with him."

Read:

Mark 3:20 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."

Mark 3:22 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."

Mark 3:23 So Jesus called them and spoke 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 and carry off his possessions unless he first ties up the strong man. Then he can rob his house. **28** I tell you the truth, all the sins and blasphemies of men will be forgiven them. **29** But whoever blasphemes against the Holy Spirit will never be forgiven; he is guilty of an eternal sin."

Mark 3:30 He said this because they were saying, "He has an evil spirit."

Mark 3:31 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."

Mark 3:33 "Who are my mother and my brothers?" he asked.

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

Discuss:

1. Where do you see Jesus making it clear in this passage that people must choose?
2. How is "choosing" evident in a person's life?
3. How would you respond to someone who said that this talk of "choosing to obey" in order to have relationship is either trying to earn God's love, or some form of legalism?
4. How does 1 John 5:3 pull together the "argument" that love for God (relationship) is revealed in our obedience? **1 John 5:3 This is love for God: to obey his commands. And his commands are not burdensome.**

5. What do you think it means that his commands are not "burdensome?" Why do you believe John felt it important to include that phrase?

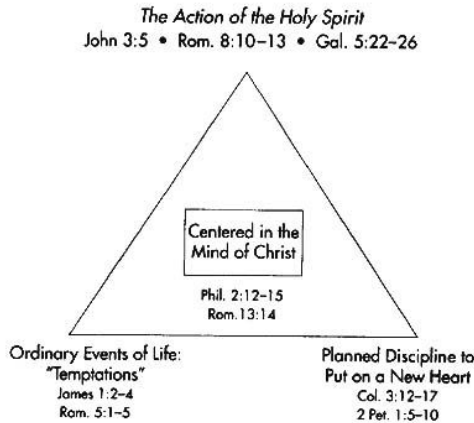
Apply: Look at Dallas Willard's "Golden Triangle of Spiritual Growth" image below.

He says that growth for the Christian is the result of the: 1. Work of the Holy Spirit, 2. Choices, habits, disciplines that we put in place and practice, 3. What happens in our daily lives and how we respond to them in line with who God is.

In line with this model of Spiritual Growth how would it be helpful to "reframe" obedience so that it increasingly becomes opportunity rather than burden?

For instance in responding to the promptings of the Holy Spirit to forgive, or to give grace to someone you are "enjoying" being angry with. How could you learn to see these promptings as opportunities for joy rather than duties to be performed?

Another example might be the disciplines of time in prayer and the Bible. How could you reframe them in your mind as great opportunity and what impact might that reframing have in your life?



The Gospel of Mark



*"For even the
Son of Man
did not come
to be served,
but to serve,
and to give
his life as a
ransom for
many."*

Mark 10:45

Mark 3:20 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.”

What happened?

Why did it happen?

What needs to happen?

22 And the teachers of the law who came down from Jerusalem said, “He is possessed by Beelzebub! By the prince of demons he is driving out demons.” 23 So Jesus called them and spoke 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 and carry off his possessions unless he first ties up the strong man. Then he can rob his house.

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No one who is actually worried about having committed such a sin is going to be guilty of having done so.

31 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."

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Lunatic

**When his family heard about this,
they went to take charge of him, for
they said, “He is out of his mind.”**

Liar

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

Jesus=LORD=Decision

Jesus=irrelevant=~~Decision~~

Jesus=MOST relevant=Decision!

Choice

1. The "unpardonable sin" conversation

2. The "real family" conversation

**Obedience=opportunity for
relationship.**

obey=opportunity

"Whoever does God's will is my brother and sister and mother."

"They are my family, my closest relationships."

Obedience=Opportunity

"If you obey my commands, you will remain in my love, just as I have obeyed my Father's commands and remain in his love."

John 15:10

**This is love for God: to obey his
commands. And his commands are
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1 John 5:3

Obey=opportunity not burden