

Mark

Lesson 4

Chapter 3:7-35

Leader Guide

Leader Guide Bible Studies

David R. Steele

This lesson is a free download from Leader Guide Bible Studies and is not for resale.

Scripture quotations are from The Holy Bible, New International Version®
NIV®

Copyright © 1973 1978 1984 2011 by Biblica, Inc.™
Used by permission. All rights reserved worldwide.

Popularity and Rejection

Lesson 4, Mark 3:7-35

Opening Prayer

Introduction

Chapter 3 is the culmination of Mark's introduction to Jesus Christ. He is the Son of God and the Son of Man as testified by God himself, by John the Baptist, by prophetic scriptures, and by Jesus' miraculous works. Jesus claimed to have authority and power from the Spirit of God. The Pharisees claimed his authority came from Beelzebub (Baal Zebub)— the pagan Canaanite god of weather, fertility, and battle. Hebrews referred to Baal as the "lord of the flies"; we would call him Satan.

By the end of chapter three, the time for God's kingdom was at hand. Spiritual warfare is underway between good and evil, between Jesus and Satan, and there is no middle ground. Jesus called his disciples into the battle, and Satan called the Pharisees. Jesus is both loved and despised. Crowds are flocking to him, and the Pharisees are plotting to murder him.

Read Mark 3:7-12

Mk 3:7 Jesus withdrew with his disciples to the lake, and a large crowd from Galilee followed.

Mk 3:8 When they heard all he was doing, many people came to him from Judea, Jerusalem, Idumea, and the regions across the Jordan and around Tyre and Sidon.

Mk 3:9 Because of the crowd he told his disciples to have a small boat ready for him, to keep the people from crowding him. ¹⁰ For he had healed many, so that those with diseases were pushing forward to touch him. ¹¹ Whenever the evil spirits saw him, they fell down before him and cried out, "You are the Son of God."

Mk 3:12 But he gave them strict orders not to tell who he was.

1. In lesson 2, we discussed various reasons Jesus silenced the demons from testifying that he was the Son of God. Does the rising conflict with the Pharisees give you any further insight into why Jesus commanded them not to say who he was?

The title "Son of God" brought a death sentence by stoning from the Pharisees. No wonder the demons were quick to exclaim it, and Jesus forbade them to say it.

Read Mark 3:13-19, the Appointing of the Twelve Apostles

[Luke adds] ^{Lk 6:12} One of those days Jesus went out to a mountainside to pray, and spent the night praying to God.

Mk 3:13 Jesus went up on a mountainside and called to him those he wanted, and they came to him.

Mk 3:14 He appointed twelve—designating them apostles—that they might be with him and that he might send them out to preach ¹⁵ and to have authority to drive out demons.

Mk 3:16 These are the twelve he appointed: Simon (to whom he gave the name Peter);

Mk 3:17 James son of Zebedee and his brother John (to them he gave the name Boanerges, which means Sons of Thunder);¹⁸ Andrew, Philip, Bartholomew, Matthew, Thomas, James son of Alphaeus, Thaddaeus, Simon the Zealot¹⁹ and Judas Iscariot, who betrayed him.

2. Prayer is a major theme in Luke's gospel, and it points out that Jesus prayed through the night while calling his disciples. What does Jesus' example teach you about prayer?

Praying all night- a remarkable and unfathomable action. Prayer is many things; unpretentious, persistent, giving thanks, making requests, confession, adoration. Jesus gave the example of an intense conversation with God. Luther must have mastered prayer, as one of his statements reveals, "I have so much to do that I shall spend the first three hours in prayer.

3. Jesus called his disciples to preach and to drive out demons. After his death and resurrection, they would testify to the ends of the known world that he was the resurrected and ascended Messiah, the Son of Man, and the Son of God. What do the disciples' qualifications teach you about their readiness for the task? (Careful, this might be a trick question!)

Eight of the disciples were fishermen from Galilee. Mathew was a tax collector from Galilee. One would be a traitor, and the background of the other two is not known. It hardly seems like the team to entrust the radical revelation: the Messiah had come; the religious leaders and experts in the law had missed it, and a new covenant of grace and redemption had been established through the Messiah's blood. Yet these were the men Jesus spoke about when he said, "You did not choose me, but I chose you" (John 15:16).

The most important qualification of the disciples were ready hearts. Andrew, Peter, Philip, and Nathanael were seeking the Messiah and were in the place John was baptizing. Andrew and another disciple (probably Philip) were disciples of John the Baptist and were with him when he baptized Jesus (John 1:35-42). Jesus called Andrew, Andrew called his brother Peter, Philip called Nathanael. Jesus called, and they followed.

Peter fully illustrated his qualifications as a disciple on the shores of Galilee when he responded to Jesus call with, "Go away from me, Lord, for I am a sinful man (Luke 5:8). John Murry said, "A broken spirit and a contrite heart are the abiding marks of the believing soul." The Holy Spirit guides, shapes, and gifts so that the believer equipped for the task they are called.

Read Mark 3:20-30, including parallel verses in Matthew and Luke. Jesus and Beelzebub.

Mk 3:20 Then Jesus entered a house, and again a crowd gathered, so that he and his disciples were not even able to eat.

Mk 3:21 When his family heard about this, they went to take charge of him, for they said, "He is out of his mind."

Mk 3:22 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."

[Luke adds] ^{Lk 11:16} Others tested him by asking for a sign from heaven.

Mk 3:23 So Jesus called them and spoke to them in parables: “How can Satan drive out Satan?

Mk 3:24 If a kingdom is divided against itself, that kingdom cannot stand.

Mk 3:25 If a house is divided against itself, that house cannot stand.

Mk 3:26 And if Satan opposes himself and is divided, he cannot stand; his end has come.

Mk 3:27 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.

Mk 3:28 I tell you the truth, all the sins and blasphemies of men will be forgiven them.

Mk 3:29 But whoever blasphemes against the Holy Spirit will never be forgiven; he is guilty of an eternal sin.”

Mk 3:30 He said this because they were saying, “He has an evil spirit.”

[Matthew and Luke record a similar conversation with the Pharisees when Jesus healed a man who was blind and mute while in Judea. Following are additional details in the conversation included in Matthew 12:25-37 and Luke 11:24-28.]

Mt 12:25 Jesus knew their thoughts and said to them, “Every kingdom divided against itself will be ruined, and every city or household divided against itself will not stand.

Mt 12:26 If Satan drives out Satan, he is divided against himself. How then can his kingdom stand?

Mt 12:27 And if I drive out demons by Beelzebub, by whom do your people drive them out? So then, they will be your judges.

Mt 12:28 But if I drive out demons by the Spirit of God, then the kingdom of God has come upon you.

Mt 12:29 “Or again, how can anyone 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.

Mt 12:30 “He who is not with me is against me, and he who does not gather with me scatters.

Lk 11:24 “When an evil spirit comes out of a man, it goes through arid places seeking rest and does not find it. Then it says, ‘I will return to the house I left.’

Lk 11:25 When it arrives, it finds the house swept clean and put in order.

Lk 11:26 Then it goes and takes seven other spirits more wicked than itself, and they go in and live there. And the final condition of that man is worse than the first.”

Mt 12:31 And so I tell you, every sin and blasphemy will be forgiven men, but the blasphemy against the Spirit will not be forgiven.

Mt 12:32 Anyone who speaks a word against the Son of Man will be forgiven, but anyone who speaks against the Holy Spirit will not be forgiven, either in this age or in the age to come.

Mt 12:33 “Make a tree good and its fruit will be good, or make a tree bad and its fruit will be bad, for a tree is recognized by its fruit.

Mt 12:34 You brood of vipers, how can you who are evil say anything good? For out of the overflow of the heart the mouth speaks.

Mt 12:35 The good man brings good things out of the good stored up in him, and the evil man brings evil things out of the evil stored up in him.

Mt 12:36 But I tell you that men will have to give account on the day of judgment for every careless word they have spoken.

Mt 12:37 For by your words you will be acquitted, and by your words you will be condemned.”

Lk 11:27 As Jesus was saying these things, a woman in the crowd called out, "Blessed is the mother who gave you birth and nursed you."

Lk 11:28 He replied, "Blessed rather are those who hear the word of God and obey it."

4. The divided kingdom (3:24) and divided house (3:25) are easy to understand illustrations of why Jesus' authority to cast out demons came from God and not Satan. How does the example of the strong man (verse 3:27) point to Jesus' authority?

The strong man in the parable is Satan. Jesus was saying that he could drive out demons because he subdued Satan.

5. Luke 11:24-27 includes a frightening illustration of a person who healed of demons but who does not turn to God in repentance. What does this illustrate about spiritual warfare?

When Jesus healed the paralyzed man, he healed his spiritual condition first by forgiving his sins and bringing him to faith (Mark 2:5). The paralytic man might have been in a spiritually worse condition if he had only healed his body. We have also experienced spiritual defeat after a spiritual victory. Spiritual warfare might intensify after a spiritual win, so we must continually pray to God to "deliver us from evil." We have all had a "mountain top" experience only to find ourselves struggling with the same sins and temptations when we return to our every-day routine.

6. Mark 3:29, Mt 12:31,32 What are the consequences of disbelieving the works of the Holy Spirit

Disbelief in the works of the Holy Spirit is called the "unforgivable sin" with eternal guilt. The unforgivable sin was a judgment against the disbelief of the Pharisees who witnessed the healing power of the Spirit of God and said it was the work of Satan. All non-believers are in-effect blasphemers against the Spirit but are forgiven of their sins when they come to repentance and faith in Jesus Christ.

7. Matthew 12:33-37 includes Jesus' moral judgments against the Pharisees. How does he tell the Pharisees it is they who are in Satan's kingdom?

Jesus left no middle ground for the Pharisees. In Matthew 12:30, Jesus said, "He who is not with me is against me." Jesus called them a brood of vipers who were condemned because they blasphemed against the Spirit by their unrighteous acts and careless words.

8. Matthew and Luke also include the account of the Pharisees demanding another sign – this time a sign from heaven (Lk 11:16). How was this request no different from the hostile rejection from other Pharisees?

The request for a sign from heaven after Jesus drove out the demons did not reflect a heart of someone seeking to understand who Jesus was but rather someone with a malicious disbelieving heart. Jesus' healings and casting out demons were signs from heaven, but the Pharisees refused to believe in him.

Jesus' Mother and Brothers (No additional information is in Matthew or Luke)

Mk 3:31 Then Jesus' mother and brothers arrived. Standing outside, they sent someone in to call him.

Mk 3:32 A crowd was sitting around him, and they told him, "Your mother and brothers are outside looking for you."

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

Mk 3:34 Then he looked at those seated in a circle around him and said, "Here are my mother and my brothers!"

Mk 3:35 "Whoever does God's will is my brother and sister and mother."

9. Hopefully, your parents were loving and supportive. Unfortunately, many of us grow up without both parents, especially without fathers, who are most commonly absent due to divorce, death, or emotional estrangement. Jesus' father died early, his mother and brothers thought he was out of mind (Mark 3:21), and his brothers mocked him and told him to go Judea to be a public figure – knowing the Pharisees plotted to murder him in Jerusalem (John 7:1-5). Who did Jesus regard as his family? How can you apply Jesus' outlook if there is family brokenness in your background?

Jesus said his brothers, sisters, and mother were whoever did God's will. He adopted a new family. We know there was reconciliation in his family. His mother and brothers, James and Jude, became his disciples.

Closing Prayer

Dear Father in Heaven, we look to you in these uncertain times. We pray for the end of the virus attack and the healing of those who contracted it. We pray for the spiritual and physical needs of our friends and neighbors who lost jobs due to the quarantine. We pray for the doctors, researchers, and first responders who are fighting against the virus.

Forgive our sins and guide us with your Spirit to act wisely and in the best interest of others. You are our refuge, our joy, and peace. Amen