PARABLES OF JESUS

A KINGDOM DIVIDED AGAINST ITSELF - MARK 3:20-35

A. Introductory Notes
   1. The Gospel of Mark
      a. The book is anonymous but tradition identifies John Mark as the author, Acts 12:12, *When he realized this, he went to the house of Mary, the mother of John whose other name was Mark, where many were gathered together and were praying.*
      b. His material probably came from the preaching of Peter.
      c. It was written between 63 and 70 A.D.

   2. Mark featured three main groups of people: the disciples, the crowds and the religious leaders. In Mark 3 priority is given to Jesus' family as a teaching tool.
   3. Mark begins with the role of John the Baptist, the baptism of Jesus and the calling of His disciples.
   4. In chapter 3, great crowds follow Jesus due to His authoritative teaching and authority over sickness and demons.
   5. Parallel passages: Matthew 12:22-30; Luke 11:14-26; 12:10

B. The concerns of Jesus' family (20-21)
   1. Because of Jesus' teaching, great crowds gathered around Jesus (20), ***Then he went home, and the crowd gathered again, so that they could not even eat.***

      a. *then He went home*
         1) Mark 3:7-10, describes how the crowds were growing as Jesus healed many.
         2) Jesus went up on a mountain where he appointed twelve to be His apostles.
         3) He healed a paralyzed man by saying *your sins are forgiven*. Scribes present responded by saying that Jesus was a blasphemer because nobody can forgive sins but God.
         4) After that, He returned home where the crowds again gathered around Him to the point that He could not even eat.

      b. Thomas Constable, *The picture the writer painted was of Jesus and his disciples in a house in Capernaum. Jews wanting healing or some other favor from Jesus barged right in the door. There were so many of them that Jesus could not even eat a meal much less get some needed rest. The house was completely full of seekers. Probably more people thronged around outside the building trying to get in the doors and windows.*

   2. Jesus' family came to take care of Him (21), ***And when his family heard it, they went out to seize him, for they were saying, "He is out of his mind."***

      a. Jesus' family became concerned for His well-being because He was ministering to the point that He was not even able to eat.
      b. Some even felt that His overworked condition had affected His mental stability, possibly He had become a religious fanatic.
      c. They were at the point of removing Him from ministry by force. *Seize* is a word used for making an arrest.
      d. Thomas Constable, *Sometimes those who have concern for a disciple's welfare apply pressure to depart from God's will. This constitutes opposition, not assistance.*
      e. Note John 7:5, *For not even his brothers believed in him.*

C. Jesus rebuked accusations of demon-possession by use of a parable (22-30)
   1. Scribes accused Jesus of being possessed by the prince of demons (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."***

      a. Scribes were teachers of the law and these were probably an official delegation.
      b. They declared that Jesus was possessed by Beelzebul and cast out demons by the prince of demons.
      c. D. Edmond Hiebert on the name Beelzebul, *...it means lord of the dwelling, that is, the dwelling of the evil spirits.*

   2. Jesus refuted them with a parable (23-27)
      a. Jesus puts forth a rhetorical question (23), ***And he called them to him and said to them in parables, "How can Satan cast out Satan?***

         1) Jesus replied to the charge by use of a parable.
         2) He asked, without expecting an answer, *How can Satan cast out Satan?*

3) He used the term Satan in place of Beelzebul.
   a) In Aramaic, Satan means "adversary."
   b) Jesus used Satan instead of Beelzebul to emphasize the distinction between Jesus and Satan, they are adversaries.

b. Jesus gives the answer (24-27), ***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.***

   1) His parable used comparisons, kingdom divided against itself, house divided against itself, Satan against himself.
   2) Such activity would be working against oneself which would bring defeat. Therefore, Jesus can't be an agent of Satan.
   3) A strong person can only be defeated by a stronger person and Jesus is defeating demons because He is stronger than Satan, His adversary.
   4) *plunder*
      a) to carry off one's possessions.
      b) Satan's possessions cover the realm of sin, sickness, demon possession and death.
      c) No one can plunder Satan's possessions unless Satan is bound by Jesus.
      d) John Grassmick, *His* (Jesus') *mission is to confront and overpower (not cooperate with) Satan and to deliver those enslaved by him.*

   5) Jesus proclaimed that His power was from God in the parallel passage, Matthew 12:28*, But if it is by the Spirit of God that I cast out demons, then the kingdom of God has come upon you.*

3. Jesus warned them of severe judgment for blaspheming the Holy Spirit (28-30), ***Truly, I say to you, all sins will be forgiven the children of man, and whatever blasphemies they utter, 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."***

   a. *Truly I say to you*
      1) This is a solemn warning used by Jesus 13 times in the Gospel of Mark.
      2) Jesus is speaking on His own authority.

   b. All sins and blasphemies can be forgiven except one, blasphemy against the Holy Spirit.
      1) The scribes were accused of blaspheming the Holy Spirit because they credited the work of Jesus to the power of Satan, not the power of God the Spirit.
      2) Mark Bailey, *Having rejected the testimony of the Father, the Son, and now the Spirit's miraculous authentication, nothing more could be done for the salvation of those religious leaders.*
      3) F. F. Bruce, *...the nature of this sin is such that one does not repent of it, because those who commit it and persist in it do not know that they are sinning...their eyes were so tightly closed to the light that for them light had become darkness and good had become evil. The light is there for those who accept it, but if some refuse the light, where else can they hope to receive illumination?*

   c. Let's not overlook the breadth of God's forgiveness.
      1) No sins, no acts of disobedience are beyond God's forgiveness except rejecting the work of the Holy Spirit through the Lord Jesus Christ.
      2) 1 John 1:7, *But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us from all sin.*
      3) The unpardonable sin is rejecting the One Who alone can forgive sins.

   d. Thomas Constable, *This saying of Jesus has caused many people great anxiety throughout the history of the church. Many have wondered if they have committed the unpardonable sin. Concern that one may have committed it is a good indication that one probably has not. The way to avoid committing the unpardonable sin is to believe the testimony that the Holy Spirit has given about Jesus in Scripture, namely that He is the Christ.*

D. Jesus declares that family relationship is not as strong as spiritual relationship (31-35)
   1. The crowd informed Jesus that His family was outside seeking Him (31-32), ***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."***

      a. Jesus' family arrived and sought to meet with Jesus concerning His overworked condition.
      b. The crowds surrounding Jesus told Him of his family's arrival.

2. Jesus responded by answering a rhetorical question (33-35), ***And he answered them, "Who are my mother and my brothers?" And looking about at those who sat around him, he said, "Here are my mother and my brothers! For whoever does the will of God, he is my brother and sister and mother."***

   a. Again, Jesus asked a rhetorical question, *Who are my mother and my brothers?*
   b. Thomas Constable, *He* (Jesus) *identified His disciples as those closest to Him. This would have been a startling statement to Jesus' hearers because the Jews valued natural family relationships highly...Those who do God's will, not just those who profess discipleship, constitute Jesus' spiritual family.*
   c. The paramount relationship is based on spiritual not physical ties, not a repudiation of family but a qualitative comparison.
   d. This must have been a great encouragement to those following Jesus who were experiencing separation from family and opposition from unbelievers because of their commitment to Christ.

CONCLUSION

A. One who serves the Lord may be accused of faults that range from being charged with madness by friends to being accused of serving Satan by enemies.
B. Jesus affirms the reality of Satan and his demons.
C. Jesus declares His authority over the realm of Satan.
D. Family relationships are special but spiritual relationships take priority.