

MARK: OUR PREACHING MANUAL

SECOND DIVISION

II. 1:14-4:34 *WHAT IS THE MESSIAH'S "WORKING" PLAN?*

FOURTH SECTION: *THE KINGDOM AS A HOUSEHOLD*

Mark 3:7 Mark 3:7-30

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KINGDOM Colossians 1:12, 13; Ephesians 2:1-10	PRIESTHOOD 1 Peter 2:4-10; Hebrews 7:22-10:39	BODY Ephesians 5:22-33	HOUSEHOLD Ephesians 2:19-22	FIELD 1 Corinthians 3:6-9
1:14,15 To Galilee : A political entity He preached the kingdom Repent Believe	1:32-34 At the door Received people Ministered to them A priest at the door	2:13-17 Called Levi Doctor for the sick Condemnation of law upon sinners The Savior of sinners	3:7-12 A great crowd came to Jesus from many regions The demons cried " Son of God "	4:1-9 The Sower Jesus at work preaching (planting)
1:16-20 4 Fishermen at the Sea of Galilee : A commercial scene Leave Follow	1:35-39 Early prayer Represented people to God Preached in towns Represented God to the people	2:18-22 Disciples fast & feast The order of law - moral & spiritual orientation Help with God & help for living	3:13-19 12 Apostles called, appointed, designated to be with him He will send them and they will have authority	4:10-25 The Mystery to those who seek The Sower is " interpreted " (watering) for the 12 & others How to respond to parables?
1:21-28 The demon cast out in the synagogue : A religious scene Hear Obey	1:40-45 A leper cleansed Sacrifice & Priest Jesus' testimony to the priests A sacrifice	2:23-28 They plucked grain because of their hunger Spirit of law - our real needs met - Lord of Sabbath is concerned	3:20-30 Holy Spirit " House ", " Eat ", " Family ", " Kingdom ", Unity, strength, holiness.	4:26-32 Seed parables Growth through invisible agent (God) Miraculous growth
1:29-31 Peter's Mother-in-law healed at home : A domestic scene Rise Serve	2:1-12 A paralytic and a break-in Sins forgiven By God's authority The way to God	3:1-6 A hand healed Save life or kill? Do good or evil? Purpose of the Law is that we do good. Each member is important	3:31-35 The family called. Mother, brothers, and sisters? Whoever does God's will.	4:33,34 Jesus spoke only in parables Jesus explained everything to his own disciples (The field)

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FOURTH SECTION: *THE KINGDOM AS A HOUSEHOLD*

Mark 3:7-30

Corresponding PowerPoint® presentation:
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The outline:

House and family

I. Great crowds surrounded Jesus, “the center of attention”, 3:7-12

- Almost crushed by the crowd!
- Why didn't he just levitate?
- An international crowd
- The Son of God, the center of attention
- Others called sons of God
- “Son of God” in 30 Bible references

II. The choosing of the 12, “faithful men who teach others”, 3:13-19

- Steps to appointing the 12
- The 12 who were appointed

III. Jesus, Beelzebub, and the Holy Spirit ... is “it” in you? 3:20-30

- He's crazy!
- Crowds on board
- Empowered by Satan?
- Satan drives out Satan?
- I stepped in it!
- Go for the top standard

IV. Jesus' family, but which family? 3:31-35

- Family needs or control?
- Spiritual family above physical family
- Do the will of God
- A study on the “will of God”
- A prayer partner?
- Sexual morality
- A part of Jesus' family but not Jewish

Questions to aid in the study of this section, Mark 3:7-35

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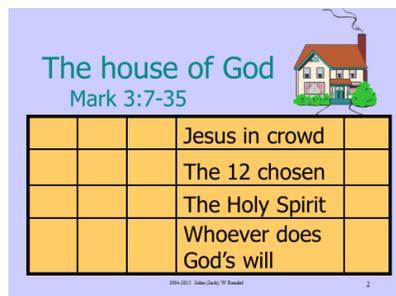
House and family

We have pointed out earlier that Jesus came into Galilee preaching the kingdom of God (1:14). In this portion we are looking at now, Jesus referred to the kingdom in Mark 3:24. Finally he described the kingdom in the parables (4:26, 30).

Throughout this whole division of the gospel various images of the kingdom of God describe for us our identity and show us what being a disciple is like. In the following 4 scenes we see God's kingdom as a family and household. Throughout this section there are references to sons, house, family, mother, brothers and sisters.



This theme is developed through four stories.



These stories are: 1) Jesus at the center of the crowd, 2) the 12 chosen by Jesus, 3) a discussion about the Holy Spirit and 4) a discussion about “whoever does the will of God”.

I. Great crowds surrounded Jesus, “the center of attention”, 3:7-12



Almost Crushed By The Crowd!

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Many came to Jesus in their need especially as his fame spread. They brought their sick, demon possessed and needy. They crowded in on him and pressed in on him. It was so overwhelming he had to ask for a boat to be ready at the water's edge.

Sometimes we had lines of visitors a mile long at the ships Doulos and Logos II. They pressed up the gangway to get on board, to see the exhibition, and try to meet a crewmember. We had the privilege of making available Bibles, books and videos that present the gospel, as well as 1000's of titles in educational books. Someone might say, "But they come for the educational books, not for the gospel." Well, ask yourself, did the crowds come to Jesus in his days to hear the gospel or be healed. I'm inclined to believe that his ability to heal and cast out demons drew them to him. Fortunately upon encountering Jesus they also heard the gospel! But on that day, for Jesus, there were no orderly lines or crowd control, so he finally asked his disciples to have a boat ready just in case they pushed him into the water.

You can feel the pressure in some countries as you take to the streets and start handing out leaflets. So many come for a leaflet you can be overwhelmed. At the same time millions in the world have turned to Christ for salvation. The growth in the church is truly phenomenal in some places and could be again in others as the ground is prepared, sowed and watered. God can give the increase.

Why didn't he just levitate?

When I think of the enormous power Jesus possessed to heal, cast out demons, calm the storm on the lake, raise the dead I ask myself why he did not simply levitate off the ground and heal them from a safe 10 feet above the crowd? Firstly, Jesus did not do this because he did not want to rise above the crowd. He wanted to humbly serve them and identify with them. Secondly, he limited his use of power to helping them, not making himself most comfortable. He lived along with them in the midst of the dust, poverty, smells, sweat, jostling and noise of the crowd. He "spent" his grace and power to care for, comfort, guide and help the people at their level.

An international crowd

The people crowding Jesus were from many nations and regions; it was an international multitude. One nation may be larger than another and boast of their size, such as the country of Russia. The Portuguese might rave about their cooking, especially when they think of Letao de Bairaada, suckling pig of the city of Bairaada, or even crow over their famous exploring navigators, like Vasco da Gama or Bartolomeo Dias, or the Brazilians swell up with pride when the best bar-b-cue in the world is mentioned, Churrasco, but in the end all of us equally need Jesus. They have come from virtually every nation to put their trust in him.

On one occasion in Latin America someone tried to accuse the crew of the ship Doulos of being CIA. But it wouldn't stick because they were from so many different nations. The internationality of the crew was a testimony to the people who met them.

The Son of God, the center of attention

That day the people surrounded Jesus. He was the center, just as a wheel has only one center. Jesus is referred to as the cornerstone of God's house, the first stone of the building. No other name has been given under heaven whereby we must be saved, only his.

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Verse 11 says, *“Whenever the unclean spirits saw Him, they would fall down before Him and shout, “You are the Son of God (NASB-u)!”* Jesus knew the reality of evil spirits and threw them out. The spirit world is very real, and certainly not neutral. For those who find the idea of Jesus being called “the Son of God” abhorrent, would this encounter and words from the spirit world have some impact?

While Jesus wanted no one to place their faith in the testimony of demons and told the devils to be quiet, what little escaped their lips, as they are cast out by him, is very revealing. In this way the gospel writer recorded both the testimony of the evil spirits and the fact that Jesus rebuked them, telling them to be quiet, so that we will go no further in our investigation about him by following up on what evil spirits have to say. Remember, there will come a point at which evil spirits will slip in the lie. Why not trust evil spirits when they tell a truth? Because eventually they will mix lies with truth especially when you are off your guard. One of Satan’s most powerful weapons has been deceit. He used this weapon against our forefathers in the Garden of Eden and he uses it time and time again today. His attack is usually not frontal; it is often subtle.

It was not that Jesus did not want people to know who he was. He was concerned about the integrity of the messengers. While he could not trust the message of the gospel to fallen angels he would trust it to human beings and make them “honest to God” by changing their hearts and giving them integrity through the gospel.

This demon cried out the truth about Jesus that he is the Son of God, and the Lord allowed the gospel writer to record the event. The voice from heaven had already given witness to this reality at Jesus’ baptism. The voice from the cloud will repeat this important fact in the Mountain of Transfiguration, by saying, *“This is My beloved Son, listen to Him (9:7 NASB-u)!”*

Hebrews 3:1-6 tells us that Jesus is the Son who is over God’s house. We are to fix our thoughts on him. Moses was faithful as a servant in all God’s house, testifying to what would be said in the future. But Christ is faithful as Son over God’s house. And we are his house, if we hold on to our courage and the hope which we proclaim.

Well, now if we are not allowed to take information about the spirit world from demons what sources do we have? This is answered in the next section. The apostles were chosen to be with Jesus and then to go out and preach, to tell the rest of the world just who he was.

Let us take seriously what happened to King Saul. He rejected God’s word so often that there came a point when the Lord would no longer speak to him. Sadly he turned to the occult and was led to his death.

But let's examine more closely the doctrine that fell from the demon's lips that day ... that Jesus is the Son of God. Let's begin with 2 verses from the temptation of Jesus by the devil.

Matthew 4:3 And the tempter came and said to Him, "If You are the Son of God, command that these stones become bread." Matthew 4:6 and said to Him, "If You are the Son of God, throw Yourself down; for it is written, 'He will command His angels

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concerning You'; and 'On their hands they will bear You up, So that You will not strike Your foot against a stone (NASB-u).''

The devil knew very well Jesus was the Son of God; his own minions confessed this in Mark 3:11. Satan was tempting Jesus. Was his challenge like a little boy daring another to do something? "If you're so good at that, do it!"

Another reference is from Jesus' trial before the Sanhedrin, the Jewish council.

Matthew 26:63 But Jesus kept silent. And the high priest said to Him, "I adjure You by the living God, that You tell us whether You are the Christ, the Son of God (NSAB-u)."

This issue certainly was a burning issue in Jesus' days. Back in the days of open and rampant idolatry in Israel, before the Babylonian captivity, Israel's leaders might have accepted Jesus as the Son of God, but they might have done this uncritically. They might have accepted him along with other gods as a god. They might have simply added him to the pantheon of deities they and other nations worshipped. They might have accepted him as a son of God amongst other sons of God, and not as uniquely the Son of God, even as God himself.

Others called sons of God

There are others who are called sons of God, or gods, such as (NASB-u):

1. Those to whom the Law was given, *John 10:34-35, 34 Jesus answered them, "Has it not been written in your Law, 'I said, you are gods'? 35 "If he called them gods, to whom the word of God came (and the Scripture cannot be broken)...*
2. Adam as the first man created, *Luke 3:38, the son of Enosh, the son of Seth, the son of Adam, the son of God.*
3. Those who are born again of the Spirit of God and called the sons of God, *Galatians 3:26, For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus.*
4. The angels, *Job 1:6, Now there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the Lord, and Satan also came among them. Job 38:7 When the morning stars sang together And all the sons of God shouted for joy?*
5. The peacemakers, *Matthew 5:9, "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God.*
6. The sons of the resurrection, *Luke 20:36 for they cannot even die anymore, because they are like angels, and are sons of God, being sons of the resurrection.*
7. Those led by the Spirit of God, *Romans 8:14, For all who are being led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God.*
8. Those who will eventually be revealed as the real sons of God, *Romans 8:19 For the anxious longing of the creation waits eagerly for the revealing of the sons of God.*

However, Jesus' claim to be the Son of God was understood by the Jews, and they understood rightly, that he was God and not a son of God in any of the above senses. Hebrews chapter one makes it very clear that he was not an angel, one of the groups called the sons of God. His great works and claims would not allow us the option of just saying he was a good man or teacher. He was much more than that. Nor was he the first human being created as in the case of Adam.

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What makes us sons of God is our faith in Christ Jesus, and so he does not fit into that category of son of God as we do.

So why did he call those to whom the Law came, gods? He called them gods, lesser gods if you like, because God deigned to raise them to that level and communicate to them. In other words they were privileged to receive the word of the living God. It refers to their privileged position, not their inherent nature.

Jesus was letting the Jews know that they were not to worship him for his physical attributes but for his spiritual attributes. He was the Son of God incarnate, in flesh. God the Son had taken on human nature and body. This was unique, a mystery, something almost beyond comprehension! God had weaned them away from bowing to any physical object, and he had had to do it in a very painful way by sword, famine, and slavery to other nations. How could they bow to Jesus, a physical human being standing there in front of them? Besides, he was so young!

The human body and nature of Jesus was privileged to house the person of the Son of God. So too their forefathers had been privileged to receive the Word of God and they had been raised to the privileged position of being called gods, although nothing about their makeup or essential nature was divine. Jesus body and human nature were not divine, they were entirely human, and in his case without sin. What made him divine was his God nature.

“Son of God” in 30 Bible references

Because the issue of who Jesus is, is so important I have listed below almost 30 Bible references, in which either he or another person state that he is the *Son of God*. Let us remember too, that he often calls himself the *Son of Man*. He was both truly God and truly man.

All texts in this list are from the New American Standard Bible-updated version.

Matthew 27:43 "He trusts in God; let God rescue Him now, if He delights in Him; for He said, 'I am the Son of God.'"

Matthew 27:54 Now the centurion, and those who were with him keeping guard over Jesus, when they saw the earthquake and the things that were happening, became very frightened and said, "Truly this was the Son of God!"

Luke 1:35 The angel answered and said to her, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; and for that reason the holy Child shall be called the Son of God.

Luke 4:41 Demons also were coming out of many, shouting, "You are the Son of God!" But rebuking them, He would not allow them to speak, because they knew Him to be the Christ.

Luke 22:70 And they all said, "Are You the Son of God, then?" And He said to them, "Yes, I am."

John 1:34 "I myself have seen, and have testified that this is the Son of God."

John 1:49 Nathanael answered Him, "Rabbi, You are the Son of God; You are the King of Israel."

John 5:25 "Truly, truly, I say to you, an hour is coming and now is, when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God, and those who hear will live.

John 10:36 do you say of Him, whom the Father sanctified and sent into the world, 'You are blaspheming,' because I said, 'I am the Son of God'?

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John 11:4 But when Jesus heard this, He said, "This sickness is not to end in death, but for the glory of God, so that the Son of God may be glorified by it."

John 11:27 She said to Him, "Yes, Lord; I have believed that You are the Christ, the Son of God, even He who comes into the world."

John 19:7 The Jews answered him, "We have a law, and by that law He ought to die because He made Himself out to be the Son of God."

John 20:31 but these have been written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing you may have life in His name.

Acts 8:37 [And Philip said, "If you believe with all your heart, you may." And he answered and said, "I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God."]

Acts 9:20 and immediately he began to proclaim Jesus in the synagogues, saying, "He is the Son of God."

Romans 1:4 who was declared the Son of God with power by the resurrection from the dead, according to the Spirit of holiness, Jesus Christ our Lord,

2 Corinthians 1:19 For the Son of God, Christ Jesus, who was preached among you by us -- by me and Silvanus and Timothy -- was not yes and no, but is yes in Him.

Galatians 2:20 "I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself up for me.

Ephesians 4:13 until we all attain to the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a mature man, to the measure of the stature which belongs to the fullness of Christ.

Hebrews 4:14 Therefore, since we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession.

Hebrews 6:6 and then have fallen away, it is impossible to renew them again to repentance, since they again crucify to themselves the Son of God and put Him to open shame.

Hebrews 7:3 Without father, without mother, without genealogy, having neither beginning of days nor end of life, but made like the Son of God, he remains a priest perpetually.

Hebrews 10:29 How much severer punishment do you think he will deserve who has trampled under foot the Son of God, and has regarded as unclean the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified, and has insulted the Spirit of grace?

1 John 3:8 the one who practices sin is of the devil; for the devil has sinned from the beginning. The Son of God appeared for this purpose, to destroy the works of the devil.

1 John 4:15 Whoever confesses that Jesus is the Son of God, God abides in him, and he in God.

1 John 5:5 Who is the one who overcomes the world, but he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God?

1 John 5:12 He who has the Son has the life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have the life.

1 John 5:20 And we know that the Son of God has come, and has given us understanding so that we may know Him who is true; and we are in Him who is true, in His Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God and eternal life. NASB-u

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II. The choosing of the 12, “faithful men who shall be able to teach others also.” 3:13-19



In John’s Gospel Jesus made it very clear that he chose the 12 and not, they him. What is more, he chose them and appointed them to go and bear fruit, fruit that would last (John 15:16).

These 12 responded. However we find that one of them, Judas Iscariot eventually turned back. He lost even what he had. These words are found in the comments Jesus made in chapter 4 surrounding the parables. Whoever had nothing even what he had would be taken away, but more of that later.

Steps to appointing the 12

Let’s go through the steps Jesus took in appointing the 12.

1. First he called to himself, on a mountain, those he wanted and they came to him.

There were more than 12 who followed him, and he chose from among them. It seems he was specific because it says he called those he wanted. And this seems to be a call to ministry and not discipleship, if we can think of the first as work and the second as learning, at least by way of emphasis. We will always be learning even as older believers and after years of service. And even as new disciples and learners there is work to do in the Lord’s service.

2. He appointed 12...

The Lord wanted a well-defined and recognizable group. When we really stop and think about how small a group Jesus chose we might be surprised. After all is this not the Son of God himself? Surely he could disciple at least 50 if not many thousands. In part it may not have been a question of Jesus’ capacity to disciple but rather his example. He knew our limits and was setting an example to us to “think small” in our making disciples of others or we would lose the impact on individual lives.

I found the phrase “think small” in an article called “Passing on the Baton”, in Alpha Magazine, in the January 1993 issue. Justin Dennison, who has been a pastor in England and Canada, and was chaplain to Manchester United Football Club, wrote the article. He “recounts his discovery that he could help others run the race effectively and issues a challenge to Christians to ‘think small’ in order to increase their impact.”

He quotes Bill Hull, from his book, *The Disciple Making Pastor*, and writes, “Hull points out that a strong emphasis on personal discipleship training will not necessarily produce a large church, in

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fact initially, it may even retard numerical growth, striking hard at the pastor's and congregation's Achilles' heel of impatience and thirst for immediate results. In reality, however, studies suggest that patience has its reward with most pastors seeing their best growth after leading a church for between four to seven years."

He goes on to exhort us not to let the problems encountered in what has been termed 'shepherding' turn us away. There will always be excesses and the negative experiences should not keep us from the real thing. Let's be careful about that overbearing authoritarian approach.

He wrote of a story that a Christian leader told that illustrates the idea of disciple making. "He told the story of meeting an old lady in his native Argentina, who introduced him to a young girl who was one of her great grandchildren. She went on to tell him that she had six children and 36 grandchildren.

Her family was impressive in number and among her grandchildren were many well educated and professional people. Carlos asked her, 'How did you manage to produce such a large, well-fed, well-dressed, well-educated, extended family?' She replied, 'I didn't, I just took care of the six, and each of them took care of their six.'"

3. Designating them apostles (sent ones)

Some of us may shy away from titles and others deeply desire titles. Some may be afraid that a title is superficial and what really matters is the work to be done. Others may desire titles because of the supposed position and prestige that they will lend to them. But there is a middle road. A title is like a handle on an instrument. It is useful in order to have some idea of what a person is and does. May the Lord give us each the grace to see our titles or names, and we are given a few in the New Testament, as true descriptions of what we are and do, rather than as symbols of prestige. We are called saints. Should that put us on pedestals, or remind us that we are to live holy lives, committed to the Lord? The believers were called disciples, which means learners. Are we in the learning mode, or are we too proud to learn?

Apostle means one who is sent, and the same word from the Latin language is *missionary*. It is not a title which gives license to someone to lord it over others.

4. That they might be with him

If Jesus was to send them into the world to represent himself and his kingdom they must have time with him to learn of him, and be witnesses of who he was, and what he had come to do on earth. Later when replacing Judas with another to bring the number of apostles back to 12 of those who were his witnesses; they chose between 2 men who had been with Jesus from his baptism until he was received back into heaven.

Although not accomplished in the same way, we can say that the Lord wants us, even today, to be with him through the witness of those who saw and followed him. Through the witness they left behind in scripture we can come to know Jesus better, reading about him, meditating on his

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teachings and all his good acts of kindness towards those with whom he walked; and towards us since many things he did were on our behalf, as well as for those who lived at the time.

5. That he might send them out to preach

You see his purpose was to send them out to preach, to tell the good news about him. How could they be accurate and faithful in such a task unless they were with Jesus to see and hear all that he had done. Being with him had a purpose. Returning to the thought that we can be with Jesus through the witness left in the Bible, we too must take what we learn of him through those ancient witnesses and preach this good news to others. They in turn can come to “be with Jesus”, and they in turn can go out and preach.

The apostle in his letter to the Romans plants that question before them in chapter 10 verses 14 and 15, “How, then, can they call on the one they have not believed in? And how can they believe in the one of whom they have not heard? And how can they hear without someone preaching to them? And how can they preach unless they are sent?”

Jesus describes the Lord as the owner of a vineyard in Mark 12:1-12. He rented the vineyard to tenants and time and again sent his servants to the tenants to gather the fruit of the vineyard. The servants were treated brutally. He finally sends his son and the tenants kill him. God is a sending God. He sent his prophets time and time again to his people. Finally he sent his only Son Jesus.

Acts 13:1-5 tells us that leaders in the church were ministering to the Lord. This time of fellowship with the Lord led to 2 of them being sent out to the work to which God had called them. Being with the Lord led to being sent out by the Lord.

6. To have authority to cast out demons

There seemed to be much demon activity in Christ’s time. One Bible teacher said he felt that Satan stepped up his activities because of the presence of Christ.

They were given power to drive out demons. Paul and other apostles did the same. Paul seems to say in his writings that God would endow some, in times to come, in the church, with authority over evil spirits. Some would argue that this authority is upon all believers and some would argue that it is a gift or ministry to some. Whatever the case let us make a distinction between preaching and casting out demons; that is important. Not everyone is possessed of a demon, but all are lost who do not believe. Therefore it is imperative that the Gospel be preached to all, while only in the case of some do we have demon possession, and so the need to cast out a demon.

The 12 who were appointed

Then follows a list of the 12 he appointed.

1. Simon (to whom he gave the name Peter)

Why did he give this name to Peter? It meant a stone? Later Peter was to use the concept and image of believers in the Lord as living stones being built up together as a spiritual house (1 Peter

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2:4-8). In this passage he gave Christ the prominent place as “the living Stone” who is the cornerstone, the stone laid in Zion, *“a chosen and precious cornerstone, and the one who trusts in him will never be put to shame (NIV).”*

At the same time Paul wrote in Ephesians 2:19-22 that the apostles, along with the prophets form the rest of the foundation linked to Jesus the cornerstone. The apostles do have an important place in the structure of the house.

2. James and John, sons of Zebedee (to whom he gave the name Boanerges, Sons of Thunder)

The word “sons” reminds us that the prominent image in this section of the Gospel is family or house. James and John were brothers and now they were becoming part of a much larger family which took them from the carnal level of being brothers to each other, to the spiritual level of being brothers to many. After all, if you go far enough back in history, we are all related in the flesh. But what counts now is that we can be related in this new brotherhood and sisterhood that follows Jesus.

3. Andrew, Philip, Bartholomew, Matthew, Thomas, James son of Alphaeus, Thaddeus, Simon the Zealot

4. Judas Iscariot, who betrayed him.

This short narrative ends with a note of sadness. Jesus was to have trouble from one of those in the inner circle of 12 disciples. Judas was to betray Jesus. We wish it could be otherwise but we are in a very imperfect world and betrayal is an event which repeats itself over and over again in our world. In a way it is not surprising that that it took place in the group of Jesus’ closest followers, and it will take place amongst us in our churches and missionary teams.

There was a person on one of our teams who traveled from country to country visiting teams and counseling them with their personal problems. That person seemed so spiritual and so kind and understanding, and their ministry was developing. It was exciting to see how they served others so humbly and effectively. But there came a day when they gave it up. They went back to the world. Now they are simply living with another person in an adulterous relationship.

But the story is not over. Let us hope that those who fall return as did that individual in the Corinthian church of Paul’s days who was living with his father’s wife. He repented and was restored. There is a difference between Judas or Demas, and those who rebel for a time but later return in repentance to the Lord.

The Lord would have more to say to this point in his comments surrounding the parables in chapter 4.

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III. Jesus, Beelzebub, and the Holy Spirit ... is “it” in you? 3:20-30



The crowds pressed in on Jesus. He and his disciples could not even eat! There are those who because of deadlines miss meals, or grab bites of pizza ordered in, and carry on working. A friend of ours who plans and writes computer programs once described to me how they face some deadlines. They hole up in a hotel and work night and day. Yes they eat, but it is often on the run as they work. Here Jesus and his followers are so pressed by the needy and possibly inquisitive crowds they can't eat.

He's crazy!

Now there were various opinions about all this. His family had their opinion. They went out to take charge of him. They felt he had had too much and was giving himself recklessly to the ministry. He wasn't taking care of himself and their explanation was that, "He is out of his mind." Were they embarrassed or even angry? "Here is this crazy relative of ours who is working so hard he can't stop to eat. He is going to kill himself. Besides that, all these people are just taking advantage of his good will."

If we get too involved in the Lord's service so that we begin to miss a meal or two our families might start reacting the same way. Unbelieving families can have some very strong and negative opinions about serving the Lord. You might get away with it if you are quiet about it and keep the involvement to a minimum. In other words, be careful you don't get too fanatical.

So one opinion made out that Jesus had gone crazy. Why didn't he send the crowds away and set up a schedule so they knew when they could come and when they could not. He needed planned interviews. This was all just getting out of hand!

Crowds on board

The Lord has given us some ocean going ships in Operation Mobilization, and we hold book exhibitions on board. In many countries we have been swamped with visitors and the crush can get to us emotionally and, in some cases, even physically. Millions have come on board and taken away millions more Bibles and books. How do we respond when the crowds swarm on board in the tropical heat? It is easy to begin to wish they would stay away. This way of working is not as comfortable as we would like it to be. We might even feel like we are going crazy. We start getting impatient and irritable with people who need the Lord.

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It is interesting that Mark cites the opinions of Jesus' family, because this is that section of this part of his book, where he is describing the kingdom as a family or household. Mark is trying to bring attention to the Kingdom of God under this figure, that of the family.

But what is the issue being raised? People are beginning to wonder where Jesus gets his vision, compassion and stamina for all he is called upon to do! In modern terms we might ask, "Which tiger is in his tank?" While this may sound a bit irreverent let's remember that the Bible describes our Lord as the Lion of the tribe of Judah.

Empowered by Satan?

The teachers of the law who came down from Jerusalem voice their opinion. While his family has the homespun street wisdom of Nazareth or Capernaum, these men reveal the theological wisdom current in the capitol, Jerusalem. Their opinion was decidedly negative. They did not say he was a religious fanatic who was overdoing it. No, they accused him of being possessed of Beelzebub. They said he was driving out demons by the prince of demons.

While it may be very discouraging to have your family say you are crazy or even fanatical, which has the same ring to it; if you catch the attention of some religious leaders they may go so far as to say you are worse than crazy; you are evil, even motivated by Satan. The Apostle Paul, while he was still Saul the Pharisee, thought he was doing God a favor by trying to stamp out the early Christians.

There is a war on between the forces of darkness and those of light. Here we find the religious leaders of the day closing ranks against Jesus. In chapter 3:6 we have seen how the Pharisees and the Herodians went out to plot his death.

Jesus could have simply brushed them aside or breathed out fire at them and consumed them on the spot. What would you have done if someone in all seriousness said you were the devil? He called them and spoke in parables. He gave them an opportunity to listen to his word and respond once again. His mercy and compassion are amazing!

Satan drives out Satan?

Jesus asked them a question, "How can Satan drive out Satan?"

Let's take this parable phrase by phrase (Text from the NIV):

1. How can Satan drive out Satan?

Someone might suggest that the devil casts out a demon occasionally to confuse us. He might try a cover up to make us think Jesus was God's agent when, really, he was the devil's. However, Jesus was casting out so many demons this just couldn't be a serious consideration!

2. If a kingdom is divided against itself, that kingdom cannot stand.

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Jesus stated the obvious. Lives are at stake and he is ridding them of the bondage of the devil and his forces. He was robbing Satan and his kingdom of its subjects. Here again we see the mention of a kingdom. Satan's dominion is a kingdom and Jesus called it that.

Other references to both God's rule and Satan's rule are referred to as kingdoms. In Colossians 1:13-14 Paul writes, "*For he has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son he loves, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins (NIV).*" In Ephesians 2:1 Paul described the former condition of the Ephesians by writing, "*As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins, in which you used to live when you followed the ways of this world and of the ruler of the kingdom of the air, the spirit who now is at work in those who are disobedient (NIV).*" A discussion about the Holy Spirit ensued.

It is interesting that Peter announced to the elders of Israel when on trial that he and the other apostles were witnesses of Jesus' death at the hands of Israel's leaders, as well as Jesus' resurrection, and that their co-witness was the Holy Spirit, "... *whom God has given to those who obey him (Acts 5:29-32 NIV).*" Jesus ministered in the power of the Spirit who brings obedience to God. The next scene will bring us face to face with the importance of doing the will of God.

3. If a house is divided against itself that house cannot stand.

Jesus repeated the statement to emphasize its reality but he changed the vocabulary. Now he called this entity, not a kingdom but a house. Whether the divisions are in a kingdom or a house the results are the same. We also find in the course of history that it has become common to call a line of kings the house of a certain family of kings, as for example the House of David, or the Hapsburgs or the House of Windsor.

Why did Jesus repeat himself and use the image of a house? It is assumed in the case of a house that we are talking of the same family which will have family ties to keep them united. They have strong bonds of blood that keep them committed to each other. You have heard that blood is thicker than water. This reference to house reinforces the image and conforms to the image or symbol being emphasized in this section to help us understand the kingdom of God.

4. And if Satan opposes himself and is divided, he cannot stand; his end has come.

Apparently unity is important even to the devil, the agent who sows disunity. His temptation to Eve led to a breakdown between God and the creatures he had endowed with his image; the people that he had given dominion over the creation and with whom he communicated. In his own kingdom he rules and demands some semblance of unity and allegiance to himself; he needs unity or he will come to an end. Apparently he has not come to such an end so he does command the allegiance and power of huge forces, forces that to us are enormous! He may be evil and very, very wrong, but he does command respect and we are not to take the devil lightly.

Unity is of great importance. A house or kingdom will not stand without it. Let's make the greatest effort we can to maintain unity amongst us as the body of Christ. Ephesians 4 exhorts us to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.

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The Old Testament exalts unity in Psalm 133 explaining how good and pleasant it is when brothers live together in unity! It is likened to precious oil coursing down the head and clothes of Aaron and the dew of Hermon falling on Mt. Zion. A blessing is announced from the Lord, even life forever more.

My 1966 summer evangelistic team in southern Spain was an example of unity. They included Willie, the prayer warrior; Detlief, the Bible distributor; Dave, the testifier; José, the cook; Bob, “anywhere any time”; and Roger, “servant of all”. They hardly needed me as a leader!

5. 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.

Let's take this a little at a time. Who is the strong man? Who might be the one entering his house? If the strong man is Satan and the one who ties him up is Jesus or one using his authority, then it means Jesus is neutralizing Satan's power and taking something from his house or kingdom. Can casting a demon out of a person be described as robbing Satan's house? By casting out the demon with its control over that person Jesus takes that person out of Satan's house and we assume takes that person into his kingdom. Is Jesus “tying up the demon” and then taking the person from Satan's house? If the person is robbed out of Satan's house then where is that person if not placed in God's house. We assume from Scripture that there are only 2 houses, that of God and that of Satan.

Whatever the case, the issue of power or strength arises here. Jesus spoke of a strong man. The writings of Jude remind us not to slander authorities and celestial beings as some have done to their own hurt (Jude 8-10). The Lord told his apostles in Acts 1:8 that they would be endowed with power after the Holy Spirit came upon them and that this power was to be used as his witnesses all over the world. Paul wrote with spiritual exuberance in Ephesians 1:18-21,

I pray also that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened in order that you may know the hope to which he has called you, the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints, and his incomparably great power for us who believe. That power is like the working of his mighty strength, which he exerted in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly realms, far above all rule and authority, power and dominion, and every title that can be given, not only in the present age but in the one to come (NIV).

Paul goes on in Ephesians 3:20-21 to utter phenomenal words, “Now unto him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, forever and ever. Amen (NIV).”

Remember to keep asking and you will see the Lord do more of the wonderful things he has done for you in the past.

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Paul encourages his disciple Timothy with these wonderful words to him in his second letter, chapter 1, verse 7, *“For God did not give us a spirit of timidity, but a spirit of power, of love and self-discipline (NIV).”*

Jesus turned their attention to an issue now, which was of supreme importance, the nature of the power within him. His family has done a streetwise analysis of him psychologically and said, “He is out of his mind.” The teachers of the law have judged him spiritually and said he was possessed of the prince of demons, the devil. He then confirmed by implication that he was possessed of the Holy Spirit. He launched a most solemn warning about blasphemy against the Holy Spirit. The author commented that he said this because the teachers had said he had an evil spirit. When the teachers claimed he had an evil spirit they were blaspheming against the Holy Spirit, a sin for which there is no pardon.

The mention of the Holy Spirit reveals to us the nature of the spirit that was in Christ. He is the “Holy” Spirit. Jesus had insisted on the importance of unity. Jesus had spoken of the importance of strength, or power. Then he made absolute the need for holiness. The Spirit of God is holy. In a parallel passage earlier in this part of the gospel Jesus was in the synagogue. A man with an evil spirit cried out, *“I know who you are, the Holy One of God (1:24 NIV).”*

God told his people Israel to be holy for he, their God, was holy, and here lies our motivation. People want to be like the one they honor and admire. When Isaiah saw the Lord high and lifted up the Seraphim cried out, “Holy, holy, holy is the Lord Almighty, the whole earth is full of his glory (Isaiah 6:3 NIV).” We are not far wrong when we say holiness brings glory, the glory of God. When the priests of Eli’s family sinned and they lost the ark to the Philistines the wife of Eli’s son called her new born, Ichabod, the glory has departed.

It is not surprising that in that breathtaking list of our blessings in Christ, in Ephesians chapter one, we find toping that list these words in verse 4, *“For he chose us in him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight (NIV).”* The first part of Ephesians chapter 1 is a litany of the blessings of salvation in Christ. Holiness and blamelessness are the landing lights of your spiritual airplane that light up your final approach in the darkness. We are thrilled with the power we possess as expressed in chapter 3 verses 20 and 21, the verses that close that first part of Ephesians. Let’s remember that at the other end of those mountains of power of 3:20 and 21 we have the mountains of holiness and blamelessness that form the starting point of our spiritual mountain range which are the blessings of God in Christ!

Peter expressed in similar symbols what the Lord is doing in us and he emphasized holiness. *“... you also, like living stones, are being built into a spiritual house to be a holy priesthood ... (1Peter 2:5 NIV).”*

Holiness embodies two concepts, one is separation and the other is purity. Those who are called by the Lord’s name are separated to him. Leviticus 20:26 spells it out to Israel, *“You shall be holy to me; for I the Lord am holy and have separated you from the peoples, that you should be mine(NIV).”* John 15:19 clarifies for the believer today, *“If you belonged to the world, it would love you as its own. As it is, you do not belong to the world, but I have chosen you out of the world (NIV).”*

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I stepped in it!

Those called by the Lord are also purified and cleansed by him. Leviticus 10:8-10 taught Israel to distinguish between the holy and the common, the clean and the unclean. Normally when you change clothes you might admit to being able to wear them at least another day, they are not that dirty. However, my experience in Green Park, London, England on one occasion was a different matter. After taking a church meeting in central London Cathy and I went for a stroll in Green Park. It was late spring and the sun was out in all its glory. The grass was growing and the birds were singing. The flowers gushed with glory! We walked and ran through the park and finally returned to the car. The car had been heating up in the sun and the minute we climbed inside I recoiled at the stench. I knew immediately what had occurred. Yes, I had stepped in dog excrement (poop)! I yelled at Cathy, "Look at your shoes!" but she had escaped stepping it; I, however, had it all up and down my trouser leg. We had nothing with which to clean it off, so we opened the windows and rushed back home, our heads hanging out the car windows the whole way back! That event reminded me of the filth and vileness of my sin in the sight of God. One of his great purposes in my life was to purify me and make me holy.

Go for the highest standard

Holiness may seem a burden to some but God knows his standards are the tough but best way to go. Remember the consequences of stretching the rules. To someone fornication, euphemistically called premarital sex, may seem a small peccadillo or even okay. Just remember that there will be others who want you to overlook their brutal murders or rape. It is best to go for God's highest standards. We who see fit to excuse a little must be ready to excuse much. If we forsake the pursuit of holiness in life's standards, meaning and even reality will break down. These breakdowns on a personal level have a popular name; they are called nervous breakdowns. (Nervous breakdowns may not necessarily come from moral breakdown in some cases.) The alternative to holiness is hell, hell even on earth! The apostle Paul refers in his writings to one who restrains and is referring to the restraint of sin and evil in the world. Most commentators firmly believe this refers to the work of the Holy Spirit in our present world. In other words if it were not for the Holy Spirit our whole world would be apocalyptic in its horrors and this horror would be without borders or time limits.

Don't let expressions like "holy roller", "holy Joe", or "holier than thou" keep you from a total commitment to holiness, God's holiness. It is the one moral characteristic of the person of the Holy Spirit that actually appears in his name.

I have never heard anyone say that Jesus had an evil spirit or was controlled by the devil. Most people I have met respect the person of Christ. They may not accept that he is the Son of God. They may say he is a teacher or a very good person at least. Someone who hopes to justify his or her own lifestyle might try to say Jesus was a practicing homosexual or a being from another planet. I have never heard anyone at least in my own experience commit the unpardonable sin and say he had an evil spirit.

But it is interesting that the issues brought up here are the real issues. According to the witnesses of the day Jesus did and said things that would cause you to pause and consider his psychological

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condition and his spiritual state. He was either a lunatic, or a liar, or the very Son of God. The evidence available to us points clearly to the later.

I was distributing evangelistic books in an office somewhere in southern Europe when a priest came into the room. I was presenting the book, *Peace With God*, to the two gentlemen in the room, and I happened to be going through the table of contents and read the chapter title called, “The Holy Spirit”. At that moment the priest entered and when he heard mention of the Holy Spirit he began to laugh and treat very lightly the whole idea. Did he commit an unpardonable sin? I don’t know but it frightened me to think that a man purporting to represent the God of the Christians take the third person of the Trinity so lightly!

The writer to the Hebrews called them holy brothers and wrote to them about God’s house in Hebrews 3:1-6. He made it clear that while Moses was a faithful servant in God’s house Jesus was the faithful Son over God’s house. This mention of Moses will lead us into the next narrative which is built around the concept of family or house. Moses faithfully communicated God’s will to his people in his house. Jesus said that a key to knowing you are a part of God’s family is doing his will. Hebrews tells us that Moses testified to what would be said in the future. Jesus was that future.

IV. Jesus’ family, but which family? 3:31-35



Verse 20 tells us Jesus family went to take charge of him. Verse 31 brings us back to his family who are outside. They were his mother and brothers. They sent someone in to call him. It may have been a child who could squeeze through the crowd. The crowd heard about his family and passed on the message that the family was looking for him.

Family needs or control?

If they had been in some great need I think Jesus would have responded to the call. Maybe he did eventually respond and the words to the crowd were in passing as he eventually made his way out to his family. We are not told this. He may have understood that they felt some urge to control him and his ministry and he would not have it.

At the same time he did not condemn his family, but rather took the image of an earthly family to teach what the heavenly family of God was like. While he did not condemn or set aside his family entirely he had reached the age and point in his short life’s work when he must get on with the task of forming a family for God.

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Spiritual family above physical family

In that spiritual family who are his mother and brothers? He told us clearly. The members of his family are those who do the will of God. But he looked around at those seated around him and said this. He implied that those who were listening and receiving his word were his family. At the same time he made it clear that they were only potentially his family for until they did the will of God they remained only hearers of that word. Jesus said, "Whoever does God's will is my brother and sister and mother (3:35 NIV)."

How sad it is to see in more than one place in our world how people who are supposedly Christians make so much of Jesus' earthly family and care so little for God's will. Religion has turned Jesus' teaching inside out and upside down! The carnal realities are honored above the spiritual, in fact, at times the spiritual is all but erased!

Do the will of God

But what a joy it is to do the will of God! John said in his epistle that the world and everything in it are passing away but whoever does the will of God abides forever. That person who does the will of God belongs to an everlasting family.

While working amongst the Roma (gypsies) of Granada, Spain, it was not unusual to find they had images of virgins and saints on their walls. We were tempted to tell them to get rid of these idols and never to pray to them. Maybe it was good we did not do that. Eventually a preacher visited their church and preached on the 10 commandments. It was a revelation to them! They themselves realized they should rid themselves of the images in obedience to the Bible.

2 Corinthians 8:5 says, "*... and this, not as we had expected, but they first gave themselves to the Lord and to us by the will of God (NIV).*"

Paul was commending the Macedonians, in his letter to the Corinthians in order to motivate the Corinthians. He commended them because they gave even in their poverty. But they had done something else before sharing their money, they had first given themselves to the Lord and to Paul's team and that was by the will of God.

I know of someone in fulltime ministry heading up a church and ministry in an inner city area. When someone offers him or gives him a gift, let's say of \$5000, he returns the gift and invites the person to come and visit him and the ministry. That way he meets the giver, fellowships with the person and can show that donor the work that is going on. He then leaves it in the Lord's hands as to whether that person gives any money or not. If they become convinced of the work, he has gained the donors themselves, their interest long term, their prayers and their gifts.

Ephesians 6:6 says this about the will of God, "*... not by way of eye service, as men-pleasers, but as slaves of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart NIV.*"

The Lord is concerned about how we do his will. He wants us to do his will, not grudgingly, but from the heart. Is your heart in it? If someone does it from the heart it will not be done lackadaisically. It is also easy to do something when others are watching. In the Sermon on the Mount Jesus warned us that if we do things for others to see, that will be the sum total of our

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reward, but if we do it for the Lord he will reward us openly. Be careful if you are a men pleaser because you will have too many masters to please. It will get very confusing! You will be headed for a nervous breakdown.

A prayer partner?

If you struggle with doing the will of God you might consider finding a prayer partner to pray for you to do the will of God. Paul mentions someone like that in Colossians 4:12.

12 Epaphras, who is one of your number, a bonds slave of Jesus Christ, sends you his greetings, always laboring earnestly for you in his prayers, that you may stand perfect and fully assured in all the will of God (NASB).

12 Epaphras, who is one of you, a servant of Christ, saluteth you, always labouring fervently for you in prayers, that ye may stand perfect and complete in all the will of God (KJV).

This is the kind of prayer partner we need. Epaphras was from the church in Colossae and knew those people. While away from them on Paul's team he prayed for them, really working at it. What an example for missionaries to pray for their home church! Epaphras was also a short term missionary. Apparently he joined the apostle's team for periods of time. Many today have been short term missionaries so they can identify with Epaphras. Let's identify with him in his prayer life! Let's pray for our churches that they might do the will of God. We all know there are churches that are in great turmoil. There is back biting, a critical spirit, lying, greed, when there should be a demonstration of the fruit of the Holy Spirit. Other churches seem to be doing so well and growing, but let's not presume that this will always be the case! Let's pray for our churches and leaders like Epaphras did, whether those churches seem to be doing well or not.

It's one thing to be exhorted to do something such as prayer, not any easy occupation. It is quite another to know we have a helper. But we do have a helper, a helper from that other world, that world which is invisible to us, that of the spirit. Romans 8:27 tells us, "... and He who searches the hearts knows what the mind of the Spirit is, because He intercedes for the saints according to the will of God (NASB-u)." How encouraging to know that we have someone praying for us who knows the will of God! This helper is divine, not just any helper, but the Lord himself! Let's go further in what we are saying. The Lord, the Spirit, helps us to pray, and he is helping in exactly the area in which he is sovereign over all other helpers. This is no small thing.

Sexual morality

Another area is that of sexual morality. 1Thessalonians 4:3 says, "*For this is the will of God, your sanctification; that is, that you abstain from sexual immorality... (NASB).*"

This is part of the revealed, stated will of God. We are to grow in holiness abstaining from sexual immorality. It is an area of struggle for many of us. Let's not point the finger too quickly. Not a popular message in our world! Sexual immorality is praised in our media.

There have been times when those who claimed to be the leaders of the visible church have strayed far from this commitment to holiness. While a church council was being held at Lake Constance on the border of Germany and Switzerland in the late Middle Ages, 1414-15 AD, that

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council was being serviced by 1200 prostitutes. At the same time John Huss, the rector of Prague University, who had translated the Bible into the vernacular, forbidden counsel and tried on a trumped up charge, was being burnt at the stake, along with his books. The priests in charge of his execution had not read even one of Huss' books, not even in translation! Peter De Rosa's comment was, "It was clearly more sinful to say, as did Huss and the New Testament, that after the blessing the Eucharist should still be called 'bread' than to be a greedy, murderous, incestuous pope who misled the church on almost everything." (*Vicars of Christ*, by Peter de Rosa, "A Most Embarrassing Council", Crown Publishers, Inc., 94-96)

A part of Jesus family but not Jewish

Hearing Jesus' words about his true family may have brought joy to the hearts of those who were not immediate members of Jesus' family. They too could be a part of Jesus' family. But they had not stopped to think of the implications for Jewish society. Later the Jewish believers in Jerusalem realized where all this 'freedom' could lead in the Gentile world. Why, they could have "filthy" Gentiles becoming members of Christ's family! Well even if Gentiles are allowed they best clean the Gentiles up a little before they come into membership! They must become Jews before they become Christians. It became an issue in the church and Paul along with other apostles fought for liberty in Christ for the new Gentile believers.

The house of God
Mark 3:7-35



- Jesus, the Son of God 3:7-12
- The twelve, brothers 3:13-19a
- The Holy Spirit, a house 3:19b-30
- Whoever: my brother ... 3:31-35

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A person may be from whichever family on earth, whichever race or background, but joins the heavenly race when he comes to Jesus. That person is built up on the foundation which is Jesus and the testimony to him of the prophets and apostles; he's got a sure foundation. That person has the Holy Spirit of God in him. That person demonstrates his family ties, as he does God's will.

The house of God
Mark 3:7-35 and Ephesians 2:19-22

- Jesus, the Son of God 3:7-12
- The twelve, brothers 3:13-19a
- The Holy Spirit, a house 3:20b-30
- Whoever: my brother, sister, mother 3:31-35
- The cornerstone v. 20
- The foundation v. 20
- A dwelling of God v. 22
- Members of the family v. 19

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Paul laid out the blueprint in Ephesians 2:19-22. We are no longer foreigners but fellow citizens and members of God's household, Jesus the cornerstone, the apostles and prophets the foundation, and we a house, in which lives the Holy Spirit.

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JESUS' FAMILY AND THE WILL OF GOD

Mark 3:31-35

(All references are NASB-u)

A Study on the “Will of God”:

Mark 3:35 "For whoever does the will of God, he is My brother and sister and mother."

“**Mi casa es tu casa**”, is a popular greeting in the Spanish speaking world when you visit someone’s home. They are welcoming you by saying “mi casa es tu casa”, or my house is your house. Jesus welcomes you today to his house and family. We also welcome you to his house. But of course the physical building is temporary and he wants you to enter his spiritual household.

Many of us attend **family reunions** and it is so good to see people in your family that you grew up with, played with, and worked with. But those of us who are followers of Jesus and want to do the will of God know there is a family which is spiritual, not just physical. How good it is to have physical family who are also spiritual family.

None of us needs to be **homeless** spiritually. If today you ask Jesus to become your Lord and Savior and you give your life to him turning from your wrongdoing, you can become a member of the Lord’s family!

The players of the Detroit Tigers all have their private homes, but they also have a **baseball home**, Comerica Park. So we dedicate this house, this building, to many of the spiritual activities that as a church in Milan we will be doing (Message given at the dedication of a multi-purpose building at Milan Baptist Church). We all have our private homes but then on a temporary and local basis we have these buildings as a worship, fellowship, teaching, social and physical center as a church.

Romans 1:10 always in my prayers making request, if perhaps now at last by the will of God I may succeed in coming to you.

Paul wants to see the believers in Rome but has not been able to do that as yet. He is praying that the Lord will allow him to finally visit them. This will of God is not the **scriptural revealed (written down in the Bible)** will of God, but the **individual circumstantial (what would You have me to do)** will of God. It was terribly important that Paul should do the will of God when it came to loving God and his neighbor, but only relatively important that he visit Rome.

Romans 12:2 And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect.

This verse, and verse 1, introduce three and a half chapters about the will of God. We are not to think too highly of ourselves, exercise our gifts, love each other, submit to temporal authorities,

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support the weaker brother, recognize missionaries, and other very important issues.

Romans 15:32 so that I may come to you in joy by the will of God and find refreshing rest in your company.

At the end of the letter to the Romans Paul again expresses his desire to visit them in joy by the will of God and find rest in their company.

1 Corinthians 1:1 Paul, called as an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, and Sosthenes our brother ...

2 Corinthians 1:1 Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, and Timothy our brother, ¶ To the church of God which is at Corinth with all the saints who are throughout Achaia

Ephesians 1:1 Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, ¶ To the saints who are at Ephesus and who are faithful in Christ Jesus

Colossians 1:1 Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, and Timothy our brother

2 Timothy 1:1 Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, according to the promise of life in Christ Jesus

Paul had a very clear calling from God and so made this claim again and again, that his calling was by the will of God. All the amazing revelations he received from the Lord, his crisis and blindness on the way to Damascus, his confident teaching and preaching, his love for people and for the church, his sufferings in the gospel, and the miracles he did all confirm that he was called by the will of God.

When Paul claims he was called by the will of God it was no light assertion.

2 Corinthians 7:9 I now rejoice, not that you were made sorrowful, but that you were made sorrowful to the point of repentance; for you were made sorrowful according to the will of God, so that you might not suffer loss in anything through us.

2 Corinthians 7:10 For the sorrow that is according to the will of God produces a repentance without regret, leading to salvation, but the sorrow of the world produces death.

Repentance is from the Lord, not man made. A worldly person can be sorrowful but not repent. They can be sorrowful that things did not go well for them, or that they were found out or that they have been humiliated. When a person repents they turn away from their wrong doing, having recognized it as sin.

2 Corinthians 8:5 and this, not as we had expected, but they first gave themselves to the Lord and to us by the will of God.

Paul is commending the Macedonians because they gave even in their poverty, but they had done

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something else before sharing their money, they had first given themselves to the Lord and to Paul's team and that was the will of God.

I know of someone in fulltime ministry heading up a church and ministry in an inner city area. When someone offers him or gives him a gift, let's say of \$5000, he returns the gift and invites the person to come and visit him and the ministry. That way he meets the giver, fellowships with the person and can personally show that donor the work going on. He then leaves it in the Lord's hands as to whether that giver gives any money or not. If they become convinced of the work he has gained the donors themselves, their interest long term, their prayers and their gifts.

Ephesians 6:6 not by way of eye service, as men-pleasers, but as slaves of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart.

The Lord is concerned about how we do his will. He wants us to do his will, not grudgingly, but from the heart. Is your heart in it? If someone does it from the heart it will not be done lackadaisically. It is also easy to do something when others are watching. In the Sermon on the Mount Jesus warns us that if we do things for others to see that will be the sum total of our reward, but if we do it for the Lord He will reward us openly. Be careful if you are a men pleaser because you will have too many masters to please. It will get very confusing! You will be headed for a nervous breakdown.

Hebrews 10:36 For you have need of endurance, so that when you have done the will of God, you may receive what was promised.

Doing the will of God takes perseverance, and leads to reward. Gideon and his men experienced the need for perseverance. While chasing the Midianites who had escaped across the Jordan, Judges records, *Then Gideon and the 300 men who were with him came to the Jordan and crossed over, weary yet pursuing (Judges 8:4 NIV).*

1 Peter 2:15 For such is the will of God that by doing right you may silence the ignorance of foolish men.

We can silence foolish people, not by our arguments but by doing right and that is the will of God.

1 Peter 4:2 so as to live the rest of the time in the flesh no longer for the lusts of men, but for the will of God.

We have 2 options, live our time here in the flesh for the lusts of men, or live doing the will of God. God's desire is that we live out the will of God. The lusts of men provide certain immediate pleasure but it does not last. Moses chose rather to suffer affliction with the people of God rather than the pleasures of Egypt for a short time.

1 Peter 4:6 For the gospel has for this purpose been preached even to those who are dead, that though they are judged in the flesh as men, they may live in the spirit according to the will of God.

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God's will is that we live in the spirit. Our bodies are dying and our spirits are dead without God. When we are saved our bodies continue to die but we are made alive in the spirit.

1 Peter 4:19 Therefore, those also who suffer according to the will of God shall entrust their souls to a faithful Creator in doing what is right.

Doing the will of God may very well lead to suffering and persecution. But when we face that we can entrust our souls to a faithful Creator in doing right. Doing the will of God is doing right.

1 Peter 5:2 shepherd the flock of God among you, exercising oversight not under compulsion, but voluntarily, according to the will of God; and not for sordid gain, but with eagerness....

Enthusiastic church leaders are a blessing. What a blessing to have eager church leaders. People who are not chasing money but doing the work voluntarily are a thrill. This a word for the deacons or elders, as well as pastors.

1 John 2:17 The world is passing away, and also its lusts; but the one who does the will of God lives forever (NASB-u).

This text was one of DL Moody's favorite texts. The world is short lived, and its lustful pleasures. God has a long term view for us. If we do his will we will live forever.

FAMILY

Mark 3:31-32, 31 Then His mother and His brothers arrived, and standing outside they sent word to Him and called Him. 32 A crowd was sitting around Him, and they said to Him, "Behold, Your mother and Your brothers are outside looking for You."

My mother used to call us for various things. We were 3 brothers and one sister. We lived on a compound of 4 acres in Africa and we could hear her when she called wherever we were on the compound. She used to get confused sometimes. She might want me but would say, Bob, Jim, then finally, Jack, before she got the right one. She usually wanted us to come to do something.

Jesus family also called him because they wanted him to eat. Go back to chapter 3 and verses 20 and 21. He was so busy he did not have time to eat.

YOUR WILL

Psalm 40:8 "I delight to do Your will, O my God; Your Law is within my heart."

Doing the Lord's will was not drudgery to the psalmist. Some people think doing God's will is be boring, difficult, painful, but it is not to the one who loves the Lord, who is grateful to the Lord for all the Lord has done for him. God's law was not something outside of this person but down in his heart. Some folk have a Bible but it sits on their shelf. They never read it. They never think on it and obey it. It is not in their heart. It is foreign to them even when it sits so

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close to them as to be on the shelf in their home.

Psalm 143:10 Teach me to do Your will, For You are my God; Let Your good Spirit lead me on level ground.

This writer asks for help to do God's will. That should be our prayer. Begin your day asking the Lord to help you do his will. He had a reason for doing the Lord's will. The one he is addressing is his God. God is the one who made him and rules over him. He recognizes that and wants to obey his Creator.

He also refers to the Lord's good Spirit. He asks God to have his Spirit level out the way before him. Isn't it nice to have a level way to be led on? It is like the difference between a dirt country road full of pot holes and washboard surfaces and an express way. It is much faster and easier to make head way on the express way because it is so level, so smooth.

Matthew 6:10 'Your kingdom come. Your will be done, On earth as it is in heaven.

A prayer for God's will to be done and done in such a way that it is done, or carried out just as it is in heaven. The beings of heaven obey the Lord explicitly and so should we.

Matthew 26:42 He went away again a second time and prayed, saying, "My Father, if this cannot pass away unless I drink it, Your will be done."

The Father's will led Jesus through terrible pain. It was not an option. It had to be done and Jesus did it.

Hebrews 10:7 "Then I said, 'Behold, I have come (In the scroll of the book it is written of Me) To do Your will, O God.'"

Jesus' one great purpose was to do God's will. He would do it constantly without fault. No wonder he said that whoever did God's will, was his mother, brother and sister! He identifies so closely with them.

Hebrews 10:9 then He said, "Behold, I have come to do Your will." He takes away the first in order to establish the second.

The priests of Aaron's family could not do God's will consistently so the Lord raised upon another priest who would do God's will consistently.

Revelations 4:11 "Worthy are You, our Lord and our God, to receive glory and honor and power; for You created all things, and because of Your will they existed, and were created."

The existence of the universe is a huge evidence of the reality of God's will. How huge and powerful his will is. How important to take God's will seriously, for by his will the vast universe was created! God's will is no puny thing! It is enormous!

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If by the will of God people were created and created to reproduce and form families, then those who do not recognize the Creator and their relationship to him have rejected their family link to him. Those who do recognize him and his will come back into family with him. So Jesus says these are my mother, sister and brother.

Questions to aid in the study of this section, Mark 3:7-35

1. What are the 4 main elements of the house of God according to Ephesians 2:18-22 and this passage of Mark?
2. Of what significance is each of the 4 elements? If one of these elements were missing what would that mean to the house of God?
3. Why was the Lord Jesus so attractive to people from so many different regions? (3:7-12)
4. What part do the apostles play in the house of God? (3:13-19)
5. What did the Pharisees accuse Jesus of? What are the 3 characteristics of the Holy Spirit mentioned in the third scene, 3:20-30?
6. How did Jesus use family relationships to teach us about relationships in the kingdom of God? (3:31-35)
7. According to this passage, and Ephesians 2:18-22, we have the most important elements of the house of God, the church: Jesus Christ, the prophets and apostles, the Holy Spirit, and whoever does the will of God. Please do a little research as to whether some religions that are called Christian put too much emphasis on saints, virgins, patriarchs, bishops and other persons? Do they teach for example that without the permission of the head of their 'church', past or present, no one will enter heaven?