

One UNFORGIVABLE thing

Mark 3:22-30

November 18, 2006 Crossroads Community Fellowship, La Paz BCS, Mexico

Have you ever seen the Super Bowl pre-game? It is amazing, absolutely dripping with pump, hype, focus, and pure, raw, bone crunching testosterone (mostly steroids) and power. Now that these things are going on the web I can say this for people who aren't here like Paula Rabel, Oscar Montoya, and Mark and Susan Larrimer. Anyway, The at home team get themselves in a complete frenzy by declaring to each other...This is our house...ain't no one comin' in here goin' to take it away...this is my house...my house...and they push, punch and pound on each other...a ritual which by the way, would land a normal person in the hospital for weeks. Of course when a 350 pound man whose eyes are bugging out of their head says stuff like this their claim has credibility. We say yes sir, would you like a small cow and a 3 liter coke with your house?

In a way Jesus beat them to the punch or pound. He declared a long time ago that the heart of every believer was his house...and no one in the universe was going to beat him at home. Let's look.

Mark 3:20-22, 31-35

Last week you might remember we spoke of how God has made us as beings that need and seek relationships. From the moment of birth we are given a family in which to thrive. **If** that family is healthy we gain all the essentials with which we are able to build and grow into a whole life...we should find faith, love, trust, hope, and approval, we learn how to have healthy relationships, make good decisions, and gain confidence to go out and take our place in God's kingdom on this earth.

In last weeks passage, which surrounds this weeks, we discovered how God has established not simply a community but a family of all who believe in and follow Jesus. We looked around the room and could see some of those with whom we will be sharing eternity.

We considered how, as human beings, our lives are profoundly impacted by relationships and sadly, that there are abusive people in the family. For far too many people the most important developing ground for life has becomes a place of undoing, an unraveling relational disconnection in our lives.

Jesus was establishing a new family order where faith and forgiveness not blood line is the shared bond. It is a community where there is no condemnation, no shame and where guilt has been nailed to the cross. And here today, it is as real as

we are sitting in this room. It is God's love and Kingdom in our hearts and it binds our lives into a family gathered in grace for all eternity. If you do not know of such great love and family you are certainly invited.

If you would like you can look at or listen to that message online at www.crossroadslapaz.com How cool is that.

It is important to summarize last week a bit because, although it doesn't seem like it, this week's passage is very much a part of what Jesus taught in response to the challenge of the religious leaders. This week we encounter Jesus going head to head with the religious leaders again...and in no uncertain terms he is battling it out for God's Kingdom...again. Not only is it a very hard teaching it is of the greatest news for all people everywhere.

LET'S LOOK AT THE PASSAGE...

22 But the teachers of the law from Jerusalem were saying, "Beelzebul is living inside him! He uses power from the ruler of demons to force demons out of people." 23 So Jesus called the people together and taught them with stories. He said, "Satan will not force himself out of people. 24 A kingdom that is divided cannot continue, 25 and a family that is divided cannot continue. 26 And if Satan is against himself and fights against his own people, he cannot continue; that is the end of Satan. 27 No one can enter a strong person's house and steal his things unless he first ties up the strong person. Then he can steal things from the house. 28 I tell you the truth, all sins that people do and all the things people say against God can be forgiven. 29 But anyone who speaks against the Holy Spirit will never be forgiven; he is guilty of a sin that continues forever." 30 Jesus said this because the teachers of the law said that he had an evil spirit inside him.

Let's deal with the tough part first – The unforgivable sin.

Jesus had essentially just begun his ministry and had already come up against the religious leaders and the established order. He had already been labeled as a "law breaker" having stepped outside the boundaries a few times to establish that good relationship with God is based on faith and forgiveness by grace not obedience to the law. He was walking on thin ice as his family saw it. They said "he was out of his mind" and they had come to get him home. The religious leaders, definitely threatened by his teaching, following, and power, jumped all over the opportunity. They said he was acting in the name and power of Satan.

It's pretty specific... **"I tell you the truth, all sins that people do and all the things people say against God can be forgiven"** That means, all our disobedience, all the corrupt thoughts, all the things we say against God are forgivable... **But anyone who speaks against the Holy Spirit will never be forgiven; he is guilty of a**

sin that continues forever...except this one. God holds THIS aside from ALL word and act that would separate us from him...

This is my understanding...The origin of our separation from God, at the heart of our struggle to be obedient, and our struggle to hear God's voice and see his image within us...comes from God's adversary and enemy...the one who deceives, lies, and destroys who subtly and conspicuously attacks God's way, God's word and God's character in order to intentionally separate us from God. That's satan's singular mission. God's desire from the beginning has been to get us back in right relationship from the one who stole us away. It is what God has been doing, is doing, and will continue to do because he loves us and is faithful.

But there is one thing God cannot allow, one thing that is beyond his forgiveness...and that is to give his Son over to satan. OOOOHHHHH that makes God mad – mad isn't the right word because it has to do with his holiness more than anything. God is holy, perfectly holy and can in no way be characterized with ungodliness, that which is unholy, or evil.

A.W. Tozer said, "The persons of the Godhead never work separately. Every act of God is done by all three persons." Just as Jesus said "I and the father are one" and, "If you have seen me you have seen my father (John 10:30, 14:6-11). Jesus and the father are one essence and nature. Jesus also promised the Holy Spirit as the way he would keep on living inside the believer (John 14:15ff). Scripture testifies to a God of three persons.

To say satan was living inside Jesus and he was acting with satan's power was to say it was all three persons of God who were evil and were working for evil. H.B. Swete said "to identify the source of good with the impersonation of evil implies a moral wreck for which the incarnation itself provides no remedy." Bengal said "all other sins are human but this is satanic." So you can see why to give to satan what God has done in his son is to call God satan and evil...and is a line God has drawn.

To be sure, this unforgivable sin is not a casual thing. From what I understand, one must knowingly, intentionally and without repentance - attribute God's work to the power of satan. That is, to look at the goodness of God and call it the evil of satan. It is not referring to ignorance or stupidity – but in context refers to one of the leaders of the people of God...one who with all good reason should plainly know God and the work of God. This unforgivable act is knowing and intentional and done with an unrepentant heart. This is the line God has drawn. Cross it unrepentantly and you're done.

Considering this...I for one will be careful to classify what I might see or hear going on in other Christian churches and church traditions.

As I mentioned there is some truly wonderful news wrapped around this stern warning. It is strangely found in reverse.

Jesus used two stories or parables to illustrate the point that he cannot possibly be at work for evil. He said,” **A kingdom that is divided cannot continue, 25 and a family that is divided cannot continue. 26 And if Satan is against himself and fights against his own people, he cannot continue; that is the end of Satan. 27 No one can enter a strong person's house and steal his things unless he first ties up the strong person. Then he can steal things from the house.**

Jesus is saying that the forces of evil seek to destroy what God is doing...but for those who believe in Jesus he has already defeated the effort...hands down...he has tied up the strong man. He proved it over and over by working against evil in every way. He spent no time studying, analyzing, or categorizing evil – he just went to work casting out demons, controlling the evil spirits, curing diseases, and helping people to get right with God. While making the point and “**gently**” reminding the religious leaders that he cannot possibly be at work for evil he was boldly making a statement for God’s kingdom...it is the power here to stay. The world is satan’s domain but the heart of the follower is Jesus’ house...no one can come in and take it.

This means for believers IN THIS LIFE...that satan is already defeated...tied. Nothing can take us away from Jesus (John 10:28, Romans 8:28-39), life for the believer is a constant victory of Christ over sin (Philippians 1:21) and Death has been swallowed up in eternal life (1 Corinthians 15:54ff). Jesus has opened the way to God now and for eternity(Hebrews 10:19ff).

The second part of this good news is the united family. **A divided family can not continue.** God’s family is not and can not be divided. Ephesians 4;1-6 **1 I am in prison because I belong to the Lord. God chose you to be his people, so I urge you now to live the life to which God called you. 2 Always be humble, gentle, and patient, accepting each other in love. 3 You are joined together with peace through the Spirit, so make every effort to continue together in this way. 4 There is one body and one Spirit, and God called you to have one hope. 5 There is one Lord, one faith, and one baptism. 6 There is one God and Father of everything. He rules everything and is everywhere and is in everything.**

Jesus said he is coming back for his bride, the Church.

Just as there is nothing that can defeat Jesus within our hearts (except the unforgivable sin)...there is nothing that can remove us from God's one nature. God is one in every way and we are a part of God as the body of Christ...the church.

The sad truth is that plenty of people have tried to divide the church either intentionally or unintentionally over Biblical interpretation issues, church tradition, or have caused division because of moral failure. But God persists as one in nature and will not allow it. This is his house and no one will take it from his hands (1 Peter 2:4ff) God's house is a spiritual house built with you and I as living stones...and nothing can bring it down.

God promises that the one who trusts him will never be put to shame (1 Peter 2:6). This family is the place where all who have experienced abuse of whatever type...can find restoration, wholeness, health, goodness, grace, forgiveness, acceptance, encouragement, and the character correction that leads to spiritual and relational health. Just as abusive relationships have a powerful destructive power...positive and healthy relationships have powerful healing potential.

The church has to be this place in this world because it is the only body of Christ, the only family of God, and the only spiritual house Jesus made in his name...This is God's house and left here in our hands. Instead of pounding, punching, and pushing each other into the hospital...lets make sure everyone is welcomed and see to it that no one misses God's grace (Hebrews 12:15) in his house.