CRAWFORD BIBLE COMMENTARY

BIBLE STUDY

Mark Chapter 3 —
The Son of Man, Lord of All

A Verse-by-Verse Bible Study from the Crawford Standard Bible

Introduction

Mark Chapter 3 shows the growing tension around Jesus.

In Chapter 2, the religious leaders questioned Him.

Now they begin plotting to kill Him.

The chapter opens in a synagogue on the Sabbath.

A man with a shriveled hand is there.

The Pharisees are watching to see if Jesus will heal him.

Jesus does, and He is grieved by their hard hearts.

Then huge crowds come from everywhere to see Him.

Jesus goes up a mountain and chooses twelve apostles.

They will be with Him and be sent out to preach.

But opposition grows.

His own family thinks He is out of His mind.

The scribes from Jerusalem say He is working by the power of Satan.

Jesus answers that Satan cannot drive out Satan.

He has come to tie up the strong man.

He gives a solemn warning about blaspheming the Holy Spirit.

Finally, Jesus describes His true family.

"Whoever does the will of God is My brother and sister and mother."

The chapter moves through five movements:

- Jesus Heals on the Sabbath (verses 1–6).
- Crowds Follow Jesus (verses 7–12).
- The Twelve Apostles Chosen (verses 13–19).
- A Divided Kingdom Cannot Stand (verses 20–30).
- The True Family of Jesus (verses 31–35).

The central truth of Mark 3 is:

Jesus is Lord over the Sabbath, Satan, and every power, and while hard hearts reject Him, those who follow Him and do God's will become His true family.

I. A MAN WITH A SHRIVELED HAND

Mark 3:1 — In the Synagogue Again

“Jesus went into the synagogue again, and a man with a shriveled hand was there.”

“Jesus went into the synagogue again.”

Even with growing opposition, Jesus kept going to worship.

“A man with a shriveled hand was there.”

His hand was withered and useless.

It may have made it hard for him to work.

Some of the Pharisees may have expected Jesus to notice him.

Cross References

Matthew 12:9

> Jesus left that place and went into their synagogue.

Luke 6:6

> On another Sabbath Jesus went into the synagogue and taught. A man was there whose right hand was withered.

Luke 14:3

> Jesus asked the experts in the law and the Pharisees, “Is it right to heal on the Sabbath or not?”

Spiritual Principle

Jesus notices people in need, even in the middle of controversy.

Key Truth

No one in the room escapes Jesus' attention.

II. WATCHING CLOSELY

Mark 3:2 — Looking for an Accusation

“The Pharisees watched closely to see if He would heal on the Sabbath so they could accuse Him.”

“The Pharisees watched closely.”

They were not watching to learn.

They were watching to catch Him.

“To see if He would heal on the Sabbath.”

Their tradition allowed healing on the Sabbath only if a life was in danger.

A withered hand was not an emergency.

“So they could accuse Him.”

Their hearts were set against Jesus.

They cared more about trapping Him than about the man's suffering.

Cross References

Matthew 12:10

> They asked Jesus, “Is it right to heal on the Sabbath?” They wanted a reason to accuse Him.

Luke 6:7

> The teachers of the law and the Pharisees kept their eyes on Jesus, hoping to find something to charge Him with.

Luke 11:54

> They were waiting to catch Him saying something wrong.

Spiritual Principle

A critical spirit looks for faults instead of seeing needs.

Spiritual Warning

Be careful not to watch others only to find something wrong.

III. STAND UP

Mark 3:3 — In Front of Everyone

“Jesus said to the man with the withered hand, “Stand up in front of everyone.””

Jesus did not hide what He was about to do.

He did not heal the man quietly in a corner.

He called him to the center of the room.

Jesus knew what the Pharisees were thinking.

He chose to act openly.

He also gave the man dignity.

The man who was often overlooked was now at the center.

Cross References

Matthew 12:13

> Then Jesus said to the man, “Hold out your hand.”

Luke 6:8

> Jesus knew what they were thinking, so He said to the man, “Get up and stand here in front of everyone.” The man got up and stood there.

John 5:6

> When Jesus saw him lying there and knew he had been sick a long time, He asked him, “Do you want to get well?”

Spiritual Principle

Jesus does what is right openly, without fear of critics.

Key Truth

Jesus brings the overlooked into the center of His care.

IV. TO DO GOOD OR TO DO EVIL?

Mark 3:4 — They Said Nothing

“Then He asked them, “Is it lawful on the Sabbath to do good or to do evil, to save life or to kill?” But they said nothing.”

“Is it lawful on the Sabbath to do good or to do evil?”

Jesus went to the heart of the issue.

Refusing to do good when you can is a kind of evil.

“To save life or to kill?”

The irony is sharp.

Jesus wanted to heal on the Sabbath.

The Pharisees were planning to kill on the Sabbath.

“But they said nothing.”

They had no answer.

Their silence showed their hard hearts.

Cross References

Matthew 12:12

> A person is worth so much more than a sheep. So the law allows doing good on the Sabbath.

Luke 6:9

> Jesus said, “Let Me ask you something. On the Sabbath, is it right to do good or to do harm? To save a life or to destroy it?”

Luke 13:15

> The Lord answered him, “You hypocrites! Doesn't each of you untie his ox or donkey on the Sabbath and lead it out for a drink of water?”

Spiritual Principle

Doing good always honors God, on any day.

Key Truth

Failing to do good when we can is not neutral.

V. ANGER AND GRIEF

Mark 3:5 — His Hand Was Restored

“Jesus looked around at them with anger and deep grief at their hard hearts. He said to the man, “Stretch out your hand.” The man stretched it out, and his hand was completely restored.”

“Jesus looked around at them with anger.”

Only Mark records Jesus' anger here.

This was righteous anger.

Anger at sin and cruelty.

“And deep grief at their hard hearts.”

His anger was mixed with sorrow.

He was grieved that they were so hard.

Jesus was not angry for Himself.

He was angry for the man and grieved for them.

“Stretch out your hand.”

The man could not stretch it out by himself.

But he obeyed, and as he did, he was healed.

“His hand was completely restored.”

Jesus did not touch him.

He only spoke.

So no one could even say He did “work” on the Sabbath.

Cross References

Matthew 12:13

> Jesus told the man, “Stretch out your hand.” He stretched it out, and it was healed and became as healthy as the other one.

Luke 6:10

> Jesus looked around at all of them and said to the man, “Hold out your hand.” He did, and his hand was made well.

Ephesians 4:18

> Their minds are in the dark, and they are cut off from the life God gives, because they do not understand and their hearts have become hard.

Spiritual Principle

Hard hearts grieve Jesus.

Application

Is there any hardness in your heart that grieves the Lord?

VI. PLOTTING TO KILL HIM

Mark 3:6 — The Pharisees and the Herodians

“Immediately the Pharisees went out and began plotting with the Herodians how they might kill Jesus.”

“Immediately the Pharisees went out.”

They had just seen a miracle.

But instead of praising God, they plotted murder.

“Began plotting with the Herodians.”

The **Herodians** were supporters of King Herod's family.

Normally the Pharisees and the Herodians did not get along.

But they united against Jesus.

“How they might kill Jesus.”

This is the first mention in Mark of a plan to kill Jesus.

The shadow of the cross begins to fall.

Cross References

Matthew 12:14

> But the Pharisees went out and made plans to kill Jesus.

Luke 6:11

> But they were furious and started talking with each other about what they could do to Jesus.

John 11:53

> From that day on, they made plans to kill Jesus.

Spiritual Principle

Hearts that reject Jesus can harden quickly from opposition to hatred.

Spiritual Warning

Seeing God's power does not change a heart that refuses to believe.

VII. WITHDRAWING TO THE SEA

Mark 3:7 — A Large Crowd Followed

“Jesus withdrew with His disciples to the sea, and a large crowd from Galilee followed. People came also from Judea,”

“Jesus withdrew with His disciples to the sea.”

Jesus stepped away from the conflict.

His time to die had not yet come.

“A large crowd from Galilee followed.”

The leaders rejected Him.

But crowds of ordinary people came.

“People came also from Judea.”

His fame was spreading far beyond Galilee.

Cross References

Matthew 12:15

> Jesus knew what they were doing, so He left that place. Many people followed Him, and He healed all of them.

Luke 6:17

> A large crowd of His followers was there, along with many people from Judea, Jerusalem, and the coast near Tyre and Sidon.

Matthew 4:25

> Large crowds followed Him from Galilee, the Ten Towns, Jerusalem, Judea, and the land across the Jordan.

Spiritual Principle

There is wisdom in stepping back from conflict when it is not the right time.

Key Truth

While leaders rejected Jesus, ordinary people came running to Him.

VIII. FROM EVERY DIRECTION

Mark 3:8 — They Heard What He Was Doing

"Jerusalem, Idumea, beyond the Jordan, and from the region around Tyre and Sidon. The great crowd came because they had heard about all He was doing."

Mark lists places from every direction.

- **Jerusalem** to the south.
- **Idumea**, far to the south.
- **Beyond the Jordan** to the east.
- **Tyre and Sidon** to the north, which were Gentile regions.

Jews and Gentiles were coming.

"Because they had heard about all He was doing."

News of Jesus traveled everywhere.

Cross References

Matthew 4:25

> Many people from Galilee, the Ten Towns, Jerusalem, Judea, and across the Jordan followed Him.

Luke 6:17

> People came from all over Judea, from Jerusalem, and from the coastal towns of Tyre and Sidon.

Matthew 15:21

> Jesus left there and went to the area of Tyre and Sidon.

Spiritual Principle

Jesus draws people from every nation and background.

Key Truth

The good news of Jesus was never meant for one group only.

IX. A SMALL BOAT READY

Mark 3:9 — So the Crowd Would Not Crush Him

“Jesus told His disciples to have a small boat ready for Him so the crowd would not crush Him.”

The crowd was so large it was dangerous.

People pushed and pressed.

Jesus planned wisely.

A boat would let Him step a little way out from shore.

From there He could teach the people safely.

Jesus was not careless.

He used practical wisdom.

Cross References

Luke 5:3

> Jesus got into one of the boats, the one that belonged to Simon, and asked him to push out a little from shore. Then He sat down and taught the people from the boat.

Matthew 13:2

> Such a large crowd gathered that Jesus got into a boat and sat down, while the people stood on the shore.

Luke 5:1

> One day Jesus was standing by Lake Gennesaret, and the people were crowding around Him to listen to God's word.

Spiritual Principle

Faith and practical wisdom go together.

Key Truth

Trusting God does not mean ignoring common sense.

X. PUSHING TO TOUCH HIM

Mark 3:10 — Many Healed

“For He had healed many, and those suffering from diseases were pushing forward to touch Him.”

“For He had healed many.”

Jesus' healing power was well known.

“Those suffering from diseases were pushing forward to touch Him.”

Sick people pushed through the crowd.

They believed that even touching Him would heal them.

Their need made them desperate.

Cross References

Matthew 14:36

> The sick begged Him to let them touch even the edge of His cloak, and everyone who touched it was healed.

Luke 6:19

> Everyone tried to touch Him, because power was coming from Him and healing them all.

Matthew 9:20

> Just then a woman who had been bleeding for twelve years came up behind Jesus and touched the edge of His cloak.

Spiritual Principle

Desperate need drives people to reach for Jesus.

Application

Are you reaching for Jesus with the same eagerness?

XI. YOU ARE THE SON OF GOD

Mark 3:11 — Evil Spirits Fall Down

“Whenever evil spirits saw Him, they fell down before Him and cried out, “You are the Son of God!””

“Whenever evil spirits saw Him, they fell down before Him.”

The demons bowed before Jesus.

Not in worship, but in fear.

They knew He was their master.

“And cried out, ‘You are the Son of God!’”

The demons knew who Jesus was.

Ironically, they recognized what the religious leaders refused to see.

Cross References

Luke 4:41

> Demons also came out of many people, shouting, “You are the Son of God!”

Matthew 8:29

> They shouted, “What do You want with us, Son of God? Did You come here to punish us before the right time?”

Acts 16:17

> The girl followed Paul and us, shouting, “These men are servants of the Most High God. They are telling you how to be saved.”

Spiritual Principle

Every power in the universe must bow before Jesus.

Key Truth

Demons know who Jesus is; the question is whether we will trust Him.

XII. DO NOT MAKE ME KNOWN

Mark 3:12 — A Strict Order

“But He strictly ordered them not to make Him known.”

Again Jesus silenced the demons.

He did not want their testimony.

He did not want people to think He was working with evil spirits.

And He wanted to reveal Himself in His own way and time.

The full truth about who He was would be shown at the cross and the empty tomb.

Cross References

Matthew 12:16

> He warned them not to tell people who He was.

Luke 4:41

> He scolded them and would not let them speak, because they knew He was the Christ.

Matthew 9:30

> Jesus sternly warned them, “Make sure no one hears about this.”

Spiritual Principle

Jesus chooses how and when He reveals Himself.

Key Truth

Jesus does not need the testimony of darkness to prove He is the Light.

XIII. UP ON THE MOUNTAIN

Mark 3:13 — Those He Wanted

“Jesus went up on a mountain and called to Himself those He wanted, and they came to Him.”

“Jesus went up on a mountain.”

Luke tells us Jesus spent the whole night in prayer before this.

Mountains in the Bible were often places of meeting God.

“And called to Himself those He wanted.”

Jesus chose.

The choice was His.

He called those He wanted.

“And they came to Him.”

They answered the call.

Cross References

Matthew 10:1

> Jesus called His twelve followers together and gave them authority over evil spirits and the power to heal every disease and sickness.

Luke 6:12

> At that time Jesus went up a mountain to pray, and He spent the whole night praying to God.

Luke 9:1

> Jesus called the twelve apostles together and gave them power and authority over all demons and to heal diseases.

Spiritual Principle

Jesus personally chooses and calls those who serve Him.

Key Truth

It is an honor to be called by Jesus, not something we earn.

XIV. TO BE WITH HIM

Mark 3:14 — Appointed Twelve

“He appointed twelve that they might be with Him, and that He might send them out to preach,”

“He appointed twelve.”

Twelve is a meaningful number.

Israel had twelve tribes.

Jesus was forming a new people of God.

“That they might be with Him.”

This was the first purpose.

Before they did anything, they were to be with Jesus.

They would learn by living with Him.

“And that He might send them out to preach.”

The second purpose was mission.

They would be sent out with His message.

First with Him, then sent by Him.

Cross References

Matthew 10:1

> He called the twelve disciples and gave them power to drive out evil spirits and heal every kind of illness.

Luke 6:13

> When morning came, He called His followers to Him and chose twelve of them, whom He named apostles.

Luke 9:2

> He sent them out to tell about God's kingdom and to heal the sick.

Spiritual Principle

Being with Jesus comes before being sent by Jesus.

Application

Are you spending time with Jesus before trying to serve Him?

XV. AUTHORITY OVER DEMONS

Mark 3:15 — Sent with Power

“with authority to drive out demons.”

Jesus gave His apostles a share in His own authority.

They would not go in their own strength.

They would go with His power.

The kingdom of God was pushing back the kingdom of darkness.

Now Jesus' followers would take part in that work.

Cross References

Matthew 10:1

> He gave them authority to drive out evil spirits and to heal every disease.

Luke 9:1

> Jesus gave the Twelve power and authority to drive out all demons and to cure diseases.

Luke 10:19

> Listen! I have given you power to walk on snakes and scorpions and to overcome all the power of the enemy. Nothing will hurt you.

Spiritual Principle

Jesus equips those He sends with His own authority.

Key Truth

The power for ministry comes from Jesus, not from us.

XVI. SIMON, CALLED PETER

Mark 3:16 — The First Name

“These are the twelve He appointed: Simon (to whom He gave the name Peter);”

“Simon.”

Simon is always listed first among the apostles.

He became their leader and spokesman.

“To whom He gave the name Peter.”

Peter means “rock.”

Simon was impulsive and often unstable.

But Jesus saw what he would become.

Jesus gave him a name that described his future, not just his present.

Cross References

Matthew 16:18

> Jesus said, “Your name is Peter, which means rock. Upon this rock I will build My church, and even the power of death will never overcome it.”

John 1:42

> Andrew brought Simon to Jesus. Jesus looked at him and said, “You are Simon, son of John. You will be called Cephas,” which means Peter, or rock.

Luke 6:14

> He chose Simon, whom He named Peter, and Simon's brother Andrew.

Spiritual Principle

Jesus sees what we can become by His grace.

Key Truth

Jesus names us by what He will make of us.

XVII. SONS OF THUNDER

Mark 3:17 — James and John

“James son of Zebedee and John his brother (to whom He gave the name Boanerges, meaning “Sons of Thunder”);”

“James son of Zebedee and John his brother.”

These two brothers were fishermen with Peter and Andrew.

“To whom He gave the name Boanerges, meaning ‘Sons of Thunder.’”

This nickname probably described their fiery personalities.

Once they wanted to call down fire on a village that rejected Jesus.

But Jesus changed them.

John later became known as the apostle of love.

Cross References

Luke 6:14

> He also chose James and John.

Luke 9:54

> When His followers James and John saw this, they said, “Lord, do You want us to call down fire from heaven to destroy them?”

Matthew 4:21

> Going on from there, Jesus saw James and John, the sons of Zebedee, getting their nets ready in a boat with their father.

Spiritual Principle

Jesus takes strong personalities and shapes them for His glory.

Key Truth

Jesus can turn thunder into love.

XVIII. THE REST OF THE TWELVE

Mark 3:18 — Ordinary Men

“Andrew, Philip, Bartholomew, Matthew, Thomas, James son of Alphaeus, Thaddaeus, Simon the Zealot,”

Look at this mix of men.

- **Andrew**, Peter's brother, who brought others to Jesus.
- **Philip**, from Bethsaida.
- **Bartholomew**, often thought to be Nathanael.
- **Matthew**, the former tax collector.
- **Thomas**, later known for his doubts and his great confession.
- **James son of Alphaeus**, about whom little is known.
- **Thaddaeus**, also called Judas son of James.
- **Simon the Zealot**, who may have belonged to a group that wanted to overthrow Rome.

Imagine a tax collector who worked for Rome and a Zealot who hated Rome in the same group.

Only Jesus could bring them together.

Cross References

Matthew 10:2

> These are the names of the twelve apostles: first Simon, called Peter, and his brother Andrew; James son of Zebedee and his brother John.

Luke 6:14

> Simon, whom He named Peter, his brother Andrew, James, John, Philip, and Bartholomew.

Acts 1:13

> Those present were Peter, John, James, Andrew, Philip, Thomas, Bartholomew, Matthew, James son of Alphaeus, Simon the Zealot, and Judas son of James.

Spiritual Principle

Jesus unites very different people into one family.

Key Truth

In Christ, former enemies can become brothers.

XIX. JUDAS ISCARIOT

Mark 3:19 — Who Later Betrayed Him

“and Judas Iscariot, who later betrayed Him.”

Judas is always listed last.

And he is always described as the betrayer.

Judas was with Jesus for three years.

He saw the miracles.

He heard the teaching.

He was even trusted with the money.

Yet he betrayed Jesus.

This is a sobering reminder.

Being near Jesus is not the same as belonging to Him.

Cross References

Matthew 10:4

> Simon the Zealot and Judas Iscariot, who later handed Jesus over to His enemies.

Luke 6:16

> Judas son of James, and Judas Iscariot, who became a traitor.

John 6:71

> He was talking about Judas, son of Simon Iscariot. Even though Judas was one of the Twelve, he would later turn Jesus over to His enemies.

Spiritual Principle

Being close to Jesus is not the same as truly belonging to Him.

Spiritual Warning

Outward closeness to Jesus can hide a heart that is far from Him.

XX. NOT EVEN TIME TO EAT

Mark 3:20 — The Crowds Return

“Then Jesus entered a house, and again a crowd gathered so that He and His disciples could not even eat.”

“Then Jesus entered a house.”

Jesus returned to Capernaum.

“Again a crowd gathered.”

The crowds would not leave Him alone.

“So that He and His disciples could not even eat.”

Jesus gave Himself fully to the people.

He did not even have time for a meal.

Cross References

Matthew 12:15

> Many people followed Jesus, and He healed all who were sick.

Luke 8:19

> Jesus' mother and brothers came to see Him, but there were so many people that they could not get near Him.

Mark 2:2

> So many people came that there was no room, not even outside the door, and Jesus was teaching them God's message.

Spiritual Principle

Jesus gave Himself fully to serving others.

Key Truth

Love is willing to be inconvenienced.

XXI. OUT OF HIS MIND

Mark 3:21 — His Family's Concern

“When His family heard about this, they went to take charge of Him, saying, “He is out of His mind.””

“When His family heard about this.”

News reached His family in Nazareth.

“They went to take charge of Him.”

They wanted to take Him home.

“Saying, ‘He is out of His mind.’”

They thought Jesus had gone too far.

He was not eating.

He was causing trouble with the leaders.

They were worried, perhaps embarrassed.

At this point His brothers did not yet believe in Him.

Later, after the resurrection, they would.

Cross References

John 7:5

Even His own brothers did not believe in Him.

John 10:20

Many of them said, “He has a demon and is crazy. Why listen to Him?”

Mark 3:31

Then Jesus' mother and brothers arrived. They stood outside and sent someone in to call Him.

Spiritual Principle

Following God's call may be misunderstood, even by those closest to us.

Key Truth

Jesus understands what it feels like when your family does not understand you.

XXII. BY BEELZEBUL

Mark 3:22 — The Scribes' Accusation

“And the scribes who came down from Jerusalem said, “He is possessed by Beelzebul! By the prince of demons He drives out demons.””

“The scribes who came down from Jerusalem.”

These were official religious investigators.

They came from the center of religious power.

“He is possessed by Beelzebul!”

Beelzebul was a name for Satan, the ruler of demons.

“By the prince of demons He drives out demons.”

They could not deny Jesus' power.

So they explained it away.

They said His power came from Satan.

This was a terrible accusation.

They called the work of God the work of the devil.

Cross References

Matthew 12:24

> When the Pharisees heard this, they said, “This man drives out demons only by the power of Beelzebul, the ruler of demons.”

Luke 11:15

> Some of them said, “He uses the power of Beelzebul, the ruler of demons, to drive out demons.”

John 8:48

> The Jewish leaders answered, “Aren't we right to say You are a Samaritan and have a demon?”

Spiritual Principle

Hard hearts will find a way to explain away even clear evidence.

Spiritual Warning

It is dangerous to call the work of God evil.

XXIII. HOW CAN SATAN DRIVE OUT SATAN?

Mark 3:23 — Jesus Answers in Parables

“So Jesus called them over and spoke to them in parables: “How can Satan drive out Satan?”

“So Jesus called them over.”

Jesus did not ignore their accusation.

He answered it directly.

“Spoke to them in parables.”

A **parable** is a short story or picture that teaches a truth.

“How can Satan drive out Satan?”

Jesus shows how foolish their claim is.

Why would Satan fight against his own demons?

It makes no sense.

Cross References

Matthew 12:25

> Jesus knew what they were thinking and said, “Any kingdom that fights against itself will be destroyed.”

Luke 11:17

> Jesus knew their thoughts and said, “Every kingdom divided against itself falls apart.”

2 Corinthians 11:14

> This is no surprise, because even Satan disguises himself to look like an angel of light.

Spiritual Principle

Truth exposes the foolishness of false accusations.

Key Truth

Satan does not work against himself; only Jesus defeats him.

XXIV. A DIVIDED KINGDOM

Mark 3:24 — Cannot Stand

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

This is a simple truth.

A nation at war with itself will fall.

Civil war destroys a country.

If Satan were fighting himself, his kingdom would collapse.

Cross References

Matthew 12:25

Every kingdom that is divided against itself will be ruined.

Luke 11:17

A kingdom that fights against itself will be destroyed.

1 Corinthians 14:33

God does not cause disorder. He brings peace.

Spiritual Principle

Division destroys from within.

Key Truth

What is true of kingdoms is also true of churches.

XXV. A DIVIDED HOUSE

Mark 3:25 — Cannot Stand

“If a house is divided against itself, that house cannot stand.”

Jesus applies the same truth to a household.

A family that is always fighting will fall apart.

Unity is necessary for strength.

This truth applies to families, churches, and nations.

Cross References

Matthew 12:25

Any city or family that is divided against itself will not last.

Luke 11:17

A family that fights itself will fall apart.

Amos 3:3

Can two people walk together unless they have agreed to meet?

Spiritual Principle

Unity is essential for any household to stand.

Application

Are you helping to build unity in your family and church?

XXVI. HIS END HAS COME

Mark 3:26 — Satan Cannot Stand

“And if Satan rises up against himself and is divided, he cannot stand; his end has come.”

Jesus finishes the argument.

If Satan were fighting himself, his kingdom would already be finished.

But that is not what was happening.

Something else was going on.

Satan's kingdom was being defeated by someone stronger.

Cross References

Matthew 12:26

If Satan drives out Satan, he is fighting against himself. How then can his kingdom last?

Luke 11:18

If Satan is divided against himself, how can his kingdom stand?

Revelation 12:12

The devil has come down to you full of anger, because he knows his time is short.

Spiritual Principle

Satan's kingdom is coming to an end.

Key Truth

Satan's days are numbered, and he knows it.

XXVII. BINDING THE STRONG MAN

Mark 3:27 — Plundering His House

“No one can enter a strong man's house and plunder his goods unless he first ties up the strong man. Then he can plunder his house.”

This is the key to Jesus' answer.

“A strong man's house.”

The strong man is Satan.

His house is the world under his power.

His goods are the people he holds captive.

“Unless he first ties up the strong man.”

Someone stronger must come and tie him up.

That someone is Jesus.

“Then he can plunder his house.”

Every time Jesus drove out a demon, He was taking back what Satan had stolen.

He was setting captives free.

Jesus is not working with Satan.

He is defeating him.

Cross References

Matthew 12:29

> How can anyone break into a strong man's house and carry off his things unless he first ties him up? Then he can take everything.

Luke 11:21

> When a strong man with weapons guards his own house, his things are safe.

Isaiah 49:24

Can the spoils be taken away from a warrior? Can captives be rescued from a mighty man?

Spiritual Principle

Jesus is stronger than Satan and sets his captives free.

Key Truth

The strong man has met the Stronger One.

XXVIII. ALL SINS CAN BE FORGIVEN

Mark 3:28 — Every Slander

“Truly I tell you, people can be forgiven all their sins and every slander they utter.”

“Truly I tell you.”

Jesus speaks with solemn authority.

“People can be forgiven all their sins.”

This is amazing grace.

All sins can be forgiven.

No matter how great.

“And every slander they utter.”

Even words spoken against God can be forgiven.

God's mercy is wide.

Cross References

Matthew 12:31

I tell you, every sin and every evil word people speak can be forgiven.

Luke 12:10

Anyone who says something against the Son of Man can be forgiven.

1 John 1:9

> When we own up to our sins before God, we can count on Him to do what is right. He will forgive us and make us clean from every wrong thing.

Spiritual Principle

God's forgiveness is wide enough to cover every sin we bring to Him.

Key Truth

No sin is too great for God's grace when we turn to Him.

XXIX. BLASPHEMY AGAINST THE HOLY SPIRIT

Mark 3:29 — An Eternal Sin

“But anyone who blasphemes against the Holy Spirit will never be forgiven; they are guilty of an eternal sin.”

This is one of the most serious warnings in the Bible.

“Anyone who blasphemes against the Holy Spirit.”

What does this mean?

Look at the context.

The scribes saw the clear work of the Holy Spirit through Jesus.

And they called it the work of Satan.

Bible students generally understand this sin as a hardened, deliberate rejection of the Spirit's clear witness to Jesus.

It is not a careless word or a single moment of doubt.

It is a settled heart that calls God's light darkness and refuses to repent.

“Will never be forgiven.”

Why can it not be forgiven?

Not because God's grace is too small.

But because the person refuses the only One who can forgive.

A word of comfort:

Those who are worried that they have committed this sin show by their concern that their hearts are not hardened.

Anyone who comes to Jesus in repentance will be received.

Cross References

Matthew 12:32

> Anyone who speaks against the Son of Man can be forgiven, but anyone who speaks against the Holy Spirit will not be forgiven, now or in the age to come.

Luke 12:10

> But anyone who insults the Holy Spirit will not be forgiven.

Hebrews 6:4

> It is impossible to bring back to repentance those who were once given light, tasted the heavenly gift, and shared in the Holy Spirit.

Spiritual Principle

Hardened rejection of the Spirit's witness to Christ shuts the door to forgiveness.

Spiritual Warning

Do not harden your heart against the Holy Spirit's call to come to Jesus.

XXX. HE HAS AN UNCLEAN SPIRIT

Mark 3:30 — Why Jesus Said This

“He said this because they were saying, “He has an unclean spirit.””

Mark explains why Jesus gave this warning.

The scribes were saying Jesus had an evil spirit.

They looked at the Holy Spirit's work and called it demonic.

That was the danger they were in.

Cross References

Matthew 12:24

The Pharisees said, “He drives out demons only by the power of Beelzebul.”

John 8:48

They said, “Aren't we right to say You are a Samaritan and demon-possessed?”

John 10:20

Many said, “He has a demon and is out of His mind. Why listen to Him?”

Spiritual Principle

Calling God's work evil is a dangerous path.

Key Truth

The warning was given to save people, not just to condemn them.

XXXI. HIS MOTHER AND BROTHERS

Mark 3:31 — Standing Outside

“Then Jesus' mother and brothers came. Standing outside, they sent someone in to call Him.”

“Then Jesus' mother and brothers came.”

His family arrived, as verse 21 said they would.

Christians understand Jesus' “brothers” in different ways.

Many Protestants understand them as younger children born to Mary and Joseph.

Catholic and Orthodox Christians understand them as close relatives, such as cousins or children of Joseph from an earlier marriage.

“Standing outside.”

Notice the picture.

His family was outside.

The crowd of listeners was inside.

“They sent someone in to call Him.”

They wanted Him to come out to them.

Cross References

Matthew 12:46

> While Jesus was still talking to the crowd, His mother and brothers stood outside, wanting to speak with Him.

Luke 8:19

> Jesus' mother and brothers came to see Him, but they could not get to Him because of the crowd.

John 7:5

> For not even His brothers believed in Him.

Spiritual Principle

Being related to Jesus by family does not guarantee being close to Him.

Key Truth

It is possible to stand outside while others sit at Jesus' feet.

XXXII. LOOKING FOR YOU

Mark 3:32 — The Crowd Tells Him

“A crowd was sitting around Him, and they said, “Your mother and brothers are outside looking for You.””

“A crowd was sitting around Him.”

This is the posture of disciples.

Sitting at the feet of the teacher.

“Your mother and brothers are outside looking for You.”

Someone passed on the message.

They probably expected Jesus to stop and go to His family.

Cross References

Matthew 12:47

Someone told Him, “Your mother and brothers are standing outside and want to talk to You.”

Luke 8:20

Someone told Him, “Your mother and brothers are standing outside, wanting to see You.”

John 2:12

After this, Jesus went down to Capernaum with His mother, brothers, and followers.

Spiritual Principle

Those who sit at Jesus' feet are in the place of true discipleship.

Application

Are you sitting at Jesus' feet or standing outside?

XXXIII. WHO ARE MY FAMILY?

Mark 3:33 — A Surprising Question

“Jesus asked, “Who are My mother and My brothers?””

This question would have shocked the crowd.

Family was extremely important in that culture.

Jesus was not rejecting His family.

He loved His mother.

Even on the cross, He made sure she was cared for.

But He was teaching that there is a family even deeper than blood.

Cross References

Matthew 12:48

Jesus answered, “Who is My mother? Who are My brothers?”

Luke 8:21

But He answered them, “My mother and brothers are those who hear God's word and do it.”

2 Corinthians 5:16

So from now on we do not look at anyone the way the world does.

Spiritual Principle

God's family is formed by faith, not by blood.

Key Truth

Jesus loves His earthly family, but His spiritual family is open to all.

XXXIV. HERE ARE MY MOTHER AND BROTHERS

Mark 3:34 — Looking at Those Around Him

“Then He looked at those seated around Him and said, “Here are My mother and My brothers!”

“Then He looked at those seated around Him.”

Picture Jesus looking around the room.

Looking into the faces of those listening to Him.

“Here are My mother and My brothers!”

These ordinary people were His family.

What an honor.

Those who sat at His feet were as close to Him as family.

Cross References

Matthew 12:49

Pointing to His followers, He said, “Look! These are My mother and My brothers.”

Luke 8:21

Jesus answered, “My mother and brothers are the ones who hear God's message and obey it.”

John 15:14

If you obey what I tell you, you are My friends.

Spiritual Principle

Those who follow Jesus are welcomed into His family.

Key Truth

Jesus looks at His followers and says, “This is My family.”

XXXV. WHOEVER DOES THE WILL OF GOD

Mark 3:35 — My Brother, Sister, and Mother

“Whoever does the will of God is My brother and sister and mother.”

“Whoever.”

The door is open to anyone.

Man or woman.

Rich or poor.

Jew or Gentile.

“Does the will of God.”

This is the mark of God's family.

Not just hearing, but doing.

Not just knowing, but obeying.

“Is My brother and sister and mother.”

Jesus calls His followers His closest family.

Notice He includes **sister**.

Women were fully welcomed into His family.

Cross References

Matthew 12:50

> Whoever obeys My Father in heaven is family to Me, a brother, a sister, and a mother.

Matthew 7:21

> Saying “Lord, Lord” to Me will not get anyone into the kingdom of heaven. Only those who actually obey My Father in heaven will go in.

Hebrews 2:11

> Jesus makes people holy, and He and the people He makes holy share the same Father. That is why He is glad to call them His brothers and sisters.

Spiritual Principle

Those who do God's will belong to Jesus' true family.

Application

Is your life marked by doing God's will?

XXXVI. FIVE GREAT LESSONS FROM MARK 3

1. The Sabbath Is for Mercy and Healing

“Is it lawful on the Sabbath to do good or to do evil?”

Principle:

Jesus shows that doing good honors God, even on the Sabbath.

2. Hardened Hearts Grieve Jesus

“With anger and deep grief at their hard hearts.”

Principle:

Religion without compassion misses the heart of God.

3. Jesus Has Power Over Satan

“Unless he first ties up the strong man.”

Principle:

His kingdom cannot be overthrown; He binds the strong man.

4. Blasphemy Against the Spirit Is Serious

“Anyone who blasphemes against the Holy Spirit will never be forgiven.”

Principle:

Hardened rejection of the Spirit's witness to Christ cannot be forgiven.

5. True Family Is Spiritual

“Whoever does the will of God is My brother and sister and mother.”

Principle:

Those who do God's will are closer to Jesus than blood relatives.

XXXVII. FIVE RESPONSES TO JESUS

Mark 3 shows different ways people responded to Jesus.

1. The Pharisees: Hostility

They watched to accuse Him and plotted to kill Him.

2. The Crowds: Curiosity and Need

They came from everywhere because of what He was doing.

3. His Family: Misunderstanding

They thought He was out of His mind.

4. The Scribes: Rejection

They said His power came from Satan.

5. The Disciples: Following

They came when He called and sat at His feet.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

Everyone responds to Jesus in some way; the only right response is to follow Him.

XXXVIII. THE PURPOSE OF THE TWELVE

Verses 13–15 show why Jesus chose the apostles.

1. Called by Jesus

“Called to Himself those He wanted.”

2. To Be With Him

“That they might be with Him.”

3. To Preach

“That He might send them out to preach.”

4. With His Authority

“With authority to drive out demons.”

Key Truth

Every disciple is called first to be with Jesus and then to be sent by Him.

XXXIX. THE STRONG MAN AND THE STRONGER ONE

Verse 27 gives a picture of Jesus' victory over Satan.

The Strong Man

Satan, who held people captive.

His House

The world under his power.

His Goods

People trapped by sin and evil.

The Stronger One

Jesus, who came to tie up the strong man.

The Victory

Jesus sets the captives free.

When It Happened

- Jesus resisted Satan in the wilderness.
- He drove out demons throughout His ministry.
- He defeated Satan fully at the cross and the empty tomb.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

No one is too firmly held by Satan for Jesus to set free.

XL. WHAT MARK 3 TEACHES ABOUT JESUS

He Notices the Suffering

“A man with a shriveled hand was there.”

He Feels Anger and Grief

“With anger and deep grief at their hard hearts.”

He Heals with a Word

“Stretch out your hand.”

He Is the Son of God

“You are the Son of God!”

He Chooses His Followers

“Called to Himself those He wanted.”

He Is Stronger Than Satan

“He first ties up the strong man.”

He Welcomes Us into His Family

“Here are My mother and My brothers!”

Crawford Bible Study Principle

Jesus is the mighty Son of God who defeats Satan and the tender Savior who welcomes us into His family.

XLI. QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS FOR PERSONAL STUDY

Question 1

Why were the Pharisees watching Jesus in the synagogue?

To see if He would heal on the Sabbath so they could accuse Him.

Question 2

What question did Jesus ask them?

Whether it was right on the Sabbath to do good or evil, to save life or to kill.

Question 3

Why was Jesus angry and grieved?

Because of their hard hearts that cared more about rules than a suffering man.

Question 4

How did the Pharisees respond to the healing?

They began plotting with the Herodians to kill Jesus.

Question 5

Why did Jesus silence the evil spirits?

He did not want their testimony and would reveal Himself in His own way and time.

Question 6

What were the two main purposes of the Twelve?

To be with Jesus and to be sent out to preach.

Question 7

What does it show that Jesus chose both Matthew and Simon the Zealot?

That Jesus unites very different people into one family.

Question 8

Why did Jesus' family think He was out of His mind?

He was so busy serving the crowds that He did not even eat, and His brothers did not yet believe.

Question 9

How did Jesus answer the charge that He worked by Satan's power?

Satan would not fight against himself; instead, Jesus was tying up the strong man.

Question 10

What is blasphemy against the Holy Spirit?

A hardened, deliberate rejection of the Spirit's clear witness to Jesus, calling God's work evil.

Question 11

Who is Jesus' true family?

Whoever does the will of God.

Question 12

What should Mark 3 change about the way Christians live today?

Mark 3 should cause believers to live:

- Doing good whenever they can.
- Keeping a soft and compassionate heart.
- Spending time with Jesus before serving Him.
- Trusting His power over Satan.
- Living in unity with other believers.
- Taking the Holy Spirit's call seriously.
- Doing the will of God.
- Treating fellow believers as family.

XLII. PERSONAL APPLICATION

Mark 3 asks several important questions.

Do I Do Good When I Can?

Or do I hold back for the wrong reasons?

Is My Heart Hard or Soft?

Would my attitudes grieve Jesus?

Do I Watch Others to Criticize Them?

Or to help them?

Do I Spend Time with Jesus?

Am I with Him before I try to serve Him?

Do I Trust Jesus' Power Over Evil?

Or do I live in fear?

Am I Helping Unity or Division?

In my family and my church?

Am I Open to the Spirit's Call?

Or am I hardening my heart?

Am I Part of Jesus' True Family?

Am I doing the will of God?

XLIII. A CRAWFORD BIBLE STUDY PRINCIPLE

“Inside or Outside?”

At the end of Mark 3, there are two groups of people.

One group was outside.

His own family.

People who had known Him all His life.

They wanted to take Him home.

They thought He had lost His mind.

The other group was inside.

Ordinary people.

Tax collectors, fishermen, and sinners.

They were sitting at His feet, listening.

Jesus looked at the people inside and said, **“Here are My mother and My brothers!”**

This creates a powerful principle.

What brings us close to Jesus is not our background.

It is not our family name.

It is not how long we have been around Him.

It is whether we sit at His feet and do the will of God.

Principle:

Closeness to Jesus is not about where you came from but whether you listen to Him and do God's will.

XLIV. FINAL APPLICATION

Mark Chapter 3 shows Jesus as Lord of all.

Lord of the Sabbath.

Lord over sickness.

Lord over demons.

Lord over Satan himself.

It shows hearts that harden against Him.

It shows crowds that come to Him.

It shows twelve men called to be with Him.

And it shows a new family formed around Him.

Mark 3 therefore reminds us:

Never let rules replace compassion.

Never harden your heart against Jesus.

Never call God's work evil.

Never think Satan is stronger than Jesus.

Never forget that God's family is open to all who do His will.

The church does not need people who stand outside and criticize.

It needs:

Hearts that are soft.

Disciples who are with Jesus.

Messengers who are sent by Him.

And a family that does the will of God.

The same Jesus still calls:

Tell people that Jesus is stronger than Satan.

Tell people that all sins can be forgiven when they come to Him.

Tell people that Jesus welcomes them into His family.

Tell people that doing good always honors God.

And as you live:

Keep a soft heart.

Be with Jesus.

Trust His power.

Do the will of God.

Closing Prayer

Heavenly Father,

Thank You that Jesus notices those who suffer.

Thank You that He used the Sabbath to do good and to heal.

Thank You that He is the Son of God, before whom every evil power must bow.

Thank You that He calls people to be with Him and sends them out with His message.

Thank You that He is the Stronger One who ties up the strong man and sets captives free.

Thank You that all sins can be forgiven for those who come to Him.

Thank You that He welcomes all who do Your will into His family.

Forgive us when our hearts have been hard.

Forgive us when we have watched others to criticize instead of to help.

Forgive us when we have caused division.

Forgive us when we have stood outside instead of sitting at Jesus' feet.

Keep our hearts soft and open to Your Spirit.

Help us spend time with Jesus each day.

Give us courage to share His message.

Make us people who do Your will.

And help us love our brothers and sisters in Christ as true family.

“Whoever does the will of God is My brother and sister and mother.”

In Jesus' name, Amen.

Key Verse

“Whoever does the will of God is My brother and sister and mother.” — Mark 3:35

Central Truth

Jesus is Lord over the Sabbath, Satan, and every power, and while hard hearts reject Him, those who follow Him and do God's will become His true family.

Mark 3 in One Sentence

Jesus heals a man's shriveled hand on the Sabbath despite the Pharisees' hard hearts, draws crowds from every direction, chooses twelve apostles to be with Him and preach, answers the charge that He works by Satan by showing that He has come to bind the strong man, warns against blaspheming the Holy Spirit, and declares that whoever does God's will is His true family.