

Mark 3:31-35 (NASB 2020)

1) Here we have the continuation of the thought that was presented in verse 20 and 21.

Mark 3:20-21 (NIV)

- 2) Jesus is in the midst of a crowd that is filling the house such that his family, when they do arrive, cannot get in to see him.
- 3) Instead they send word in that they are outside waiting to see him.
- 4) This is one of those situations that can be looked at with two totally different perspectives if one chooses.
- 5) It can be seen as a very negative situation from both Jesus' point of view in that his family members do not believe in him, and they are basically coming to seize "take custody of" him and drag him off to who knows where.
- 6) From the family's point of view negatively they do not believe in him and think he is crazy and are going to seize him and try to protect Him from Himself.
- 7) Looking at the other gospel accounts in Matthew and Luke really doesn't change the perspective much.
- 8) However, I think there is definitely room for a little more positive thinking here from the perspective of his family and in looking at Jesus' comments – WITHOUT being untrue to the intent.
- 9) First, we know that at least some of Jesus' brothers did not believe in him.
 - a) That in itself does not mean that they feel animosity toward him – you are able to not believe in something someone says or does and still love them – especially if they are family.
 - b) Jesus' mother definitely believed in him.
- 10) Their statement about him being out of his mind or as some translations put it "beside himself" could refer to:
 - a) what he was teaching
 - b) being so involved with his work he was not eating
 - c) even perhaps just putting up with the sizes of the crowds that were pressing in on him
- 11) As to them "taking custody" of him, the verb κρατέω {karato} has a ton of meanings associated with it.
 - a) Taking custody has, in the English, a negative connotation.
 - b) Other gentler meanings are:
 - i) To hold securely (so that he cannot get away)
 - ii) to restrain, hold back, hinder

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- iii) to hold fast (to prevent escaping)
 - iv) to hold fast (to) something or someone to stay closely united
 - v) to subdue, conquer, prevail
 - vi) to grasp, seize, take hold of
- c) The idea in some of these definitions is more the idea of restraining
- d) When we apply it to the situation of Jesus not eating and them being worried about him, it might be more appropriate to say “take hold of” or “prevail on him” with the intent to allow him to eat.
- e) One way or the other, the family appears to be showing genuine concern for His wellbeing.
- 12) Getting to Jesus’ closing comment to the crowd, it could be construed as a slam against his family.
- 13) Jesus’ question – “Who are My mother and My brothers?” was not indicating in any way that he did not know his own family – he obviously knew the identity of His earthly family members.
- 14) It was also not intended as any level of disrespect or antagonism toward His mother and brothers, whom He clearly loved (cf. John 19:26–27).
- 15) Jesus simply used this real-life interruption to teach a transcendent spiritual truth to His followers who were gathered around Him.
- 16) He then answers his own question.
- “Here are My mother and My brothers! 35 For whoever does the will of God, this is My brother, and sister, and mother.”
- 17) His point is that the only relationship to Him that matters eternally is not physical – it is spiritual – those who have a saving relationship with him thru faith and obedience to God’s plan.
- 18) In John 8:31 Jesus explained, “If you continue in My word, then you are truly disciples of Mine.”
- 19) A few chapters later, He echoed that same truth: “If you love Me, you will keep My commandments” (John 14:15).

Mark 4:1-9 (NIV)

- 1) We begin here again with Jesus being pressed by the crowds so much so that he actually has to get into a boat and put out from shore in order to be able to teach effectively.
- 2) He begins teaching them in parables.
- 3) Skipping the actual parable for a moment, and looking at his concluding statement.

"He who has ears to hear, let him hear."

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'He who is having ears to hear — let him hear. YLT

- 4) This is a quote from the Old Testament that can be found in several different places:
 - a) Isa 6:9 f; Isa 43:8; Jer 5:21; Ezek 12:2;
- 5) Now, let those words sink in for a second and let's look at what he tells his apostles and other believers in his following remarks:

Mark 4:10-13 (NIV)

- 6) I think, if we truly analyze the situation at this point in Jesus' ministry, there are three basic groups following him.
 - a) The majority are interested in the healing and are probably somewhat curious about his radical teaching.
 - i) Many in this group are looking to him for an indication that he is the "knight on the white horse" that will save them from Roman oppression.
 - ii) This group when they figure out that he is not what they are looking for or, they get what they need, simply go away.
 - b) There are then two minority groups:
 - i) The first minority group would be the religious leaders – firmly against him and want to kill him as soon as the opportunity presents itself.
 - ii) The second minor group would be those who are truly seeking to hear him and find a path to God thru what he is saying.
 - (1) From this group, we find his followers and of course the disciples themselves.
- 7) So, looking at these groups, we see two indictments.
- 8) The first indictment would be against the unbelievers that are basically rejecting him.
 - a) These would fall into two fundamental categories:
 - i) The religious establishment on the one hand.
 - ii) On the other, those who really are NOT looking for a way to forgiveness and God.
 - (1) These are the ones looking for healing and/or a savior who will take them out of the Roman rule they are under.
- 9) The second indictment is of his own followers who are not thinking and trying to understand.
 - a) He says clearly that they have been given the ability to understand but they are not using it.
- 10) As to the ones who basically reject Christ, the quote from Isaiah 6:9-10
"they may be ever seeing but never perceiving, and ever hearing but never understanding; otherwise they might turn and be forgiven!"

is very appropriate.

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- a) These would be the religious leaders and to some extent those who are looking for a different Messiah than He is and walk away.

11) John MacArthur says of this quote as applied to these two groups here:

Though written some seven centuries earlier, those words from Isaiah provided an apt description of the unbelieving Israelites in Jesus' day. During Isaiah's ministry, the people repeatedly ignored the prophet's warnings until their consciences were so seared, and their spiritual senses so dulled, that they no longer had any ability to understand or respond. God allowed them to harden their hearts to the point that they could no longer repent. Consequently, divine judgment on Israel, executed through the instrument of Nebuchadnezzar's invading armies, became inevitable. Jesus' parables represented a similar form of judgment on the intractable unbelief He encountered in the first century. Due to the people's repeated rejection of His clear teachings and undeniable miracles, from this point on Jesus would frame His teachings in a way they could not understand. Unable to comprehend the truth, they would never return and be forgiven. Thus, they would face God's wrath. Historically, divine judgment came upon the apostate nation of Israel in A.D. 70 when Jerusalem was destroyed by the Romans. Eternally, that judgment came when those who had rejected Jesus died and were cast into the everlasting torments of hell.

MacArthur, John. Mark 1-16 MacArthur New Testament Commentary Two Volume Set (MacArthur New Testament Commentary Series) . Moody Publishers. Kindle Edition.

- 12) A word of clarification which we will get into in more detail shortly, Jesus is not trying to "hide" his teachings from anyone.
- 13) To the contrary, parables are made to make things clearer – if you are willing to listen and think about them.
 - a) The key is being willing to listen – effort is required!
 - b) Those whom MacArthur is saying are people who repeatedly rejected His clear teaching and undeniable miracles are not going to put forth any effort thus sealing their fate.
- 14) As for the indictment of ones who are his followers, those who believe – they miss the point because they are not thinking kingdom thoughts.
- 15) They are not applying what they are hearing to their lives which they need to do.
- 16) Again, speaking to His followers, so that they can see what they missed, he clearly explains each portion of the parable.

Mark 4:14-20 (NIV)

- 14) This point-by-point explanation of how those who hear the gospel accept or reject it sets the stage for the next series of parables that Jesus gives to his followers.

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Do we ever read scripture and fail to try to understand or even think about the true meaning? YES!

What are some ideas of how we can raise our study to a higher level – study more deeply and understand more?

- 1) Jesus continues speaking we assume, to his disciples and followers.
- 2) The parables we are about to hear highlight the responsibility of the faithful hearer and evangelist.
- 3) Jesus' disciples would shortly be called to bear fruit by obediently proclaiming the message of salvation to others therefore it is important that they get these parables.

Mark 4:21-23 (NIV)

- 4) In ancient Israel, a lamp was lighted and set on a stand in the middle of the room so that it would give light to the entire room.
- 5) If one places the lamp under a bed or a bowl, obviously the light would not fill the room.
- 6) As we just said a moment ago, Jesus' disciples are now to go and proclaim the message of salvation.
- 7) In view of Jesus' comment regarding teaching in parables and his quote from Isaiah
"they may be ever seeing but never perceiving, and ever hearing but never understanding; otherwise they might turn and be forgiven!"
his disciples were probably confused as to exactly who they were to teach.
 - a) If the word was going to fall on hardened hearts, why should they sow so liberally?
 - b) Should they limit their teaching to those who were consider and willing to listen?
- 8) The LABC interprets this parable as Jesus' answer to these questions:

"No," explained Jesus, "I am not deliberately trying to hide the truth from people. That would be like lighting a lamp and then putting it under a bowl. Why then light the lamp at all? If I am hiding the truth, there is no reason for me to teach." The purpose of the parables is not to conceal the truth, but to reveal it; the parables explain in everyday terms truths that human minds cannot grasp. Thus the parables do not obscure, they clarify — but only to those who are willing to listen and believe.

The disciples may have been beginning to understand the mission to which Jesus had called them. Like the farmer in the parable, theirs would be the job of sowing the seed of the gospel in a largely hostile world. The light of the truth about Jesus had illuminated them, and it was their ministry to shine that light to a sin-darkened world. Their witness for Christ would be public, not hidden. The benefits of knowing Jesus and receiving salvation were not to be kept to themselves, but passed on to

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others. Christ's message is intended for all people. We should not hide our Christianity from the watching world.

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Where are our lamps? Are we placing them squarely on a stand in the middle of the rooms of our lives or – not so much?

How do we assure our lamps are on stands and not under the beds of our everyday living?

Other