

## **I May Be Crazy, But I am Not Stupid!**

### **Mark 3:20-35**

<sup>20</sup> Then he went home, and the crowd gathered again, so that they could not even eat. <sup>21</sup> And when his family heard it, they went out to seize him, for they were saying, "He is out of his mind."

<sup>22</sup> And the scribes who came down from Jerusalem were saying, "He is possessed by Beelzebul," and "by the prince of demons he casts out the demons." <sup>23</sup> And he called them to him and said to them in parables, "How can Satan cast out Satan? <sup>24</sup> If a kingdom is divided against itself, that kingdom cannot stand. <sup>25</sup> And if a house is divided against itself, that house will not be able to stand. <sup>26</sup> And if Satan has risen up against himself and is divided, he cannot stand, but is coming to an end. <sup>27</sup> But no one can enter a strong man's house and plunder his goods, unless he first binds the strong man. Then indeed he may plunder his house.

<sup>28</sup> "Truly, I say to you, all sins will be forgiven the children of man, and whatever blasphemies they utter, <sup>29</sup> but whoever blasphemes against the Holy Spirit never has forgiveness, but is guilty of an eternal sin" — <sup>30</sup> for they had said, "He has an unclean spirit."

<sup>31</sup> And his mother and his brothers came, and standing outside they sent to him and called him. <sup>32</sup> And a crowd was sitting around him, and they said to him, "Your mother and your brothers are outside, seeking you." <sup>33</sup> And he answered them, "Who are my mother and my brothers?" <sup>34</sup> And looking about at those who sat around him, he said, "Here are my mother and my brothers! <sup>35</sup> Whoever does the will of God, he is my brother and sister and mother." (*ESV*)

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ, I want to start this morning with a little story. It may be true or it may not, but it makes a valid point.

A woman was driving through an unfamiliar part of her rural county. The rain was coming down in buckets. She heard a loud "BANG" from under her car as it pulled strongly to the right. She knew she had a flat tire. She pulled on to the shoulder of the road next to a drainage ditch that had become swollen with rain water. On the other side of the ditch was a mental institution. The residents eagerly watched through the windows to see what she would do.

The woman stepped out of her car, searched the trunk for a jack, lug wrench and spare tire. She jacked up the car, removed the hubcap, unbolted the lug nuts and placed them neatly in the hubcap. She cautiously removed the flat tire but as she did the tire slipped out of her cold, wet hands and struck the hubcap, knocking it and the lug nuts into the roaring drainage ditch. She angrily asked herself, "Now what am I going to do?"

One of the residents of the mental institution opened a window and yelled at her, "Hey, Lady! Take one nut from each of the other wheels and use them to hold the spare tire on the axle. Then you can drive to a service station or parts store and purchase some replacement nuts."

"That is brilliant," said the woman! "How did you think of it?"

“I may be crazy,” replied the inmate, “but I’m not stupid!”

So that is what I am titling today’s message -- “I may be crazy, but I am not stupid!” In our text everyone accuses Jesus of being crazy. However, it turns out they are all stupid. I find it supremely ironic that the most sane person is the one that everyone else accuses of being crazy.

### I. People accused Jesus of Being Crazy.

People accused Jesus of being crazy. Who were they? First, there was his family. The end of our text informs us that it was Jesus’ mother and brothers. It causes me to ponder how much even Mary understood about her Son’s identity and calling. However, as I read Mark chapter 3, starting at verse 20, Mark’s description almost sounds like a family intervention. This is a technique whereby a family gets together to confront another family member who has an apparent problem that the ill member will not acknowledge or for which he or she will not seek help.

What evidence indicated to the family Jesus had a problem? Just reread the two previous chapters. One day Jesus laid down his tools, received the baptism of John the Baptizer in the Jordan River, disappeared into the wilderness for forty days, returned home and became an itinerant preacher with no apparent income, acquired a hodgepodge of students, and believed he was called by God to be the Savior and performed miracles. What more evidence did they need? Mark writes, “And when his family heard of it, they went out to seize him, for they were saying, “He is out of his mind”” (Mark 3:21).

Second, there are the Scribes. These learned, well-respected men also thought Jesus was crazy. And what was their evidence? They thought Jesus undermined most everything they believed. He claims to represent God. He forgives sins (Mk. 2:5). He heals on the Sabbath while claiming to be the Lord of the Sabbath (Mk. 2:23ff). He consorts with lepers, paralytics, harlots, demon possessed and tax collectors. His disciples do not fast on holy days. These are some of the things we find in just the first three chapters of Mark’s Gospel. In short, Jesus claims to represent God; he claims to be the Son of God and the Lord of the Sabbath; he breaks the rules; he thinks he performs miracles. Need any more proof that Jesus is crazy? Yes, he is crazy -- crazy for the Lord, crazy to carry out God’s plan, crazy to hang on a cross, crazy even for the salvation of the Scribes themselves.

### II. Not Crazy But Stupid.

A whole bunch of people accused Jesus of being crazy at worst or misguided at best. And while Jesus’ accusers were not crazy, they were certainly stupid. Here are a couple of examples of people who were not crazy but definitely stupid. I hope that does not sound too harsh or judgmental.

I think the greatest example of stupidity is Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden, and I am not referring to eating from the tree which God forbade them to eat or even touch. I refer to them thinking their eating would remain undiscovered. Worse yet, “And they heard the sound of God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and the man and his wife hid themselves

from the presence of the Lord God among the trees of the garden” (Gn. 3:8). And then when confronted by God they attempted to justify themselves by blaming each other. And, unfortunately, their stupidity has passed down to us. Psalm 14:1 and following asserts, “The fool says in his heart, ‘There is no God...’ They have all turned aside; together they have become corrupt; there is none who does good, not even one.”

The next greatest example of stupidity is the Scribes who accuse Jesus of “being possessed by Beelzebul, and by the prince of demons he drives out demons” (Mk 3:22). And Jesus replies, in effect, “I may be crazy but I am not stupid. How can Satan cast out Satan...And if a house is divided against itself, that kingdom cannot stand’ (Mk. 3:23-24). Jesus had vanquished Satan in the wilderness; unfortunately the Scribes were not there to witness it. Jesus bound the strong man and he will vanquish the strong man by his death and resurrection. In John’s Gospel we hear Nicodemus confess, “Rabbi, we know that you are a teacher come from God, for no one can do these signs that you do unless God is with him” (Jn. 3:2).

### III. Stupidity and Craziness

This leads me to what I must call the greatest combination of craziness, stupidity, and certain death, that is believing we can save ourselves, that Christ is not necessary, that the work of the Holy Spirit is not essential. We are all sinners! The Apostle Paul writes, “For there is no distinction; for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God...” (Ro. 3:22-23). “For the wages of sin is death...” (Ro. 6:23).

Ultimate, deadly stupidity and craziness are not accepting the witness of the Holy Spirit. This is the unforgivable sin. The Holy Spirit leads us to and sustains our faith through Word and Sacrament. Martin Luther said of the Holy Spirit in his explanation of the third article of the Apostles’ Creed, “I believe that I cannot by my own reason or strength believe in Jesus Christ, my Lord, or come to Him; but the Holy Spirit has called me by the Gospel, enlightened me with His gifts, sanctified and kept me in the true faith.” Hence, not receiving the witness of the Holy Spirit becomes the unforgivable sin because the work of the Spirit is the only way we can be led to faith.

However, once we come to faith, once we confess Jesus as Lord and Savior, the world around us accuses us of craziness and stupidity. This past Tuesday I read a story in the *Reporter*, the synodical newspaper, about a Finnish Lutheran Bishop, the Rev. Dr. Juhana Pohjola, who is being prosecuted by the Finnish government for supporting the traditional view of marriage, one man and one woman. The Rev. Dr. Pohjola introduced his assertion by stating that he views every single person as a child of God, loved and redeemed. However, the national court accused him of “hate speech.” The Apostle Paul forewarned us of this world view. He wrote, “For Jews demand signs and Greeks seek wisdom, but we preach Christ crucified, a stumbling block to Jews and folly to Gentiles, but to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God. For the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men” (1 Co. 1:25ff). Just compare this to Mark’s description of the Scribes and Pharisees.

### IV. True Wisdom and Sanity -- Believe in the Lord.

Here is true wisdom and sanity. Believe in the Lord, no matter what the people or the world around you say.

Why? Because God's kingdom is eternal; this reality, the one in which we exist at this moment, is temporal. What we see is but a shadow of what awaits us. I have been fascinated by a recent course I watched about the latest scientific understanding of the universe, time and all things. One example, if the strength of the attraction of an electron to the nucleus of an atom were the tiniest bit stronger or weaker ( $\times 10^{-39}$ ) than it currently is, the universe as we know it could not exist. The laws of physics would be different and we would not exist. This property of circumstance is labeled by some scientists as a "homo-centric" view of the universe because we happen to be at just the right time under just the right conditions to observe and meditate on the existence of all things. There is so much more out there than our feeble brains can grasp.

And if people call us crazy or stupid, our epistle for this day informs us that our present affliction does not compare to what awaits us. "For this light momentary affliction is preparing for us an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison, as we look not to things that are seen but to things that are unseen" (2 Co. 4:17ff).

Let us wrap this up! Here is all we need to know. We will call it "simple wisdom and sanity."

1. All have sinned.
2. All are lost.
3. God is gracious.

God gave His Son for us. "If you, O Lord, should mark iniquities, O Lord, who could stand? But with you there is forgiveness that you may be feared" (Ps. 130:3). We are saved! "O Israel, hope in the Lord; For with the Lord there is steadfast love, and with him plenteous redemption. And he will redeem Israel from all his iniquities" (Ps. 130:7-8)

When you walk out the church doors today, following confession and absolution, after hearing the Word and partaking of the Lord's Table, the world may consider you crazy, but rejoice because you are not stupid. Amen!

May the peace of the Lord, that transcends all understanding, guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. Amen!

*Sol i De i Gloria!*