

## Jesus Unfiltered Series – Week 2 and we're in Mark 3 Called As True Family

The Gospel of Mark tells the story of Jesus who means business from the onset!

We see how Jesus launches into his ministry in the first 2 chapters. He declares forgiveness, he begins to heal people, and he's already starting to upset the religious leaders. Chapter 3 begins with another healing. And it's the tone of this healing that sets the mood for this chapter!

**This time Jesus heals a man with a deformed hand** (A withered hand in the Greek).

⇒ **In a synagogue on the Sabbath. (Those 2 facts are significant)**

### **The Sabbath or Shabbat was strictly observed.**

The Jews weren't allowed to do any work. They couldn't hunt, shear a sheep, tie a knot, they couldn't carry and light or extinguish a flame.

It goes further:

- They couldn't add fresh water to a vase of flowers
- Apply make-up
- Sharpen a pencil
- Or rub soap together to make lather

**The principle was rest...** It's all they knew, and Jesus comes and performs a perceived act of work on the sabbath...**and the pharisees are fuming!** In fact, most of them weren't connected with the poor and they never would have expected Jesus to be introduced to the world in the way he was!

⇒ Jesus has this way up challenging the norm, and our religiosity.

**One thing that Chapter 3 depicts so well is the spiritual environment that existed 2000 years ago, & still exists today.**

### **Let's read Verse 1-5**

*Jesus went into the synagogue again and noticed a man with a deformed hand. <sup>2</sup>Since it was the Sabbath, Jesus' enemies watched him closely. If he healed the man's hand, they planned to accuse him of working on the Sabbath.<sup>3</sup> Jesus said to the man with the deformed hand, "Come and stand in front of everyone."<sup>4</sup> Then he turned to his critics and asked, "Does the law permit good deeds on the Sabbath, or is it a day for doing evil? Is this a day to save life or to destroy it?" But they wouldn't answer him.<sup>5</sup> He looked around at them angrily and was deeply saddened by their hard hearts.*

Sometimes we can think that Jesus began his ministry in a peaceful environment, but it was anything but that! He was facing head-on resistance. Notice that it was silent resistance.

- ⊙ **Isn't this the worst! If you're like me, sometimes you may not encounter verbal resistance, but you can feel defiance or resistance in a room, or in someone's heart! It's NB to discern the spiritual environment around us.**

**Jesus comes to preach** and demonstrate the Gospel. To declare salvation, heal the sick, raise the dead, and cast out demons. How's that mandate going for us?

- ⊙ **Today happens to be the International Rare Disease Day.** 6-7000 rare diseases globally. Around 1 in 17 people will be affected with a rare disease in their lifetime. 3.7 million people in South Africa live with a rare disease. Such as: MS, Narcolepsy, Cystic Fibrosis, Retinal dystrophy

Let's not forget to pray for healing over the sick, over those struggling amongst us

**Back to the story, after this healing**, there are a lot of people following Jesus..everyone with a disease was desperate to be healed. This is a swarm of people, and things start to get unruly!

### **Let's track from verse 9 Crowds Follow Jesus**

<sup>9</sup> Jesus instructed his disciples to have a boat ready so the crowd would not crush him. <sup>10</sup> He had healed many people that day, so all the sick people eagerly pushed forward to touch him. <sup>11</sup> And whenever those possessed by evil<sup>[e]</sup> spirits caught sight of him, the spirits would throw them to the ground in front of him shrieking, "You are the Son of God!" <sup>12</sup> But Jesus sternly commanded the spirits not to reveal who he was.

**Do you see the spiritually charged environment?** Notice that the evil spirits themselves could identify Jesus, but yet they were the very ones who blinded to hearts of the pharisees.

- **Lockdown has made us intently aware of our individual challenges. What is hasn't always done well, is reminded us of our mandate as Christ followers.**
- For many of us right now, opposition is personalized – unemployment, finances, purpose etc.
- The enemy will make it all about us and our needs, but what about others.
  
- **But what about opposition in our ministry and our calling?** If you're not facing opposition in what Christ has called you to, then perhaps you're not walking in the fulness of that.
  
- **When we operate in the power of the Holy Spirit**, we will see spiritual resistance
  - **Why?** Because there's a clashing of spiritual realms.
  
- ⊙ **I think aspects of Westernised Christianity** have dulled down the reality of the spiritual realm. We need to acknowledge it and walk in authority. **For our battle isn't against flesh and blood...but the rulers, powers and world forces of darkness.**
- ⊙ **All that was hidden, was now being revealed.** The authority Jesus was waking up those evil spirits. Jesus was bringing order and clarity.

**Following on from this**, Jesus goes up a mountain and calls out to those that he wanted to join him. He then appoints the 12 apostles. *'They were to accompany him (Be with him), and he would send them out to preach, <sup>15</sup> giving them authority to cast out demons.'*

Jesus brings order and clarity. They have a clear mandate.

Over the last 2000 years, has our mandate changed?? No.. It's still the same.

- ⊙ **We love change!** A new car, new clothes etc, We love continual stimulation. In fact some of us may even be falling into the habit of pulling our phones out during a sermon, because we're not stimulated enough. Because we've heard it. But is the hearing translating into doing?

Ok, so Jesus comes to a house, and this is where the chapter heats up!

### **Jesus and the Prince of Demons**

<sup>20</sup> One time Jesus entered a house, and the crowds began to gather again. Soon he and his disciples couldn't even find time to eat. <sup>21</sup> When his family heard what was happening, they tried to take him away. "He's out of his mind," they said. <sup>22</sup> But the teachers of religious law who had arrived from Jerusalem said, "He's possessed by Satan,<sup>[e]</sup> the prince of demons. That's where he gets the power to cast out demons." <sup>23</sup> Jesus called them over and responded with an illustration. **"How can Satan cast out Satan?"** he asked.

Jesus builds an argument and says that **Satan can't fight against himself.**

**Jesus brings clarity into the confusion. And here's the verse that so many of us have stumbled on.**

<sup>28</sup> "I tell you the truth, all sin and blasphemy can be forgiven, <sup>29</sup> but anyone who blasphemes the Holy Spirit will never be forgiven. This is a sin with eternal consequences." <sup>30</sup> He told them this because they were saying, "He's possessed by an evil spirit."

#### FIRST THING TO ALWAYS DO:

**CONTEXT – Jesus says this in response to the pharisees who are saying that he's demon possessed. That the HS is a demonic spirit. They're ignorant to the Holy Spirit at work in Christ. In fact, they are calling it a work of Satan. This is the blasphemy in this story.**

⇒ **They weren't just denying the truth**, they were blaspheming the Spirit by contradicting what they had just witnessed before their very eyes.

I love how the The MESSAGE puts this:

<sup>28-30</sup> "Listen to this carefully. I'm warning you. There's nothing done or said that can't be forgiven. But if you persist in your slanders against God's Holy Spirit, you are repudiating the very One who forgives, sawing off the branch on which you're sitting, severing by your own perversity all connection with the One who forgives." He gave this warning because they were accusing him of being in league with Evil.

#### Stay with me here!

##### Why only blasphemy against the Holy Spirit?

I think it's because of the unique role the Holy Spirit plays in our salvation.

- If we look to God the Father and then turn from his glory to embrace sin, that's bad right?
- Or if we turn away from Jesus Christ, we still have the option to turn back.

In either case there is hope. Because of the gift of repentance.

##### What's the HS's role?

He has many, but one is that he convicts the world of sin and opens our eyes towards repentance.

If we blaspheme and reject the Father and the Son, there is still hope, for the Spirit can still humble us and bring us to a place of repentance. **But if we see the Holy Spirit's power and reject his work and liken it to the work of Satan, we close ourselves off from the only one who could ever bring us to repentance.** And so we close ourselves off from forgiveness.

**What then is it?** As Piper puts it: *The unforgivable sin of blasphemy against the Holy Spirit is an act of resistance which belittles the Holy Spirit so grievously that he withdraws forever with his convicting power so that we are never able to repent and be forgiven.*

© They are like the bird of pray who spots a carcass on a piece of ice floating in the river. He lands and begins to eat. He knows it is dangerous because the water falls is just ahead. But he looks at his wings and says to himself, "I can fly to safety in an instant." And he goes on eating. Just before the ice goes over the falls he spreads his wings to fly but his claws are frozen in the ice and there is no escape — It's a persistent blasphemy, ignorance of the Spirits work, that brings us to a place of non-repentance

#### WHAT DO WE TAKE FROM THIS? Well, what's your relationship like with the HS?

**The HS is not a force, he's a person of the trinity. He is God and he has a personality, and he dwells within us, and so this should change the way we live.**

**Bill Johnson makes an interesting statement.**

*"We have been given the privilege to host his presence. The Holy Spirit is in me for my sake but he is upon me for yours."*

**I'd like to say this carefully..**

*"Much of today's church relies more on a book the early church didn't have, than the Holy Spirit they did"*

- ⇒ **I'm not saying** that I don't hold to the authoritative Word of God, but what I am saying is that I think we've lost something of what it means to walk day in and day out with the Holy Spirit.
- ⊙ I have a friend who I connect with fairly often, and we've been doing early morning walks around the common. They are good times of connecting and sharing openly about struggles that we have in our faith. **I sensed the Lord reminding me this week**, that he wants to be the closest friend, and counsellor in my life.

**The question:** Are we fully submitted to the rule of leading of the HS. Because Jesus was

**CLOSE**

**Chapter 3 ends with Jesus explaining who our true family is.**

**The True Family of Jesus**

*<sup>31</sup> Then Jesus' mother and brothers came to see him. They stood outside and sent word for him to come out and talk with them. <sup>32</sup> There was a crowd sitting around Jesus, and someone said, "Your mother and your brothers<sup>Ⓛ</sup> are outside asking for you." <sup>33</sup> Jesus replied, "Who is my mother? Who are my brothers?" <sup>34</sup> Then he looked at those around him and said, "Look, these are my mother and brothers. <sup>35</sup> Anyone who does God's will is my brother and sister and mother."*

**What does it mean to truly love someone?**

- ⊙ We need to feel the presence of Christ in the other person. If we can feel Christ in our neighbour, and sense the sacredness of that person, you will never come away with a sense of pride. If you sense Jesus in the other person, your only question will be: Am I worthy? Because I've loved this person for Jesus himself. Jesus waits to be encountered in those who call themselves our neighbour and do the will of God.

**Doesn't this change your outlook at people you meet?** We're called to love even those who aren't doing the will of God. They too are made in his image

**WE'RE EMPOWERED BY THE HOLY SPIRIT TO BE TRUE FAMILY OF GOD AND EACH OTHER**

As we close today, could I ask us a few questions of reflection?

- 1) Are our eyes open to the spiritual environment that we find ourselves in. Or do we just take everything at physical value?
- 2) Do we know the authority that we've been called to walk in? Clarity or Confusion?
- 3) Do you consistently acknowledge the Holy Spirit's role and guidance in your life.
- 4) Do you engage with HS daily? Do you love him? Do you know his presence?
- 5) Do you see the sacredness Christ in other's lives who do his will?

As I close, you know what verse stands out to me, its Mark 3:14-15

*'They were to accompany him (Be with him), and he would send them out to preach, <sup>15</sup> giving them authority to cast out demons.'*

All that Jesus was doing, pointed towards his desire for relationship. To break the separation.