

Lectionary Gospel Commentaries

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Based on the Lectionary Pericope Covering:

SOLA-LSB (Lutheran Service Book):
RCL (Revised Common Lectionary):

Mark 3:20-35

Year B - Proper 5, Text: Mark 3:20-35
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(Note: Most of the pericope notes assigned for use in Lent during Lectionary Year B are from John. All passages assigned for use during the rest of this church year are from Mark and John. Here we return to the chronological presentation of stories from Mark, having left off in Epiphany.)

In the lead up to today's text (Mark 3:7–19), the multitudes have come to hear what Jesus has to say. It is possible that some of them are Gentiles — from Syrophoenicia and the Transjordan.

By this point in the story, Jesus now has twelve disciples (including Judas). He sends them out to proclaim His message and cast out demons. Note that He meets with the disciples on a mountain (v.13). The twelve and “those about Him” are insiders; they have the key to the mystery of the Kingdom of God.

This is where today's pericope begins.

Mark 3:20–35: Jesus now goes “home” to either Nazareth or a house in the vicinity of Capernaum. His family members, evidently having heard rumors of what Jesus had been saying, come to the conclusion that he has gone mad. The Scribes from Jerusalem come to a different conclusion. They accuse Him of being in league with the ruler of the demons.

Jesus' mother Mary and some of His brothers appear on the scene, hoping to take him aside to restrain Him. Perhaps they were concerned about His safety (amidst the intense emotions emerging around Him), and the charges of blasphemy that had been directed at Him.

Jesus responds by stating that His family bonds have to do with discipleship, not genetics! Those who know and do the will of God are His brother, sister, and mother.

Additional Notes by Timothy Schaefer:

These parables are meant to be heard by the crowds, the family, and the scribes, to aid in giving them data

from which to draw their conclusions as to Jesus identity. The main subject has to do again with the realm of the demonic.

So the text reports that Jesus leaves the mountain and heads home. The crowd gathers again, preempting meal time. His family hears that Jesus is back, and they make an effort to control him, saying that “he's crazy.” They appear to be embarrassed by this family member. They obviously haven't connected the dots, as of yet, as to Jesus' full identity. The religious contingent from Jerusalem has him figured out, they think! “He's worse than crazy. He's possessed by the prince of demons, Beelzebul. and casts out demons in his name.”

Jesus uses a very common sense argument to refute this accusation: Satan can't cast out Satan any more than a kingdom divided against itself can stand. Same with a house divided. So if Satan is doing this, he's coming to an end.

Then Jesus, drawing on images very reminiscent of the content of the old testament books of Joshua and Judges (et. al.) that were about Israel entering a strong man's house (think Palestine), plundering their goods (think milk and honey). The problem for Israel was that the strong man consisted of the Philistines, the Edomites, the Canaanites, the Ammonites, the Moabites, the Jebusites, the Hittites, etc. The closest they ever got to ever conquering these strong men was under David, but it didn't last.

You see, for Israel, the enemy of God's people was always perceived as being other people. For the True Israel, the enemy of God's people is the realm of the demonic. And Jesus is showing that He is able to bind that strong man. This is step one in the establishment of the Kingdom of God.

The scribes have crossed a line. Jesus in no uncertain terms indicts them. Sins and blasphemies are forgivable, but saying Jesus has an evil spirit is an unforgiv-

able sin, because Jesus has the Holy Spirit, and together with the Father, the three make up the God head. The thrice holy deity can in no way and at no time be confused with the realm of the demonic.

Once again we hear from the family. They want Jesus in the house and quiet. Good luck with that! They are apparently so ashamed of one of their own that they have the crowd intercede for them. Jesus now removes any and all ethnic slant or advantage of being “all in the family.” Family members are now redefined as being those who do the will of God, which is simply to believe, follow, and dwell in the Kingdom of God that Jesus is establishing once and for all.