

PENTECOST 3 (2018)

Mark 3:20–35 Then [Jesus] went home, and the crowd gathered again, so that they could not even eat. And when his family heard it, they went out to seize him, for they were saying, “He is out of his mind.” 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.” And he called them to him and said to them in parables, “How can Satan cast out Satan? If a kingdom is divided against itself, that kingdom cannot stand. And if a house is divided against itself, that house will not be able to stand. And if Satan has risen up against himself and is divided, he cannot stand, but is coming to an end. 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.

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

And his mother and his brothers came, and standing outside they sent to him and called him. And a crowd was sitting around him, and they said to him, “Your mother and your brothers are outside, seeking you.” **And he answered them, “Who are my mother and my brothers?” And looking about at those who sat around him, he said, “Here are my mother and my brothers! Whoever does the will of God, he is my brother and sister and mother.”**

In the Name of Jesus.

LOOK, my dear ones, at all that the true mother and brother and sister of Jesus DO, to be DOING the will of God! (Remember! You're LUTHERANS! So, no adding and no subtracting from the Spirit's Word!)

They are sitting; they sitting around Jesus.

That's all that MY BIBLE says!

My Bible also says that when Jesus preached, He sat down. I wonder sometimes if that would be more fitting for your pastor, rather than standing up on his hind legs.

Nevertheless: Y'ALL are sitting; sitting around Jesus! His HOLY SPIRIT, Who was pleased to land on the Son of God at His Baptism in the Jordan, to fill HIM without measure: the One of US, Who never skirted the will of God, joining in with the Baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of those whose shame is their skirting of the will of their God; with those who are afraid.

I beg to you hear what I say NEXT in the tone I mean to say it! If y'all love and are devoted to every last person who shows up at your house for holidays and such, those who share your DNA and last name and y'all are written into each other's wills—SUPER-DUPER!

Yet, there remains something TYRANNICAL about families; AT LEAST in the Gospel lesson today, according to Saint Mark! A whole CULT has developed among the VAST majority of Christians in this world: with the BIRTH-MOTHER of our Lord at its center. And Jesus BIRTH-BROTHERS figured they had a claim on Him and knew what was best for Him and when He had gone too far. 'He is OUT OF HIS MIND!'

And many Christians learn, by the hardest experience, that some of the most stinging pains of being a disciple of Jesus is the blowback or friction or testing that we receive from those whose claim is DNA and wills and Thanksgiving Day. That is all that I mean by the sadness we poor sons and daughters of Adam can make of that most precious of God's creations! The FAMILY!

No surprise, of course! Just check in with the FIRST FAMILY! (I do not mean the occupants of the White House!)

[God] said [to Adam], “Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten of the tree of which I commanded you not to eat?” The man said, “The woman whom you gave to be with me, she gave me fruit of the tree, and I ate.”

Just one chapter before—one PAGE before, in MY BIBLE!—Adam was singing the first song ever sung, about THIS ONE!...THIS ONE!...THIS ONE!

And now, Adams’ beaming face has fallen, and his praise of His Creator for FULFILLING Adam, as he pointed to the crowning jewel of Creation—that finger of praise has now turned much busier, accusatory, at HER and at the God Adam had up ‘til then praised: ‘Sin?!!! Look at HER! Everything was FINE in MY GARDEN, until YOU, UP THERE, GAVE her to me!’

And so it goes.

His family was one thing; the scribes were another. More than any men who have lived, the scribes knew this accounts of Genesis and all the rest of the Hebrew Bible. Had it memorized, the most clever of them! No doubt, those who blasphemed the Spirit of Jesus that day.

Whence THEIR tyranny? SAME SOURCE!
 Inherited from Adam! The FEAR that what we SHOULD
 be under heaven is not at all what we MUST
 BE.....MUST BE, Doctor Luther taught the Church! And
 so, taking that OTHER best of all gifts of Our Lord and
 Giver of Life—His Holy Scripture!—those who claimed to
 know the Bible BEST were shown to know nothing about it
 at all!

For, in their fear, those men had only one
 FICTIONAL, MADE UP DELUSION, spun from Adams’
 own wicked self: ‘If I can point out to the Scary One
 confronting my conscience that OTHERS are MORE
 culpable—maybe even that HEAVEN ITSELF has some
 share in the blame!—the PASS/FAIL of my standing with
 heaven may turn into some sort of sliding scale.’ (Ask the
 teachers in the congregation about grade-time at school,
 and the pleading and the tears and the promises and the
 offers of extra work if only the day of judgment would be
 softened!)

SO ready to label men as ruled by—do NOT be
 worried about the different names of the prince of demons!
 A skunk is a skunk no matter what we calls it! We can
 always sniff it out!

So ready to label men as ridden and governed by
 Beelzebub of Satan or the devil—

In one of my favorite movies, there's this great line about a FANATIC! 'I know this man can be beaten; because he's a fanatic. And a fanatic is always hiding a SECRET DOUBT!'

Knowing full well that the scribes' insult of Him—and those sitting, sitting around Him—all sprung from the Original Fear, the Original Dread, our Savior and Son and Brother did all He could, that day, to save even them. Waving them off of labeling the OTHER with the VERY FAULT and worry that MOST...TYRANNIZES...THEM!

Oh, happy day! Dear family of Christ! His mothers and his brothers and his sisters, all sitting here around His Spirit's Word and His Spirit's Absolution and His Spirit's Supper and His Spirit's prayer: HIM!

THAT is why we MEN, who none of us DESERVE our fulfillments, our completions, our women—why we fail them! The devil done rode us from our conception! And though the Spirit of Jesus unseated the Lord of the flies the day we were baptized, Satan is still VERY COZY in the saddle on us that is our FEAR!

So, instead of pardon, our better half gets accusation.

And sometimes right back at us! (Though, that may be deserved!)

And THAT is the source of the TYRANNY, WHEREVER we find it! Family, work, church? The one we are MOST COMFORTABLE riding us, by nature, rides us again! Either turning us to despise the will of God and improve upon what Moses taught. Or turning us, so easily, to think what behavior under Heaven's judgment IS some sort of sliding scale: and thus, the accusations! The BEST being those ON WHOM the devil is most comfortably seated, telling others how much in danger THEY ARE! (Our secret doubt; secret no longer!)

‘Simplify, pastor!’ Okey-dokey!

Any of y'all wanna corner your poor pastor for diet and exercise counsel? You SHOULD'N'T!

And yet we are so willing to seek the still, small voice of the Spirit, the gentle Word and whisper of God and His Love, from the loudest and brashest and noisiest of all in this world. Just look around! People get mad at me when I POINT the finger at those I'm thinking of! So, open your eyes yourselves!

The world is FILLED to the choke point with those who SCREAM that THEY have the final word for the world about the world and God and how it's all gonna work out! Their secret fears are on display in their ostentatious dress, toys, or those with whom they lust to rub shoulders!

This poor man—whose BOAST is how shamefully little I HAVE DOWN about God, and thus am happy to be bound to nothing but the Gentle Spirit's Word!—I tell you today, without fear:

YOU are the Lord Jesus' mother, and brother and sister. For you are sitting here, and HE is here! And that...IS...THAT!

So God above is now God with you! And He is ONLY delighted when you call upon Him with all boldness and confidence, as a dear child calls upon his dear father—family DEVOID of TYRANNY!

And the Spirit of Jesus fills you, too! You can tell! For not only do you sit and listen to the one who knows God least of all! You love one another too, and refuse to give up on the other mothers and brothers and sisters of Jesus!

Oh, Holy Spirit! Enter in! And in our hearts Your Work begin—ALWAYS beginning, again! And makes our hearts your dwelling, in the Name of Jesus! Amen!