

"TAKING CHARGE OF JESUS"

MARK 3:20-35

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MESSIAH, BOERNE

JUNE 9, 2024

IN THE NAME OF THE FATHER AND OF THE SON AND OF THE HOLY SPIRIT. AMEN.

READ TEXT: MK 3:20-35

DEAR FRIENDS IN CHRIST:

THE FAMILY IS A POPULAR TOPIC OF DISCUSSION IN OUR SOCIETY, BOTH *WHAT* A FAMILY SHOULD BE AND *HOW* A FAMILY SHOULD BEHAVE. OUR LORD JESUS SPEAKS ABOUT HIS OWN FAMILY IN OUR TEXT THIS MORNING. HE TELLS US *WHAT* DETERMINES HIS TRUE FAMILY AND *HOW* HIS TRUE FAMILY BEHAVES. WE READ THAT JESUS' EARTHLY FAMILY THOUGHT HE WAS "OUT OF HIS MIND" AND "WENT TO TAKE CHARGE OF HIM" (V 21). THE TRUTH IS, HOWEVER, *NO ONE* CAN TAKE CHARGE OF JESUS. RATHER HE, BY THE HOLY SPIRIT, TAKES CHARGE OF US! AS JESUS SAYS IN OUR TEXT, "WHOEVER DOES GOD'S WILL IS MY BROTHER AND SISTER AND MOTHER" (V 35), THAT IS, EVERYONE WHO HEARS THE WORD OF GOD AND PUTS IT INTO PRACTICE IS PART OF JESUS' TRUE FAMILY (LK 8:21).

WE READ IN OUR TEXT ABOUT TWO GROUPS OF PEOPLE WHO ATTEMPTED TO TAKE CHARGE OF JESUS. THE FIRST GROUP IS JESUS' EARTHLY FAMILY. THEY COME TO PHYSICALLY TAKE CHARGE OF JESUS. HE AND HIS DISCIPLES HAD BEEN EXTREMELY BUSY IN MINISTRY, AND HIS FAMILY IS CONCERNED THAT HE HASN'T HAD

TIME TO REST OR TO EAT. PERHAPS THEY WANT TO KEEP HIM FROM GETTING SICK. WHATEVER THE REASON, THEY DON'T UNDERSTAND THE REASON FOR THE INTENSITY OF HIS ACTIVITY. THEY WANT TO TAKE CHARGE OF HIM.

THE SECOND GROUP THAT ATTEMPTED TO TAKE CHARGE OF JESUS IS THE JEWISH TEACHERS OF THE LAW. THEY DO NOT COME TO TAKE CHARGE OF HIS PHYSICAL PERSON BUT OF HIS *TEACHING*. THEY DO SO BY TRYING TO DISCREDIT HIM AS A FAITHFUL TEACHER OF GOD'S WORD. THEY DO THIS BY ASCRIBING A DEMONIC BASIS TO HIS MINISTRY.

JESUS RESPONDS TO THOSE TEACHERS OF THE LAW, HOWEVER, BY REVEALING THE IMPOSSIBILITY OF THEIR LOGIC: "HOW CAN SATAN DRIVE OUT SATAN? IF A KINGDOM IS DIVIDED AGAINST ITSELF, THAT KINGDOM CANNOT STAND. IF A HOUSE IS DIVIDED AGAINST ITSELF, THAT HOUSE CANNOT STAND. AND IF SATAN OPPOSES HIMSELF AND IS DIVIDED, HE CANNOT STAND; HIS END HAS COME" (VV 23-26).

PEOPLE CONTINUE TO TRY TO TAKE CHARGE OF JESUS' TEACHING TODAY. MODERN DAY "SCRIBES" SIFT THROUGH HIS TEACHING FOR SOMETHING, ANYTHING THAT THEY CAN USE TO DISCREDIT HIM. FOR EXAMPLE, A GROUP OF SCHOLARS KNOWN AS THE "JESUS SEMINAR" SAY THAT JESUS ACTUALLY SAID ONLY *EIGHTEEN PERCENT* (18 %) OF THE SAYINGS ATTRIBUTED TO HIM IN THE BIBLE. THEY ACCEPT THE HUMBLE JESUS WHO WOULD LET HIS

CHEEK BE STRUCK, BUT DENY THE POWERFUL JESUS WHO WORKS
MIRACLES AND CLAIMS UNITY WITH THE FATHER.

WE, TOO, AS MEMBERS OF THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH, JESUS'
FAMILY IN THE WORLD TODAY, TRY TO TAKE CHARGE OF HIM AT
TIMES. FOR EXAMPLE, WHEN WE WORRY. NOW, AS HUMAN BEINGS
WE FIND MANY THINGS ABOUT WHICH TO BE CONCERNED, BUT WHEN
OUR CONCERN TURNS TO WORRY, WE REDUCE JESUS TO OUR SIZE
INSTEAD OF LETTING GOD BE GOD. WE FORGET THAT JESUS HAS
ENTERED THE "STRONG MAN'S HOUSE," THE WORLD, AND TIED UP
"THE STRONG MAN," SATAN, BY HIS DEATH ON THE CROSS AND
RESURRECTION FROM THE DEAD (V 27). SIN AND GUILT NO LONGER
RULE IN OUR HEARTS. CHRIST NOW RULES IN OUR HEARTS THROUGH
HIS WORD AND SACRAMENTS.

WE ALSO TRY TO TAKE CHARGE OF JESUS WHEN WE TRY TO
REDUCE THE GOOD NEWS OF SALVATION IN JESUS CHRIST TO HUMAN
CATEGORIES OF REASON AND LOGIC. THE MESSAGE OF THE CROSS,
HOWEVER, IS A STUMBLING BLOCK TO REASON AND FOOLISHNESS TO
LOGIC. THE BIBLE SAYS THAT GOD WAS IN CHRIST RECONCILING
THE WORLD TO HIMSELF THROUGH THE CROSS OF CALVARY (2 COR
5:18). GOD TOOK CHARGE OF OUR SINFUL SITUATION BY MOUNTING
THE CROSS IN THE PERSON OF JESUS CHRIST. WE CANNOT
COMPREHEND THIS, ONLY BELIEVE IT.

YES, IT IS TRUE! GOD IN CHRIST JESUS TAKES CHARGE OF

US. GOD GAVE JESUS THE POWER AND AUTHORITY TO TAKE CHARGE OF US. AS CHRIST SAYS: "ALL AUTHORITY IN HEAVEN AND ON EARTH HAS BEEN GIVEN TO ME" (MT 28:18). CHRIST'S WORK OF SALVATION IS NOT DONE THROUGH SATAN, AS THE TEACHERS OF THE LAW SUPPOSED, BUT BY THE POWER OF THE ALMIGHTY GOD, THE MAKER AND REDEEMER OF THE UNIVERSE, THROUGH THE HOLY SPIRIT.

JESUS TAKES CHARGE OF US BY TAKING CHARGE OF OUR SIN. THE PROPHET ISAIAH TELLS US HOW: "THE LORD HAS LAID ON HIM THE INIQUITY OF US ALL" (53:6b). IN EFFECT, ON THE CROSS JESUS SAID TO HIS FATHER, "FATHER, CHARGE ALL THEIR SINS TO MY ACCOUNT," AND JESUS PAID OFF THE BALANCE WITH HIS BLOOD. AS ST. JOHN WRITES IN HIS FIRST LETTER, "[JESUS] IS THE ATONING SACRIFICE FOR OUR SINS, AND NOT ONLY FOR OURS BUT ALSO FOR THE SINS OF THE WHOLE WORLD" (2:2). AND NOTHING PROVES MORE DEFINITELY THAT GOD ACCEPTED JESUS' SACRIFICE AS FULL PAYMENT FOR OUR SINS THAN HIS RESURRECTION FROM THE DEAD.

GOD'S HOUSE, HIS FAMILY, THE CHURCH, IS NOT DIVIDED AGAINST ITSELF BUT OPEN TO EVERY PERSON TO FORGIVE EVERY SIN. THE ONLY EXCEPTION IS THE SIN AGAINST THE HOLY SPIRIT, THAT IS, BLASPHEMY AGAINST THE HOLY SPIRIT BY ONE WHO AT ONE TIME HAD BEEN CONVINCED OF THE TRUTH OF THE GOSPEL. THAT'S UNFORGIVABLE BECAUSE IT BLOCKS THE MEANS OF

GRACE, THAT IS, GOD'S WORD AND SACRAMENTS, WHICH WORK FORGIVENESS OF SINS BY THE POWER OF THE HOLY SPIRIT. IN OTHER WORDS, THE UNFORGIVABLE SIN IS THE SIN OF UNBELIEF, AND NO ONE CONCERNED ABOUT HAVING COMMITTED IT COULD HAVE DONE SO. YOU SEE, IF YOU ACTUALLY HAD, THEN YOU WOULDN'T EVEN BE CONCERNED ABOUT IT.

DEAR FRIENDS, BEING "OUT OF ONE'S MIND" MUST BE AN AWFUL FEELING. IF A PERSON'S ONLY HOPE FOR HELP WERE ANOTHER HUMAN BEING—MAYBE A FAMILY MEMBER, A FRIEND, OR AN ACQUAINTANCE—THEN SURELY HE OR SHE WOULD HAVE REASON TO BE WORRIED. BUT SOMEONE MUCH MORE POWERFUL THAN THAT HAS TAKEN HOLD OF US, SEIZED US, TAKEN CHARGE OF US—OUR HEAVENLY BROTHER, THE LORD JESUS CHRIST. HE SAYS TO US, "SURELY I AM WITH YOU ALWAYS, TO THE VERY END OF THE AGE" (MT 28:20). HE'S WITH US RIGHT NOW—TO HELP US AND TO HEAL US—AND HE WILL BE WITH US FOREVER. AMEN.