

# Do I Belong?

Scripture: Mark 3: 20-35  
Date: February 23, 2020

## ***CALLED CRAZY***

### WEDDING STORIES

I've been invited to many weddings over my years of life. Some very unusual and unique weddings but often during that stage of my life I was single and went as a plus none. Which meant that I was often seated at the back or with all the quirky uncles and aunts. Many times, I drove away wondering where I belonged or fit into any crowd!

### EPIPHANY VISION 2020 SERIES OVERVIEW

This past series we've been on a journey seeking a revelation of who God is and who we are to God. Using questions to better understand what is important to us. Last week we looked at Peter's response to Jesus' question – Who do YOU say I AM? In doing so I referenced C.S. Lewis' view that there are three responses to belong to God. Firstly, that Jesus was a liar – He knew he wasn't God and yet proclaimed that he was. Secondly, that Jesus was a lunatic – He thought he was God even though he really wasn't and thirdly that Jesus was / is God and is Lord over us.

In that context – there are many today in the world and even possibly in the church as well that opt for choice # 2. Where Jesus is seen as a strange lunatic – with most of his sayings and actions beyond us.

### TEXT BACKGROUND

Today's text illustrates two groups who had a similar response. Jesus – in the gospel of Mark – has been busy. He's been baptized, He's been tempted by the devil in the desert, He's chosen His disciples, He's fought with religious leaders over the Sabbath and He's healed many people.

Into this context comes Jesus' family. His mother Mary and the brothers of Jesus come to take charge of Jesus. In the Greek the word to take charge of could also mean - to arrest or to seize or to take control. They think that Jesus is out of his mind and they are stepping in to take care of Jesus. They recognize that as he's doing all this work, he's not getting enough rest, he's not eating enough food – basically he's not taking care of himself. So, his mother is doing what most families would do. They are going to help Jesus when Jesus can't help himself.

At the same time come some religious leaders / teachers who come to challenge Jesus because they don't agree with his actions and in fact see him as being in league with Beelzebub and that he's demonic with an impure or evil spirit.

### CURIOUS / CRAZY CHRISTIANITY

A few weeks ago, I spoke partially of my story that upon a realization of who Christ was I was afraid that I'd have to go to Africa as a missionary because that's what born again Christians did. "Real" Christians were kind of crazy – giving money and time away and filled with a hippie kind of counter cultural loving and living.

There ARE lots of Christian things that are 'strange' or 'crazy' by the standards / expectations of the world. Lent is starting this week beginning with Pancake Tuesday where you feast before you fast and Ash Wednesday where many Christian cultures mark your foreheads with dirt.

## BELONGING

Part of my fear was that I'd have to be separated from all that I knew and loved. Part of my confusion was that I'd be no longer 'fit in' or belonged to a group.

We spoke of last week how my mother was so bad at remembering names that we sometimes needed name tags. But simple name tags – Hi my name is ..... - only signify your name. They don't identify a person's history or their or their family or friends. They don't illustrate where you belong – what your family or clan or tribe is.

Television has had many shows of families over the years. Many of the shows became a visual of what the ideal family looked like – funny, harmonious and loving. More recent shows have tried to air the 'honest' looks of the dysfunction of a 'real' family. While such illustrations are caricatures at best they still underline the passion people have for connecting and belonging – even in contexts that are unreal and unsustainable.

We live in culture and context where belonging is massive. We are separated by so many issues and elements in our world such as independence and individualism, yet we strive so hard to foster some form of connection through social media, clubs or groups etc. All of which are calling us to join in but often we're not sure how or why.

## **CRAZY CALLING – TO BELONG**

### MARY & JESUS FAMILY

Mary and her family travel to Jesus but stay outside and call for Him to join them. Last week – Jesus spoke of the declaration of building the church The Greek word Ekklesia is the word we use for church and it literally means the called-out ones.

The irony here is that Mary and Jesus' brothers are calling out to Jesus, but they remain outside of Jesus' sphere and send someone inside the house to look for Jesus. They are calling for Jesus to come out and join their 'normal'

### JESUS' RESPONSE

Jesus looks around those seated in a circle around Him – most likely the disciples and others who have been travelling with Him and learning from Him. Jesus repeats the question – rhetorically - Who is my mother and my brothers?

For Jesus is expanding the understanding of 'normal', the understanding of 'family' and the understanding of 'belonging'. He will later expand who is my mother and brothers to include sisters when He indicates that all in God's family are those who do God's will.

## BELONG TO JESUS

In Mark's writing style he has sandwiched this story of Jesus' family with the religious leaders. I think that Mark is trying to make the point of belonging clearer not just by two groups who see Him as 'crazy' but also how the family of belonging actually works.

Jesus speaks in a parable to the teachers in responding to their claims that Jesus is part of the Kingdom of Beezebul. Jesus refers to the illogical arguments put before Him that it is impossible for Satan (the Strong Man) – or his agents – to be delivering demons on his behalf. That type of kingdom would become divided and unsustainable.

The name beezebul – which later English morphed into Bezelbub - is a title of a lord of a house which Satan has over the world in it's sinfilled condition. To be defeated the strong man must be subdued and tied up and only then can one plunder the possessions of the house. Denying this truth is the equivalent of blaspheming against the Holy Spirit and that sin is an eternal sin – not capable of being forgiven.

Now defeat of the Strong Man could be a potential reference to the time in the dessert where Jesus overcame the temptations from Satan. It could also be a potential reference to the time on the cross where Jesus defeated the powers of sin and evil and death. Regardless Jesus can – has – overcome the strong man and all those who were under the strong man's control – will be freed.

Thus, when Mark write of Jesus speaking in between the story of Jesus' family coming to get him he's also indicating not just that Jesus' family is more spiritual than physical but he's also indicating that Jesus Himself is what creates and sustains the family itself.

As we transition from Epiphany to Easter - as we move from looking from who God is to who we are to God we need to remember that Jesus is the One. The one to follow because he is also the one who saves!

## ***CRAZY CALLING – TO BECOME***

### CRAZY CALLING

In addition - when Jesus indicates that those who are belonging to the family of God – the called out ones – His brothers and sisters are the ones who understand who He is. They are also the ones who follow and obey Him. To not just BE a part of the family but also to LIVE as part of the family .

The questions we ask of God and the questions we ask of ourselves point to a greater understanding of who God is, point to a greater understanding of what God has done for us and also point to a greater understanding of God within us / through us to the world around us.

To be called crazy by the world but also to be part of the crazy calling by God. A crazy calling as His child – holy and dearly loved, belonging to Him. Yet also a calling to be in the world as God's light and presence. Living before Him and living within the the world around us so that it may see and know and love and belong and follow Him as well

#### VISION 2020 - EPIPHANY TO LENT / EASTER

Several years ago, I was part of a church that was involved in a March for Jesus through the streets of downtown Toronto. It an interesting experience as they engaged so many non Christians on a Sunday afternoon. The highlight – for me – was this pamphlet that was handed to out to bystanders. Its primary theme was that it's okay to have the wrong idea of Christianity – because Christians haven't always been good about portraying Jesus in their lives as called out ones. But – the pamphlet urged - don't' get the wrong idea of Jesus and spend time questioning and searching for that truth.

The journey through Epiphany doesn't end with start of Lent. We will continue to have questions of who God is, of who we are to God and what that means in our daily living. We are called to continue to ask questions – not by looking at the 'craziness' of Christianity but rather at the person and work of Jesus Christ himself.

#### BELONGING - ALONE TO ADAPTED

I spoke earlier of all the weddings I had attended and how lonely and isolated I often felt at the end of them. When the time came – finally – for my wedding Rhonda and I put our head table (of two !!) in the middle of the room so that we were surround by family and friends.

In an increasing isolated world – that thinks it's increasingly connected - we are reminded that we are not alone but that we belong to God and to each other. Through Lent we will be looking at another series of questions from a teaching tool of the CRC the Heidelberg Catechism focusing on the first question and answer. This question speaks to all of creation especially creation struggling to understand its identity, especially creation struggling to understand its calling. What is your only comfort in life and in death? The answer – as was read during the time of reconciliation – is that we are not alone but BELONG body and soul in life and in death to our faithful saviour – Jesus Christ.

We will journey through the different parts of that question - That through His life, death and resurrection - we are not alone but rather are adapted into His family, into His purposes by His power and for His glory

#### BECOMING - CRAZY TO CALLED

This Lent period is a crazy time where people sacrifice all sorts of things - for all sorts of reasons - Facebook, chocolates are all forsaken for 40 days (excluding Sundays). But the craziness isn't in giving up things of the world. Rather it's in taking on the things of God and doing the will of God.

Romans 12: 1-2 speaks of becoming a living sacrifice and not conforming to the patterns of the world. In essence looking crazy to the expectations and patterns of the world. A living sacrifice so that we will know - and live - out God's perfect and pleasing Will.

Romans 12: 3-8 then speaks of doing this together – as a body, as a family, as a church – belonging to the family of God.

### ***CONCLUSION***

There are many times in our world which challenges our understanding and belief that we could belong to something bigger and better than ourselves. Such thinking – such living appears as out of control to many in our families and even many in our churches.

Yet it is God's calling to belong to Him and this is accomplished through the life and the death and the resurrection of His Son – Our Lord and Savior – Jesus Christ.

This is the Lenten journey – a journey of vision of who we are to God – that we will undertake in the next several weeks.

May you grow and know in the faith and life of belonging to God!

Amen and Amen