

QUESTIONED

MARK 3:20-30

(Prepared by Gene Thompson using LifeWay's ETB materials.)

1. Can you think of a politician, or a ministry, that had some controversy or criticism? That's easy, isn't it.
 - Donald Trump has had a lot of criticism.
 - President Biden.
 - In 1916 Woodrow Wilson was strongly criticized for NOT responding to German U-boat attacks on our country's ships by declaring war against the Germans.
 - Franklin Graham received a lot of criticism a few years ago for his comments that the God of Islam was not the same as the Christian God, and that Islam was an "evil" religion.

Virtually every politician, pastor, minister, or leader of any kind will have some kind of controversy or criticism leveled against him/her. If a leader isn't receiving some level of criticism, they are probably not doing something right! Even JESUS was criticized, as we see in our passage today—and He was perfect!

2. What is the difference between the criticism that comes against many presidents or ministers, and criticism that was leveled against Jesus? (Men are all imperfect; there is probably something that could be criticized in every one of us. But Jesus did everything perfectly, and the criticism against Him was entirely misplaced, as we will see in today's study, which focuses on the ministry of Jesus.

CONTEXT!

Since our study last week, Jesus has begun His ministry, healed several people, and then called His disciples.

Read Mark 3:14-15 These verses are loaded with truth!

1. What was the most important thing Jesus called these apostles to do? (Be with Him. Then they would be prepared for their own ministry roles.)

Then we see the 12 listed, which brings us to our focal passage.

SKEPTICS! Read Mark 3:20-22

They are most likely back in Capernaum at Peter's house.

1. Why were the crowds looking for Jesus? (Last week we learned that they had never heard someone speak with such authority. But He was also healing many and casting out demons from others. They wanted to be healed or to see Jesus heal someone.)
2. How large was the crowd at the house where they were staying? (They crowded into the house so much they couldn't even eat.)

I was with the Singing Churchmen of Oklahoma in Russia. At a church in Moscow, we sang at a church that was packed and people were gathered around the doors and windows just to hear us. It was a humbling experience.

3. What motivated Jesus' family to come after Him? (They thought He had lost His mind—claiming to be God!)
4. What motivated the scribes to come seeking Him? (They were afraid Jesus would draw away their followers; they thought He was blaspheming God; and He did not keep the law.)
5. Which group do you think would hurt you more? Mk. 6:4

1 Peter 4:12— "Don't be surprised at the fiery ordeal...which comes upon you."

6. How do the attitudes of Jesus' family and the religious leaders compare to the attitudes some people have about Jesus today?

Let's make sure that we are not the people who do the criticizing! When God is doing something, let's not be the people who are standing on the sidelines criticizing.

7. How should we react if we find ourselves being criticized? (We should have a humble attitude about it; search to see if it is warranted, if wrong change if not keep going. With Jesus there was nothing to criticize—but there certainly is in us!)

STRONG MAN? Read Mark 3:23-27

1. How did Jesus address this criticism? (He addressed the nature of this specific criticism by asking them a question: “How can Satan cast out Satan?”)

Then He spoke a principle which has far-reaching application.

Read verse 24-25.

So Jesus said you’re absolutely wrong in this criticism. Satan is not attacking his own work. Jesus lays down here the important principle of UNITY; how important that is for the success of anything we endeavor to accomplish!

Abraham Lincoln famously quoted these verses in the 1860s in the context of slavery and the Civil War: “A house divided against itself cannot stand. I believe this government cannot endure permanently half slave and half free. I do not expect the Union to be dissolved—I do not expect the house to fall—but I do expect it will cease to be divided. It will become all one thing, or all another.” (Carl Sandburg, Abraham Lincoln, The Prairie Years, and the War years. P. 138)

2. How important is unity in the church? (In Jesus’ High Priestly Prayer” in John 17 He repeatedly prayed for the unity of His people. Why? “So that the world may know that You sent Me.”)
“Let us be ready to concede much and make many sacrifices for the sake of unity and peace.”—J. C. Ryle
3. What are some ways in which Satan takes people captive? (Drugs, alcohol, sex, greed, etc.,)
4. Who is the “strong man” in these verses? (Satan and Jesus has overcome him!)
5. What arguments do people raise against the authority of Jesus? (It’s my life and I’ll live it any way I choose!)
6. How can believers respond to those arguments? (1 Cor. 6:20 “you were bought at a price. Therefore, glorify God with your body.”)
7. How does the authority of Jesus bring peace and disruption at the same time? (For the believer there is peace in knowing nothing can come into my life that God does not allow. Disruption comes when I fail to yield my life to Him.)
8. In what ways do people live in a divided kingdom when they allow Satan to develop strongholds in their lives? (They are trying to live with one foot in the “world” and one foot in the “spiritual” realm. There is a constant battle and there is no peace.)

WARNING! Read mark 3:28-30

This passage is often questioned or misunderstood. This is an amazing passage. Don’t miss verse 28.

1. What sin is God willing to forgive? (ALL!)

“To the man who is alive to his own sinfulness and deeply sensible of his need of mercy, these words are sweet and precious.”—J. C. Ryle.

2. Under what conditions are our sins forgiven? (If we accept Jesus’ sacrifice at Calvary on our behalf.)
3. What convinced you of Jesus’ forgiveness?
4. What is the unpardonable sin? (Sin becomes unpardonable when the guilty one rejects the path that leads to pardon, continues in rebellion, and refuses to bow in submission before God. Therefore, a person receiving the penalty of the “unpardonable sin” has condemned himself. This sin is a chronically rebellious and continuing attitude, not a single act.)

The rejection of the continuous wooing of the Holy Spirit to accept Jesus as Savior leaves one eternally lost to a place of eternal torment.

If there is no such thing as “eternal damnation,” we may throw the Bible aside, and say that words have no meaning at all. We should not be ashamed to believe that there is an eternal God, —an eternal heaven,

—and an eternal hell. Sin is an infinite evil. It needed an atonement of infinite value to deliver the believer from its consequences, —and it entails an infinite loss on the unbeliever who rejects the remedy provided for it.”—J. C. Ryle

5. How would you counsel someone who feared they were no longer a candidate to receive God’s forgiveness? (I would ask them if they felt convicted of their sin and feel a need to talk to God about it. If there is a feeling of conviction in your heart, it’s not too late. God can forgive anything—yes anything you’ve done except reject the conviction of the Holy Spirit.)

CHALLENGE!

- We should not be surprised when others are skeptical about Jesus.
 - We can trust that Jesus has authority over all creation.
 - We should be heartbroken when people reject Jesus.
1. In which of these areas (your mind, your body, your understanding of nature, and your mission in life) does Jesus now exercise authority?
 2. In which of them did you once recognize His authority but no longer are doing so?

Lord, let us be sensitive to the Holy Spirit in our lives and recognize Jesus’ authority in all areas of our life.