



Grace to you and peace from God our Father and our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. **AMEN**

Have you ever accused someone of being out of their mind? If you are like me, I suspect that you have. Think with me of some instances that we might say someone is out of their mind. How about your friend skydiving, jumping out of a perfectly good airplane, at the age of 75? How about one of your siblings purchasing a new home way above his or her price range? Or your child wants to forego a full ride scholarship at a prestigious college for a year to travel Europe on a bicycle?

I think today during a pandemic we probably have even found new instances to use the words, “have you gone out of your mind”. Our friends or relatives going out to what we might think are unsafe places before vaccines and with no masks on. And sometimes we might think those words, but do not verbalize them in order to keep the peace. Why would my sister want to move to Wyoming where she knows no one and leave behind her two daughters and 3 beautiful granddaughters? What is she thinking? Has she gone out of her mind?

Well, that is the question that people were thinking about Jesus as reported in our Gospel reading for this morning. The people said, “He has gone out of this mind.” Verse 21 shows the sentiment that the people were thinking as they watched Jesus during his early ministry. People were alarmed by his

behavior. And actually, not only people but his family as well had come to seize him before Jesus made any crazier moves and statements.

Possibly his family was just concerned about Jesus' health. He was so busy and bombarded by crowds that He often forgot to eat and take care of his own needs. It is possible that Jesus' mother and brothers were lovingly concerned for him. But in fact, I think that that probably was only part of the reason for their attempted intervention. We read in John 7:5 that his brothers didn't believe in him. And would that be so odd. After all, Jesus was their family, his brother. They all grew up together in a small town as regular boys. Most likely they found it hard to believe that Jesus could do the things he was doing and that He was tampering with the Jewish way of life. After all, he was their brother, just a human boy. So, was he out of his mind preaching about a new way of doing things? Was he out of his mind doing and showing people to think outside of the box, the Jewish box?

I can also imagine that his brothers wanted to get him to stop this nonsense, stop this preaching. They came to take him home away from the crowd that were demanding his attention. Our text tells us that it is those same crowds that would not let Jesus' mother and brothers into to house to see him. And the reaction to Jesus affirms their belief that Jesus was out of his mind, with this new power. In verse 33, "Who are my mother and my brothers?" is what he replied as he left them standing on the outside. Jesus at this time, does not even acknowledge his family of origin. How can this be? Is Jesus out of his mind?

Another topic of conversation in this Markian Gospel is found in verse 29, "but whoever blasphemes against the Holy Spirit can never have forgiveness but is guilty of an eternal sin." For years this statement by Jesus has troubled many people. Jesus said this and it gave even the crowds present, along with the Pharisees, I bet, a shiver down their spine. It seemed to go against everything Jesus had been teaching them. They knew if they repented their sins, they would be forgiven, but now Jesus seems to be saying that was not true. Is Jesus out of his mind?

Are we to worry about offending the Holy Spirit and sinning against Him? I read this week an excellent statement explaining this by William Barclay. He said: "If a man, by repeated refusals of God's guidance, has lost the ability to recognize goodness when he sees it, if he has got his moral values inverted until evil to him is good and good is evil, then, even when he is confronted by

Jesus, he is conscious of no sin; he cannot repent and therefore he can never be forgiven.” Does that make sense?

So, in simpler terms, the only unforgivable sin is to refuse the forgiveness of God. If you do not accept the provision of salvation offered by Christ and don't throw yourself on the mercy of Almighty God, there will be no forgiveness. When you refuse to accept Jesus as your Lord and Savior you have committed the unpardonable sin while believing that there has been no sin committed. Are you out of your mind, not accepting God's gracious gift? God sent his only son to die on the cross to relieve us from our sin and the burden of death, to give us the promise of eternal and everlasting life. What an awesome God we have.

And no, we are not out of our mind living, believing and serving such a gracious God in Christ Jesus. And that is the point in this reading from Mark. Jesus is not out of his mind. He is trying to explain to all that He has a different way, a better way to live life. Jesus shows us the way to be with him in a house without Satan, to have our sins forgiven and to be a part of God's family, to be God's children. It is a new way, a spiritual way that differs from our physical earthly ways. Jesus was unlike anyone we will ever meet on this planet. Not only did he break the laws of ritual cleanliness, he violated the Sabbath, he spoke openly of a kingdom not of this world, but he spoke directly and intimately with God, he spoke as God.

Jesus did not fit the mold of the long-awaited savior and king. And he had no intention of conforming to the expectations of the religious leaders or the crowds. It is only God that can unite us in His family, a family within the kingdom of God. The Spirit of God unites us as family in a bond of love that can withstand all the physical, worldly tests of time.

Yes, Jesus loved and honored his earthly siblings and of course, his mother. However, his mission was to establish the kingdom of God on earth where all

believers are part of the family, a family where the ultimate allegiance is to God: Father Son and Holy Spirit.

So, no, Jesus had not gone out of his mind. He knew exactly what he was doing. God the Father sent Him to be the Savior of the world.

My prayer for you is that you will not go out of your mind and ignore Jesus's invitation to His kingdom. But rather say Yes to God's grace and love. **AMEN**