

**Mark 3: 20-30; "Speaking Against Jesus" Sermon # 16 in the series - "Astonished at His Teachings", Delivered by Pastor Paul Rendall on August 17th, 2008, in the Morning Worship Service.**

In James Chapter 4, and verse 11, it says this: "Do not speak evil of one another, brethren." "He who speaks evil of a brother and judges his brother, speaks evil of the law and judges the law." "But if you judge the law, you are not a doer of the law but a judge." "There is one Lawgiver, who is able to save and to destroy." "Who are you to judge another?" If the sin of speaking against a brother is condemned because it is speaking against God's having given that commandment, and thus against God Himself indirectly; then how much more displeasing it must be to God that men should speak against His Only begotten Son whom He sanctified and sent into the world to teach men the way to eternal life and to save His people from their sins. Why would anyone want to speak against One so pure and holy as Jesus? We have already seen in past sermons that Jesus had gotten Himself into a lot of trouble with the Pharisees by healing the man with the withered hand on the Sabbath. The problem was not with Jesus. He was going about doing good and healing, and yet His life was being plotted against, at this very point of time in which we are studying. The problem was with these men's sinful hearts. "He came to His own, and His own did not receive Him;" and not only did they not receive Him, they were willing to blaspheme both His person, and the person of the Holy Spirit in their opposition to Him. Some of these men were guilty of a sin which they could never be forgiven of. It is very important that you and I understand how serious a problem that these kinds of sins are; these sins in our speech. It is imperative that every person search their heart and ask themselves; am I guilty of these sins? And it is also just as important that you and I come to understand that we, as believers, are being conformed more to the image of Jesus Christ. And because of that; we also, as we grow in Jesus Christ; we will be spoken against.

So this morning we want to look at the subject of Jesus' being spoken against. Next Sunday we will look more in depth at the sin against the Holy Spirit. But today I would like us to look at the 2 ways in which He was spoken against, and then I want to relate those 2 ways to us as sinners, and to us as saints. I hope to be able to give assurance to all those of you who are trusting in the Lord Jesus, that you will be forgiven of all of your sins, if you will confess them to the Lord. And I would have you to learn also, in the times when men will speak against you, how to face such trials. The 2 ways in which Jesus was spoken against were these. First, people said that it was out of His mind. 2nd- He has a demon. Let us pray to learn the lessons which the Lord Himself would teach us.

**1st- His own people said that He was out of His Mind.** (Verse 20 and 21)

"Then the multitude came together again, so that they could not so much as eat bread." "But when His own people heard about this they went out to lay hold of

Him, for they said, he is out of His mind." Here we have a situation which had developed, in relation to the ministry of the Lord Jesus, in which the healing ministry had grown, and it had expanded to such an extent that the people in need kept coming; more and more of them kept coming; so many of them pressing upon Him that there was not even time to eat. There was no good time to even take a break or leave to have a meal. The lesson that we should learn from this is that the Lord certainly can cause His own ministry to flourish. And when it does, we who are Christ's disciples and servants must work and labor hard in relation to His cause and kingdom. The Christian minister and the Christian worker must work while it is yet day. Jesus said in John 9: 4, before He healed a blind man, "I must work the works of Him who sent Me, while it is day: the night is coming, when no man can work." We must preach the word while we have the opportunity. We must minister compassion now, when people come to us, and when we see them in need. You and I need to learn the lesson that compassion and faithfulness to minister to the true needs of others will bring more and more work to us, not less. In Luke 12: 48 Jesus says, "For everyone to whom much is given, from him much will be required; and to whom much has been committed, of him they will ask all the more." You and I as believers have each of us been given gifts, and the Lord expects us to be good stewards of those gifts. He has also given to us His will, His holy will, in the Bible as to what we are to do and how we are to conduct ourselves. Jesus was out-and-out doing His Father's business. He was using all that He was, and all that He had as a man; all that the Father and the Spirit had given to Him, in ministering to the needs of people. He was pouring out His strength in it. He was demonstrating the great compassion of God, the ceaseless and unending compassion of God to those who seek Him and who will come to Him to be helped and to be healed. Jesus would not have anyone to say, "I could not be healed because Jesus could not see me; He didn't have the time." No, beloved, Jesus always has the time to minister to you if you will come to Him. Are you troubled by sickness and disease? Then come to Christ in prayer and ask Him if He would not heal you and help you. Go to Him as the Great Physician before you go to the earthly physicians. Ask His counsel and diagnosis before you go to the doctor and while you go to the doctor, and during every treatment you may receive from any doctor. His ear is open to your sighs and cries and He will never say that He is too busy to see you. Are you troubled by your sins, and the pains and sorrows of a sin-sick soul? The Lord Jesus can take them all away. Why will you not go to Him? You should never hesitate to go to him.

But Jesus was so busy in ministering to other people's needs that it says, "His own people heard about it, and they went out to lay hold of Him, for they said, 'He is out of His mind.'" Certain people thought that He had become obsessive and compulsive about doing God's will in the ministry. And this caused his own relatives to greatly wonder about what was going on. People were coming to His relatives and telling them about this eccentric behavior of Jesus. His parents and His relatives think to themselves, "Is this really necessary?" "Is it really necessary

to be so involved in ministry that you can't even stop to have a meal?" And so they begin to question His sanity in their minds. This is not normal behavior. This is not a normal life. He must be beside Himself; He must have lost His mind, to let His ministry come to this. When these people came to them, telling them that this was the way that Jesus was; that this was what He had allowed His ministry to come to; they felt compelled to give some explanation for his behavior. And instead of the correct explanation they gave a wrong one; a false one. They spoke against Him, by saying that He had lost His mind, when really, what Christ was doing was perfectly loving God with all His heart. He was serving the true needs of people around Him. At times, this work; these labors, were very heavy. But they were perfectly in the will of God, and Jesus was diligently engaging in them, to the glory of God.

Now you and I need to ask ourselves, first of all, whether we do this kind of thing in regard to those who are fully engaging themselves in doing the will of the Lord? Do we speak against them? If we do, we need to repent of it, and pray to learn how we may be more like them. 1 Corinthians 15: 58 says, "Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your labor is not in vain in the Lord." But there is a tendency in Christian circles, a tendency perhaps in some of your hearts, to want to speak against those who you believe are working too hard in the Lord's work. It is likely that you want to have a "normal" life. And a normal life to you is being able to have every meal, every day at the same time. A normal life is having the time to recreate and vegetate and watch television and play games. A normal life, we sometimes think, is being able to forget about the Lord and His will, the Lord and His work, and live to ourselves. And so, if we see one of our brethren who we think is working too hard, we try to slow them down. But if they will not take the time to be "normal", then we say that they are a fanatic, or even crazy, because of all of their service to the Lord. This, beloved, is not True Christianity. True Christianity is, after all, in the eyes of the world, a little mad. I am not at all saying that we shouldn't encourage those Christians who are overworked to get some needed rest and make attempts to preserve their health. That is loving counsel. But if we perceive that the Lord hand is stretched forth to save and to heal, and a Christian minister or worker is abounding in that work, and that the "normal" life is being left behind; do not speak against it. Rather seek to learn how you can be involved yourself.

Then, another application here. You and I who are Christians must understand that there are times in the Lord's providential ordering of things that when we are making such good progress in holiness and great progress in doing the Lord's will, that we will be thought of as crazy by our closest relatives and friends. This does not mean that we are trying to be eccentric. But if we are doing the Lord's will from the heart, and with all of our strength; this kind of zeal will sometimes, perhaps even often, be mistaken for fanaticism. And people may even think that we have become mentally imbalanced. This is particularly true of

unbelieving family members and friends. I can remember when my father was converted to Christ in May of 1970, that my mother and I thought that he had lost his mind. We would sit and discuss this at the kitchen table together when he was not around. He was obsessed with following Christ; obsessed with seeing us brought to faith in Christ. His love and His zeal, and His willing obedience to God's word were so very evident that we thought that he had gone way too far with it all. He was a fanatic. He needed a psychiatrist. But it was simply His love for Christ and his love for us that were being demonstrated. I believe that instead of speaking against him, and sinning against him by speaking against him, it would have been better to have simply asked this question. Who is really the crazy one? Is it the one who is so full of love and zeal for the salvation of the souls of his loved ones and friends that he labors to show them the gospel; or is it those who refuse to recognize their need of Christ? Who will be the sane one in the Day that God judges? Will not hell be populated with cases of the insanity of those who remember that great love and those constant labors to serve others, and still refused it? You can judge.

And then another application. If you are a believer in the Lord Jesus Christ, and you do see others who are fervent in spirit, serving the Lord, always abounding in the work of the Lord; do not attempt to get them to be what you call "normal". This business of seeing the Christian life in compartments. This is my church life, this is my private life, this is my business life, and may my social and recreational life never be hindered by my zeal to promote Christ's kingdom; this whole view of the Christian life is false. This "normal" American cultural life is not the Christian life that Christ has called us to. It is the World. And if you speak against unworldly, heavenly-minded, servant-hearted Christians, yourself being a Christian, where does that leave you? It leaves you in the World, having sinned against those who are trying to cultivate their relationship with the Father and trying to bring you along with them. Repent of this selfishness, and turn from speaking against the brethren who are laboring, laying down their lives for others. Repent and pray to find grace to cultivate the life of doing the Father's will. You will know that you are making progress in this when you find yourself serving the Lord and serving others so much that you might even miss an occasional meal to do so.

**2ndly- We see here in our text that our Lord Jesus was spoken against by the Pharisees, who said that He had a demon.** (Verses 22-30)

"And the scribes who came down from Jerusalem said, 'He has Beelzebub,' and 'By the ruler of the demons He casts out demons.'" "So He called them to Himself 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 cannot stand." "and if Satan has risen up against himself, and divided, he cannot stand, but has an end." "No one can enter a strong man's house and plunder his goods, unless he first binds the strong man." "And then he will plunder his house." We can see from these words that the kingdom of heaven,

the kingdom of God and Christ, was making such great progress that the kingdom Satan was being greatly shaken. And Satan's way of further preventing Christ from doing more damage to his kingdom and overthrowing it, was to use wicked men to destroy the good reputation of Christ by linking Christ's actions in casting out demons with his own. These scribes were attempting to link Christ's work and His ministry with the Devil himself when all the while, unbeknownst to them, they were being used as his agents. This is often how it is with the devil's work, and the work of false religionists. They will speak against Christ, calling His glorious work of the saving and healing of men's souls, devilish; when all the while they are being duped into thinking that they are the righteous people with the righteous cause.

It is wonderful to see how our Lord handles this slanderous accusation. He begins by doing something which was very wise and very good. He "called them to Himself." He doesn't let things go, as if He did not care if the scribes had said these things. He confronts the lie about Himself head-on with the truth of how spiritual warfare is waged between the kingdom of darkness and the kingdom of light. He wanted to convince them of their error, and also to pronounce publicly the eternal judgment which would come upon these men for this sin. He will speak to them in such a way that they will be publicly reprovved and their mouths silenced. "How can Satan cast out Satan?," he says. The answer is, that he cannot and he does not. He would be fighting against his own kingdom and working against his own goals if he were to do so. It is not in his interest to cast out the demons under his authority, those evil spirits who have deceived their human prey and taken up their residence and habitation in the bodies of men. In Matthew Chapter 12, verse 22, the parallel passage, we find that just before this conversation with the scribes that there had been one brought to Him, "who was demon-possessed, blind and mute," it says. And Jesus had healed him so that "the blind and the mute man both spoke and saw." It had caused the people who witnessed this great miracle to all be amazed and to say, "Could this be the son of David?" The response of the scribes (they are called the Pharisees here in this passage) was, "This fellow does not cast out demons except by Beelzebub, the ruler of the demons." "If Satan casts out Satan, he is divided against himself." "How then will his kingdom stand?"

We must always remember that when we are speaking to people about the gospel, to speak plainly about the two great kingdoms which are fighting each other in relation to the salvation or damnation of the souls of men. Do not confuse darkness with light and evil with good. Do not think that Jesus Christ would ever promote His own kingdom through the doctrines or the practices of something that belongs to the Devil. Do not think that you can combine Christianity with the Wicca religion. Is it not the Devil who seeks to deceive so that he can take possession of the souls and bodies of men for their harm and not for their good? Is it not Devil who seeks to work in such a way that people harm themselves or others rather than to heal or to be healed? Men are not truly healed except through Christ and His gospel. To speak against the Lord Jesus and to assert that

He is in league with the Prince or ruler of the devils, is to confuse the work of both kingdoms. Jesus is saying, "Let good be good; let right be right; let My kingdom never be understood as ever promoting deception or lies." "I have come to bear witness of the truth." "Plainly then," He is saying, "Satan would be divided in his own goals and his kingdom would surely fall." Satan is a murderer and a liar and he does not stand in the truth. "But I", Jesus says, "have come to save and to heal in the power of the Holy Spirit of God." "And if I cast out demons by the Spirit of God, surely the kingdom of God has come upon you."

The purpose of Christ's spiritual warfare is to "enter the strong man's house" and "to plunder his goods." This "entering of the strong man's house" is Christ coming in His incarnation, coming to minister to those bound in sin and those who are captives of Satan. He comes to set these captives free by breaking Satan's hold over them by preaching the gospel to them and casting out their demons by the Spirit of God. In Matthew 12: 28, Jesus says to his enemies, the Pharisees, "But if I cast out demons by the Spirit of God, surely the kingdom of God has come upon you." If the Pharisees of Jesus' day spoke blasphemously against Him in that day; who is to say that the false religionists of our day will not also speak blasphemously of Him in regard to the work which you and I as believers are working hard to promote? They will do this I am sure. But I pray that none of us will fall into the same spirit or walk in their steps. If you will turn over to Luke 9: 49 you will see what I mean by this. "Now John answered and said, 'Master, we saw someone casting out demons in Your name, and we forbid him because he does not follow with us.'" "But Jesus said to him, 'do not forbid him, for he who is not against us is on our side.'" Beloved brethren, do not think that you need to speak against others who are Christians in regard to the good work of the Lord which they are attempting to do in ministering the true gospel to the needy. They may not follow with us, if but they are attempting to minister Jesus to others around them as well. If they believe in the true gospel, that men are sinners and they need to be saved by grace and not by sacramental religion; if they believe that people need to be transferred from the kingdom of darkness, out of the kingdom of Satan, and to be brought into the kingdom of light, the kingdom of God's dear Son; and they are attempting to see them brought savingly to Christ; we should not hinder them or forbid them. We should not speak against them. We can certainly speak against anything of men's practices that is a substitute or a counterfeit for the true doctrine and practice which is laid out for us in the Word of God. But let not Christ's work or His person be evil spoken of by anyone.

In closing let us remember the words of our Lord which are recorded for us in Matthew 10: 24, "A disciple is not above his teacher, nor a servant above his master." "It is enough for a disciple to be like his teacher, and servant like his master." "If they have called the head of the house Beelzebub, how much more will they call those of household!" "Therefore do not fear them." "For there is nothing covered that will not be revealed, and hidden that will not be known." If we are following Christ and intent on doing His will, showing compassion to

people; preaching the gospel to them and ministering to their true spiritual and physical needs; when we do this in the name of Jesus, then we will be spoken against by some. Remember that Christ has bound the strong man Satan at the cross, and He is currently through us, out to plunder his house. Let us be those who speak up and speak out for our Lord's honor and glory. Remember His words to his disciples then, and to his disciples now, "Do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul." "But rather fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell." (That is - God.) "Are not two sparrows sold for a copper coin?" "And not one of them falls to the ground apart from your Father's will." "But the very hairs of your head are all numbered." "Do not fear therefore; you are of more value than many sparrows." "Therefore whoever confesses Me before men, him I will also confess before My Father in heaven." We ought always be afraid of criticizing and speaking against Christ, but we ought never to be afraid of confessing Him.