

Mark: Eyewitness to History

March 6-10

Monday, March 6 - Mark 3 Another time Jesus went into the synagogue, and a man with a shriveled hand was there.² Some of them were looking for a reason to accuse Jesus, so they watched him closely to see if he would heal him on the Sabbath.³ Jesus said to the man with the shriveled hand, "Stand up in front of everyone."⁴ Then Jesus asked them, "Which is lawful on the Sabbath: to do good or to do evil, to save life or to kill?" But they remained silent.⁵ He looked around at them in anger and, deeply distressed at their stubborn hearts, said to the man, "Stretch out your hand." He stretched it out, and his hand was completely restored.⁶ Then the Pharisees went out and began to plot with the Herodians how they might kill Jesus.⁷ Jesus withdrew with his disciples to the lake, and a large crowd from Galilee followed.⁸ When they heard about all he was doing, many people came to him from Judea, Jerusalem, Idumea, and the regions across the Jordan and around Tyre and Sidon.⁹ Because of the crowd he told his disciples to have a small boat ready for him, to keep the people from crowding him.¹⁰ For he had healed many, so that those with diseases were pushing forward to touch him.¹¹ Whenever the impure spirits saw him, they fell down before him and cried out, "You are the Son of God."¹² But he gave them strict orders not to tell others about him.¹³ Jesus went up on a mountainside and called to him those he wanted, and they came to him.¹⁴ He appointed twelve that they might be with him and that he might send them out to preach¹⁵ and to have authority to drive out demons.¹⁶ These are the twelve he appointed: Simon (to whom he gave the name Peter),¹⁷ James son of Zebedee and his brother John (to them he gave the name Boanerges, which means "sons of thunder"),¹⁸ Andrew, Philip, Bartholomew, Matthew, Thomas, James son of Alphaeus, Thaddaeus, Simon the Zealot¹⁹ and Judas Iscariot, who betrayed him.²⁰ Then Jesus entered a house, and again a crowd gathered, so that he and his disciples were not even able to eat.²¹ When his family heard about this, they went to take charge of him, for they said, "He is out of his mind."²² And the teachers of the law who came down from Jerusalem said, "He is possessed by Beelzebul! By the prince of demons he is driving out demons."²³ So Jesus called them over to him and began to speak to them in parables: "How can Satan drive out Satan?²⁴ If a kingdom is divided against itself, that kingdom cannot stand.²⁵ If a house is divided against itself, that house cannot stand.²⁶ And if Satan opposes himself and is divided, he cannot stand; his end has come.²⁷ In fact, no one can enter a strong man's house without first tying him up. Then he can plunder the strong man's house.²⁸ Truly I tell you, people can be forgiven all their sins and every slander they utter,²⁹ but whoever blasphemes against the Holy Spirit will never be forgiven; they are guilty of an eternal sin."³⁰ He said this because they were saying, "He has an impure spirit."³¹ Then Jesus' mother and brothers arrived. Standing outside, they sent someone in to call him.³² A crowd was sitting around him, and they told him, "Your mother and brothers are outside looking for you."³³ "Who are my mother and my brothers?" he asked.³⁴ Then he looked at those seated in a circle around him and said, "Here are my mother and my brothers!³⁵ Whoever does God's will is my brother and sister and mother."

Tuesday, March 7 - Mark 4:1-20. Again Jesus began to teach by the lake. The crowd that gathered around him was so large that he got into a boat and sat in it out on the lake, while all the people were along the shore at the water's edge.² He taught them many things by parables, and in his teaching said:³ "Listen! A farmer went out to sow his seed.⁴ As he was scattering the seed, some fell along the path, and the birds came and ate it up.⁵ Some fell on rocky places, where it did not have much soil. It sprang up quickly, because the soil was shallow.⁶ But when the sun came up, the plants were scorched, and they withered because they had no root.⁷ Other seed fell among thorns, which grew up and choked the plants, so that they did not bear grain.⁸ Still other seed fell on good soil. It came up, grew and produced a crop, some multiplying thirty, some sixty, some a hundred times."⁹ Then Jesus said, "Whoever has ears to hear, let them hear."¹⁰ When he was alone, the Twelve and the others around him asked him about the parables.¹¹ He told them, "The secret of the kingdom of God has been given to you. But to those on the outside everything is said in parables¹² so that, "they may be ever seeing but never perceiving, and ever hearing but never understanding; otherwise they might turn and be forgiven!"¹³ Then Jesus said to them, "Don't you understand this parable? How then will you understand any parable? ¹⁴ The farmer sows the word.¹⁵ Some people are like seed along the path, where the word is sown. As soon as they hear it, Satan comes and takes away the word that was sown in them.¹⁶ Others, like seed sown on rocky places, hear the word and at once receive it with joy.¹⁷ But since they have no root, they last only a short time. When trouble or persecution comes because of the word, they quickly fall away.¹⁸ Still others, like seed sown among thorns, hear the word;¹⁹ but the worries of this life, the deceitfulness of wealth and the desires for other things come in and choke the word, making it unfruitful.²⁰ Others, like seed sown on good soil, hear the word, accept it, and produce a crop—some thirty, some sixty, some a hundred times what was sown."

Wednesday, March 8 - Mark 4:21-41 He said to them, "Do you bring in a lamp to put it under a bowl or a bed? Instead, don't you put it on its stand?"²² For whatever is hidden is meant to be disclosed, and whatever is concealed is meant to be brought out into the open.²³ If anyone has ears to hear, let them hear."²⁴ "Consider carefully what you hear," he continued. "With the measure you use, it will be measured to you—and even more."²⁵ Whoever has will be given more; whoever does not have, even what they have will be taken from them."²⁶ He also said, "This is what the kingdom of God is like. A man scatters seed on the ground.²⁷ Night and day, whether he sleeps or gets up, the seed sprouts and grows, though he does not know how.²⁸ All by itself the soil produces grain—first the stalk, then the head, then the full kernel in the head.²⁹ As soon as the grain is ripe, he puts the sickle to it, because the harvest has come."³⁰ Again he said, "What shall we say the kingdom of God is like, or what parable shall we use to describe it?"³¹ It is like a mustard seed, which is the smallest of all seeds on earth.³² Yet when planted, it grows and becomes the largest of all garden plants, with such big branches that the birds can perch in its shade."³³ With many similar parables Jesus spoke the word to them, as much as they could understand.³⁴ He did not say anything to them without using a parable. But when he was alone with his own disciples, he explained everything.³⁵ That day when evening came, he said to his disciples, "Let us go over to the other side."³⁶ Leaving the crowd behind, they took him along, just as he was, in the boat. There were also other boats with him.³⁷ A furious squall came up, and the waves broke over the boat, so that it was nearly swamped.³⁸ Jesus was in the stern, sleeping on a cushion. The disciples woke him and said to him, "Teacher, don't you care if we drown?"³⁹ He got up, rebuked the wind and said to the waves, "Quiet! Be still!" Then the wind died down and it was completely calm.⁴⁰ He said to his disciples, "Why are you so afraid? Do you still have no faith?"⁴¹ They were terrified and asked each other, "Who is this? Even the wind and the waves obey him!"

Thursday, March 9 - Mark 5:1-20 They went across the lake to the region of the Gerasenes.² When Jesus got out of the boat, a man with an impure spirit came from the tombs to meet him.³ This man lived in the tombs, and no one could bind him anymore, not even with a chain.⁴ For he had often been chained hand and foot, but he tore the chains apart and broke the irons on his feet. No one was strong enough to subdue him.⁵ Night and day among the tombs and in the hills he would cry out and cut himself with stones.⁶ When he saw Jesus from a distance, he ran and fell on his knees in front of him.⁷ He shouted at the top of his voice, "What do you want with me, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? In God's name don't torture me!"⁸ For Jesus had said to him, "Come out of this man, you impure spirit!"⁹ Then Jesus asked him, "What is your name?" "My name is Legion," he replied, "for we are many."¹⁰ And he begged Jesus again and again not to send them out of the area.¹¹ A large herd of pigs was feeding on the nearby hillside.¹² The demons begged Jesus, "Send us among the pigs; allow us to go into them."¹³ He gave them permission, and the impure spirits came out and went into the pigs. The herd, about two thousand in number, rushed down the steep bank into the lake and were drowned.¹⁴ Those tending the pigs ran off and reported this in the town and countryside, and the people went out to see what had happened.¹⁵ When they came to Jesus, they saw the man who had been possessed by the legion of demons, sitting there, dressed and in his right mind; and they were afraid.¹⁶ Those who had seen it told the people what had happened to the demon-possessed man—and told about the pigs as well.¹⁷ Then the people began to plead with Jesus to leave their region.¹⁸ As Jesus was getting into the boat, the man who had been demon-possessed begged to go with him.¹⁹ Jesus did not let him, but said, "Go home to your own people and tell them how much the Lord has done for you, and how he has had mercy on you."²⁰ So the man went away and began to tell in the Decapolis how much Jesus had done for him. And all the people were amazed.

Friday, March 10 - Mark 5:21-43 When Jesus had again crossed over by boat to the other side of the lake, a large crowd gathered around him while he was by the lake.²² Then one of the synagogue leaders, named Jairus, came, and when he saw Jesus, he fell at his feet.²³ He pleaded earnestly with him, "My little daughter is dying. Please come and put your hands on her so that she will be healed and live."²⁴ So Jesus went with him. A large crowd followed and pressed around him.²⁵ And a woman was there who had been subject to bleeding for twelve years.²⁶ She had suffered a great deal under the care of many doctors and had spent all she had, yet instead of getting better she grew worse.²⁷ When she heard about Jesus, she came up behind him in the crowd and touched his cloak,²⁸ because she thought, "If I just touch his clothes, I will be healed."²⁹ Immediately her bleeding stopped and she felt in her body that she was freed from her suffering.³⁰ At once Jesus realized that power had gone out from him. He turned around in the crowd and asked, "Who touched my clothes?"³¹ "You see the people crowding against you," his disciples answered, "and yet you can ask, 'Who touched me?'"³² But Jesus kept looking around to see who had done it.³³ Then the woman, knowing what had happened to her, came and fell at his feet and, trembling with fear, told him the whole truth.³⁴ He said to her, "Daughter, your faith has healed you. Go in peace and be freed from your suffering."³⁵ While Jesus was still speaking, some people came from the house of Jairus, the synagogue leader. "Your daughter is dead," they said. "Why bother the teacher anymore?"³⁶ Overhearing what they said, Jesus told him, "Don't be afraid; just believe."³⁷ He did not let anyone follow him except Peter, James and John the brother of James.³⁸ When they came to the home of the synagogue leader, Jesus saw a commotion, with people crying and wailing loudly.³⁹ He went in and said to them, "Why all this commotion and wailing? The child is not dead but asleep."⁴⁰ But they laughed at him. After he put them all out, he took the child's father and mother and the disciples who were with him, and went in where the child was.⁴¹ He took her by the hand and said to her, "Talitha koum!" (which means "Little girl, I say to you, get up!").⁴² Immediately the girl stood up and began to walk around (she was twelve years old). At this they were completely astonished.⁴³ He gave strict orders not to let anyone know about this, and told them to give her something to eat.

Getting to Know Me

Share a memory or an experience that involved a garden, lawn, planting, harvesting, etc.

OR

Share about what your Sundays have looked like growing up and what your Sundays are like now?

Message Follow Up

When you think of "Influencer" in today's social media world, how do you think you measure up to being an Influencer for Jesus?

Into the Bible

The overall teaching of Scripture shows that God is ready to forgive the sin of any person who asks to be forgiven. Yet a few passages seem to refer to a sin that cannot be pardoned. (Mark 3:28-30, Luke 12:10, Hebrews 6:4-6, 1 John 5:16). In Mark's account the sin is called the sin against the Holy Spirit. These Jewish leaders had completely rejected Jesus, contending that his power, did not come from God but from Satan. They had taken a deliberate attitude of hardened resistance. Thus they put themselves beyond the reach of forgiveness. Hebrews (6:4-6 and 10:26-31) describes persons who once had a genuine experience of God's grace in Christ but had totally turned against Him. These passages are not speaking of Christians who make mistakes or even who fall into sin through temptation. Rather, these people deliberately and persistently denied Christ. Because they turned from Him and refused to come back, there was no way for them to be forgiven. When we look at 1 John 5:16, they were probably former Christians who now refused to believe in and follow Christ. In all of these circumstances, the problem is not God's refusal to forgive, but humanity's persistent and determined rejection of Christ. By this rejection persons put themselves beyond the reach of God's forgiveness. Those who are still concerned about their own salvation have not committed this sin.

How does this explanation of Mark 3:28-30 sound to you? Are you in agreement with it or what other thoughts do you have?

Application

In chapter 4, the parable of the sower is explained. What soil do you identify with now and why? Next, think of your life in the past, was there another soil you identified with then and why? What steps are you taking to make your mind and heart "good soil" in which God's word can grow and bear a good crop? Jesus ended his parable with a common Hebrew expression: "He who has ears to hear, let him hear!" It was not mainly about eardrums. "In the Bible the ear is synonymous with the heart and mind as an organ of cognition (Proverbs 2:2; Isaiah 6:9-10), and true hearing involves listening and understanding (Job 34:16)." What has helped you tune your inner, spiritual "ears" to God's voice? What helps you persist in seeking to understand God's teachings, rather than just giving up?