The Gospel of Mark

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[0:00] This is the First Mustang Pulpit Podcast, a podcast of the weekly preaching and teaching at First Mustang.! Thank you for joining us. Good morning. It's so good to be here with you.

I've been out the last couple of Sundays, was preaching in Texas, and last week I was able to be in California teaching at the Master's Seminary, which I'm privileged to get to do every once in a while, and it is certainly good to be back.
I feel like the church is kind of just sticking it to me for being gone. I come back after being gone a couple Sundays, and they've got me baptizing and doing Lord's Supper and changing songs and singing Christmas and singing Easter, and thousands of people storm the stage when the service starts, and I was afraid to come up.
I didn't know what was about to take place, but it is a good, good time to be a part of our church. We've had so much great ministry this summer that I'm so thankful for.
We have had just a tremendous time with VBS and Kids Camp for our student ministry. We've had a great time with Super Summer, a middle school camp, high school camp, middle school mission trip.
[1:17] All those things have already happened. Getting ready now to send another group off for a mission trip in just a couple of days, and the Lord just continues to be at work among us, and we are so thankful.

And today, the very things we have sung today is the heart of who we are. We want to preach, sing, teach, pray, and proclaim the gospel.
The glory of God, the birth of His Son, the death of His Son, the resurrection of His Son, and our call to go and proclaim the gospel message. And so, it is good to be here with you.
Before we jump into Mark 3, let me take just a brief moment and highlight inside your bulletin this yellow ministry interest sheet.
If you would do me the favor and just pull this out just so that we're looking at the same thing for just a moment. This is the time of year where we begin to make sure we are ready for school to start.
[2:18] Now, I've already been admonished this morning to not mention that school starts in a month, so I'm not going to mention it. I'm not even going to bring it up, Anna. I'm not even going to do it. But the fact of the matter is for a church, while you can pretend school is not starting as a church, we've got to be prepared for that.

The Lord and His goodness has allowed us to be able to minister to a number of people. We continue by God's grace to see many new members added to us. In fact, we start a new membership class this coming Wednesday.
We normally don't even do them in the summer, but we're adding an extra room because of how many people have been coming to our church. And we've got a large group signed up for this kind of extra bonus membership class because the Lord is just continuing to add to our fellowship, which we're so thankful for.
With that joy and with that blessing comes a tremendous amount of responsibility. If you work in the children's and preschool area, it would not be a surprise to you.
But if you don't work there, you might be shocked to know how many adult volunteers it takes to do what we do with our preschoolers and our children.
[3:34] Between Sunday school for two hours with preschoolers, Sunday school when the school year starts, two hours with children and Awana and children's choir and Parents' Day Out, all the different things that we do.

It just takes a tremendous army of volunteers. We have a lot of teachers, but if you haven't noticed, the Lord keeps bringing not only people of all ages, which we love, but also many, many young

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children.
And so we've got some teachers who have been teaching a while that are still serving next year. We've got others who have been teaching for a long while and going to take a year out to go and be a part of an adult Sunday school class and be able to reconnect with friendships, which we absolutely support.
And we've got some new classes we need to add because of attendance. So what that means for us is that we need those who the Lord may be working in your heart, calling you to a place of service to help us with that.
And so on this ministry interest sheet, you'll see several different ministry teams that you may be interested in serving. You can check those. We've got some specific areas in preschool ministry. [4:53] You see those listed on the back side. Some specific classes with children's ministry that we need to staff in the fall. In the summer, we just do Sunday school one hour.

But once school starts, we go back to two hours. And August, September traditionally is by far our biggest time of the year. So as full as it's been here this summer, we're going to have to be ready to meet even more needs in about a month.
So if you are able to help us with that, we would love to talk to you. This is not a commitment sheet. We would need to talk to you and make sure we know who you are.
You know what the responsibility is. Make sure it's what the Lord is doing. But if you would be open to us connecting with you to talk about ministry, just fill this out for us.
And you may have a few different places that you're interested. And you say, I don't want to do all of these, but I might be interested in several of these. Go ahead and check any area that you're interested.
[5:55] Our staff will follow up with you. And we'll just meet with you and talk and see where the Lord would have you to serve. We want to be as prepared as we can be to have the best school year of ministry our church has ever had.

It takes tremendous leadership. It takes tremendous volunteers. And the Lord has allowed all of us to be a part of a church where you see so many people here and so many ministries.
And if you've got little ones, I can't think of any place I would rather raise my kids in than right here at First Baptist Mustang. This is an amazing place.
If you've got preschoolers and children and youth, college students, it's a tremendous place to have your family here as a part of the church. Part of that is because of how many people love to serve and give so much of themselves in ministry.
And so just think through that, pray through that. The most efficient way to connect with us would be just to complete this. And on your way out, just drop it in one of our giving boxes and allow our leadership some time to follow up with you and see if we can get these needs met.
[7:08] It is, every time I drive around town and I see more housing going in, I think what a great thing, more people we get to reach. And then those that work with our preschool and children think that's a whole lot of new classrooms and teachers we need.

And it's all true. It's all true. So lots of families to reach, which we're grateful to do. But lots of volunteers required to help us to do that. But we've got, we probably have 150 of our members that teach Sunday school.
Actually, probably a little more than that with our adult classes. Maybe 175 that teach Sunday school. Another 75 or so that teach in Awana. 40 or so that teach with Parents' Day Out and then our kids' choirs.
You are a servant-minded people. You are a church that does so much ministry. And I want to thank you for all that you do. And there may be others of you who this is your time.
This is your time. The Lord's been leading you through the work of the Spirit to use your gifts and find your place to serve. And we want to help you to do that. All right. One last quick thing on that. [8:27] We want you to serve where you're gifted and where you would enjoy serving. We're not going to, we don't want to make you feel guilty. We're not going to twist arms. All right. If you don't like being with kids, we'd rather you not be with kids.

That would be best for everybody involved. All right. If you're not really good with people, being a greeter may not be your thing. All right. We want you to serve where you're gifted.
Serve where you would be joyful. Serve where you can be used by the Lord with relative ease and great effectiveness. But as believers, we are to be serving.

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We know that. All of us need to have our place to serve. Nobody has to do everything. But all of us need to do something. So if we can help you with that, we would love to be able to connect with you through that sheet.
Just drop that on your way out in the giving box and we would be so thankful. Mark chapter 3. We'll return there. We've been walking through the gospel of Mark for a majority of this year.
[9:28] The last two weeks while I've been out, Kent and Joey, our two youth pastors, have stepped in and done a great job teaching you from God's word. I'm thankful for their ministry and the work that they have done with our students and the work they do pastoring in our congregation.

We jump back now into Mark 3. And just kind of give you a heads up, this section we are in in Mark 3 is just incredibly, incredibly important.
In fact, Lord willing, what we're going to look at next week is one of the most misunderstood, most important, and oftentimes most concerning passages for people.
We're looking next week at what we know as blasphemy of the Holy Spirit or what you may have heard called the unpardonable sin. What is the unpardonable sin?
Can you commit the unpardonable sin? What does that mean? What does that look like? It's an extremely important, important topic. So do your very best to go back next week as we look at that.
[10:38] But what we're looking at here in Mark 3, let's go back a couple of weeks since it's been a while. We're in verses 13 to 19 where Jesus calls the 12 apostles. And we spent a couple of Sundays ago looking at each of these 12 apostles and who they were and what we know about them.

And then remember, Mark is writing his gospel not by any means to try to record every single event in the life of Jesus. None of the gospel writers try to do that.
But Mark especially writes with just a very quick, rapid, bullet point kind of presentation. And so there are some very important things that happen after Jesus calls the 12 apostles before the next thing that Mark mentions that happened in the life of Jesus.
Mark doesn't try to include all of that. Jesus has a busy time of ministry after he calls the 12. So when you go from verses 19 to 20, just be aware there is some time and a lot of ministry that's taking place that Mark does not give us.
As you look at the next portion of Mark 3, we're going to look in the next couple weeks in verses 20 down through the end of the chapter in verse 35.
[11:57] And it's going to show us several different ways that people respond to Jesus. The question is, what will you do with Jesus?

What do you believe about Jesus? And what we're going to see today and the next two Sundays are really the three main ways that people try to make sense and respond of what they want to do with this one Jesus who says, He is the very Son of God.
Jesus, as we've been learning through the last number of months, is teaching with a very unique authority and a very unique clarity.
The people that Jesus is preaching to and ministering to, they understand precisely what He claims. He claims to be able to forgive sin.
He claims to be the Messiah. He claims to be the Son of God. He claims to have power over disease and even over death.
[13:08] He claims to be able to tell a man who is paralyzed he can rise and walk and a sinner that his sins have been forgiven. And he preaches and he speaks with such authority that nobody in his day has the option of ignoring him.

Some, for sure, are enamored by him. Some are curious about him. Some love to hear him teach, if for nothing else, just because they've never seen somebody teach with this kind of clarity.
Others are convinced that he is who he says he is and they want to follow him. Some, for nothing else, just because he is not alone.
Some, just don't want to miss out. A crowd attracts a crowd. And huge amounts of people are going and swelling everywhere Jesus is.
They don't want to miss out. They don't want to be left out. And so some go just to see what everyone is talking about.
[14:24] But Jesus, who is not one to simply want a crowd, he's preaching a very clear message.

And whether that message draws a massive crowd or whether that message causes everyone to flee from him will be of no deterrence to him because the message will not change.

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The message is, God is holy. We are sinful. God the Father has sent Christ the Son to pay our price.
That any who believe in him will be saved and all who reject will be judged. That's the message. It doesn't change.
It is C.S. Lewis, the author, who is credited with the famous way to phrase what you do with Jesus.
[15:30] That he said, he actually originally, I think it was a message in 1942 where he first said this. It's in his book, Mere Christianity, a decade later, where it was put down on pen and paper.

C.S. Lewis said that when you look at Jesus, he is either a lunatic, liar, or he's Lord. The way of expressing it actually was not original to C.S. Lewis, though he often gets credited with it.
It actually comes from about a century earlier. A preacher by the name of John Duncan who first coined a phraseology similar to that.
And it comes predominantly from this section here in Mark 3 where we see these three responses to Jesus.
In fact, a good number of authors and scholars and biblical pastors when they deal with this text and they say that Jesus will do so as I'm going to do today with this idea of Jesus by some called a lunatic and Jesus by others called a liar or a deceiver, a blasphemer, or he is really Lord.
[16:52] Now understand, Jesus says he can forgive sin. That's either true or it's false. Only God can forgive sin.

So if Jesus is right that he can forgive sin, then that means he is Lord. He says I can forgive your sin. It's true or it's false. If it's true, he's Lord.
If it's false, then there's a couple of options. Either he can't forgive sin and he knows he can't forgive sin and he's just a liar or he can't forgive sin, but he's just delusional and thinks he can.
He's a madman. And so as others may phrase it, Jesus here is either a madman, a bad man, or the God man.
What are you going to do with him? There are some who say, well, I don't think Jesus is Lord.
[18:01] I think he's a false teacher. Others who say, I don't think he's a liar. I just think he was, I just think it was kind of out of his mind. I just think he didn't really understand who he was and he was just confused.

Confused. Strangely enough, the prevailing thought in our day of unbelievers seems to be more along the lines of, well, I just think he was a good man.
I don't think he's God. I don't think he's the Savior. I just think he was a good man. But there is not one person who would watch Jesus and listen to what Jesus said who could possibly, with any intellectual honesty of any degree, conclude that Jesus was just a good man.
Because he said to people, your sins are forgiven. If that's not true, if he can't do that, then he's not a good man because he's leading people astray.
And if it is true, and he can forgive sin because he is God, then by no means could you conclude he's merely a good man.
[19:12] There are good people in this room, none of us who can forgive sin. So I think it's a fair way to express it, not only because of human logic, but because of what we see in the text, that some will conclude Jesus was out of his mind, others will conclude he was a deceiver or the truth that he is Lord.

So we're going to take the next few weeks and walk through this passage in looking specifically at these three ways that people responded to Jesus. Some as a lunatic, some that he was a blasphemer, and then thirdly, of course, what we would hold with all of our heart that he is the true Son of God, the Lord of all lords.
Verse 20 and 21. Then he went home, and the crowd gathered again so that they could not even eat. And when his family heard it, they went out to seize him, for they were saying, he is out of his mind.
Which brings our first way that some respond to Jesus, that he is no more than a lunatic. He's no more than a madman. He's out of his mind.
Verse 20 says he went home. We're back in Capernaum on the northwest side here of the Sea of Galilee. We don't know for sure what home he went to, although in my opinion, most likely, this is the same home that he would have already have been at.
[20:47] He's most likely at the house here of Peter and Andrew, the place where Peter's mother-in-law had been healed in Mark chapter 1. He's back at the home, and the crowd gathered

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there again.

Whenever Jesus comes back, the crowds just begin to swell. Remember that the crowds earlier in the book were so full that the people who brought their friend on the stretcher to be healed could not even get in the house.
They couldn't get in through the front door. They couldn't move people around. It was too crowded. Their only option was to go up the top of the stairs and dig a hole through the roof and lower their friend in.
It's so crowded every time Jesus comes back. That's how it is now. So crowded, in fact, verse 20 says, they could not even eat.
They couldn't even eat. It's been pointed out that Jesus is constantly in contact with people and having an impact on them.
[21:50] That's exactly right. Jesus does not hide from the crowds. He will occasionally retreat for the purpose of prayer to show the importance of communion with the Father.

But He does not live His life in an ivory tower or trying to push people and keep them at arm's length away. He is always having contact with the people, and wherever He goes, He has a direct impact on their lives, which I think is very instructive for us and our ministry, all of us as Christians who should have ministries within the body of Christ, that we are to be near people and clear in our teaching.
All of us should be near people and then be clear in what we believe. If we don't have both of those, then we're going to miss it.
If we are near people and serving people and helping people, but we're not clear with the gospel, then all we are doing is alleviating some measure of suffering with people while we usher them down the gates of judgment.
On the other hand, if we're very clear with our teaching, but don't love people and draw near to them, then all we love is theology as an absence of loving people.
[23:22] Biblical ministry is always both of these. Near people, clear doctrine. For all of us. Not just pastors and not just missionaries and not just leaders in the church.

For all of us. We should be people who are seeking to serve with our hands, to be near those who are hurting, and with our mouth to be clear in what we believe.
And that's what's happening. Everywhere Jesus goes, He's teaching, He's preaching, He's healing, He's instructing, He's around the people, He is touching people to give them healing and alleviate suffering.
And verse 20 says, it's so crowded that Jesus and His disciples can't even eat. Now it'd be easy to overlook that, but don't overlook that detail. It's there for a reason. It's not just to simply tell you that there's that many people who want to be around Him.
I mean, this would be quite frustrating for the disciples. If you've ever been somewhere and you were really, really hungry and wanting to eat, but you maybe got to the restaurant a few minutes late and there was a long wait and there's so many people you can't eat, is your first response, what a lovely panorama of those creating God's image.
[24:43] No. Your thought is, I wish these people would go home so I could eat. Well, it's an interesting thing because what Mark doesn't tell us or the other gospel writers do tell us are some of the details of all that Jesus has been doing.

And if you were to put together all that's happened between verses 19 and 20, what you would see is it's been an exhausting schedule. And at the end of it, he comes to the house and the people that he's with are tired and they're hungry and they want to rest and they want to refresh and yet the crowds press in so tight they can't even eat.
Verse 21, when his family heard it. Let's stop there for just a minute. When his family heard it. The phrase in the original language here says the ones alongside him.
The ones beside him. The phrasing there can refer to friends. It can refer to associates. It can refer to family.
So why is it translated in verse 21, his family heard it? The reason is because at the end of the chapter, verses 31 to 35, when Mark goes back to the story, it's his mothers and his brothers who are there.
[26:15] That's how we know who we're talking about in verse 21. So what Mark does, and he'll do this several times throughout the gospel. He'll tell a story.

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He will interrupt the story with a second story. And then he'll come back to the scene of the original story and complete it. That's just one of the styles of writing that he does.
That's what you see here. Verse 20 and 21 is this account. Verse 22 to 30 interrupts the account, blaspheming the Holy Spirit. And then verses 31 to 35 completes this account.
And when you put that together, that's how we know who we're talking about in verse 21. When it's translated, his family heard it. His family heard it. Who is his family?
Well, the Bible actually tells us about the family of Jesus. By this point in his life, Joseph, his earthly father, has almost certainly died.
[27:20] Joseph is mentioned when Jesus is born. He is mentioned in those very early days of his life. By the time you get to his ministry and the cross and the resurrection, you have mentioned his mother and his brothers and his sisters, but no mention of Joseph.

Joseph is just almost certainly deceased at this time. His mother, of course, is Mary. If you turn to chapter 6 for just a second here in Mark, and you look at verse 3, is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary, and the brother of James and Joseph and Judas and Simon and are not his sisters here with us?
And so Mark tells us his family. Joseph, Mary, and then these four brothers, James, Joseph, Judas, and Simon.
We don't know how many sisters, but it's in the plural. It mentions his sisters. It doesn't name them. It's at least two. It could be more, but at least two, which means his family has at least seven siblings.
You've got Jesus, four brothers, that's five, at least two sisters, because in the plural, that's seven. You put all that together and we learn a little bit about his family here.
[28:45] And it says in verse 21, when his family heard it, heard what? Well, his family's up in Nazareth and Jesus at this time is making his headquarters in Capernaum.

It's about a 30-mile walk and word is getting back to his family of all these things that is going on in the life of Jesus.
things like what he is doing and saying is creating and drawing such attention that he can't even eat.
He's exhausted, they would think. As word gets back to the family about all the places he's going, he's going village to village. Everywhere he goes is a swell of people.
He's dealing with those who are sick. He's dealing with those who are diseased. He is healing. He is dealing with those who are demon-possessed. It's a tremendous amount of energy being required of Jesus.
[29:49] The travel, the work, the demands, not to mention the fact he is taking the religious authorities head-on. Well, you know how much extra strain that would put and so his family 30 miles away gets word of what Jesus is doing.

He's going everywhere. He's up all hours of the day. He is dealing with all kinds of difficult people and so many people want a part of him that he doesn't even have time and space to eat.
He must be exhausted. He must be starving. He must be stressed. He must be absolutely at the end of his energy reserves.
That's what his family thinks. So when his family heard it, all that was happening to him, they went out to, our English word here, to seize him.
The same word is used in Mark to refer to arresting someone or to take into custody. They went basically to arrest Jesus, to take him under custody and get him out of this phase.
[31:23] Get him away from all these crowds and say, Jesus, you need to rest, you need to sleep, eat. What you're doing is not sustainable and besides that, we need to kind of check you out to see if you're okay, what were they thinking about him?

Look at the end of verse 21. For they were saying he is out of his mind. That phrase is one word in the Greek language.
It means to lose your senses. Who is it? It is saying he's out of his mind.
It's his own family. These aren't merely his opponents. These are his brothers and sisters.
We've got to go arrest him, basically. We've got to take him into custody because he is out of his mind. And it's kind of interesting that Mark would include this in the gospel because, frankly, from a human perspective, this doesn't make Jesus look real good.
[32:37] His own family says he's lost it. He's gone kind of crazy.

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hungry. And they think they understand what's happening. He's exhausted and he's starving. And you put stress and starvation and exhaustion together and people will do and say things that they normally would not do and say.
So in his family's mind, that's precisely what's going on. We've got to go rescue him from himself. And you say, well, why would Mark include this?
This doesn't make Jesus look good. And the answer is because this is one of the great defenses of the Bible, that the Bible does not try to make things look better than they are. The Bible won't hide from you that his own brothers did not believe in him.
Or that one of his own disciples will betray him. Or that one of his very best friends on the planet will deny he ever even knew him.
[33:52] See, his family has heard what's going on. Here's a man who says he's a teacher though he has no formal training. Here's a man who is choosing to attack the religious leaders and to set himself up against them.

He is now called twelve men to be his teammates and you might say okay, well this will tell us a little bit about Jesus. Did he go get some really educated men?
Did he go get some really sophisticated men? Did he at least surround himself with really strong men of great renown and great respect? And his brothers find out no, he's chosen fishermen and tax collectors.
Levi, who is known to us as Matthew, is a tax collector, he's a trader, he's a sellout, he would be hated by all the people there.
Jesus has chosen him? He's out of his mind. That's the conversation. back up in Nazareth.
[35:08] Now, what you need to know that's hard for us in our culture to fully appreciate is in the first century in Middle Eastern world, it is a strong, strong honor, shame culture.

In other words, you did everything you could to live honorably and avoided at all cost, anything that would bring shame upon you or your family.
This is very difficult for us to grasp, particularly in the time in which we live here, where people take their shame and publicize it and make money on it.
The wealthiest people in our culture today, for many of them, do the most shameful things, and their reward is great fame and great wealth.
which makes it all the more nearly impossible for our minds to fully grasp the difference in the nuance of the culture.
[36:14] Things that get paraded in our culture would never have been done in public and would have been at all costs tried to be protected so that you never brought shame upon yourself or your family, where you're from.

And so here are his brothers and sisters 30 miles away and they say, I think our brothers lost it. The things he's saying, the things he's doing, the people he's chosen as his friends, I think he's out of his mind. He's bringing shame upon himself.
But not just him and their mind, he's bringing shame upon them. Isn't your brother the one who claims to be God? Is your brother the one who's down in Capernaum and going around Galilee claiming to be able to forgive sin?
And they say, we've got to go get him. We've got to go get him. He's lost his mind. He's out of his mind. We've got to go arrest him, take him into custody, seize him.
[37:32] We've got to go get him and remove him by force and get him up out of this so he'll stop shaming himself and shaming our family. So they're going to make this 30-mile journey and they're going to show up.

We'll look at in two weeks when Mark gets back to it. But we stop and say, how is it that his own family didn't believe in him?
Well, it's the same way as the disciples. Make note of John 12, 16. His disciples did not understand these things at first.
Not just the disciples, it's the same way with John the Baptist. John the Baptist prepared the way. John the Baptist is the bridge from the Old Testament to the New Testament who looks at Jesus and says, behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world.
I must decrease, he must increase, and John the Baptist is going to be arrested because of his faithfulness, and in Luke 7, 18, and 19, the disciples of John reported all these things to him, and John calling two of his disciples to him, sent them to the Lord saying, are you the one who is to

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come, or should we look for another?
[39:04] What? the disciples struggled with doubts, John the Baptist struggled with doubts, and his brothers, John 7, verse 5, says not even his brothers believed in him.

And when was that? That's just six months before the crucifixion. That's after three years of teaching, miracles.
His own brothers were not believing in him. Same way that Festus responded to Paul in Acts 26, verse 24.
Paul, you are out of your mind. Your great learning is driving you out of your mind. The disciples, John the Baptist, those who heard Paul, and the own family of Jesus all struggling, thinking something has been missed.
Now what changed? What changed? Because if you read fast forward in the Gospels, something happened, and these disciples who were fearful and scared and doubting, something happened and they become fearless.
[40:36] His brothers who concluded Jesus out of his mind, something happened and a couple of them become leaders in the early church. church, what happened?

It's the resurrection. It's the empty tomb. The resurrection of Christ, clarified, solidified, verified, every word from his mouth is true.
There is no other name under heaven whereby men must be saved. He is the way and the truth and the life.
Nobody comes to the Father except through Jesus. The resurrection changed everything. Everything. Perhaps today you sit in this sanctuary saying to yourself, if I had just lived in Jesus' day, I would believe, brothers and sisters, you have more at your disposal than they had.
[42:00] You've got the completed Bible and you've got the empty tomb. What will you do with Jesus? The resurrection is what knocked away the doubt and the weakness and brought faith and strength.

But some, like his brothers in Mark 3, 21, will simply conclude he's out of his mind. Now, before we gather here at the Lord's table and take the Lord's supper together, let me just share three implications of this brief text we've looked at today of what it means for us.
All right? Make note of these three things here. Number one, many will reject Christianity as foolishness. Many will reject Christianity as foolishness.
1 Corinthians 1.18, Jesus said to them, a prophet is not without honor except in his hometown and among his relatives and in his own household.
That was true for him. his own family didn't believe in him. His own brothers and sisters thought he was a crazy man. He was dismissed as someone who was out of his mind.
[43:31] So don't be surprised when as a follower of Jesus that you are also dismissed as foolishness. Don't be surprised by that. Teenagers, you want to live for Jesus?

You want to make a difference on your campus? It cannot be done by people who say, I want the popularity of the world and just give me enough Jesus to slide into heaven when I die.
Teenagers, you want to make a difference? You better be ready to be called foolish. and if not to your face behind your back, and if not today at some point in your life.
But you wonder, where will teenagers get such spiritual backbones? Remember what it was like to be in middle school? I do.
I'm trying to forget, I'm just not very good at it. It was a terrible 15 years of my life in middle school. short, big teeth, same teeth I have by the way today, they haven't changed.
[44:54] Terrible, terrible years. And add to that, you want me to stand for Jesus or people will say I'm a fool? Where are teenagers going to get that kind of strength?

It better be because they go home every day and see their parents saying we'll do it too. We'll put Christ first. We'll take the heat.
We will refuse to back up and give ground when it comes to our faith. Understand, many will reject Christianity as foolishness. Don't be surprised by that.
Secondly, because of that, the world will eventually conclude conclude those who follow Christ are to be marginalized. The world will eventually conclude those who follow Christ are to be marginalized.
It's been true throughout history. It's true in lots of parts of the world today. It has been largely not true in our culture. Christianity has been widely accepted in our culture and even for those who

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don't believe, they certainly have had no trouble tolerating Christians, even respecting them for most of our nation's history, but things are turning, aren't they?
[46:13] They're changing. What was once respected then became merely tolerated and today what is hated will soon become completely unwelcomed.

so understand that. So when you read the Gospels and you say Jesus was crucified, where were his disciples? Look, what they did in fleeing was wrong, but let's not be too quick to be overly judgmental.
Understand that even we in our weakness on our worst days can tend to get really afraid of the heat from this world. You ought to be prepared for it.
If they're going to call Christianity foolishness, it's a very short drive to connect the dots and say, therefore, those who believe in it themselves are fools, and if they are fools, they have no place in our public discord.
Third, the conclusion of that is that rejection will likely come from the most painful places, those closest to you.
[47:35] But don't be surprised by that. Jesus' own family did not accept him. One of his twelve betrayed him. A best friend denied him.

Don't be flippant about your human earthly relationships, but at the same time, you must be willing to give up everything for the sake of the gospel. You must.
You must love Jesus more than everything else. Somebody asked me in a conversation a couple of weeks ago, why is it that so many people seem to be giving up Christianity?
I mean, there's several explanations, but chief among them is these are largely people who never even heard what biblical Christianity was. They were just told to do something positive, do something favorable, and be liked, and be cheered, and be accepted.
Listen, here's the gospel. It's true. You are a sinner bound for hell, and God in grace has made a way for you, and absolutely you get forgiveness of sin, and absolutely you get heaven, and absolutely you get everlasting life, and absolutely you get as a believer to dwell for all time and a place, no sorrow, no tears, no death, no dying, absolutely, but between your conversion and before heaven, you better be ready to also understand the same Bible says that the world who hated Jesus will hate you too, and if you're not ready to say, I will take up my cross daily and follow Christ wherever he leads, you have not understood the clarity of the gospel call.
[49:20] gospel. You must love Christ above all things. You say, well, I really don't want my family to think I'm weird.

You'd be in good company, you know. Jesus' family thought he was out of his mind. Persecution is a way of bringing clarity to your life.
And I'm telling you, child, teenager, adult, senior adult, if you're going to take up your cross and follow Jesus, you've got to stand strong when people call you a lunatic or narrow-minded or hateful. And if your own family rejects you, that's no small thing. It's very painful.
But he's worthy of it all. He's worthy of it all. Lord, as we transition from your word being proclaimed to the Lord's table to remind ourselves of the sacrifice on the cross, I pray that you would give us clarity.
[50:52] God bless you. God bless you. God bless you. God bless you. God bless you. God bless you. God bless you. God bless you. God bless you. God bless you. God bless you. God bless you. God bless you. God bless you. God bless you.

God bless you. God bless you.

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