

“He Is Out of His Mind; crazy!”

Message by DD Adams
Providence United Methodist Church
Second Sunday After Pentecost
June 7, 2015

Today’s gospel lesson is from the third chapter of Mark, verses 20 through 35. I’m reading from the *Common English Bible*. Jesus entered a house. A crowd gathered again so that it was impossible for him and his followers even to eat. When his family heard what was happening, they came to take control of him. They were saying, “He’s out of his mind!”

The legal experts came down from Jerusalem. Over and over they charged, “He’s possessed by Beelzebul. He throws out demons with the authority of the ruler of demons.” When Jesus called them together he spoke to them in a parable: “How can Satan throw Satan out? A kingdom involved in civil war will collapse. And a house torn apart by divisions will collapse. If Satan rebels against himself and is divided, then he can’t endure. He’s done for.

No one gets into the house of a strong person and steals anything without first tying up the strong person. Only then can the house be burglarized. I assure you that human beings will be forgiven for everything, for all sins and insults of every kind. But whoever insults the Holy Spirit will never be forgiven. That person is guilty of a sin with consequences that last forever.”

He said this because the legal experts were saying, “He’s possessed by an evil spirit.” His mother and brothers arrived. They stood outside and sent word to him, calling for him. A crowd was seated around him, and those sent to him said, “Look, your mother, brothers, and sisters are outside looking for you.” He replied, “Who is my mother? Who are my brothers?” Looking around at those

seated around him in a circle, he said, “Look, here are my mother and my brothers. Whoever does God’s will is my brother, sister, and mother.”

This is God’s word for God’s people. Thanks be to God. Lord, bless the reading, hearing, and understanding of your word today. Give ears that are willing to hear so that willing hearts might be consoled and challenged. Provide focus for our minds to consider the inclusiveness of a family. Help us to get out of the way and allow you to have all the attention. Amen.

For those of you who have asked for more social justice messages to be preached, here’s one more for you. I ask for you to have an open mind and heart as the UM Church and Providence continues to engage the love of God more openly and explore more fully the meaning of our slogan, “Open hearts, Open minds, Open Doors.”

Have you ever wondered what constitutes a happy family? What was Jesus’ family like? Let’s find out. I think things went along pretty well for Jesus until he stepped out of his comfort zone and did what was called to do. His family of origin had a different idea of what he should be doing. Jesus chose the path of an itinerant preacher, but he was doing much more than just preaching. He was healing the sick, feeding the hungry, calling disciples, exorcising demons, and preaching the Word. He was obviously taking a route in ministry that was not the norm for that time. He’d gotten quite a reputation too. Crowds were constantly pressing in on him and scribes were accusing him.

In this passage, Jesus was eating dinner with some of his followers. His family of origin got drift of the things he was doing and saying. So they came to get him, and they told him he was “out of his mind!” The religious authorities were at odds with him too. Jesus just wasn’t fitting in. It’s like he’d started his own little groupie. But this groupie was not exactly made up of the kind of people his family

of origin wanted him hanging out with. Fishermen, tax collectors, and who knows who else! I can just hear Jesus' family saying to themselves, "Hmmm, not exactly the crowd you'd want to hang with when starting a new career."

Jesus' family didn't get it. His brother's had offered him a partnership in the family business, but no, he didn't want it. He'd left all the security that was given to him. He'd thrown away the safety he'd been offered and entered into a big risk. He was even opposing the religious authorities. He *must've* been crazy. He seemed indifferent to what the norm was, and just did what he felt called to do.

In the scene that was read, the crowd presses in on Jesus. His own family decides they're moving to the outside of Jesus' circle of friends. Jesus has obviously lost his mind!! His very own family rejected him. The same rejection of Jesus is also in John 7: 5. Jesus' brothers said "they didn't believe in him."

Then the scribes begin to accuse Jesus of having exorcised demons by the power of Satan. In John 7: 20 and 8: 48 and 52, we can find the same accusations. In the passage in Mark, the finger pointing by the scribes say that the power behind Jesus' exorcisms *must* be Satan himself. Surely Jesus has lost his mind! Look what his family and respected people with standing in the community are saying about him!

What does constitute a well-adjusted happy family? Maybe you shouldn't look in the Bible—seeing that Jesus' family was at odds with him. Maybe you pride yourself in having a well-adjusted happy family. Maybe you should take a step back. Could it be some of us have learned how to domesticate Christianity so it doesn't create conflict? You know, so toes aren't stepped on and feelings aren't hurt. We just refrain from giving our opinion. Or maybe some of us stood up for authentic Christianity, as we saw it, a long time ago, and persons in

our family decided to spite us. They go the opposite direction It gets complicated doesn't it? All our spiritual journeys are so very unique and different.

Maybe we should reexamine what a well-adjusted happy family is like. In verse 31, the legal experts were saying, "He's possessed by an evil spirit." Then Jesus' mother and brothers arrive. Jesus clarifies and sets them straight, "Whoever does God's will is my brother, sister, and mother." Looks like Jesus has revisited the idea of who is who his real family.

We're all striving and wrestling with God about one thing or another in our lives aren't we? We all need a family who includes and accepts us to grow spiritually don't we? Should we exclude someone their sexual orientation is different from ours? Or should we welcome them as one who is seeking God? We're all persons of sacred worth.

Maybe your sin is hidden and no one knows about it. Maybe your struggle is gluttony or gambling. Maybe it's pornography or maybe it's slander and gossip. Maybe it's judging others and excluding them. Whatever it is, United Methodists say we have "Open Hearts, Open Minds, Open Doors." But maybe we're not as open as we think we are. Maybe we want to close our doors to people who look and live different.

We're all sinners saved by grace. We're all created in the image of God. We're not created to be the judge of humanity or to point fingers to elevate our own standing. We're not called to exclude. We're called to love. When we begin to desire more wholeness in our lives, I think we have to begin to acknowledge *our own brokenness*. We all need Jesus. We all need healing. We all need acceptance and love. Who will you be? Will you be the one who loves and includes those who are different from you? Or will you judge and be the Judge and decide to exclude and only invite some into your circle of friends?

No one said you had to agree with how others live their lives. All God calls us to do is what Micah 6: 8 says. “[God] has told you, human one, what is good and what the Lord requires from you: to do justice, embrace faithful love, and walk humbly with your God.” God calls us to embrace others in love, not judge how they live their lives. God help us as we more clearly understand and move toward who we say we are as Christian disciples. Let us choose to welcome all people from all walks of life.

Let’s pray. Lord, we are one family and a great community of faith. We are one voice with hearts that will be joined by the love of God. Lord, you have placed us here to learn from one another and to build up one another in love. Stretch our family to embrace all people, just as you do. In Christ’s name we pray. Amen.