



June 10, 2018 Mk. 3: 20-35 & Gn. 3: 9-15

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Link to [Beck](#) (paywall)

[Stone, Naomi. O Beloved Spirit.....](#)

Rolheiser, Fr. Ron. [The Loneliness of Leaving Home](#)

[New Melleray Monastery Sunday Homilies](#)

[You tube link](#)

#### ENTERING THE SCENE:

We are early on in this gospel and the intensity is building fast. It doesn't take long for the religious authorities to mobilize in an effort to discredit Jesus before things get too out of hand. They grapple with the age old problem of where a powerful person is getting that power. Both religious and civil powers are joining forces in this effort to nip this new thing in the bud. Jesus gathers the 12 disciples and sets them out to preach and teach sharing his

power to overcome demons. Then he goes home for a break. But the pressure continues and his family sees the danger and comes to rescue him.

Mk. 3:20 He went **home** again, and once more such a **crowd** collected that they could not even have a meal. 21 When his **relations** heard of this, they set out to take charge of him; they said, 'He is **out of his mind**.' 22 The **scribes** who had come down from Jerusalem were saying, '**Beelzebul** is in him,' and, 'It is through the **prince of devils** that he drives devils out.' 23 So he called them to him and spoke to them in **parables**, 24 'How can **Satan** drive out **Satan**? If a **kingdom** is **divided** against itself, that **kingdom** cannot last. 25 And if a **household** is **divided** against itself, that **household** can never last. 26 Now if **Satan** has **rebelled** against himself and is **divided**, he cannot last either -- it is the end of him. 27 But no one can make his way into a strong man's house and **plunder** his property unless he has first **tied up** the strong man. Only then can he **plunder** his house. 28 'In truth I tell you, all human **sins** will be forgiven, and all the **blasphemies** ever uttered; 29 but anyone who **blasphemes** against the **Holy Spirit** will never be forgiven, but is guilty of an **eternal sin**.' 30 This was because they were saying, 'There is an **unclean spirit** in him.' 31 Now his **mother** and his **brothers** arrived and, **standing outside**, sent in a message asking for him. 32 A **crowd** was sitting round him at the time the message was passed to him, 'Look, your **mother** and **brothers** and **sisters** are **outside** asking for you.' 33 He replied, 'Who are my **mother** and my **brothers**?' 34 And looking at those sitting in a circle round him, he said, 'Here are my **mother** and my **brothers**. 35 Anyone who does the will of God, that person is my **brother and sister and mother**.'

**DISCUSSION QUESTION:** Jesus' family thought he had "lost his mind" and wanted to rescue him from danger. Does my faith practices put me in similar danger?

**PRAYER:** Crazy man Jesus. You invite me to join you in your madness of loving unconditionally, even though who would wish me harm. Often, people who love me want me to come to my senses and go along to get along. I try that and don't find peace there. So what am I to do if I am to be known as a brother or sister? Help me as I struggle with the sense of division that your uncommon sense brings to my life and relationships. Amen.

#### WORD STUDY AND QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION:

**HOME:** It has been said home is the place where they have to let you in. It can also be the place where they want you to stay the same.

*Does Jesus' teachings make it impossible to go "home" or stay the same ever again?*

**CROWD:** Rome is always on the lookout for crowds. The local power structures only have power if they keep things under control and crowds are their worst nightmares.

*Is this a concern only for ancient times or is it still a problem today? If so, have you ever been part of a crowd that threatened the powers that be? If so, what do you remember about that experience?*

**RELATIONS:** All of us are part of a family system that includes all kinds of personalities and their strengths and weaknesses. *Have you ever dealt with a family member that was apparently not paying attention to the risk they were putting you in? If so, how did the family deal with this?*

**OUT OF HIS MIND:** Jesus' understanding of God's unconditional love caused people who loved him to fear for his safety, because he didn't seem to realize the danger that put he and the family in. The only way they could make sense of it was that he was "out of his mind".

*Have you ever been in a situation where someone thought you were "out of your mind" for choosing or doing something?*

**SCRIBES:** The scribes were the professionals that helped keep track of things and helped people make sense of rules.

*What makes them especially vulnerable to wanting to keep things the same?*

**BEELZEBUL/ PRINCE OF DEVILS/SATAN:** Then as now we ascribe power to those things that threaten us or tempt us to betray our truth. Even today exorcisms are in the news and movies thrive on such dangerous powers.

*How do you imagine being possessed might be? Have you even wondered or said "I don't know what got into me"?*

**PARABLES:** Parables are invitations to a deeper consciousness and invite us to reflection. They don't force anything on us.

*Why do you think Jesus relied so much on this method of teaching?*

**KINGDOM:** A kingdom is a place where someone is in charge in order to provide for the well-being of the people.

*How do imagine creation as being God's kingdom?*

**HOUSEHOLD:** A household is a place where love welcomes new life and provides a safe nurturing place for growth.

*How is Jesus' household doing that in this event?*

**REBELLED/ DIVIDED:** Jesus points out the illogic of trying to hold two opposing forces together in one being. A divided energy can easily be defeated.

*Can you remember a time where you were struggling with such a division? Were you easily overcome by others logic?*

**PLUNDER:** To plunder is to overcome by force and take what is not your own.

*Is there anything/anyone currently trying to plunder something of yours?*

**TIED UP:** To be tied up is to be rendered impotent to do something freely.

*Are there any strong men/people doing that to us today?*

**BLASPHEMIES:** To blaspheme is to speak irreverently about God or sacred things

*Can you give an example of such behavior?*

**ETERNAL SIN:** Something that is eternal has no beginning or end. A sin is something that misses the mark.

*How do we participate in this behavior?*

**HOLY SPIRIT / UNCLEAN SPIRIT:** A spirit can be either holy or unclean. Both are sources of energy.

*What are the ways you can tell the difference between them?*

**MOTHER/BROTHERS/SISTERS:** Jesus' immediate family wanted to get him out of harm's way but he refuses their well-meant efforts.

*What do you think they made of this rebuff?*

**OUTSIDE:** To be on the outside of something is to not have access to relevant information.

*How is Jesus' family on the outside of what the crowd is inside?*

**PARALLEL TEXTS:** 3: 19-30 //Mt. 12:22-37; Lk. 11: 14-23; 12:10; 6: 43-45; Lk. 7: 33; Jn. 10:20; Mt. 13: 55. Jn. 7: 20; 8:48, 52; Mk. 9: 40; Lk. 9:50; Mt. 7: 16-20;

**OTHER TEXTS OF THE WEEK:** Gn. 3: 9-13; [Ps. 130: 1-8](#); 2 Cor. 4: 13-5:1; Mk. 3: 20-35

Revised Common Lectionary: Gn. 3: 8-15; [Ps. 130](#); 2 Cor. 4: 13-5:1; Mk. 3: 20-35

#### **SUPPORTIVE INFORMATION:**

Mk. 3.19b–35: Beelzebul and Satan (Mt 12.22–32,46–50; Lk 8.19–21; 11.14–23; 12.10). 21: His family . . . restrain him, Jesus' near relatives are sometimes portrayed in the Gospels as misunderstanding him, or opposing his ministry (Mt 12.46–50; Lk 8.19–21). 22: Beelzebul, a name for Satan, derived ultimately from the Canaanite high god Baal, meaning perhaps "Baal, the prince" (2 Kings 1.2,3 spells the name "Baal-zebul," "lord of flies," an insulting parody). This passage shows how charges of magic develop: the perceived

miracles of one group are assigned to demonic forces by another. 23–27: The parables refute the accusation of demonic power in casting out demons by drawing an analogy with a human kingdom working at cross-purposes with itself, which would be self-defeating. Jesus then draws another analogy, comparing himself to one who has bound a strong man so that his property can be plundered as Jesus is plundering the demonic world by defeating Satan. 28–30: As in some Jewish apocalypses (1 En. 38.2), the Holy Spirit was the divine power that brought the new community into existence. In rabbinic texts unforgivable sins were also sins against God and the sanctity of the community (m. Avot 3.12: “R. Eleazar of Modiim said: If a man profanes the hallowed things and despises the set feasts and puts his fellow to shame publicly and makes void the covenant of Abraham our father, and discloses meanings in the law which are not according to the Halakah, even though a knowledge of the law and good works are his, he has no share in the world to come.”) 28: Truly, Heb “amen,” see 1.14–15n. Jesus uses the word “amen” not in the typical Jewish way as an affirmation of what someone else has just prayed, but as a solemn affirmation of what he is about to say (cf. Jer 28.6, where the prophet’s use of “Amen” at the beginning of his speech relates [probably ironically] to the previous speech of the prophet Hananiah). 31–35: New religious movements often create “fictive families” of social networks outside of traditional families, with members called “brothers and sisters,” “saints,” and so on. Pgs. 66-67. [The Jewish Annotated New Testament](#)

### [Tending Your Little Spark](#)

Whenever friends ask my advice about making some critical decision I enjoy replying with my favorite quote, “You are only given a little spark of madness. You mustn’t lose it!” So said Robin Williams, and the madness to which he refers isn’t insanity or schizophrenia but that rare spark of reckless daring to try something new or the boldness to be different from others.

Wisely, the majority of us keep our little spark under a bushel basket safely hidden from the puritanical police of societal respectability. Society does issue special licenses to be mad to artists, musicians, inventors, poets and others, but these arty licenses don’t protect their users from ridicule. When French impressionists displayed their paintings for the first time in 1874 they were judged for their “shear madness,” yet today’s galleries pay millions of dollars for a single one of these rare masterpieces.

While the world values creative folly, it strangely fears and yet simultaneously reveres the terrible kind as observed by the poet Alexander Pope, “The worst of madness is a saint run mad!” We venerate “sane” saints like Mother Theresa of Calcutta who wear religious clothing while caring for the poor. The risky insane saints do not dress up in respectable religious garb to daringly live out the Gospel running madly in the footsteps of the Loony Rabbi of Nazareth. “Loony”?—that’s sacrilegious!

But he was judged to be insane! Take away his halo and look honestly at his outrageously crazy behavior. Inspired by his small spark of madness he walked off his job as a carpenter to tramp the countryside breaking social & religious rules. He ate and drank with women, synagogue dropouts and societal scabs—tax collectors. He taught radically crazy ideas: always forgive; never be violent or seek revenge; never think angry thoughts; loan money without hope of being repaid; love those who hate and do harm to you. Not surprising then that when gossip of his bizarre behavior and teachings reached his family, they came to seize him saying, “He is out of his mind!” (Mark 3:21).

So daily prayerfully huff and puff on your little spark of madness so to dare to live the teachings of the Mad Messiah...and people will think you’re out of your mind!

We are living in a world that is absolutely transparent, and God is shining through it all the time. [If we center our attention on Him and draw our attention away from our surface selves] ...we see it sometimes and we see it maybe frequently: that God manifests Himself everywhere, in everything — in people and in things and in nature and in events... He is everywhere, He is in everything, and we cannot be without Him... The only thing is that we don’t see it.” - Thomas Merton –

When we seem to possess and use our being and natural faculties in a completely autonomous manner, as if our individual ego were the pure source and end of our own acts, then we are in illusion and our acts, however spontaneous they may seem to be, lack spiritual meaning and authenticity. Thomas Merton

The only moment there ever is, is now. Your entire life is now. Whatever you experience, feel, think, do — is always now, has always been now, will always be now. Don’t live as if the now were a secondary thing because the next moment is more important. There is no next moment. When the next moment comes, it is now. Eckhart Tolle

The more you are aware, the more you are able to help something new arise. The first thing to remember as you’re confronting any situation that looks like two irreducible binaries is that the resolution, the manifestation of love, is already there in the situation, but you need to find it. Third force is there because the Trinity is real. And if you are alert to it, you will be able to find it. Cynthia Bourgeault

[Jesus followed in the same path.](#) He was faithful and loyal to Judaism, but he was not silent in the face of its faults and wrongdoings in his time. In the name of love, he challenged everything that was wrong. He taught, and taught strongly, that blind religious loyalty can be idolatry. He would be last person to teach that loyalty and love mean never criticizing your own. Indeed, he de-literalizes the meaning of family, country, and church and asks us to understand these in a higher way. He asks: Who is my mother and who are my

brothers and sisters? And he goes on to say that these are not to be defined by biology, country, or religious denomination. Real family, he says, is made up by something else, namely, by those who hear the word of God and keep it, irrespective of biology, country, or religion. Consequently biology, country, and religion must be criticized and opposed whenever they stand in the way of this deeper union in faith and justice. Fr. Ron Rolheiser

Don't ask yourself what the world needs; ask yourself what makes you come alive, and then go do it. Because what the world needs is people who have come alive. -Howard Thurman

Another exciting piece of the emerging church is that, for the first time perhaps, we've stopped emphasizing and idealizing the top. We are beginning to recognize actual operative gifts and real ministry to God's world as in the early church ([Ephesians 4:11-13](#), [1 Corinthians 12:4-30](#)), instead of just being preoccupied with getting formally ordained or academic certification—not that there isn't a place for such things. I probably would never have had the access I did if I had not been ordained and "certified," especially in my young years. But the first question is not just, "Is she trained in theology?" or "Is he ordained?" The first question can also be "Can she do the job?" and "Is he changing lives?" or "Is it working?" Most of us were ordained without ever having led a single person to conversion, transformation, or even spiritual health. What evidence did any bishop have that we were gifted for ministry? It was too often a decision for security and status, a sincere career move, but not really a recognition of any actual gift for service. We are beginning to support lay leadership—competence itself being more important more than role, office, costume, or title. In that light, the very terms "layman" or "laywoman" begin to be a real misperception and misnomer of what is happening. Richard Rohr

That we go numb along the way is to be expected. Even the bravest among us, who give their lives to care for others, go numb with fatigue, when the heart can take in no more, when we need time to digest all we meet. Overloaded and overwhelmed, we start to pull back from the world, so we can internalize what the world keeps giving us. Perhaps the noblest private act is the unheralded effort to return: to open our hearts once they've closed, to open our souls once they've shied away, to soften our minds once they've been hardened by the storms of our day. Mark Nepo,

All of Jesus' guidance for ministry, his seeming "tips for the road," are very concrete and interpersonal. They are all about putting people in touch with specific people, and especially with people's pain. Person-to-person is the way the Gospel was originally communicated. Person-in-love-with-person, person-respecting-person, person-forgiving-person, person-touching-person, person-crying-with-person, person-hugging-person, person-hurting-person: that's where the Divine Presence is so beautifully revealed. And from the concrete and personal it universalizes! What is true here and now is true everywhere and always. Richard Rohr

"Do not imagine that character is determined at birth. We have been given free will. Any person can become as righteous as Moses or as wicked as Jeroboam. We ourselves decide whether to make ourselves learned or ignorant, compassionate or cruel, generous or miserly. No one forces us, no one decides for us, no one drags us along one path or the other; we ourselves, by our own volition, choose our own way." - Maimonides, 12th Century

Every time you make a choice, you are turning the central part of you, the part of you that chooses, into something a little different from what it was before. And, taking your life as a whole, with all your innumerable choices, all your life long you are slowly turning this central thing either into a Heaven creature or into a hellish creature — either into a creature that is in harmony with God, and with other creatures, and with itself, or else into one that is in a state of war and hatred with God, and with its fellow creatures and with itself. To be the one kind of creature is Heaven: that is, it is joy, and peace, and knowledge, and power. To be the other means madness, horror, idiocy, rage, impotence, and eternal loneliness. Each of us at each moment is progressing to the one state or the other. ... C. S. Lewis, *Mere Christianity*

We are at liberty to be real, or to be unreal. We may be true or false, the choice is ours. We may wear now one mask and now another, and never, if we so desire, appear with our own true face. But we cannot make these choices with impunity. Causes have effects, and if we lie to ourselves and to others, then we cannot expect to find truth and reality whenever we happen to want them.

Thomas Merton, in *New Seeds of Contemplation*

There are any number of ways that the seeds of our preferences can fall to the ground and die. If they die in the service of our brothers and sisters, God will make them fruitful, and provide for our needs. If we cling to them, they will eventually wither and die anyway and we will be left with empty shells. Fr. Neil Paquette

Better to die excommunicated rather than violate our conscience. Thomas Aquinas

#### **SUGGESTED READINGS:**

Links to all the books mentioned in this guide are on The Ark web site: [www.theark1.com](http://www.theark1.com)