

# BRIARCLIFF CHURCH

## Small Group Study Guide: Mark

Week of October 21 (Week 10)

Mark 3:22-35



### Sermon Overview

The last episode of Mark 3 begins to draw stark and uncomfortable lines of distinction between those who follow Jesus and those who do not. These lines are drawn across socially established norms of race, religious status and affiliation, and family ties. Jesus' purpose in drawing these lines is the very separation of good and evil.

Discipleship depends on being in Jesus' presence and doing God's will, which are essential characteristics of being a Christian. We all make lines of distinction between good and evil. How we make those distinctions is determined by what we believe about Jesus, the repentance we offer Jesus, and our commitment to Jesus.

The clear lines of division drawn by Jesus leave no room for casual or cultural Christianity. This sobering reminder demands Jesus' hearers ponder its implications for themselves: those who assume that they are close to Jesus should think again; those who assume that they are far from him should take hope.

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### Getting Started

1. What kinds of reactions have you gotten when people learn you are a Christian? If you are not a Christian, or in the time before you were a Christian, what was/is your impression of Jesus' followers?

### Starting With God

2. There is no shortage of people – from crowd to Pharisee to family – to mistake and malign the identity of Jesus. But, Jesus is unwavering to who he is. How has your character or identity been mistaken or maligned? How does Jesus' true identity give us an unwavering commitment to discipleship?

3. The Scribes (and/or Pharisees) don't seem to miss many chances to attack the person and work of Jesus. They do so (at least in the beginning) with an allegiance to what they believe is right. Their consistent attitudes of knowing all, negativity, condemnation and malice has led them to accuse Jesus of being in league with Satan. We have all harbored negative attitudes now and then. What attitudes do you struggle with that may be at odds with what Jesus is accomplishing now?
  
4. In Mark 3:22, the Scribes call Jesus' acts evil. Jesus shows the foolishness of this claim with the simple logic that evil doesn't fight itself. This interaction gives rise to Jesus' statement in vv. 28-30 that seems to identify a sin for which there is no forgiveness. Consider the questions below.

Explain, in your own words, exactly what sin the Scribes are committing.

Does this mean God is unable to forgive anyone that commits this sin?

5. Reread Mark 3:20-21, 31-35. What does Jesus' family think about him? Is Jesus disassociating himself from and/or disrespecting his family?

## Living God's Word

6. God's people – the Body of Christ – is his Church. The church is comprised of a wide range of personalities, talents, perspectives and preferences. How can we put our allegiances (whether social, cultural, political, economic or ethnic) back into proper relationship to Jesus? How can today's text help answer that question?

## Prayer

*Father, God,*

*I repent of the times when I have been your adversary instead of you disciple. Please shine light on the dark places that still exist in my soul – the places that still hold resentment, pride and bitterness. Please give me the grace to see Jesus as my identity. The author and finisher of my faith. Amen.*