

For the next few months we will be going through the Gospel of Mark. These discussion guides will follow along with the sermon series by either using the main passages from the weekend messages or using another passage on the same topic.

These guides will be organized using the acronym HEAR as a way to teach people to read the Bible. HEAR stands for **H**ighlight the passage, **E**xplain the passage, **A**pply the passage, and **R**espond to the passage.

Each week there will be a page to print off for each member of your group. The printed sheet will have the Bible passage you will discuss and some questions in the margins to guide them in examining those verses.

Additionally, there will be a leader's guide that will give you helpful notes on the passage (i.e. background information and definitions) as well as discussion questions to lead your group. These don't need to be printed for each member of your group.

These guides are designed to be discussed BEFORE the sermon so the group can discuss the passage before the pastor shares his insights. However, they can just as easily be used after the weekend message.

Our hope is these tools will (a) help your group members learn to study/read their Bibles outside of the group and (b) give you a helpful outline for facilitating the group discussion. If you have comments or questions about the discussion guides we would love to hear your constructive feedback. Send your feedback to us at

groups@foresthill.org.

How to Use This Discussion Guide

- Print off the "Life Group Member Guide" for each member of your group – or email it to them in advance.
- Use the main idea for each week to quickly understand the text's theme. You can use that as a reference point to help guide your discussion or bring it back if your group begins to get off topic.
- Use the respond section at the end of each guide to help you close in prayer.

Additionally, here are some tips and guidelines to help you lead these discussions:

1. **Choose the questions that best fit your group and your time constraints.** There are a lot of questions in this guide and your group may not be able to discuss them all. That's okay! You don't have to ask all of them. Before your group begins, choose the questions that are most likely to help your group understand what God is saying in the text and how to apply it to their lives.
2. **Prepare for your group time by reading the passages and the notes in a study Bible.** A good study Bible can give you some insights into the passages and how they connect to the whole book or the whole story of the Bible.
3. **Begin every group meeting with prayer.** We can only understand and apply God's Word with the help of the Holy Spirit. So, invite the Spirit to open your hearts and minds to what He says to His people.
4. **Keep the conversation focused on Scripture as much as possible.** Some people may want to bring in their opinions or continually refer to what the teaching pastor said during his message. This is helpful in small doses, but the goal of this discussion guide is to help you determine what God is saying in His Word. Encourage the group to continue to return to the Scripture. One way to do that is by saying, "That's a great insight! Where do you see that in the Scripture we're studying?"
5. **Encourage participation, but don't let anyone dominate.** Encourage everyone to share insights, ask questions, and read aloud. Don't allow any one person – even yourself, the leader – to monopolize the time. Some people are just unaware of themselves and how much they speak, so gently encourage them to listen and make space for others to talk.
6. **Help your group members to be specific in the application of Scripture.** It is easy to generalize when we talk about the Bible and how to apply it. So ask your group members specific questions – for example, "What part of the world do you sense God wants you to pray for? How will you do that? How will you make that a habit?"

We pray that you will hear God speak through Scripture and that His Spirit will move you to obey Him as you build bridges with others in your sphere of influence. May this discussion guide help you and your Life Group to become more engaged with His Word and lead you on in a dynamic life in Christ.

Date of Sermon: March 29

Topic of Sermon: Jesus Misinterpreted

Main Passage: Mark 3:20-30

BEFORE your group meeting:

- Look up the main passage in a study Bible and read the study notes.
- Print or send the “Group Member Guide” (last page) to your group members.
- Review the “Group Member Guide” for yourself.
- Have enough pens for each group member.

Main Idea: Living a dynamic life in Christ risks being misinterpreted, misunderstood and facing opposition.

Icebreakers (optional)

- Tell about a time when you were misinterpreted or misunderstood and wrongly accused.
- Can you recall an incident when this has happened to a public figure? How was it handled?

Leader’s Note: Introduce the next part of the group meeting. You can read this introduction or put it in your own words:

“Take a few minutes to read through the printed passage and then we will discuss it as a group. Focus primarily on the instructions in the “Highlight” and “Explain” sections. Bear in mind that all the passages just before and after these verses help to understand the context. This passage deals with opposition that Jesus encountered early in his ministry which even included his own family.

When you come back together, use the questions below to guide the discussion.

HIGHLIGHT the Passage

- What key ideas, words or phrases stood out to you from the passage? What is the significance of those?
- Did this passage raise any questions for you?
- How would you summarize this passage in your own words? Would anyone else add or emphasize something to that summary?

EXPLAIN the Passage

- What are some things this passage reveals about people?
- Why do you think the Scribes accused Jesus of being possessed by Beelzebub (Beelzebub)?
- How does Jesus combat this accusation?
- What do you think is the real heart of this issue that Jesus addresses?

APPLY the Passage

- What truth from this passage do you need to cling to? What makes that truth significant to you?
- By God’s power, what is God calling you to change in how you think, speak, or act?
- What can you learn from this passage about responding to opposition particularly when there is so little tolerance for differing views in our culture today?
- How can you prepare yourself for opposition? Name some other Bible passages that you can reference.
- What are some areas of unbelief with which you struggle?

RESPOND to the Passage

- Take a few minutes in prayer to thank God for facing opposition, for standing on the truth and fulfilling His mission. Ask Him for His help in handling those who are in opposition to your faith and how to respond in humility.

3:20 Evidently according to Mark, there were so many people they were unable to eat as per the custom of eating while reclining on the floor. Wherever Jesus goes, He draws a big crowd at this stage in his ministry.

3:21 Jesus' family and friends had come from Nazareth to get Him. They believed Him to be out of His mind. These kinds of accusations were made at times against "prophets, exorcists and healers". "Too much learning, it was thought, could lead to madness." (Eerdman's Commentary of the Bible). The friends and family were likely concerned for Jesus and His workload so they had a desire to protect Him. They had their point of view on what Jesus should say and do as well as the people with whom He should associate. We see this with many of His interactions throughout the Gospels. Jesus sticks with God's plan and timetable that was laid out for Him.

3:22 Now the Scribes (and Pharisees per parallel Gospel passages) accuse Jesus of demon possession and of casting out demons in Beelzebul's (Beelzebul's) name.

"Josephus (Ant." IX, 2, b 1), translates Baalzebul as the "Lord of the Flies." Others translate it as "god of the dung." It's easy to see how the two word pictures fit together. If there is dung on the ground, flies are sure to follow. Beelzebul or Baal-zebul is in a sense the god who spreads impurity." Source: Lamplighter <https://lamplighter.net/c/moments/beelzebul-beelzebul-or-baalzebul-will-the-real-baalzebul-please-stand-up/>

These Jewish leaders would not even use the name of Satan for fear that they would be possessed by him. This accusation is at the heart of their whole opposition to Jesus, His claim to deity and being the Messiah.

3:22-27 Jesus faces these accusations head on and He is not afraid to use the word, "Satan" which demonstrates His power over Satan.

He lays out the absurdity of their accusation by indicating that a kingdom that is divided cannot stand and comes to an end. He goes on to give the example of breaking and entering the home of a strongman. You must first neutralize or tie up the strongman and then you can carry out your robbery.

3:28-30 Jesus links their charges to blasphemy against the Holy Spirit and therefore "unpardonable sin". Unpardonable sin is when the works of God are attributed to Satan. It is an acknowledgement that Satan's power is greater than God's. It is a hardened heart towards the grace of God and a rejection of His grace. As long as one holds to that viewpoint, this sin cannot be pardoned...because they are not believing in Jesus and His power:

- over sin
- over Satan
- to forgive sin and restore the relationship between God and man.

This is fundamental to the Gospel.

The heart of this whole interchange with the scribes, Pharisees and the others in the crowd is, who do you believe Jesus is? Is He indeed the Son of God and the Messiah?

Life Group Member Guide

Focal Passage: Mark 3:20-30 (CSB) (Bold and italicized)

Passage in Context: Mark 3 (CSB)



Bible-Reading Tip: The use of parallel passages such as occurs throughout the Gospels helps to give a bigger and fuller context of the stories, encounters and events in the Bible. For example, we see the context for the writing of many of Paul’s letters (that became known as the Pastoral Epistles) by reading the Book of Acts.

Jesus Heals on the Sabbath

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.

Crowds Follow 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^[a] that they might be with him and that he might send them out to preach ¹⁵ 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 whom he gave the name Boanerges, which means “sons of thunder”), ¹⁸ Andrew, Philip, Bartholomew, Matthew, Thomas, James son of Alphaeus, Thaddaeus, Simon the Zealot ¹⁹ and Judas Iscariot, who betrayed him.

²⁰ *Jesus entered a house, and the crowd gathered again so that they were not even able to eat. ²¹ When his family heard this, they set out to restrain him, because they said, “He’s out of his mind.”*

²² *The scribes who had come down from Jerusalem said, “He is possessed by Beelzebul,” and, “He drives out demons by the ruler of the demons.”*

²³ *So He summoned them and spoke 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 but is finished. ²⁷ But no one can enter a strong man’s house and plunder his possessions unless he first ties up the strong man then he can plunder his house.*

²⁸ *“Truly I tell you, people will be forgiven for all sins and whatever blasphemies they utter. ²⁹ But whoever blasphemes against the Holy Spirit never has forgiveness, but is guilty of an eternal sin ” ³⁰ Because they were saying, “He has an unclean 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.

(There are also parallel focal passages to this in Matt. 12:22-32 and Luke 11:15-26)

HEAR Bible Reading Method

HIGHLIGHT the passage

- Underline any repeated words or key ideas you see.
- Note any questions you have about what you read.
- In 2-3 sentences, summarize what was said or what happened.

EXPLAIN the passage

- What was revealed about God? His character, desires, and/or actions?
- What was revealed about people? What we are/do or what we should be/do?

APPLY the passage

- From this reading, what truth do you need to embrace?
- By God’s power, how will you THINK, SPEAK, or ACT differently based on what you read?

RESPOND to the passage

- Talk to God about what you’ve seen and learned in this passage.
- Ask Him to help you apply the truth to your life.