

## Giving birth to Christ in our lives

**Mark 3:31** *There came then his brethren and his mother, and, standing without, sent unto him, calling him.*

**3:32** *And the multitude sat about him, and they said unto him, Behold, thy mother and thy brethren without seek for thee.*

**3:33** *And he answered them, saying, Who is my mother, or my brethren?*

**3:34** *And he looked round about on them which sat about him, and said, Behold my mother and my brethren!*

**3:35** *For whosoever shall do the will of God, the same is my brother, and my sister, and mother.*

Now this passage of scripture captures the essence of a theme that repeats itself over and over again in the Bible.

Well meaning people, who think that they are close to Jesus, try to control him.

In the same way today well meaning and not so well meaning people try and control God, most often they do this by changing or ignoring what the Bible clearly says.

Any argument like this forces our ideas about God onto our reading of the Bible and it does not let the Bible express what God is actually like.

For example: Some of our ideas about God come from song lyrics and not the Bible.

Have you ever heard the expression “gentle Jesus meek and mild” in the context of the song they are in they make sense and in certain aspects of Jesus nature and ministry they make sense, but if we picture Jesus as Gentle meek and mild only; then we have some explaining to do when we read about Jesus clearing the temple or facing off with the storm at sea. Sometimes Jesus was Bold abrupt and Strong as well.

### **Point 1: Obedience is the sign of a relationship with God**

The ones closest to Jesus are revealed as the ones submissive to the will of God, in this case he means keeping the commandments and following the teachings of Jesus. These are the people who God redefines as his mother, brother and sister.

Poor Mary rebuked by her own son but later remembering that her son was actually her Lord and her God.

Why does this matter so much that it was included in the Bible? Because obedience matters, knowing who God is matters and not thinking you know better than God actually matters. It was the serpent who first put the thought into eve’s mind “did God really say that?”

If it is in the Bible, you have to deal with it, and let its’ truth master you. Resisting the temptation to question God also matters and this is why these passages remind us about our spiritual enemies. You are in a sense the Mother of your faith, God is the Father the baby is born once your faith is in action. Babies are vulnerable and take time to grow.

*Revelation 12:1* *And there appeared a great wonder in heaven; a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars:*

*12:2* *And she being with child cried, travailing in birth, and pained to be delivered.*

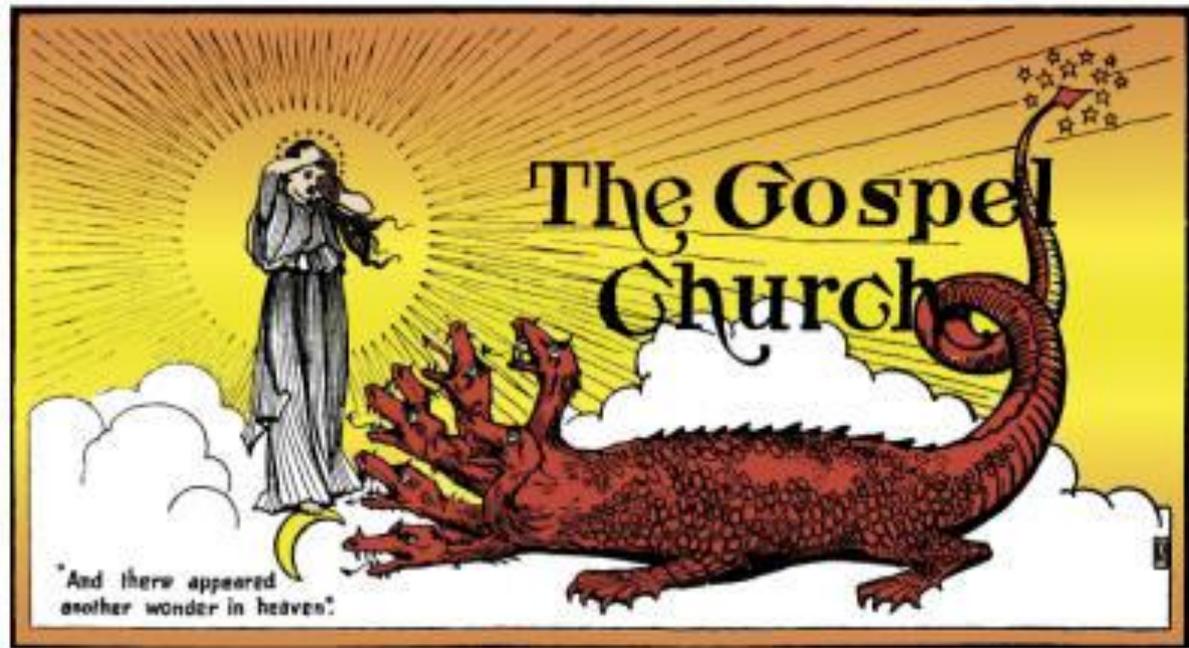
*12:3* *And there appeared another wonder in heaven; and behold a great red dragon, having seven heads and ten horns, and seven crowns upon his heads.*

*12:4* *And his tail drew the third part of the stars of heaven, and did cast them to the earth: and the dragon stood before the woman which was ready to be delivered, for to devour her child as soon as it was born.*

12:5 And she brought forth a man child, who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron: and her child was caught up unto God, and to his throne.

12:6 And the woman fled into the wilderness, where she hath a place prepared of God, ....

12:17 And the dragon was wroth with the woman, and went to make war with the remnant of her seed, which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ.



The woman is the people of God, clothed with sun = Jesus Atonement

Moon reflects the sun = the Scriptures of the time [the Old Testament] point us to Jesus.

She is standing on the moon = her foundation is the Old Testament teaching

The stars represent the apostles and their teaching = the New Testament [the surround her head = inform her thoughts]

The child was Christ who came into the world through faithful believing mother

If the woman is the People of God [the Israel of God, his church etc] and the Dragon is the devil and the child is Christ in verse 5.

Who are "the remnant of her seed"?

The first verses in this chapter tell of the coming of Christ and his defeat of Satan which ultimately stripped Satan of many powers he possessed.

FOR THE PURPOSE OF THIS SERMON WE ARE NOT GOING TO LOOK AT SATAN'S POWERS

The important thing to note is that the people of God played a significant role in bringing Christ into the world.

The passage ends with the assertion that as it was, so it will be. The people of God will continue to bring forth Christ as they continue to bring more people into relationship with him.

We Christians all were seed once, but now we are the woman and those whom we teach are the seed and as they grow they become the woman and they produce more of Christ in the world and so the story repeats itself until the end of the world.

Each Generation faces the Dragon and has to bring up the next generation in light of that threat.

## **Point 2: There will be opposition**

In this story the dragon seems very violent but we are reminded that he is also the same subtle serpent from the Garden of Eden and his key purpose is to destroy the people of God, causing us to neglect the truths of the Bible is just as effective as killing us [if not more so].

But it seems that the devil is unable to break our faith if we keep the commandments of God and hold onto the testimony of Jesus.

Now the demons attack us two ways from without and from within. There is no way to live a Christian life and avoid being attacked by the devil, the more you press into God the more the devil will try to hinder you. This is often a sign that we are going in the right direction. And often it helps if you remember God won't test you more than you are able to bear. So when you feel like you can't take it anymore God is simply saying "I believe in you". So in many ways the devil is only a tool in God's service to sharpen the faith of his people. This is how I would say we are attacked from without; although this may include us getting sick or even dying it is an external force being brought to bear on us without our cooperation.

## **We can however be attacked from within**

***11:24 When the unclean spirit is gone out of a man, he walketh through dry places, seeking rest; and finding none, he saith, I will return unto my house whence I came out.***

***11:2 And when he cometh, he findeth it swept and garnished.***

***11:26 Then goeth he, and taketh to him seven other spirits more wicked than himself; and they enter in, and dwell there: and the last state of that man is worse than the first.***

***11:27 And it came to pass, as he spake these things, a certain woman of the company lifted up her voice, and said unto him, Blessed is the womb that bare thee, and the paps which thou hast sucked.***

***11:28 But he said, Yea rather, blessed are they that hear the word of God, and keep it.***

This passage illustrates what it means to be attacked from within.

The implication is that a man was delivered from a demon but he did not have the Holy Spirit in his life to take residence. 7 is a number of completeness so the event of deliverance was not followed by a life free from sin, he had a false conversion.

Sin or disobedience, makes room for all sorts of evil things to take root in our lives,

Now we can clean out the evil things from our lives but they will only come back stronger if we don't learn how to be obedient. This can only be done if the Holy Spirit helps us listen to Jesus; our life has to be cleaned up then filled up with God.

There are times when certain people fail the tests of faith and the demons can gain an unnatural foothold in parts of their lives, in these cases prayers and deliverance ministries may be involved. I have never been involved in deliverance where the reason for the demon being there was not a direct result of repetitive sinful behaviour. PLEASE UNDERSTAND I AM NOT SURE THAT SIN IS THE ONLY REASON BUT I AM SPEAKING FROM PERSONAL EXPERIENCES IN THIS AREA. The person who was in trouble often lacked the ability to take personal responsibility for their sin, in fact sometimes the sin was not seen as sin at all. Until they were willing to repent and submit to Christ again they were struggling in various areas of their lives. Sin is our choice to listen to the devil and not God. Cooperating with demons leads to repetitive sinful behaviour. When we keep doing the wrong thing until we no longer see it as wrong at all we are in trouble.

**Why is James talking like this today:** I believe if we hold to the truth of Jesus as revealed in the Bible we are going to see more deliverances in our church in this time in history. Because there are so few people who take responsibility for the things that they do wrong.

At this point I would like me to remind you that there is a difference between mental illness and demonic affliction in people's lives. But we must never use our mental health or Genetic makeup as an excuse to sin. Doing so takes our power and responsibility away and leaves a power vacuum in

our minds that any strong personality can affect. The media, sales people, Singers, actors, preachers, Doctors, scientists and politicians can all easily manipulate people who take no personal responsibility for their lives. How much more do you think evil spirits do this?

My point is:

If you walk in the way of Jesus keeping the commandments and repenting when you break them, the devil will only be able to attack you from the outside

And why; because we allow Jesus to take responsibility for our sin [that we admit] and we trust that he will guide us better than anyone else [including our self]. No one but God can control someone who is completely under the control of Christ.

Being a relative of Jesus does not guarantee that you will be blessed; listening to God and doing what he says is preferred.

### **Point 3 It is impossible to be obedient and begin to reach out to others without The Holy Spirit imparting a sense of Christian Duty into our Hearts**

#### **Being a mother is a thankless job**

- How many of us give up on things because they do not see the fruit of our labour
- Have you tried seeing the things you do as your children
- If you can't stop trying to raise them- you don't care about them enough
- Perhaps you have too many kids
- Mums are there because they care

There is a difference between false sense of Duty and God given Duty and that is this:

God given sense of duty to a task comes from a genuine desire to do the task – the task fulfils us, we love it.

Two mistakes we can make are:

Doing too much; this can make us lose focus, it can leave not enough time to hear God

Doing it for the wrong reason; is it about Gods plan or is it about your plan?



This is the Cornerstone values Character Wheel that is used by the New Zealand foundation for Character development

It is based on the Tao that CS Lewis wrote about in his book "the Abolition of man"

The great civilisations all realised that these virtues and our responsibility to them as individual citizens were important.

When the spokes or hub fail so too the society shall fall.

It is interesting that Duty is the centre

**Luke 17:7 "Will any one of you who has a servant plowing or keeping sheep say to him when he has come in from the field, 'Come at once and recline at table'?"**

**17:8 Will he not rather say to him, 'Prepare supper for me, and dress properly, and serve me while I eat and drink, and afterward you will eat and drink'?"**

**17:9 Does he thank the servant because he did what was commanded?"**

**17:10 So you also, when you have done all that you were commanded, say, 'We are unworthy servants; we have only done what was our duty.'"**

God doesn't thank us- we thank him.

God says well done, but not thank you.

Why because our best work is simply less than what we were designed for.

And even if we did manage to live perfect sinless lives like Jesus, that would still only be what we should have done in the first place.

Just remember humility is the hall mark of our faith. God is not obliged to help humans [or even keep us alive]

What God does he does because he wants to do it, who he chooses to love is not up to us.

If you know he loves you then why would you ever feel unrecognised or ungrateful

Take home message

- There will be Opposition to the work of God
- Obedience is the sign of a relationship with God
- The Holy Spirit puts the desire in us – Duty

*Once we are forgiven;*

*we overcome the opposition in order to be obedient, which comes out of the Holy Spirit putting a new desire [sense of Duty] to serve God in our hearts.*

This message is only of any benefit to those who believe in Jesus and seek to follow his teachings; that is why I put forgiveness as a prerequisite.

You have to admit you are a sinner and an enemy of God who needs God's mercy and payment for your sin debt as found in Jesus so you can be reconciled with God.

The time to start doing the right thing is now. The Bible never says "God loves you so just sit back and relax".

The implication given is "Get up and fight in Jesus Name". Read the Book and don't compromise it. And Get a right picture of who God is.

And if you dare to speak of the love of God then you must also show it. [More on that in another sermon]