

**St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church**  
**June 5<sup>th</sup> & 6<sup>th</sup>, 2021**  
**Pastor Gerry Gallant**

**Call to Worship (Psalm 91:2, Romans 10:9,13)**

Let us worship God.

**“He is our refuge and our fortress, our God, in whom we trust.”**

Let us confess with our mouths, “Jesus is Lord,” and believe in our hearts that God raised Him from the dead.

**“Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.”**

Let us call upon our true God, believing Him in our hearts, confessing Him with our mouths, worshipping Him in spirit and in truth. **Amen.**

**Prayer of Invocation**

Blessed are you, Lord God, King of the universe. In your wisdom you have made all creation to worship you. You call us to worship you now in this time and place, in unity with prophets, martyrs, and saints from all times and places.

As we prepare for worship, we pray that you will quiet our hearts, that we may hear your voice in your Word. We pray that you will stir our hearts, that we may more faithfully follow Jesus, and that you will be glorified by the praise and prayers we offer you.

Bless those who lead us in worship with your Spirit. May our worship today help us to offer our entire lives to you and unite us with your whole church throughout the world. We pray this in the name of Jesus Christ, who with the Father and the Spirit is one God, blessed forever. **Amen.**

**Hymn: “Turn Your Eyes Upon Jesus”, The Glorious Christ Live**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=F2tKVqZZil4&feature=youtu.be>

1. Turn your eyes upon Jesus  
 Look full in His wonderful face  
 And the things of earth will grow strangely dim  
 In the light of His glory and grace
  
2. Turn your eyes to the hillside  
 Where justice and mercy embrace  
 There the Son of God gave His life for us  
 And our measureless debt was erased

**Chorus**

Jesus to You we lift our eyes  
 Jesus our glory and our prize  
 We adore You behold You our Savior ever true  
 Oh Jesus we turn our eyes to You

3. Turn your eyes to the morning  
And see Christ the lion awake  
What a glorious dawn fear of death is gone  
For we carry His life in our veins
4. Turn your eyes to the heavens  
Our King will return for His own  
Every knee will bow every tongue will shout  
All glory to Jesus alone

### Call to Confession (1 John 1:5–7 ESV)

**5 This is the message we have heard from him and proclaim to you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all. 6 If we say we have fellowship with him while we walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth. 7 But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us from all sin.**

### Prayer of Confession

We confess that it is still all too easy for us to sacrifice our convictions for convenience, your standards for status, your principles for promotion, your absolutes for our ambition, our souls for shallow and unsatisfying success. How easily we are seduced by power, prestige, pleasure, or possessions—seduced into violating our integrity or harming our fellowship with you. From earth's fullest bliss we turn to you again, unfulfilled. Forgive us our half-hearted devotion and our double-minded spirit. In the name of Him who refused to save Himself we pray. **Amen.**

### Assurance of Pardon (Jeremiah 33:8 ESV)

**8 I will cleanse them from all the guilt of their sin against me, and I will forgive all the guilt of their sin and rebellion against me.** May almighty God, who caused light to shine out of darkness, shine in our hearts, cleansing us from all our sins, and restoring us to the light of the knowledge of God's glory, in the face of Jesus Christ, our Savior. **Amen.**

### The Lord's Prayer

**Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name.  
Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.  
Give us this day our daily bread.  
And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors.  
And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the Evil One.  
For Thine is the Kingdom, the power and the glory,  
Forever and ever. Amen.**

### Children's Lesson

Let us gather all the children up front for a children's lesson.

I want everyone here to think about their family. We all know our family right. Everyone has a parent or two, some of you might even have a sister or a brother. That is your family, isn't it? What about your grandparents and your aunts, uncles, and cousins? They are your family too, aren't they?

Families can be big **or** small, and they can all be made up with different numbers of parents, grandparents, aunts and uncles and cousins. What is interesting is how they can change as we go through life, if you uncle gets married you suddenly might have a new aunt in your life.

Did you know that Jesus had a family when he lived here on earth? I think when we read the Bible, we often forget that Jesus was a human being just as much as he was God when he walked among us on Earth and taught the disciples.

Jesus's mom was Mary, we all remember that from Christmas, some of us probably know his dad was Joseph. Who knows the names of his brothers? I am willing to guess that even many of your parents could not name his brothers.



His brothers are named in Matthew 13:55: "Are not his brothers James and Joseph and Simon and Judas?". So, Jesus had a family while here on Earth. In fact, he lived with his family and worked as a carpenter until he was 30 years old. So, his family knew him for 30 years as Jesus the man before he left them and became known as Jesus the Son of God.

That is what we are learning about today. What happened when Jesus the Carpenter left home and became Jesus the Son of God?

Could you imagine what would happen if suddenly an adult you know started going all around the area performing miracles like casting out evil spirits and healing people who were really sick? What about if they suddenly were the best pastor anyone had ever heard, so everyone wanted to come hear them teach about God?

In the book of Mark that is what happens. Jesus has left home and is travelling around Galilee. He is preaching, teaching, performing miracles and healings. When His family hears this, they are worried, because they only know Him as their brother, who is a carpenter. They did not understand that He was actually God. So, they get very worried, because He is getting a lot of bad attention from the religious leaders and local authorities who are threatened by what He is saying and doing.

So, Jesus's mom and brothers go to Jesus's friend's house where he is staying and try to get him to come home with Him, so that they can protect Him. That sounds like a good thing to do, to protect your family, doesn't it?

Jesus is inside teaching when they arrive, and they send someone in to tell Jesus to come out and greet His mom and His brothers. I bet everyone was making room for Him to leave, because it was his mom and brothers. If someone came to you and told you your mom wants to see you, you get up and go because it is your mom.

However, Jesus does not get up at all. He looks up from His teachings and asks the person who came in ‘Who are my mother and my brothers?’

Jesus then looks at all of those people gathered in the little house who are listening to his teachings. He looks at everyone who has become one of his followers.

Then Jesus says what we are all meant to hear ‘Here are my mother and my brothers! For whoever does the will of God, he is my brother, sister and mother.’



This is the family that we are all part of. This is the biggest and most important family in our lives. It is a family that is made up of so many different people. People who may look different, speak different languages, even live-in different places. Yet, we are all one in our love of Jesus and following God’s will in our lives. So, when you look around at everyone here who you go to church with, you can think they are your

family too.

### **Responsive Reading (Psalm 138)**

I give you thanks, O LORD, with my whole heart;  
before the gods I sing your praise;  
I bow down toward your holy temple  
and give thanks to your name for your steadfast love and your faithfulness,  
for you have exalted above all things  
your name and your word.

**On the day I called, you answered me;  
my strength of soul you increased.**

All the kings of the earth shall give you thanks, O LORD,  
for they have heard the words of your mouth,  
and they shall sing of the ways of the LORD,  
for great is the glory of the LORD.

**For though the LORD is high, he regards the lowly,  
but the haughty he knows from afar.**

Though I walk in the midst of trouble,  
you preserve my life;  
you stretch out your hand against the wrath of my enemies,  
and your right hand delivers me.

The LORD will fulfill his purpose for me;  
 your steadfast love, O LORD, endures forever.  
 Do not forsake the work of your hands.

Scripture Reading:

Mark 3:20–35 ESV

**20** Then he went home, and the crowd gathered again, so that they could not even eat. **21** And when his family heard it, they went out to seize him, for they were saying, “He is out of his mind.” **22** And the scribes who came down from Jerusalem were saying, “He is possessed by Beelzebul,” and “by the prince of demons he casts out the demons.” **23** And he called them to him and said to them in parables, “How can Satan cast out Satan? **24** If a kingdom is divided against itself, that kingdom cannot stand. **25** And if a house is divided against itself, that house will not be able to stand. **26** And if Satan has risen up against himself and is divided, he cannot stand, but is coming to an end. **27** But no one can enter a strong man’s house and plunder his goods, unless he first binds the strong man. Then indeed he may plunder his house. **28** “Truly, I say to you, all sins will be forgiven the children of man, and whatever blasphemies they utter, **29** but whoever blasphemes against the Holy Spirit never has forgiveness, but is guilty of an eternal sin”— **30** for they were saying, “He has an unclean spirit.” **31** And his mother and his brothers came, and standing outside they sent to him and called him. **32** And a crowd was sitting around him, and they said to him, “Your mother and your brothers are outside, seeking you.” **33** And he answered them, “Who are my mother and my brothers?” **34** And looking about at those who sat around him, he said, “Here are my mother and my brothers! **35** For whoever does the will of God, he is my brother and sister and mother.”

This is the word of the Lord,  
**Thanks be to God!**

### Prayer for illumination

Our Lord and our God,  
 now as we hear your Word, fill us with your Spirit.  
 Soften our hearts that we may delight in your presence.  
 Sharpen our minds that we may discern your truth.  
 Shape our wills that we may desire your ways.  
 Through Jesus Christ, our Lord. **Amen.**

**“Our Family”**  
**Pastor Gerry Gallant**

I enjoy preaching from the lectionary on Sunday. I enjoy this because sometimes it presents me with challenges that I do not expect. It forces me to spend more time in

reflection and prayer on the scripture, especially when the Gospel for the day is not something that is easily understood or commonly studied and preached. When I looked up the lectionary reading for today, I was hesitant at first, after all this is a big sermon for me, preaching for a call is not something you do every day. I asked myself, should I preach the worship service from the lectionary, or should I preach something I have previously prepared so I can be confident it will represent me well?

So, I prayed.

As I prayed and contemplated the scripture from the lectionary, I came to realize that this scripture is what God intended for me to preach to you today and that it will be a true representation of who I am every day.



The author of the book of Mark enlightens us through a literary device he often uses in his book called the Markan sandwich - a story contained within a story. In today's scripture we have a story about Jesus's relationship with his human family which is interrupted by a second story, inserted in the middle, which helps to illuminate the reality of being a follower of God and the importance of our faith.

Our scripture today begins with Mark 3:20-21:

**20 Then he went home, and the crowd gathered again, so that they could not even eat. 21 And when his family heard it, they went out to seize him, for they were saying, "He is out of his mind."**

At this point in the book of Mark, the ministry of Jesus is becoming well known in the area as He has been healing the sick, the blind and the lame, as well as casting out demons from the possessed. Jesus has called the twelve disciples and has been surrounded by crowds of people who are coming to see the miracles that He is doing, to seek a miracle for themselves or for their loved ones.

As we see at the beginning of today's scripture the crowds have become so large and so determined that they press in upon Jesus even when He seeks rest and food. As you can imagine this means that word of who Jesus is has travelled around the region and His family will have heard at this point who Jesus claims to be. Even though Mary knows



He is the Son of God, His siblings, yes Jesus had siblings, do not really know, or understand that their brother is the Son of God. They hear stories about their brother travelling around the region performing miracles and claiming to be the Son of God. And what is their reaction, “He is out of his mind”. Remember that while there are many who follow Jesus and believe He is a great man, perhaps even a prophet or at least a man blessed by God, to claim to be God is something very different. Also, in these crowds there are the religious leaders, the Pharisees, the Sadducees, and the scribes who are getting more and more frustrated by Jesus and His ministry.

In fact, this judgement by society is something that many Christians are subject to in their life. Anytime someone takes the word of God seriously in their life they should expect to have someone judge them. Those of us who take God’s word seriously, who base our lives upon, who stand on what the scripture teaches and proclaim the truth of God’s word to the world will be considered by some, or maybe even by popular culture, to be “out of our mind”.

Sometimes Christians are referred to as religious nuts, or religious fanatics. They are called this because the way of the Lord often goes against the ways of the world. So, they are judged by the world and may be called fanatics because what they are saying does not agree with the ideas that are promoted by society. So, if you have ever been called a religious nut or religious fanatic, you are in good company, as even Jesus’s family thought He had lost his mind. It is this faith that sets Christians apart from the world and often results in the secular world judging and condemning Christianity.

The book of John 15: 18-19 tells us this:

**18 “If the world hates you, know that it has hated me before it hated you. 19 If you were of the world, the world would love you as its own; but because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you.**



So here we have Jesus’s family trying to step in and save Jesus from Himself and the judgement of the world that He is bringing down upon Himself and those around Him. I imagine that they were concerned for their brother. I also imagine that they were more concerned about how the judgement being passed on Him would be passed unto them as His family and their effort was as much

to protect themselves as it was to protect Jesus.

With this in mind Mark interrupts the story of family with the arrival of some of the scribes of the land, who serve to emphasize this idea that Jesus is causing people to talk about who He is and what He is doing, in a sense helping us to understand why His family has shown up and claimed He is out of his mind.

In Mark 3:22,

**22 And the scribes who came down from Jerusalem were saying, “He is possessed by Beelzebul,” and “by the prince of demons he casts out the demons.”**

The scribes appear in the story and they level against Jesus a charge that would be considered absolutely unthinkable by the majority of society. They are enraged that He is going against the teachings that they are preaching and will do whatever it takes to regain their worldly and secular power. So, they insist that Jesus is a man who is possessed by Beelzebul, a lesser deity that was called the prince of Demons, the lord of the flies, the lord of dung heaps. In some of the translations He is called Beelzebub. Beelzebub was the name for the God of the Baal's, the ruler of the demons, Satan himself. In either case the Scribes are attesting that Jesus is not doing the healing and casting out of demons because of any power He has received from God, but instead because He has the power of the devil in Him.

Take note though that they did not deny or even question if Jesus was actually healing people or casting out demons. They acknowledge that He was doing these things, Jesus was healing people, Jesus was doing miraculous works. Instead, they say that Jesus is doing these things because He is an agent of Satan, that is if Satan himself does not possess Him. The claim is that it is through Jesus's relationship with the devil that He has been given the power to do these miracles.

The reality is that while the scribes make this accusation, they should know that Satan cannot perform miracles. He is the master deceiver. He tricks people using counterfeit miracles and lying wonders. We know this because in the book of Job, Satan does not hold any power over Job until the Lord gives him the power in verse 12.

**12 And the LORD said to Satan, “Behold, all that he has is in your hand. Only against him do not stretch out your hand.” So Satan went out from the presence of the LORD.**

So, the scribes attesting that Jesus's miracles are true, should know that the power is coming from God. Yet they are blinded by their own worldly goals and





ideas. Instead of recognizing the power of God at work, they insist that Jesus is in league with the Devil.

Jesus's response to this accusation is direct in Mark 3:23-27.

**23** And he called them to him and said to them in parables, “How can Satan cast out Satan? **24** If a kingdom is divided against itself, that kingdom cannot stand. **25** And if a house is divided against itself, that house will not be able to stand. **26** And if Satan has risen up against himself and is divided, he cannot stand, but is coming to an end. **27** But no one can enter a strong man's house and plunder his goods, unless he first binds the strong man. Then indeed he may plunder his house.

He asks them simply how can Satan cast out Satan? He is telling them to think about what they have just said. Why would the Satan undo the work of his minions? This makes no sense at all. Every military leader since the beginning of time knows that the easiest way to defeat an enemy is to divide them and then conquer them. Jesus is asking them to think about why Satan would give Jesus the power to cast out his armies, to weaken his strength, it is illogical. Satan would not give anyone the power to cast out his minions and defeat his own army.

No kingdom that is divided can stand; we have seen this throughout history. The kingdom of the Pharaoh's fell, the Kingdoms of Alexander the great fell, the kingdom of the Roman Empire fell. Once there is a divide in the kingdom it will eventually crumble, and this holds true for the Kingdom of Hell just as much as it does for any worldly kingdom. So, if Satan is actually casting out his own minions it is inevitable that his kingdom will come to an end.

Instead, Jesus tells the scribes another parable. Imagine a burglar trying to plunder a house. If a burglar wants to plunder the house of a Strong man, first he must bind the strong man. Once the strong man is bound; he can take what he wishes from the house without worry.



Jesus tells them through this parable that Satan is the strong man with a house full of plunder, people he has afflicted by Satan in some form such as illness and possession. Even people who have been caught up in living a life of sin. Jesus is not working with Satan, instead he is breaking into the areas of people's lives that Satan has afflicted and held in his domain. Jesus is overpowering the strong man, overcoming Satan, and binding him, so that He may set free those who were held by Satan's dominion, through healing and casting

out of demons. This is the only logical conclusion that the scribes should have come too. Only someone who has the power to overcome the Devil is capable of sending his minions away.

Then Jesus gives them a very serious warning. One which I believe every Christian has pondered at least once in their lives. In fact, this is one of the most often asked questions whenever you give youth the opportunity to ask anything about their faith. What is the one unforgivable sin, the eternal sin that Jesus warns of in this piece of scripture.

Throughout history many people have debated what is the worst sin. Some claim it is murder, the taking of another life is the worst possible sin. There are some who believe it is infidelity, adultery, because it results in emotional damage to so many through the breaking of love and trust. Yet in other parts of scripture, we see the sins of murder and adultery, and those that committed those types of sins, forgiven.

David was both a murderer and an adulterer and yet when he sought out forgiveness and repented of his sins he was forgiven and restored to his state of grace with the Lord.

So, to make it even clearer these are not the sins that Jesus names here, in Mark Chapter 3, as an unforgivable sin, He gives a very specific sin that is the unforgivable sin.

He begins with truly, it is *αμην* (Ameyn) in Greek, a word meant usually to follow what someone has said and to show that we agree with it as being true. Yet Jesus begins by telling everyone present that He is about to speak the truth. He is making it clear that what is said after the amen is something that all who hear should pay attention to and heed in their lives.



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

Firstly, He states that all sins will be forgiven the children of man and even the blasphemes they utter. This is good news for all of us. We are all sinners and no matter what the sin is, if we come to God as David did with repentance in our hearts and honestly confess our sins to Him, we shall be forgiven.

Instead, Jesus clarifies that the sin which is the eternal sin is the blaspheming of the Holy Spirit. That makes things simple, except I am sure that there are many of you now wondering what blaspheming the Holy Spirit means. After all, how are we to make sure we never commit a blasphemy against the Holy Spirit if we do not understand what it means.

Blasphemy is simply speaking with irreverence. Something as simple as being shocked and saying 'Oh my God' is blaspheming the Lord. So, we should all be thankful that blasphemy is not an unforgivable sin. Yet this should be a reminder for all of us we need to be conscientious of our words. When we blaspheme against the Lord, we are not holding true to the Lord's prayer when we say, 'Hallowed be Thy Name', even if we are forgiven of such blasphemies.

Jesus's words seem to imply that we can blaspheme against the Father and be forgiven, we can even blaspheme against the Son and be forgiven. This is fortunate for all of us because I am willing to bet that many people who come to Christianity later in life are guilty of both of these sins.

In the Gospel of Luke, Jesus makes it clear in the parallel verse located in that scripture that those who speak against Him will be forgiven but those who speak against the Holy Spirit will not. Luke 12:10 ESV

**10 And everyone who speaks a word against the Son of Man will be forgiven, but the one who blasphemes against the Holy Spirit will not be forgiven.**

This leaves us asking ourselves why we are allowed to blaspheme against God or Jesus but not the Holy Spirit.



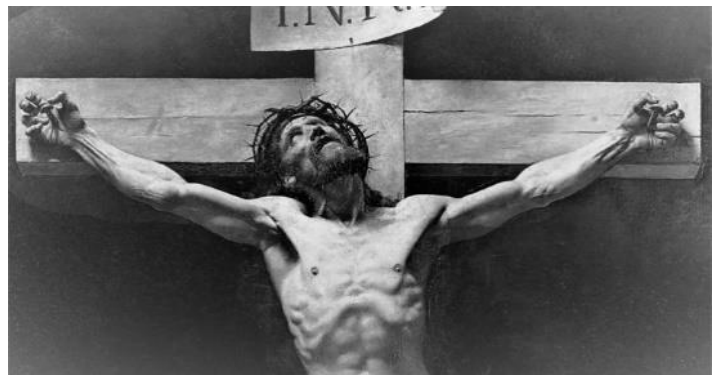
The only real way to understand this is to look at the warning in the context of the scripture. We need to set aside our own understanding of the world, and instead focus on understanding the scripture as it is presented. This dire warning is given to the scribes! The ones who have come down from Jerusalem with an agenda, get rid of this trouble causer Jesus. The man

who people are starting to believe might be the Son of God and who is impacting their power and their influence over the people of the land. The scribes have it in their mind to do whatever they need to do to discredit Him with the populace and regain their hold over the Jews within the region.

They know that they cannot claim that His miracles are fake or trickery because they have been experienced and witnessed by too many people. So, those in power go with the next best plan they can produce. They seek to discredit Jesus with the people following him by claiming the miracles that He performs are in fact because He is in league with the devil and not with God.

Jesus's warning here is given in response to this accusation. Jesus warns the scribes that they will be forgiven for blaspheming Him, but they are perilously close to blaspheming the Holy Spirit and damning themselves for all eternity. Jesus is telling them they have walked to the ledge that leads to the abyss of Hell and one small step further and there will be no hope of salvation.

The reality of this warning is further amplified for those of us who have read the Gospels and remember what Jesus said while he was hung upon the cross. Jesus looks out to the crowd that had handed Him over to the Roman authorities for Crucifixion. He looks at the members of the Pharisees, the Sadducee and the scribes who have blasphemed Him and condemned Him to torture and to death and what does He say. Luke 23:34 ESV



**34** And Jesus said, “Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.”  
And they cast lots to divide his garments.

This is the reality of God's forgiveness for his people. You can blaspheme and condemn Christ to death and still be forgiven. Therefore, we must take Jesus's warning against blaspheming the Holy Spirit seriously.

Blasphemy against the Holy Spirit is more than simply unbelief. It is a verbal or written sin where someone desecrates the Holy name of God. So, when you Blaspheme the Holy Spirit, you are knowingly desecrating the name of God. Why is it only the blaspheme against the Holy Spirit though that contains this status of eternal sin?

To understand this, we need to dig deeper into the scriptures that follow the Gospels. In particular the book of Hebrews: Hebrews 6:4–6 ESV

**4** For it is impossible, in the case of those who have once been enlightened, who have tasted the heavenly gift, and have shared in the Holy Spirit, **5** and have tasted the goodness of the word of God and the powers of the age to come, **6** and then have fallen away, to restore them again to repentance,

**since they are crucifying once again the Son of God to their own harm and holding him up to contempt.**

First, we are warned against Apostasy. Those people who fall away from the word of Christ. Those who interpret the scripture in their own way so that they can justify their own worldly desires and worldly goals. This is also a warning against syncretism, something that is becoming more and more prevalent in Christianity today. Jesus is warning people that once you know who He is in Truth, you are to live your life in His Word. Later it is repeated but with the addition of the expectation of punishment for those who do not adhere to his teachings. Hebrews 10:26–29 ESV

**26 For if we go on sinning deliberately after receiving the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins, 27 but a fearful expectation of judgment, and a fury of fire that will consume the adversaries. 28 Anyone who has set aside the law of Moses dies without mercy on the evidence of two or three witnesses. 29 How much worse punishment, do you think, will be deserved by the one who has trampled underfoot the Son of God, and has profaned the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified, and has outraged the Spirit of grace?**



The key here is understanding that the unforgivable sin comes after you have come to understand the truth of who Jesus Christ is through the Holy Spirit. Once you understand the power and transforming work of the Holy Spirit in your life, if you deny Christ and walk away from Him, that is the unforgivable sin.

This is not a warning meant for those people who do not believe in Jesus. Many Christians go through times of being committed to Jesus, times of doubting their faith and even times of walking away from the Lord. This is not what Jesus is speaking of here, He is speaking of those who have truly tasted the goodness of the Word of God and then walked away from it and hardened their hearts against God. People who know the truth of who Jesus is and then still attest He is not God. There are many people who have walked away from the church only to return later in life under the conviction of the Holy Spirit to seek their repentance. These people are forgiven as are we for all of the sins we have committed and that truly shows the mercy and grace of our Lord and Savior.

Blasphemy of the Holy Spirit is a sin that each and every one of us is capable of committing. However, the reality is that if we have ever worried that we may have committed this sin, it is very likely we have not. Even those who doubt their Christianity and worry about whether they have committed this sin have probably not come close. These scribes, however, who are confronting Jesus after they have seen Him heal and cast out demons are perilously close to knowingly saying that the works of God are the works of Satan. This is why Jesus delivers such a dire warning to them.

It is after this dire warning that we are returned to the story of Jesus and His family and given a reminder on how we can avoid ever getting close to committing this sin.

**31** And his mother and his brothers came, and standing outside they sent to him and called him. **32** And a crowd was sitting around him, and they said to him, “Your mother and your brothers are outside, seeking you.” **33** And he answered them, “Who are my mother and my brothers?” **34** And looking about at those who sat around him, he said, “Here are my mother and my brothers! **35** For whoever does the will of God, he is my brother and sister and mother.”

Remember that in the culture of the time family was very important. Jesus is being overwhelmed by the crowds, accused by the scribes, and does not even have time to eat. In all likelihood his family would expect Him to stop doing what He was doing and come out to meet them when they called upon Him.

You need to picture this; Jesus is in a crowd that is packed all around Him. He cannot even recline to eat, people are asking Him questions and listening to every single word He responds with, especially after witnessing the dire warning He has just delivered to the scribes. In this context someone pushes their way through the crowd and informs Jesus that His family is outside and waiting for Him. People would expect Him to go to them, so I imagine that they would already be trying to move and create a path, expecting Him to rise and go to His family.



However, instead of standing and working through the crowd to meet the family that He surely loved, He looks at the crowd around Him and says, ‘Who are my mother and my brothers?’



This is such a loaded question. However, the answer.... in the answer there is such beauty... such strength... such love.... This answer is perhaps one of the most beautiful answers I have ever heard in my life. Because Jesus just lets the question fall on the ears of all those collected around Him. He lets everyone be caught in the moment, letting the shock take

effect and all eyes focus on Him. Then when He has them in His grasp He looks at those around Him. He looks at those seated close to Him. Those who had followed Him, questioned Him, listened to Him. He looks at them and answers His own question.

“Here are my mother and my brothers! Whoever does God’s will be my brother and sister and mother.”

Those gathered together in His presence they are His family. His brothers and sisters and mothers. They are all in His family.

There is a caveat though ‘Whoever does God’s will’. It is not enough to be in Jesus’s presence. You need to be doing God’s will to be part of His family and it is through being part of His family that we can ensure we are never going to commit the eternal sin.

It is here, in the end of this Markan sandwich, that we are given the most valuable lesson, one which we need to recognize and apply to our lives in the here and now. The only relationship that matters in our life is our relationship with God. Biological relationships ultimately do not matter, we can adopt and banish people from our biological family at will. Religious relationships do not matter, denominations can become focused on the wrong things and the sin of man’s desires for wealth, power and acceptance can come to override the truth of scripture. It is only through sitting at the feet of Jesus and obeying God’s will that we are adopted into His eternal family.

Those who were gathered in that room, listening to His word, and obeying His teachings are all part of His family. It is not being biologically related to Jesus that makes you part of his family.

Luke tells us this. Luke 11:27–28 ESV

**27 As he said these things, a woman in the crowd raised her voice and said to him, “Blessed is the womb that bore you, and the breasts at which you nursed!” 28 But he said, “Blessed rather are those who hear the word of God and keep it!”**

It is not even being part of the church which makes you part of his family as we learn in the book of 1 John and the book of Matthew.

1 John 2:4 ESV

**4 Whoever says “I know him” but does not keep his commandments is a liar, and the truth is not in him,**

Matthew 7:21 ESV

**21 “Not everyone who says to me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom of heaven, but the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven.**

It is through our understanding of the truth that Jesus Christ is our Lord that we are able to endure the judgements of society and culture that will be cast against Christians. We are called to spend our life living out the Word of God. Living the Christ-like life everywhere we go, and, in every situation that we may find ourselves, even if it brings the condemnation of the world upon us. We need to keep ourselves seated at the feet of Jesus, listening to His teachings and to obeying His word. Ensuring we will never turn our backs on Him or even come close to committing the eternal sin of knowing the truth of who Jesus is and then rejecting Him from our lives.



All Christians need to embrace the words written by Paul in Romans 8:14-19 and see past the things of this world and look forward to the Glory we will as heirs with Christ in His eternal Glory. Romans 8:14–19 ESV

**14 For all who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God. 15 For you did not receive the spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received the Spirit of adoption as sons, by whom we cry, “Abba! Father!” 16 The Spirit himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, 17 and if children, then heirs—heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, provided we suffer with him in order that we may also be glorified with him.**



**18** For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed to us. **19** For the creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the sons of God.

So, as we part from here today let us do so with a fresh understanding of our family in Christ. Let us all commit ourselves daily to renew our walk alongside Christ in this world; continue to learn at His feet, and to obey His word as we live our lives to His glory.

**Hymn 634:**

**“Will You Come and Follow Me”**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GiXnbOORTAU>

1. Will you come and follow me if I but call your name?  
Will you go where you don't know and never be the same?  
Will you let my love be shown? Will you let my name be known,  
will you let my life be grown in you and you in me?
2. Will you leave yourself behind if I but call your name?  
Will you care for cruel and kind and never be the same?  
Will you risk the hostile stare should your life attract or scare?  
Will you let me answer prayer in you and you in me?
3. Will you let the blinded see if I but call your name?  
Will you set the prisoners free and never be the same?  
Will you kiss the leper clean and do such as this unseen,  
and admit to what I mean in you and you in me?
4. Will you love the "you" you hide if I but call your name?  
Will you quell the fear inside and never be the same?  
Will you use the faith you've found to reshape the world around,  
through my sight and touch and sound in you and you in me?
5. Lord your summons echoes true when you but call my name.  
Let me turn and follow you and never be the same.  
In Your company I'll go where Your love and footsteps show.  
Thus I'll move and live and grow in you and you in me.

### **Offering**

Presenting our tithes and offerings is an act of worship. I want to encourage you to write a cheque and drop it in the mail to the church using your envelope, if you have one. (St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church, PO Box 161, 1 Drummond St W, Perth, ON K7H 3E3) We also have another option for you for giving and that is you can make an e-Transfer. This note from our treasurer.

**E-transfers are now accepted. Please note the new email address for this purpose only.**

[standrewspert offering@gmail.com](mailto:standrewspert offering@gmail.com) Please include your Offering Envelope # in the message

section of the INTERAC transfer page you fill in. If you wish any part of your donation to go to a specific fund (eg Presbyterian Sharing) please mention this in your message.

### **Invitation to Offering**

As we come before God with our tithes and offerings, let us remember the words of Micah 6: 6-8

**6** “With what shall I come before the LORD, and bow myself before God on high? Shall I come before him with burnt offerings, with calves a year old? **7** Will the LORD be pleased with thousands of rams, with ten thousands of rivers of oil? Shall I give my firstborn for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul?” **8** He has told you, O man, what is good; and what does the LORD require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?

### **Offertory Prayer**

Gracious God, everything we have comes from you. You fill us with good things. Our hearts and lives overflow with your abundance. With thanksgiving, we bring to you our time, talents, and tithes. Use these gifts that you have given us to feed others as we have been fed, to serve others as we have been served, and to bless others as we have been blessed, through Jesus Christ, our Lord.  
**Amen.**

### **Pastoral Prayer**

Heavenly Father, you call us to be your friends and to make friends of others – more even, to recognize in them our brothers and sisters, your family in Christ. So, we pray for ourselves and for the world and its people.

We pray for the life of our denomination as it meets in General Assembly. Send your Spirit to work in and through the commissioners, even while they gather at a distance and engage through virtual technology. Speak through your Spirit to open minds and hearts to your leading. We pray that the truth of Your Word is recognized by all present at the Assembly and that the decisions reached at this assembly are in accordance with your will and are received by all with grace. Father we ask that you give us the strength to stand firm and adhere to your teachings.

We pray for those who serve our nation as leaders in business, politics, health care and education. Grant them wisdom in this challenging time, so that their choices consider the needs of the most vulnerable. We pray that you continue to guide our leaders through this pandemic so that they are capable of leading our communities to a return to a life where we are once again able to gather in worship, praise, and fellowship of you Lord, as well as gather together with friends and family. We pray for the Children who have endured many difficulties

this year in their education, Lord watch over them and use this time with their families to bring them closer to you.

We pray for those who face uncertainty, unrest in the world today. We bring before you people in our own community who know upheaval because of the pandemic, and those in places around the world where injustice is unrelenting. We pray for peace in those places that are suffering because of conflict. We pray for the Christians in the Middle East who suffer under persecution, that you would protect them and comfort them through the challenges that they face. We pray for the many small business owners, and their employees who have been stained financially throughout this time, provide for their needs, and let them find the true value of a life spent in worship of you. We pray for those who have suffered difficulties and losses through this pandemic, comfort them and help them to find solace in you.

We pray in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, who live and reign together with you, one God forever and ever. **Amen.**

**Closing Hymn:** “All My Ways Are Known To You”, CityAlight  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=44mVzqGeS-Q>

1. In days of peace and days of rest  
 In times of loss and loneliness  
 Though rich or poor, Your word is true  
 That all my ways are known to You
2. No trial has come beyond Your hand  
 No step I walk beyond Your plan  
 The path is dark outside my view  
 Still all my ways are known to You

**Chorus**

And oh what peace that I have found  
 Wherever I may be  
 For all my ways are known to You  
 Hallelujah, they are known to You!

3. I do not fear the final night  
 For death will be the door to life  
 You take my hand and lead me through  
 For all my ways are known to You

**Chorus**

And oh what peace that I have found  
 Wherever I may be  
 For all my ways are known to You  
 Hallelujah, they are known to You!

**Bridge**

Open up my eyes so I may see  
 That You have made these ways for me

Open up my eyes so I may see  
That You my God, will walk with me

### **Benediction**

The peace of God,  
which passes all understanding,  
keep your hearts and minds  
in the knowledge and love of God,  
and of God's Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord;  
and the blessing of God Almighty,  
the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit,  
remain with you always. **Amen**