

February 24 Study Companion

A Misunderstanding

Passage: **Mark 3:20-35**

Jesus was often misunderstood/hated by the people around him because:

- His culture had no context for his ministry.
 - If someone was suffering, the understanding was that they did something to deserve it.
- His ministry upset the status quo.
 - His miracles upset the power and authority religious leaders had over the people.

This encounter is still relevant to us today because we still struggle with the idea of really loving someone we think or feel doesn't deserve it.

- We don't naturally love with the capacity that God does. We often have subconscious biases and expectations about what people we will allow ourselves to engage with.
- In contrast, Jesus shows us that God's love is for everyone, it has no qualifiers. His love is pure, endless, and is expressed in a desire to have personal relationship with all of us!

Takeaway #1: To be called by God means to be misunderstood.

People won't get why it matters so much that we love people it seems doesn't deserve it. But when we love like God loves, we will always be looking for those who need healing and redemption, even if normal culture pushes against it.

Jesus also shows us that the picture of showing God's love rarely fits within the realm of our comfort zones.

It's not for us to dictate the who, how, where, and when of God's love.

- When we put conditions on how God's love should operate, or who it should cater to, we run the danger of setting ourselves against God's heart, not with it.

We can't put terms on a love that has no restrictions.

- This is the framework of 'unforgivable sin'
 - What it's not: One thing that, when you do it, you can never have relationship with God.
 - What it is: when our view of faith becomes restricted or biased against certain people, we begin to criticize when God wants to reveal his love in unique ways to them.
- When we close our hearts toward people, we actually close our hearts toward God.

- Jesus wants us to be A PART of God's movement of love to all mankind, not critics of it.

Takeaway #2: Be open to the diverse ways God unveils his plans and purposes.

Embracing this kind of love actually invites us into an eternal family.

This is the promise of God: Though we may be misunderstood and feared and hated by man, when we open ourselves to to fullness of God's love and mission, we become part of the family of God.

Though we may be misunderstood by man, we are known by God.

Application:

1. Have you examined your heart to see if there is any agenda or bias that prevents you from loving people completely?
2. Have you opened your heart to imagine how God can exercise radical love through you?

Small Group Questions

Ice Breaker: What is the silliest/most extreme misunderstanding you've had with a spouse/family member/friend?

Study & Discussion

Read Mark 3:20-21

1. None of us are Jesus, so how can we balance the importance of sharing the gospel and the advice/influence of people close to us? Who would you consider important voices in your life?

Read Mark 3:24-25

2. Jesus talk about how a divided house cannot stand. How does unity with one another play into the the gospel message?

Read Mark 3:31-35

3. How does it make you feel that Jesus seems to redefine the role of family for the believer?

Prayer: Ask about individual prayer needs. Is there someone outside of your life group anyone would like prayer for? Finally, spend a little time praying into the idea of discovering how you (individually and as a group) can be a bigger part of God's movement of love in your circles of influence.