



theme: The Gospel of Mark #6 – Where Does Your Loyalty Lie?

materials: Bibles, yarn

This month the cell talks will cover chapters three and four of Mark. We are building up a picture of Jesus in these months, one which amazed, angered, and fascinated people in 1st Century Palestine. What does this picture of Jesus tell us now? How do we respond to this “Son of Man”?

welcome

Who is the strongest person in your cell? Ask everyone’s opinion, and test it out with a push-up competition. Who can do the most the quickest? The winner should get a pat on the back.

Alternatively, ask the question: What does the word “family” mean to you? Speak out all the associations you have with this word.

interact

Spend some time giving thanks to God for the other people in your cell. See if everyone will thank the Lord for one or two people by name, and to give specifics of how they are a blessing to the cell. As you are doing this, take some yarn and tie it around everyone’s wrists, so that everyone is connected to everyone else. Stay tied together like this for the rest of the cell.

read

Read Mark 3:21-35

What do you learn about Jesus and his mission from this passage?

Why does Jesus’ family think He is out of His mind? Could they be right?

Have you ever had close family or friends think you were crazy for trying to do what was right? Has anyone ever thought you were crazy for being a Christian or being part of your cell?

Why do the teachers of the law think that Jesus is possessed by a demon?

What do you think Jesus means when he says, “A Kingdom divided against itself cannot stand”?

Have you ever been on a team or in a group that was divided? How well did that team or group work?

What kind of things can divide a cell group, or a church?

Are there any “Strong men” (dividing forces, even demonic forces) that are causing a lack of unity in your cell or church right now? How do you identify these? And then how do you deal with them?

At the end of this passage, Jesus’ family again comes to get Him. What do you think of His response to them? (verses 33-35).

Is He being a good family member?

How would your family react if you treated them this way?

Why does Jesus say this? What is He teaching us about devotion and loyalty to the Kingdom of God? Does it really come above family?

If our “family” are those who do the will of the Father, how should that change the way we act towards others, even if they aren’t flesh and blood? Do we really see other Christians as part of our family?



think

Who is your brother? Your mother? Your sister? Your Uncle? Jesus said His family were those who do the will of God (v. 35)...(and the will of God is your sanctification – 1 Thess. 4:3). This week spend time with your family (the kind Jesus is describing here.) Take a family photo, post it on facebook and tag your brother, sister, parent or child, not simply your biological family, although there is nothing wrong with that, but your spiritual family. Invite someone over for family games night or a family dinner. Intentionally address your family this week, when you call your friend rather than saying “Hi John, it’s Jill” say “Hey Bro, it’s your sister Jill”. Next week at cell debrief this – was it awkward or weird? Why or why not?

live & pray

Is there anything in your life that is coming in between you and the Kingdom of God? Is there anything that is distracting you from that primary purpose? Examine your life this week, write down those things that may be taking the place God should have in your life, and pray for God’s wisdom in how to deal with them.

useful resources

Website: <http://usinfo.state.gov/infousa/government/overview/22.html> - a brilliant speech by Abraham Lincoln, “A House Divided”

leader’s guide

A suggestion right off the start here: don’t talk about blasphemy against the Holy Spirit unless you really know what you are talking about. It will probably come up, but it is a huge topic in and of itself, and best left for another time perhaps. If you do have to talk about it, it does say in verse 30 that the reason Jesus said this was because they accused Him, full of the Spirit of God, of having an evil spirit. They were so deceived and lacking in discernment that they could not tell God from the devil, just as earlier they could not tell good from evil. Jesus is calling himself a Rabbi, gathering followers, healing and driving out demons and making some serious enemies. His family could be excused for thinking that He had gone nuts. The teachers of the law seem to have accused Jesus either out of huge blindness or just out of a desire to stop him, regardless of the truth. Jesus is saying that it would make no sense for Him to be driving out demons under the influence of the prince of demons – what is going on is a battle between 2 kingdoms, kingdoms that are utterly opposed to one another. Jesus’ behaviour towards His family seems rude to us now, but would have been shocking in His culture. Family loyalty was primary. But Jesus is teaching that loyalty to the Kingdom of God comes first, and everything else is secondary. Family does not come above the Kingdom of God, or at least we have to have a very different view of what family is.