

## Sermon: "Imagine – If you try" - 6-10-18 - Mark 3:20-35

Grace and Peace – Pause and Reflect...

It was another difficult news week; with the suicides of two well-known people, to the quarrels of government, volcanos erupting and killing people and the blurry lines between what is real and what is considered fake – all of which is certainly challenging to those trying to live a peaceful lives as disciples in Christ and children of God. What I am reminded of is how important it is to listen and learn from the children in our lives and in this world, who share wisdom with us in various ways.

*'There wasn't a parent in the room with a dry eye by the end. He got a standing ovation and the applause lasted forever!! A woman stopped me to tell me that she would buy it on iTunes if I put it out there!!'* stated; Proud mom Michelle Kornowski. She captured video of her son, Adam, performing the song during the talent show at Lakeside Elementary in Chisago City, Minnesota, on May 24. Adam, at the age of 9 shared his version of the song by the John Lennon; "Imagine." Maybe you caught this news story too; it is certainly worth hearing again: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8S1yjAOc3Do>

Imagine! Adam Kornowski shared that he was going to sing a more "upbeat" song but chose this one because of all the strife and trouble and "un-oneness" that is going on in this country and the world today. I couldn't agree more! As we consider the Gospel and the message of all our texts this morning we are hearing about divisions and scandal and conflict. These lessons also call us to image what it would be like and what it can be like to live in the "Oneness" of God as a family, newly defined by Jesus.

As you may remember from my digest article regarding our Gospel text, I stated that there is high drama in our Gospel today. Imagine, if you will the backdrop of the setting of this text, where Jesus had just been up on a mountainside and called to him those he wanted as disciples, and they came to him. He was making his way to Jerusalem, with the 12 following him like sheep, not quite sure of the journey ahead of them. Then as with

any dramatic piece, such as a play, or a made for TV movie or even reality TV there is a cast of characters.

The cast for today's drama are the **Crowd, which included the disciples, the Family of Jesus, the Scribes and of course Jesus.** When the crowd arrives they swarm around Jesus at almost every turn. Jesus is certainly a celebrity of sorts, full of charisma and passionate about his message. Jesus is literally a magnetic personality attracting all sorts of people to him..

Next to enter the scene; stage right is Jesus "family" who are very concerned about Jesus state of mind and his well-being. They are intent on seizing Jesus, possibly just to get him out of the situation. They are worried about him, and the people who are surrounding him and the things he is saying. They seem to want it all to stop, and want Jesus to get out of the "crazy" life he has chosen to lead and return to his normal life as a carpenter. This is evidenced by the remarks his family makes; "he is beside himself," he is not in his right mind.

The drama continues when the scribes from Jerusalem who had already arrived, were quick to offer their explanation of Jesus and his power. This isn't the first time Jesus had encountered these scribes, and it wouldn't be his last. It seems they have no other way of interpreting what he has been saying and doing since he went to see John and undergo a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins, than to make their accusations.

The drama intensifies and you can almost hear the background music get louder as the Scribes proclaim in the most dramatic voices they have; *"He has Beelzebul, and by the ruler of the demons he casts out demons." He is not of God, but the devil (my own literary insertion).* The drama continues to build as Jesus responds to these "theological heavyweights, who represent the authority and theological wisdom of the establishment," when he speaks in a parable, of course, *"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 his end has come. 27 But no one can*

*enter a strong man's house and plunder his property without first tying up the strong man; then indeed the house can be plundered. 28 "Truly I tell you, people will be forgiven for their sins and whatever blasphemies they utter; 29 but whoever blasphemes against the Holy Spirit can never have forgiveness, but is guilty of an eternal sin"— 30 for they had said, "He has an unclean spirit."*

The drama seems to have peaked when we hear that Jesus' family is calling for him; *"Your mother and your brothers and sisters are outside, asking for you." 33 And Jesus replied almost as a rebellious defiant child, "Who are my mother and my brothers?" 34 And looking at those who sat around him, he said, "Here are my mother and my brothers! 35 Whoever does the will of God is my brother and sister and mother."*

The drama of this passage can be unsettling. It is filled with challenges and controversy even as Jesus speaks. Jesus response to the scribes seems disconcerting for those listening, especially the Scribes and in particular Jesus' family. Jesus considers himself even more powerful than satanic dominion. The short parable Jesus tells is violent and somewhat arrogant. A home invasion and how he describes himself as the one able to overwhelm Satan's reign by "tying up the strong man" and plundering the things the "man" has taken as his own. This parable is seen by some as Jesus' mission statement in Mark, which suggests that the rest of the story is left to our imagination.

So Imagine, if you will that the whole Gospel of Christ as a story about the reign of God coming to displace anything else that pretends to be powerful. It is really about the reign of God in this world and how it seems different than anything we can imagine. Even one of the most puzzling parts of scripture really can't be explained outside the parameters of this reading. It is in this highly dramatic scenario where Jesus proclaims early in his ministry that any power he has comes ONLY from God and not from anywhere else, especially Satan.

When we try to make sense of it in any other way we are left short, with more questions than answers. But in the context of the whole of this passage verse 29 becomes clearer; *"but whoever blasphemes against the Holy Spirit can never have forgiveness, but is*

*guilty of an eternal sin.*" Out of context of time, place and the intensity of emotions this "unforgiveable sin" seems very confusing. Jesus only works through God for Good – "evil would not dispel evil." In our 20/20 post-resurrection view we understand this idea.

Jesus comes to change things – imagine that? His family wasn't too happy and they were concerned for his safety. How many times have you thought and wished the same thing for someone in your family, who you think is going down the wrong path? They may not be claiming that they are more powerful than Satan or are sent directly from God, but you are still concerned about the decisions that a loved one or a very good friend is making. When we want the best for someone in can look for like personal opinion or bias. Jesus statements today rock this concept and broaden the concept of family to include others not typically seen as family. At that time Jesus was doing more than rocking the boat but causing a Tsunami of change for two factors of Society – Laws of God and the Family.

So, what are we to imagine today if we try? We are to imagine no division, no hatred, only love flowing from God to us, to others! So Imagine...If you try – what can happen when you love without restriction! Amen

Brian Oltman, Pastor - Resurrection Lutheran Church - Coronado, CA - [www.rl.church](http://www.rl.church)