



Sunday June 6, 2021
Mark 3:20-35

Pastor Tony Acompañado

Crazy for Jesus

One beautiful summer night, a woman was out taking a quiet and relaxing walk through her neighborhood when she noticed a young boy on the porch of a house desperately trying to ring the doorbell. The little boy, however, wasn't quite tall enough to reach the doorbell, but that didn't stop him from trying to reach it again and again.

The woman paused in front of the house and now feeling intrigued and somewhat sorry for the little boy, she walked up the steps to the porch and asked him if he would like some help. The little boy replied, "yes, can you please ring the bell ten times really fast?" Although this seemed like a strange request, she nevertheless felt compelled to honor it anyway. So, she feverishly rang the doorbell as requested, and to her surprise, as soon as she did, the little boy began to run away and then yelled back to her, "you'd better run so they don't catch you!"

While things may have taken a crazy and unexpected turn for the woman trying to help the little boy, in much the same way those who are with Jesus in today's gospel story have an equally crazy and unexpected experience with Jesus.

I've always wondered if the gospel sounds a little crazy to someone hearing it for the first time – then again, maybe it's just sounds that way to those who take it seriously. Because it seems to me, the more seriously you take the gospel, the more crazy, outlandish, and even impossible it sounds. But I kind of think that's the way it has to be simply because what's sane, normal, everyday, and expected doesn't have the power to transform us, let alone save us.

"Out of his mind." That seems to be the sentiment of those who were gathered around Jesus in today's gospel story. His own family being among those who fear that he may have gone off the deep end. From early on in Mark's gospel, Jesus has not only traveled from place-to-place proclaiming that the kingdom of God is coming, but he has also already begun to enact what that kingdom will look like by driving out demons, breaking through barriers, and healing all kinds of people plagued by a variety of illnesses. In fact, he's amassed such a following and become so popular with the crowds that he and his disciples can hardly even find a moment to grab a bite to eat.

But what's really going on? How is it that Jesus' ministry of preaching and teaching and healing has created such controversy and accusation? How is it that what he's been doing has people thinking he's out of his mind or even possessed, as the religious teachers suggest? Well, the answer is simple.

Jesus is so completely outside of what the religious authorities expect that they have absolutely no idea what to make of him. He doesn't fit into their categories, and we all know that what doesn't fit neatly into our categories of logical, familiar, normal, or comfortable we tend to label as abnormal, deviant, or even crazy. We assume that what we know, what we have experienced, and what we hold to be true is what's normal, natural, even blessed by God – and that then becomes the standard by which we measure and judge others.

But Jesus' whole ministry has been about announcing a new vision of God and a new way of relating to God. And at the heart of that vision is the conviction that God is love, that God desires the health and healing of all God's creation, that God stands with us and for us, that God is determined to love and



Sunday June 6, 2021
Mark 3:20-35

Pastor Tony Acompanado

Crazy for Jesus

redeem us no matter the cost, and that God chooses to be accessible to us – to all of us – to anyone and everyone.

And this is precisely why Jesus sets himself against all the powers that would rob humanity and creation of the abundant life that God intends – whether those powers are unclean spirits, disease that devastates the body, mind, or spirit; or illnesses that isolate and separate those who suffer.

Perhaps this is the dilemma that the teachers of the religious law find themselves in today's gospel story. It's not that their way of relating to God is wrong, it's just that Jesus doesn't conform to their stringent structures. He heals on the Sabbath, because he knows the true meaning of Sabbath and isn't influenced by the human rules around it. And while this will surely cause some to see this as "not making sense," in doing so, Jesus declares that following him isn't about regulating our relationship with God, rather the purpose of following the way of Jesus is to help us get more out of life – to have the abundant life that God has promised to us and all God's children.

And so, Jesus embodies this message by healing whenever and wherever and whoever needs it – and yes, even on the Sabbath. And he welcomes all, even those who would normally be excluded or cast aside according to the standards deemed appropriate and acceptable by society. What the world calls wretched, Jesus calls blessed. What the world reasons as weak, Jesus models as strength. Jesus says, love your enemies, bless those who curse you, pray for those who despise you, turn the other cheek, give your coat also, forgive seventy times seven. I could go on and on, but you get the point. Our value system as followers of Jesus is sometimes going to look crazy and out of touch with reality to all those who don't share it.

In all these ways Jesus points back to our wildly merciful and unpredictably gracious God who is always doing a new thing. And it's into this radical and counter-cultural understanding of God that Jesus is inviting us to follow him. Believing in a God of love and grace will sometimes make us look "crazy" to others. But acting on this belief – caring for the least and putting others before ourselves will definitely make us look even more crazy.

So, just to be clear, following Jesus sometimes means marching to a different tune than the rest of the world. Sometimes it means caring more when you're tempted to care less or standing up when others sit down. Sometimes it means speaking up when others remain silent. And sometimes it means being different – even if others see that as being a little bit crazy.

All this reminds me of a commercial from the Apple company, that first appeared in the late 90's and then reappeared about 10 years ago when Steve Jobs, one of the company's founders died. The tag line for the company was "Think different." The commercial featured footage of 17 iconic 20th-century people who have invented, inspired, created, and sacrificed to improve the world and make a difference. They showed people like Albert Einstein, Martin Luther King Jr., Amelia Earhart, Frank Lloyd Wright, Pablo Picasso, Mahatma Gandhi and so on. And as the images flashed across the screen, a voice read this poem:

Here's to the crazy ones. The misfits. The rebels.

The troublemakers. The round pegs in the square holes.



Sunday June 6, 2021
Mark 3:20-35

Pastor Tony Acompañado

Crazy for Jesus

The ones who see things differently. They're not fond of rules.
And they have no respect for the status quo.
You can quote them, disagree with them, glorify or vilify them.
About the only thing you can't do is ignore them.
Because they change things.
They push the human race forward.
While some may see them as the crazy ones, we see genius.
Because the people who are crazy enough
to think they can change the world,
are the ones who do.

My friends, the world needs followers of Jesus that are just a bit crazy. Crazy enough to love like Jesus, to give like Jesus, to show compassion like Jesus, and to forgive like Jesus. The world needs followers of Jesus who are crazy enough to dare to change the world from the nightmare it sometimes is, into the dream that God intends it to be.

Jesus is calling you and me and all of us to be crazy enough to believe that the love of God is greater than all the powers of evil and death. Crazy enough to follow the radical way of the gospel and believe that the world doesn't have to be the way it is. Crazy enough to act so that nobody around the world knows what it's like to be hungry. Crazy enough to fight for every human being to be treated with dignity. And crazy enough to allow our hearts and minds to be broken open wide so that all are welcome and included – everywhere and all the time.

So, wherever you go and whatever you do from here today, know that it is only limited by your trust in God. My prayer then for each of you – for each of us, is that we put our full trust in God, believing that wherever the Holy Spirit may lead, God is and always will be with us, leading us every step of the way toward a promised future filled with hope and joy and blessings. And it is my deep hope that for the sake of the world you and I are crazy enough to take a leap of faith so that God can change the world through us. Thanks be to God! Amen.