Mark 3:20-35 (35) For whoever does the will of God is my brother and sister and mother.

 Impressions. You and I both know about those. The world will tell you that you can’t really go on impressions, at least first impressions, so in today’s world I am cautious with impressions. How would you define this idea of impressions? My favorite dictionary says, *“impression: 1. Effect produced on a person: 2. Idea, notion.”* In other words when it comes down to especially people, the effect they produce or the idea and notion you have of them is your impression.

 And we will have to admit that oftentimes our impressions are not accurate ones. They are not accurate because we may not be privy to all the information we need or because the information we might have is false or horridly incomplete. The difficulty with impressions is that once we make them, even if they are made with bad information, we have trouble getting past that first impression we made. I will tell you that over the years I have learned to not make first impressions. I prefer to do it that way because, well, it’s just a better and fairer process.

 Let me give you some examples of what I mean. When my wife and I are out and about, if we are going to go out and eat anywhere we are in the habit of looking things up online first. And online you can find all sorts of information and lots and lots of reviews. Don’t just look at the review rating number. So if you have a 5 point system and the place you are considering is rated 3.9 go in and read those reviews. We did that with one of the restaurants we visited this past vacation and that 3.9 rating was not at all our experience. I thought both the food, service and atmosphere were great. Think of what we might have missed if we had just gone with first impressions.

 Or as we were going around to all the little shops found here and there. We came across a little shop that was for an artist that did watercolors. Just kind of looking at the shop you might think, “Well, I don’t expect anything here,” but in truth, it was a wonderful experience. Turns out the artist and her husband ran the shop. She was wonderful to speak with as she told us of her pictures and adventures in doing her work. I will also tell you that I found her work to be very captivating, so much so that we walked out with a beautiful print of one of her works. Who would have thought that little tucked away shop was going to be a place we would so enjoy?

 This text is the very thing that made me think of impressions. As you read the text did you hear the “impressions” that people had made about Jesus? The fact is, those impressions are interesting. What fascinates me even more is how people today still make impressions about Jesus or Christianity and they are pretty much the same type as found in our text. That will be our theme for today: **IMPRESSIONS OF JESUS.**

 The first thing you will want to know is that this text takes place fairly early in the ministry of Jesus. By this time the disciples of Jesus are all chosen and they are involved in the early Galilean ministry of Jesus. And yes, Jesus is busy doing miracles. A number of rather impressive miracles have already been done, at least the ones we are told about. I say that because you have to be aware of the fact that the New Testament writings do not tell us every miracle but share with us only those miracles that make the biggest impact. So you have the water turned into wine, the catch of fish to gather disciples, the healing of the leper, the paralytic healed, the Centurion’s servant healed, and the widow of Nain’s son raised to life. This miracle just before this encounter would be that of the healing of the deaf and blind man that Matthew tells us was also demon possessed. That sets the stage for understanding this section better. Lots of things took place that give you an impression of Jesus. Here are impressions we find.

 Impression one: **“They went into a house. A crowd gathered again so that they were not even able to eat a meal.”**

 I like this little section of information. Do you see what it tells you? People were excited about Jesus! People wanted to see and hear Jesus but probably most true was that people wanted to see and be a part of the miracles they heard Jesus was doing. By this time miracles were a “normal” thing for Jesus. Again a close reading of Scripture will help you grasp that miracles happened all the time with Jesus. That’s why people came. It was the miracles. The miracles drew the crowds and Jesus used those times to teach and preach to the people the truths and wonders of God. There wasn’t a person around who didn’t grasp that this Jesus was a pretty exciting show.

 That is a good impression. The real Jesus was impressive. Not that he looked any different than you and me but that as he went about his ministry, between the miracles and teaching, Jesus was impressive. Isn’t it interesting that in today’s world, though we know all we can about Jesus and what he did people act as if Jesus wasn’t impressive? I can tell you that I think Jesus is impressive. What about you? Do you find Jesus impressive? Does his life and name fill you with awe and joy or have you lost that wonder of Jesus? In many cases that is the problem people have today, they don’t think Jesus at all impressive, but I think as we continue our study we will grasp exactly where the world is coming from.

 The flip side to this impression is that it is bad. People are coming to Jesus because he is a show. He is exciting and who knows what he will do next. This is really selfish motivation and if you would it gives a bad impression of the people. It fascinates me that in today’s world there are churches who work hard to “make a show and be entertaining.” There are even those churches that claim they are still doing miracles “in the name of Jesus.” Me, I doubt that is true. I doubt it because of the message these churches proclaim. The message is about healing and miracles instead of Jesus and the forgiveness of sins.

 The next verses say this: **“When his own people heard this, they went out to take control of him, because they were saying, “He is out of his mind.”**

First, be aware that there is a bit of a discussion here as to what is meant by **“his own people.”** If you were to look at the NIV you would find this phrase translated: **“his family”** but our EHV translates, **“his own people.”** The actual phrase says: **“those who were with him.”** It seems the NIV translates “**his family”** because later on in the text it is mentioned that Jesus’ mother and brothers were indeed a part of the crowd to see Jesus. Here is what I have been lead to think. It doesn’t matter if you determine this is his mother and brother or his disciples who make this statement. I do believe that all of them make up that group that would be called in the Greek, **“those who were with him.”** What is important to grasp is the impression they have of what is going on. They felt the need to take control, they felt that somehow Jesus was out of his mind. Now there is an impression!

Out of his mind because, quite frankly, you are in a situation bordering on “out of control.” People were crowding in to see Jesus. They were calling out his name, reaching for him, pleading to him for help and healing. There is Jesus, not worrying about what could happen, that a riot could break out or that this clamorous crowd could cause Roman officials to send a patrol to quiet things down. Jesus is just in the crowd, talking to people, ministering to people, helping people, healing people and it is such an intense thing that mealtime came and went, though that was no doubt the reason for going to the house in the first place, to get a meal and some rest.

The people with Jesus thought all of this was out of control and that Jesus should have had a better handle on what was going on thus the statement: **“He is out of his mind.”** But was he? I want you to notice that the disciples and the family of Jesus don’t end up turning their backs on Jesus. That’s what you would probably do to if you had finally determined that the leader you were following was **“out of his mind.”** This is such a human reaction to Jesus, especially as you grasp the scope of the miracles being done. It’s a circus, it’s crazy, and it’s out of control but down the line the people around Jesus will stay with Jesus. Their impression here is going to disappear because they eventually grasp that Jesus is the Christ the Son of God who was and is fulfilling all the Scripture had foretold of God’s Savior.

**“He is out of his mind!”** I think this is still the world’s problem with Jesus. As you look at the life and times of Jesus the very first thing that strikes you is the idea: “This just can’t be!” This can’t be God’s Son. This can’t be miracles and wonders galore. This can’t be God’s plan to save us. This just can’t be!”

Yet it is! Only I don’t think it is crazy, I think it is the greatest thing that has ever happened to this world. That God sent His Son to be our Savior. That Jesus, true God, came and became a true man just for the purpose of atoning for our sins. Even more impressive yet, is that God has done this and it is all by grace though faith. It doesn’t depend on us. It is what God has done. And even though the majority of the same people flocking to see Jesus right now, will eventually shout **“Crucify him!”** it all works to fulfill the plan of God to save our souls. If you want my opinion it is this, God must surely have been out of his mind to come and save us. The last thing we deserve is his grace and love and yet that is exactly what God continues to pour our way in Jesus.

Then comes that next impression, the impression of the religious leadership. **“The experts in the law who came down from Jerusalem were saying, ‘He is possessed by Beelzebul,” and ‘He drives out demons by the ruler of demons.’”** Now, you’ve got to think about this one.

Why do they make this accusation? We have to judge that they have rejected Jesus as the fulfillment of their promised Savior and thus they hate and despise Jesus in every way. But why make this accusation? Why declare that Jesus is doing all these miracles by the power of Satan?

Because they couldn’t deny the miracles were being done. Trust me, they investigated, dug, questioned, explored and probed in every way they could every miracle that Jesus did. If there was even an inkling that the miracles were trickery, slight of hand, staged, or enactments then I can guarantee that the accusation would have been: “He is a trickster, a charlatan, a false prophet doing false and staged shows to make you think he is something!” It should strike you and strike you deeply that the best they can do is not deny or excuse but acknowledge the factuality of the miracles while declaring them the works of the Devil himself. That’s all they have. Since they don’t want to acknowledge that Jesus is the Christ the Son of God and the Savior promised in their faith, they have no alternative but to declare the Devil is at work here.

That is really the only acceptable course you can take when it comes to Jesus. Either he is God’s Son and our Savior or he is totally fake, totally crazy and totally to be avoided! Welcome to the view of the world even today. People do not want to believe or accept that Jesus Christ is God and Lord so they come up with every excuse not to believe. Jesus is fake. The Bible is fake. We’ve evolved beyond the point of needing God. The list of excuses is pretty vast but this list is not surprising. It is one of the basic ways that the world deals with Jesus. Dismiss him, treat him as evil, reject him, scorn him, and so on. And if you really want to squash Jesus then don’t forget to attack his Church and his believers too! I mean, clearly those who follow Jesus are just like him…”Out of their minds!”

Last impression, this one given by Jesus. **“Whoever does the will of God is my brother and sister and mother.”** By the way, the will of God is to believe in Jesus as the Savior from sin and the granter of eternal life and salvation by grace through faith. You always have to chuckle at those churches who like to come up with lists of things or duties that we must do and be in order to be saved. What we are to do is believe. To believe in Jesus and his atoning redemption.

If you think I am wrong on that then contemplate the situation here. What have any of the people around Jesus done to earn the miracles, the teaching, or the presence of Jesus? How has anyone in this crowd on this day in any way fulfilled the will of God? They haven’t. Clearly Jesus is teaching about faith in Him because He is the only one on this day doing the will of God. We are saved because of Jesus and his power. We are saved because we believe in Jesus.

That’s my thoughts on these impressions of Jesus. I pray you believe! Amen.