

WHEN YOUR INTEGRITY IS INTERRUPTED +++

SETH FLICK

Good morning, King of Kings. Good morning. Oh, it is fall. It is beautiful out. The weather's turned a little bit. I can wear my plaids back again. I love that we had football yesterday. How did that go? Hold on. Sorry, this is embarrassing. No, hang up. Hang up. Hang up. No, okay, hold on. No more interruptions. It's going to be fine. First sermon, a little nervous. It's a call back. I got to take it. It's a call back two times. Hello? Oh, you just got started? Okay, I'll try to make this quick. So, Seth, when I do something for the first time, I get kind of nervous. So I just want to call. See if you were nervous. Check in on that. It's okay to be nervous. There's a black curtain to your left, so you can use that as well.

Seth, dude, it's your first message at King of Kings. Are you feeling a little nervous? 100%. That's what I asked him, Ty. Okay, I'm praying for you, Seth. It's good to hear your voice. Oh, yeah, you too, Ty. What are you doing out there? It's our public lunch. That's fantastic. We've been praying about this. You know where the Gospel of Mark has these series of interruptions where an outer story is interrupted by an inner story before it gets back to the outer story? I've been wondering that same thing. I'm so excited for you. Oh, you said you're doing your message right now. Maybe we should let him get back to his message. I think we should let him listen, Peter. Good luck, Seth. Sorry about the interruption. I was scripted and rehearsed ahead of time. Probably not.

What we are going to learn, just as Tyler, the campus director from Fremont, was saying, is that the Gospel of Mark has a very specific style that it employs to teach important lessons by Jesus. What occurs is that it begins with an outer story. Jesus is saying something, teaching something, living something out. It gets interrupted in the middle of that story. We'll call that the inner story. Then both of those stories get resolved by the end. That's the point where I want every single person that's listening to this teaching to lean in. That's where the application is going to be made for you and for me with this interruption style.

It's also a little bit a nod to a show on ESPN called Pardon The Interruption. We want to pardon this so there's no copyright or infringement on anything. As you know, Mike and Tony, they talk about the different topics in sports for the day. They knock through different things on the sidebar and they interrupt each other while they do it. That's going to be a similar idea to what's happening in the Gospel of Mark. What's specific for today's lesson is that the interruption is going to focus on people questioning the integrity of Jesus.

I thought it would be good if we could figure out what integrity is. We could have something common that maybe we could even take away with after the message is done. If someone says, what was church all about today? Number one, you always got to say Jesus. We prayed and we praised, but this is what we learned. That is this idea of integrity.

Here's going to be the definition of integrity. It rhymes so then hopefully you'll be able to repeat it in just a moment. Integrity is when the truth lines up with your word and your proof. Truth and proof rhymes so that it can be portable. We're going to say it again. I'm going to start it. I'll ask you to say the ending part. When the truth lines up with your word and proof. Excellent. You've got it. That's the way we typically look at integrity.

In this specific story, this true Bible event, Jesus' integrity is going to be questioned by two very close groups of people. The first group that's going to question his integrity is his biological family. The second group that's going to question his integrity are those religious leaders that were put into position to uphold the Messiah coming and yet, as you know from the reading of the Gospels, it's these various scribes that are actually going to be questioning who he is and what he's come here to do.

That's our interruption for today. We're going to start with the outer story from Mark chapter 3. If you have a Bible, I would highly encourage you to open up an actual physical Bible. If you don't have that with you today, please feel free to open up the Bible app to Mark chapter 3 verses 20 to 21.

As you're doing that, just a little bit of a foray into Life Interrupted and that is my family's life. We know what it's like to have an interruption from Jesus. I had the opportunity to lead in a fairly large congregation. Everything was going really well. Our school was growing. Our church was growing. We were doing baptisms left and right. It was an amazing season of ministry. We just finished building a brand new early childhood development center and before it was open, it was full. Go God!

And then, and then a call came from King of Kings Church. Now my calling is to follow where Jesus has asked me to go. That's who I am. That's my family. That's what we're supposed to be doing. But I tell you what, as soon as I let the congregation know, hey church family, Jesus is calling me somewhere else. They were like, what did you do? What's going on in the background that you're trying to flee away from it? Because come on, when you look at the news and you watch videos and stuff, usually when things are going right and a minister leaves, that's something wrong.

And so like, as a family, we knew it was life to have some of our integrity questioned. Now, to be honest, most of the church was super supportive and loving and amazing, but there were some that were like, what did you do? The answer was nothing, just so you know. It's all good. But sometimes that hurts the worst, right? When the people you love and care about the most are the ones that have the deepest questions about your motivations and your integrity.

Well, that's what's happening here with Jesus. Jesus is in Capernaum. If you remember right, Capernaum is Jesus' home base as he's doing his Galilean ministry towards the north in the beginning of his ministry time. That's his place where, you know, you probably know this story, the friends of the man who was paralyzed destroy his roof to let him down. That's the same city, same location, that's what's happening.

Now, you would think that people like Mary, his mother, who lived by him, lived with him, saw him grow as the way that he grew, and his brothers, two of them are named in the Gospels, James and Jude. There are other brothers and sisters, but they're not named, but James and Jude are. You would think that they would have, like, the most support for Jesus, because they have the most access to everything that he is and, like, what he says about himself and how he teaches behind closed doors. They should have the most support behind him.

And yet, here's what happens in Mark 3, 21. I'm going to actually ask you to read some of this, and if you're at Northwest or Fremont, I want you to read this as well. And when his family heard it, they went out to seize him, for they were saying, he's out of his mind.

All right. Again, these are the people. That's all Jesus is. He was growing up. And rather than support him, they're questioning him.

And there are other ways that the Gospel writer Mark could have written this down. There are other ways for, like, they staged a gentle intervention to caress Jesus into their line of thinking. They peacefully nudged Jesus out of the picture to reclassify and think about who he was. No.

What's the word that's used here? Seize. Most people think about seize and, like, convulse. No. This word is specifically chosen. It's like a tackle, because it's football season. Mary, James, Jude, the others, they wanted to seize, grab, and pull him out of there, because he's bringing shame to their family.

And first century Judaism, shame and honor are one of the biggest parts of their culture. It's all built off of comparisons. Think about James and Jude as they were growing up. Oh, man, we gotta do second chores again, because perfect Jesus did what he was supposed to do. And now we've gotta do this, because we decided we were gonna go swimming instead. Oh, perfect Jesus' perfect Hebrew school report card. Here we are. So there's a comparison that they carried with them.

And now this is the time! Yes! Finally! Thank you! We think he's doing something wrong. We're gonna drag him out of the house, probably by, like, his feet or his ear or whatever you do. I don't know.

Those characters I kind of understand, living in kind of this culture of comparison with honor and guilt and shame. The character I don't understand, though, is Mary. The scriptures say that Mary was blessed amongst women.

We're gonna read back and forth together some of the things that Mary herself was explicitly told that her Jesus, her son, was going to claim to be but also who he was going to be. And she would have been able to have a front row seat to all of this as he grew.

So in Luke chapter 1, verse 32, an angel of the Lord, named Gabriel, comes to her and says, your son, the one developing in your womb, he will be great, and he will be called the... the son of the most high. The son of the most high.

Okay, and just in case maybe Mary didn't quite understand what it meant for her son to be the son of the most high, he doubles down just a few verses later. In Luke 1, 35, again, here, Millard, Fremont, Northwest, please read along with the highlighted section.

The Holy Spirit will come upon you, Mary, and he will be called holy, the son of God.

Now, Mary would have seen him doing son of God things. Even the gospel of Mark, as it lays out his ministry, shows that he's publicly casting out demons, publicly showing miracles, publicly teaching as words with authority that line up with the scriptures that only the son of God actually could do.

And yet because of all of the pressure that Mary had from the outside culture, she would rather question the integrity of her child and put him in his place by seizing him and taking him out of ministry than actually look at the words of truth that lined up with his words and proof.

Think about that. A parent devalued their child so they could feel a little bit better about themselves.

Now, this doesn't just happen in the scriptures. There's a pretty popular book series. Back from the 80s and the 90s, it was called A Child Called It. There was a boy called It.

And it's the first person autobiography of a man who actually carried a name. His name was Dave Pelzer. But his mom wanted to make herself feel so much better that if she just put him down further, she by comparison would be up higher.

So she never referred to him by his name. Do you know what she called him? From the title of the book? It. Hey, It. You gotta do your chores. Hey, It. You have no worth in this family. Hey, It. I'm gonna come and hit you now.

Because that level of control makes me feel better about myself than I care about who you are. And so he grew up devalued, thinking that his name was It.

Because that does happen in families today. We may not live in the same style of honor, guilt, and shame culture that Jesus and Mary lived in, but we still struggle with the same stuff. Because we still carry the same sin.

Mary knew who Jesus was, and yet chose this manner of treating him anyways. But even more powerfully, Jesus knew who He was, because His proof, His words, lined up with the truth of who He actually is.

Now, while all that is happening outside, this interruption of Jesus' integrity, we have a story that has cut now in the inside. So, outside the home, biological families cutting down His integrity, we cut to the inside of the home, and now we've got another group, the scribes, who have also heard about Jesus' power, and they've seen Him cast out demons, and rather than accepting Him for who He claims to be, because His words and proof line up with the truth, they say this in verse 22.

They came down from Jerusalem, and they were saying, He is possessed by Beelzebul, and by the prince of demons, He must be casting out demons.

This is so interesting. The words of Jesus Himself, He says, I am the Lord of the Sabbath. Just a few short verses earlier. He's claiming Godhood there, because what's the Sabbath? It's the seventh day after the six days of creation. God created the heavens and the earth. One, two, three, four, five, six, and then on the seventh day He rested, and Jesus is saying, right before this, I am that God. I am Lord of the Sabbath.

And instead of seeing Him unleash reconciliation and freedom on this broken world, they question His integrity, and they say, this is Aramaic, Lord of the flies, not Lord of the Sabbath.

Jesus answers pretty logically. He's like, yeah, that doesn't make any sense. How can Satan cast out Satan? If a kingdom is divided against itself, that kingdom can't stand. If a house is divided against itself, that house will not be able to stand. If Satan risen up against himself and is divided, he cannot stand, but he's coming to an end.

This is the part I want you to key in on. But no one can enter a strong man's house and plunder his goods unless he first binds the strong man. Then indeed, he may plunder his house.

Brothers and sisters in Jesus, this is a strong gospel point for every single one of you. Wherever you're listening from, I want you to lean into this.

Jesus is the robber in this story. Have you ever stopped to think about that? Who's the strong man? The strong man is the prince of this world. The prince of this world, according to the scriptures, is Satan.

So what he's saying is, look, this is not Satan going against Satan. That's stupid. He's telling these theology teachers, like, your theology is not good.

But he's saying, look, if he was a strong man and this was his house, I've come to break into his house, and I've come to take mine what's back. I've come to take my kiddos back.

And so here's what I want you to think. There's probably some kind of sin that you harbor in your heart, and when you think about that sin, you want to call yourself it. He devalues who you are.

You've come to church Sunday after Sunday or Wednesday or Saturday, and you are forgiven of that sin, and you hear it here, but in the darkness of a hard night, you don't believe it in here, because you believe that there is some bad thing that you've done that has distanced you away from your Jesus.

And by Jesus saying, no, no, no, no, I'm the stronger man, what is he saying? There is no thing that you have done that is stronger than the grace of our Jesus. Amen, church? There is not one thing.

And then he doubles down because, I tell you what, preachers do a really poor job of preaching this text, and they have made people think and feel like they could do something that was out of the grace of Jesus, that his strength and his power wasn't good enough or strong enough to lift the burden off of you.

And so then he comes to teach about the work of the Spirit. He says, truly I say to you, all sins, how many sins, church? All. Will be forgiven the children of man, whatever blasphemies they utter.

But whoever blasphemes against the Holy Spirit never has forgiveness, but is guilty of an eternal sin.

And this is where preachers have done a terrible job in history of preaching this text. Because they'll say, and you know what that sin is? Fill in the blank. Whatever's the hot sin for church in that era? Drinking for a long time. Sexuality recently. Identity and gender also very recently. Oh, that is the unforgivable sin. That's the blasphemy against the Holy Spirit.

And that is 100% wrong. It is false doctrine.

Blasphemy is saying that someone else is God who is not.

Jesus is saying the Holy Spirit is God.

You blaspheme against him.

This is why forgiveness doesn't come.

Because the job of the Holy Spirit is to deliver faith to you and to me that we like because our faith always has an object into which it's being pointed. This faith is in the resurrected Jesus who's strong enough to take away all my sins.

And by saying Holy Spirit, you're no thing. You're saying I don't want faith. And if you don't want faith, then you don't want the forgiveness that faith will receive.

So blasphemy against the Holy Spirit is saying I don't want your forgiveness, Jesus.

It's not saying there is some sin that's too strong for him to deal with.

It's saying I feel more comfortable being it.

But you see, Jesus is not saying you're an it. He has something much greater for you and for me.

But here's sometimes why that hits so hard and why we want to carry that it identity with us.

It's because most of the time when people are calling us out, they're right.

They're right.

Our words and our proof, they 100% don't line up with the proof of the word. Where Jesus says, look, I have this expectation for you. God's word says, I have this expectation for you. And we do not lean into that and we do not follow it and we're not obedient and someone calls us out on it and we feel really uncomfortable with it and we don't like it because it's true.

That's why we get so offended and maybe that's why we get a little bit comfortable just being an it in our own eyes and in the eyes of our families and in the eyes of our church.

So what does that mean?

Like when our lives, our words, our actions don't line up with our proof. Maybe we just twist the understanding of integrity just a little bit. Just a little bit.

So that it's actually reflecting some truth for us from these scriptures and that is maybe we don't look at integrity as when our word and our proof line up with the truth but maybe we just line it up with what Jesus is saying here and that is his word and his proof because it's his proof of the gospel.

It's his proof of the cross.

It's his proof of the resurrection that says I love you and you've got a name child and it's not it.

And his words proclaim joy and grace and reconciliation and restoration into your heart.

So if you're in Fremont now and you just sat down and this is your first church service ever, know that Jesus has claimed you as his child and there is not how many sins? Oh, there are no sins that he cannot forgive for you.

And if you're at Northwest right now and maybe you've been a part of a church for two and a half years or even longer, grace is yours in Jesus.

That's his proclamation. Those are true words for you.

And Miller, brothers and sisters here, Jesus identifies who you are with his life, with his words and his proof.

And that is what our source of integrity will be.

And here's what I love about this story.

It's only lining up with Jesus' integrity where we see characters change and they don't have to worry about honor cultures or sin cultures or shame cultures anymore.

Look at Mary, like historically, you look at her life that's written down after the scriptures and she becomes like a prime figure in the proclamation of Jesus.

So the very one who wanted to seize him in the outer story is the very one who after the resurrection wants to seize the hearts of every other person to line up with Christ.

And James and Jude, they're also some of the pillars of the early church.

Some of the first martyrs to die for their resurrected brother.

They are no longer just some random it's.

No, they are James and Jude, the brother of Jesus, the ones for whom he died.

Now let's wind this back into the resolution of both the outer story and the inner story with verse 35.

Jesus steps between us, between us and the Father's wrath, between us and our sins and our guilt and our shame.

He interrupts all of that judgment and declares what you'll see up on the screen.

I'd love to have everybody read those words in bold together.

Whoever does the will of God is my brother and sister and mother.

He returns to this outer story to resolve both to let you know and you know that you're a part of his family still.

Look, I know it's gotten pretty popular to cancel people in your families but maybe this story is going to tell you something a little bit different, whether you're the parent who's cancelled the child or a child who's cancelled the parent.

Maybe this is your moment to interrupt that cancellation to hold the bigger grace and extend it to somebody that you love very much.

Someone who feels like an it but you know they have a name in Christ.

Your integrity is an extension of your identity in Jesus and the way that you live with your family, it's a reflection of that.

So let's live a life interrupted, alright?

So raise your hand here Fremont Northwest, raise your hand if you have downloaded the King of Kings app.

Put it up high.

Alright, this isn't just some random appeal or anything like that.

Here's the deal.

We broke up the entire gospel of Mark into easy-to-read bite-sized sections and at 6.20am every single morning, Jesus is going to interrupt your life with a section of the gospel of Mark in sequence so that if you get that push notification he's interrupting you for this entire sermon series so that by the time you start tomorrow until the last sermon, guess what?

For an entire month Jesus himself will be interrupting your life so that your words and your proof line up with his truth and even better, his proof and his word lines up with your life.

You know, we were talking about sports a little bit earlier and if you call it time out, is that usually the end of the game?

No.

It's time to regroup, focus up again and I pray that your time with Jesus at 6.20am or whenever you read it is that opportunity for you.

Let him interrupt your life every day this month so that you remember who he's called you to be.

Someone who's living a life interrupted by Jesus.

Let's pray.

Jesus, thank you for this interruption.

Lord, your integrity was questioned and rather than leaning into that or shying away from it, you just identified yourself with your word.

We'd ask Jesus that you would interrupt every moment of our lives with your words of truth and grace and hope and forgiveness.

We ask this in your holy name, all God's people said, Amen!