

Whoever does the will of God

- **Introduction:**
 - Personal anecdote about keeping secrets and daughters' inability to keep surprises.
- **Mark's Gospel and the Messianic Secret:**
 - Mark reveals Jesus' identity as the Messiah gradually, known only to him and the reader initially.
 - Comparison with other Gospels (Matthew, Luke, John) where Jesus' identity is openly declared.
- **Recognition of Jesus by Spiritual Beings:**
 - Demons and unclean spirits recognise Jesus' divine identity and authority.
 - Example of the unclean spirit in the synagogue recognising Jesus in Mark.
- **Jesus' Early Ministry:**
 - Jesus' ministry involved healing, exorcisms, and challenging religious authorities.
 - Public reaction to Jesus' actions, including his family's and religious leaders' opposition.
 - Accusations against Jesus of being possessed by Beelzebub.
- **Redefining Family and Loyalty:**
 - Jesus redefines family as those who do God's will, emphasising spiritual bonds over biological ones.
 - Jesus' stern response to his family and religious leaders highlights this new spiritual relationship.
- **Genesis 3:8-15 - The Fall:**
 - Discussion on the relational nature of God and the deception by Satan.
 - Human tendency to blame others and the breakdown of trust and relationship with God and each other.
 - The Fall represents the human condition of hiding from God due to sin.
- **Contemporary Relevance of Spiritual Opposition:**
 - Modern examples of opposition to God's goodness (racism, patriarchalism, materialism, militarism).
 - Jesus' mission to overcome these dark forces and set people free.
- **Jesus' Authority and Victory:**
 - Jesus' death and resurrection signify his victory over evil.
 - Jesus' ongoing power to free individuals from various forms of captivity today.
- **Invitation to Relationship with God:**
 - Reflection on God's question to Adam and Eve, "Where are you?"
 - Encouragement to evaluate personal spiritual journey and relationship with God.
 - Invitation to come to Jesus, regardless of past mistakes, for freedom and a renewed relationship.
- **Conclusion:**
 - Emphasis on Jesus' love, acceptance, and call to walk with him.
 - Encouragement to take the first step towards a journey with God, supported by the church community.

Questions:

1. How does the interaction between God, Adam, and Eve in Genesis 3:8-15 reflect the nature of sin and its impact on human relationships with God and each other?
2. In Mark 3:20-35, Jesus' family and the religious leaders question his actions and identity. What does this passage reveal about the challenges of recognizing and accepting God's work in unexpected ways?
3. Mark's Gospel often emphasises the Messianic secret, where Jesus' true identity is hidden from many. Why do you think Mark chose to present Jesus' identity in this way, and how does it affect our understanding of Jesus' mission?
4. The demons recognize Jesus' authority, but the religious leaders accuse him of being possessed. What does this contrast tell us about spiritual discernment and the recognition of divine authority?
5. Reflecting on God's question to Adam and Eve, "Where are you?" (Genesis 3:9), what does this question mean to you personally in your spiritual journey? How can it guide us in evaluating our current relationship with God?
6. Jesus faced opposition from his family and religious authorities. How can we prepare ourselves to face opposition in our faith journey, and what can we learn from Jesus' response to such challenges?