

Author: Patrick J Griffiths ©
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 Title: "Jesus Withdrew and a Great Multitude Followed"
 Text: Mark 3:7-12
 Theme: Transition Statement Summarizing Previous Section and Introducing the Next (3:7-12 [cf. 1:21, 22, 32-34, 39])

Introduction:

The gospel writer is persistent in setting forth the nature of who Jesus is and what He does. He continues to move the story forward. Jesus Christ is king and He is here to establish His kingdom, to secure for Himself a people who live forever in His presence under His blessing.

"As Mark closed the first subsection with a general survey of Jesus' activity, so he closes also the second (3:7-12). Yet some begin the third subsection with v. 7 by making it introductory to the appointment of the apostles. We prefer to make the incision at v. 12." (R.C.H. Lenski, Commentary on the New Testament: Mark, 140).

The fame of Jesus' ministry spreads to the areas surrounding Galilee. He continues to free the sick from their ailments and the demon possessed from their demons. Even the demons, Jesus' enemies, acknowledge he is the Son of God (Mark 3:7-12).

Questions:

1. Why did Jesus withdraw from His disciples?
2. Should a ministry professing to be Christian be attractive?
3. Should we seek to promote the gospel locally, nationally, and globally?
4. Is making preparation or taking precautionary measures a lack of faith?
5. How would we describe our targeted audience for the preaching of the gospel?
6. Have you affirmed the divine Sonship of Jesus Christ?

To Know: The Holy Spirit desires for us to know the greatness of God and the wonder of His work.

To Choose: The Holy Spirit desires for us to choose Him above all else as the center of our joy.

To Feel: The Holy Spirit desires for us to feel the joy of resting in the person and work of Jesus Christ for salvation and for service.

The Eternal Value:

It is only a ministry that is proclaiming and embodying good news that is worthy of perpetuity. Jesus Christ is here for the despairing, the diseased, and the distraught. He is everything we need, and one day He will be everything we want.

While attending this year's appreciation dinner for those working in Awana, Elder Keith Knapp made the statement, "When you ask any question in the clubs, the answer is always Jesus. That is still true as adults, but often it becomes more complicated."

Everything we need is found in Jesus. Mark pushes this answer to all of life's questions and this solution to all of life's problems.

The Present Danger:

The ministry we have is to be a reflection of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. What do people see when they come here or when the words, "Waukesha Bible Church," are spoken? The greatness of this ministry is definable by the greatness of our God. If this ministry is man-centered, personality driven, then it is worthy of failure.

There are two broad statements inside of this short paragraph. The first is a summarizing of His ministry and the second is the substance of His ministry. For what is His ministry noted? Our passage is both a summary and an introduction. Let us begin by noting how Mark summarizes the ministry of Jesus Christ.

- I. The summarizing of His ministry (vv. 7-9).
 - A. Notice the attractive nature of His ministry (v. 8 ["a great multitude"]).

Mark carefully sets contrasting pictures. The religious establishment sought His demise in 3:6 whereas the hurting multitude sought Him out for hope, healing, and wholeness (3:7, 8).

"The crowd did not gather in an hour. It evidently took some time for this vast assemblage to gather together." (Kenneth Wuest, Word Studies in the Greek New Testament, 1:66).

Why would so many travel such great distances to see him, and from Gentile regions? News couldn't travel fast at this time. Someone might hear about Jesus' actions in a town weeks if not months after the events. How could they go all that way and be sure where to find him? It's not as if people had enough disposable income to leave their homes and jobs for days and weeks just on the off chance they might discover a healer in a particular location.

The most likely people to make such a journey are the truly desperate – in other words, those who are so afflicted by physical, mental, or emotional ailments that they are at the end of their ropes. For them, failure isn't any worse than what they have now, so it's worth the risk to make the trip. This suggests that if there were indeed great crowds there, they were more likely around for healing than for preaching.
<http://atheism.about.com/od/biblegospelofmark/a/mark03b.htm>

Jesus offered them something other than what they were getting. The kingdom brought by Jesus gave hope, healing, and wholeness. His ministry was marked by life and not death and it sought to do good not harm. This is what marks the kingdom of His beloved Son. Our danger in our quest to reach people is to abandon the substance that is Christ and replace it with mere trinkets and shadows.

“These multitudes are not disciples; it is not His teaching which attracts them, but His cures. They want to be healed, or to see Him heal.” (Alfred Plummer, The Gospel According to St. Mark, Thornapple Commentaries, 103).

Personally, I would love to have all the people God would have us shepherd if we can do it biblically and maintain a unified fellowship built around the person and work of Jesus Christ.

B. Notice the aggressive nature of His ministry (v. 8b).

Everywhere everyone went word was spread that a miracles worker was on the rise. The gospel’s intent is to make know to people the truth about sin, salvation, and the Savior.

“They were attracted by the great deeds they kept hearing (durative present participle) that Jesus was doing (the imperfect for continuous doing).” (R.C.H. Lenski, Commentary on the New Testament: Mark, 138).

C. Notice the preventive nature of His ministry (v. 9a).

Jesus took precautionary measures to insure His immediate well-being. Not only did He withdraw from a highly volatile situation (v. 6), but He did what was necessary to keep Himself from being crushed.

Was Jesus walking by faith when He avoided a head-on collision with those who sought His destruction? Was He living by faith when He made provision for His physical well-being? Did He trust God in both cases? It has often been said that “those who fail to plan, plan to fail.” Walking by faith does not preclude the making of preparation or the establishing of plans.

“He did not want the boat as a pulpit, but as a refuge, in case the pressure of the immense multitude should become dangerous.” (Alfred Plummer, The Gospel According to St. Mark, Thornapple Commentaries, 103).

“It shows that even Jesus, though divine as well as human, in his state of humiliation made wise use of precautions, measures taken beforehand against possible danger. In doing this, is he not teaching a lesson which everyone would do well to heed? When God created the human body he equipped it with many precautionary extras! The point is: it was there, always ready, ever available.” (William Hendriksen, Mark, NTC, 120-121).

D. Notice the exhaustive nature of His ministry (vv. 9, 10a [“crowd Him”]).

“Very graphic. He healed many by word or touch, so that those near Him were falling upon Him, and those at a distance were frantic to get near Him.” (Alfred Plummer, The Gospel According to St. Mark, Thornapple Commentaries, 103).

The idea behind the word means “to afflict, suffer tribulation, to trouble.” “It is so used when speaking of pressing grapes so as to extract the juice.” (Kenneth Wuest, Word Studies in the Greek New Testament, 1:67). Jesus was literally mobbed by people who were trying to touch Him. He was physically jostled and pushed. The ministry He presented caused Him to be physically spent to the point of harm and it was necessary for Him to recuperate.

The text also tells us that the afflicted “pressed around Him.” The word “pressed” is a compound word that heightens the idea of pressure. They were seizing Him.

“They were not hostile, but simply intensely eager, each to have his own case attended to by Jesus.” (A.T. Robertson’s Word Pictures on Mark 3:10). Literally, they “fell upon him”; such was their eagerness to be healed by touching him.

“Only Mark includes the detail about the boat (v. 9). Its purpose was, of course, to provide escape for Jesus in case the crowd began to get unruly.” (Walter W. Wessell, “Mark,” in EBC, 8:641).

C. Notice the repulsive nature of His ministry (v. 10b [“all with afflictions”]).

Notice how verse 10 says that the result of His healing ministry was a more aggressive response toward Him by the crushing multitudes.

Jesus attracted the unclean and unwanted. Those whom He attracted were those whom others rejected. The word used in verse 10 is also used in Mark 5:29 and 34 to describe the woman who had the issue of blood. She was unclean. Those who fully recognize the wretched condition of their souls will flock to Jesus for healing. It is a tragedy when we cannot see past the shell of the individual into the crying need of their souls. As long as we are consumed by shadows we will never be marked as a grace-based family.

II. The substance of His ministry (vv. 10)

Why did the ministry of Jesus attract the poor, the crushed, and the bound? The answer is stated in verses 10 and 11.

A. What is stated (vv. 10-12).

1. He healed the sick (v. 10)
2. He cast out demons (vv. 11, 12)

Our text gives us three thoughts concerning demons.

a. Their character

“Calling these forces ‘unclean spirit’ is a convenient way of saying two things about them. First, they are non-physical powers that operate upon, and sometimes within, a

person. Second, they defile the one they inhabit, making such a person behave in ways that are untrue to their calling as a human being.” (Tom Wright, Mark for Everyone, 33)

b. Their circumstance

“(Imperfect indicative with hotan of repeated action) they kept falling down before him and crying, and he kept charging or rebuking them, all imperfects.” (A.T. Robertson’s Word Pictures on Mark 3:11)

The idea behind “falling down” “indicates servility” (Rogers and Rogers, 72). I have said this on multiple occasions and I will say it again -- there is nothing created that can ultimately resist the work and word of God. All that He wills comes to pass. The demonic realm bows before Him and does His bidding.

c. Their cry

Again notice the carefully contrasting picture used by Mark. The demons identify Jesus as “the Son of God” and the religious establishment “began conspiring as to how they might destroy Him” (v. 6).

“They kept on constantly crying. What horrible confusion this was, deep throaty, raucous voices from the satanic world.” (Kenneth Wuest, Word Studies in the Greek New Testament, 1:67).

“Clearly, when they yelled ‘You are the Son of God,’ they were referring to Jesus as Son of God in a unique sense, God’s Son as no one else ever was or will be.” (William Hendriksen, Mark, NTC, 121).

There is rawness to the gospel narrative that is often overlooked. We cannot sterilize the gospel story. The gospel means good news because there is bad news.

B. What is assumed (1:21, 22; 2:13; 4:1, 2; 6:2, 6, 34; etc.)

Jesus taught. He always was teaching. Jesus used every means at His disposal to preach God and call people’s attention to God. How do we “mesh” the two ideas of preaching the gospel and helping our fellow man?

The gospel of Jesus Christ addresses the whole of the individual. The gospel of Jesus Christ is not simply proclamational; it is also incarnational. The gospel feeds the hungry, clothes the naked, and provides a cup of cold water to the thirsty. The gospel produces humanitarian activity. Christianity causes us to care. Ministries of mercy are intrinsic to the gospel of Jesus Christ. In the absence of either one (proclamation and incarnation) we have an imbalanced and unhealthy expression of the good news.

For us to be a clearer picture of the gospel we have begun to emphasizing the idea of mercy ministries as an expression of the Waukesha Bible Church family. We do not believe such expression can be severed from a proclamational ministry, nor do we

believe their fullest expression can happen apart from a community of faith. As a means of us fulfilling the gospel in our immediate community, we are working through already established works. We are not partnering with these agencies. We are simply using means that already exist for us to be the hands and feet of Jesus in our immediate community. Many of you are already involved in ministries of mercy. The thoughts behind us having a COMMUNITY OUTREACH MINISTRY are to establish and solidify this idea as a believing community. This is important and if you do not have the venue for this expression to take place in your life, then we are providing a platform for it to exist.

St. Francis of Assisi is quoted as saying, "Preach the gospel at all times -- if necessary, use words." Let us do the same.

C. Why the silence? (v. 12)

Notice how He appoints twelve men to follow Him in 3:13-19, and in 6:7-13 He will send them out to do what He is doing. So the issue is not one of trying to limit His ministry expression or advance His kingdom. The issue is probably a restriction placed on how the kingdom ministry is expressed and advanced.

"Jesus silenced the outcries of the demons (v. 12) because the time for the clear revelation of who he was had not yet come, and the demons were hardly appropriate heralds of him." (Walter W. Wessell, "Mark," in EBC, 8:641).

"The scribes were telling the people that Jesus and the demons were allies (3:22). If, then, Jesus permitted himself to be advertised by demons, would he not seem to be confirming the allegation of these scribes?" (William Hendriksen, Mark, NTC, 121).

The sea places a prominent place in Mark's account (Mark 1:16; 3:7; 4:1, 39-41; 5:1-13; 6:47-49; 7:31; [9:42; 11:23 - illustrations]).

APPLICATION: (Where do we go from here, what is our NEXT ACTION STEP?)

1. Let us continue to lead with a ministry marked by hope, healing, and wholeness. May His beauty radiate from us in order that He might draw sinners to Himself.
2. Let us embrace the idea that life can be taxing, thus let us rest on the person and work of Jesus Christ and never grow weary in doing good. May we find our work His work.
3. Let us seek the lost in order that we might be a ministry marked by proclamation and incarnation. May we never divide His words from His works.

I truly feel like a kid in a candy store as we work through the gospel of Mark. As is my custom, I often eat out, and when I do I go to buffets. The other day I was at an establishment that has an enormous dessert section. I enjoy watching the joy of others

as they select and consume their delectable items. Recently a bus load of smaller children were brought in and I saw a small child excitedly run up and down the dessert line and say, "I want this, and this, and this, I WANT IT ALL." Friend, that is how I often feel as I read the work of Jesus and consider what He is doing in and through His people for the proclamation of His name among every tongue, tribe, people, and nation. Like the little child, "I WANT IT ALL."

It is with great joy and contentment knowing that God wins and His name is great and His fame known by all.