

Sermon Notes Nov. 17, 2019

Mark 3:7-12

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Introduction

Several years ago, on New Year's Day, a beautiful float in the Tournament of Roses parade suddenly sputtered and quit.

It was out of gas.

The whole parade was held up until someone could get a can of gas.

The amusing thing was this float represented the Standard Oil Company.

With its vast oil resources, its truck was out of gas.

Ironically, that truck describes a lot of Christians.

They have vast resources in Christ, but more often than not they find themselves “out of gas.”

Mark 3:7-10

Jesus withdrew with his disciples to the lake, and a large crowd followed. When they heard all he was doing, many people came to him from Judea, Jerusalem, Idumea, and the regions across the Jordan and around Tyre and Sidon. Because of the crowd he told his disciples to have a small boat ready for him, to keep the people from crowding him (or restricting him). For he had healed many, so that those with diseases were pushing forward to touch him.

There were a lot of people crowding Jesus that day, but they were not really interested in getting to know Him.

They were only interested in what they could get from Him.

They only wanted to be healed of their diseases.

Jesus, as the healer and miracle worker, was very popular, but Jesus wasn't interested in popularity.

Mark 3:11-12

Whenever the evil spirits saw him, they fell down before him and cried out, “You are the Son of God.” But he gave them strict orders not to tell who he was.

Again, these demons tried to control Jesus and strip him of his power, because they believed that calling a person by his true name grants mastery over that person.

But Jesus did not allow them to continue their useless babble.

His sovereign word of rebuke rendered the demons powerless and kept them from popularizing His name.

You see, even though Jesus was attracting great crowds, He didn't come to be popular, because it was restrictive to His true purpose.

He didn't come to be served, but to serve and to give His life as a ransom for many ([Mark 10:45](#)).

Even so, when the crowds were crowding Him for selfish reasons, Jesus still healed them.

Jesus still cast out their demons.

Jesus still cared for them.
And there are people who “crowd” Jesus today.
As a healer and miracle worker, Jesus is still quite popular.

1. The text describes the ongoing impact of Jesus' Galilean ministry.

- A. Great multitudes followed Jesus and His disciples - Mk 3:7-9
- B. The people were drawn by Jesus' ability to heal the sick and to cast out demons - Mk 3:10-12

2. After reading the text, we can find three distinct classes of individuals And their different responses to Jesus.

- A. The Disciples of Jesus - Mk 3:7,9
- B. The Great Multitude - Mk 3:7-10
- C. The unclean spirits - Mk 3:11-12
- D. It seems that there are 3 distinct classes of people in the text and they all respond to Jesus differently.

1. The Committed

A. The Committed include the Disciples

- 1. They included men like Peter, Andrew, James, John, and Matthew
- 2. They answered the call to follow Jesus
- 3. They offered their service in whatever way He asked
 - a) As when Jesus asked them to prepare a boat they did so.
 - b) And later, Jesus would later send them out to preach

B. The Committed Today

- 1. That would include those who make up the Body of Christ
- 2. Those who heed Jesus' call to discipleship.
- 3. Those who offer their energy and resources to the spread of Christ's kingdom
 - a) By developing a Christ-like character
 - b) By developing a Christ-like service

2. The Curious

A. The Curious would include the Multitude

- 1. They include those looking to be healed, or perhaps just to see a miracle
- 2. Though following Jesus from place to place, they were not true disciples
- 3. But those seeking some sort of personal satisfaction, whom Jesus often drove away
 - a) As when they followed Him after He fed the 5000
 - b) As when He challenged them with the call to true discipleship - cf. Lk 14:25-2
- 4. Of course, some would eventually take up the challenge and become true disciple

B. The Curious Today

- 1. Would be those who may visit churches, even regularly
- 2. But they are like “tire kickers”, they never fully commit themselves
- 3. Perhaps they attend just to appease their conscience
 - a) But they never obey the gospel of Christ
 - b) They just put it off
- 4. Hopefully, one who is curious will eventually take the step to follow Jesus completely

3. The Condemned

A. The condemned would be the unclean spirits

- 1. Unclean spirits were demons, or fallen angels
- 2. They knew who Jesus was
- 3. They also knew that torment that awaited them

4. Yet they showed no desire to repent of their evil ways

B. The Condemned Today

1. They would include those who persist in sin and refuse to repent
2. For whom there is no forgiveness while they remain in that state
3. It is those who often think lightly of sin, and mock those trying to do good
4. Yet they will one day have to answer, even confess Jesus

3. Everyone is in one group or the other.

A. You are either among the committed

- a faithful disciple of Jesus Christ?

B. Or you are among the curious

- interested, but have not yet made the decision?

C. Or you are among the condemned

- determined to resist God and refuse to follow Jesus?

D. One day, we will either be in the group of the committed or the condemned.

- A. The time for curiosity will be over
- B. We will either be saved or lost forever
- C. Today is time to make your choice!

E. As Paul wrote in 2 Corinthians 6:1-2:

We then, as workers together with Him also plead with you not to receive the grace of God in vain. For He says: "In an acceptable time I have heard you, and in the day of salvation I have helped you"

Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation.

1. Let's now look at the text from a different point of view.

Let's look at it from what Jesus was trying to accomplish.

Mark 3:7-8

7 Jesus withdrew with his disciples to the lake, and a large crowd from Galilee followed. 8 When they heard about all he was doing, many people came to him from Judea, Jerusalem, Idumea, and the regions across the Jordan and around Tyre and Sidon.

2. First of all, I think that we have difficulty grasping the size of this crowd.

A. This was not just a few people, or a few thousand.

1. There were literally tens of thousands of people in this crowd.
 - They came from all over this country.
 - They came from Galilee, from Judea, which began fifty miles to the south,
 - From Jerusalem, the capital of Judea some seventy miles south of the Sea of Galilee,
 - And beyond that from the land of Idumea, or Edom, way down in the southern desert, and from the region east of the Jordan River stretching out into the Arabian Desert,
 - And from the west clear to the Mediterranean coast and up the coast to Tyre and Sidon, the area now in the country of Lebanon.
 - It is from throughout this entire area that they came.
 - They flocked out from all the cities to hear this amazing prophet from Galilee who was saying such startling things.

3. For many, this has been the symbol of Jesus' success, as it would be for many in evaluating a person today.

A. Anybody who can get a great crowd following him is regarded as a success.

1. We have all kinds of people who do that.
 - We call them "stars"
 - There are star actors, star athletes, star singers, star politicians.

2. They are the various people who have attained what in our day is a mark of success.
 - No wonder the title of one of today's most popular musicals is Jesus Christ, Superstar.
 - He is the one who drew all these great multitudes out from the cities of his day.

4. But as you read through the text, you see that Mark's intention is to underscore the weakness of popularity, the empty, hollow worthlessness of being popular, and how much damage and danger popularity produced in Jesus' ministry.

A. We can see the false and hindering effects which are invariably produced when a movement becomes merely popular.

1. They are a warning for us.
2. Popularity produced these effects in Jesus' day and popularity produces the same effects today.

B. The first effect is given to us in Verses 9-10. After describing the crowd Mark says:

9 Because of the crowd he told his disciples to have a small boat ready for him, to keep the people from crowding him. 10 For he had healed many, so that those with diseases were pushing forward to touch him.

1. This underscores certain unwanted and false emphases which were awakened by this crowd.
2. They misunderstood the purpose for which Jesus came and they began to emphasize that which was secondary in his thinking.
3. You can see this all through the ministry of Jesus, especially with regard to the healing of physical bodies.
4. Now there is no question that Jesus did heal physically.
 - But, from that day to this, men have seized upon that as though it preeminently were the thing he came to do.
 - Yet, as you read the Gospels carefully, you see that Jesus is very careful to play it down, and to emphasize that he came to heal the spirits of men and not their bodies.
 - Jesus healed their bodies in order to demonstrate what he could do, and would do, in the realm of the spirit, for this is how we are truly made.
 - Human nature is such that what is going on internally must become externalized.
 - It must show up in something which affects our bodies.

C. We well know that if we are anxious or troubled or upset it can result, if long continued, in certain physical defects.

1. We can develop a nervous tic or twitch, or can get ulcers.
2. All kinds of things can go wrong because of some malady in our inner man.

D. Again, Jesus healed the body to demonstrate what he could do with the spirit.

1. But the crowd misunderstood that, and they pressed around him so that he might touch those who were sick, and heal them, so much so that Jesus had to resort to a strategy to avoid being crushed, literally, by this crowd.
2. That's how large the crowd was.
3. The interesting thing is that the device he used to get away was perfectly human.
4. Notice that Jesus didn't play with magic here.
 - He didn't build an invisible barrier around himself so that nobody could get close, or suddenly step into a phone booth, change clothes and then leap into the sky.
 - He is human.
 - And, in order to escape, he asks his disciples to keep a boat handy on the shore so that he can step into it and move out onto the lake where the crowd can't follow him.
 - He did this in order that he might preach instead of heal.

E. But all they wanted was healing.

1. And what Jesus wanted to do was to preach about the Kingdom of God.
2. This is one of the things popularity does.

3. It invariably distorts a message and emphasizes something secondary, making the secondary so paramount in the eyes of the people, that they miss the point.

5. The second false effect popularity awakens is given in Verse 11:

11 Whenever the impure spirits saw him, they fell down before him and cried out, “You are the Son of God.”

A. Behind these diseases, the Scriptures tell us, were oftentimes the presence and the power of unclean spirits.

1. Have you noticed how many times in Scripture these demons are called “unclean”?
2. They are unclean either morally or physically.

B. And Mark tells us that when the unclean spirits saw Jesus they always identified Jesus as “the Son of God.”

1. And why do you think Jesus always silenced them and cast them out.
2. Why do you suppose he rejected this testimony from these demonic entities?
3. Do you remember when Paul and Silas were in Philippi, and a young girl followed them and cried out “These men are servants of the most high God.”
4. And Paul and Silas refused her witness.
5. Finally, Paul finally cast the demon out of her.
6. So, everywhere in the Scriptures, you find both Jesus and the apostles rejecting this kind of testimony.
7. Yet the testimony was true.
 - Jesus is the Son of God.
 - But Jesus would not permit that witness to come from these demons.
 - So what was his reason for that?

C. Well, we can be sure of one thing.

1. These unclean spirits did not desire to advance the cause of Christ by their witness.
2. They told the truth, but they did so because they knew it would hurt the cause of Jesus, not help it.
3. They were out to mislead people about Christ.
4. So something about the way they told this, though it was true, was nevertheless misleading, and that is what Jesus rejected.

D. But it is more likely that these demons intended that the people would believe that Jesus was the son of the God they worshipped, i.e., Satan.

1. So when they said that, “He is the Son of God,” people would associate Jesus with demonic beings and with the devil himself.
2. It is no accident that in just two more paragraphs you read of a delegation coming from Jerusalem who accuse Jesus of being possessed by a devil.
3. That is why Jesus totally rejected this witness from the demons that he was the Son of God.
4. The demons god was not Jesus’ God.

1. Now let's look at the Pressures That Come With Faithful Ministry

The great football coach of the Green Bay Packers was Vince Lombardi.

He led the Packers to victories in the first 2 Super Bowls.

Lombardi was a great coach but also a man of great wit and insight.

For example, Lombardi said

- “Confidence is contagious. So is lack of confidence.”
- “Football is like life. It requires perseverance, self-denial, hard work, sacrifice, dedication and respect for authority.”
- “If you accept losing, you can’t win.”
- “It’s not whether you get knocked down, it’s whether you get up.”

- "Once you learn to quit, it becomes a habit."
- "Fatigue makes cowards of us all."
- "People who work together will win."
- "The good Lord gave you ability that can stand most anything. It's your mind you have to convince."
- "It is essential to understand that battles are primarily won in the hearts of men."
- "Men respond to leadership in a most remarkable way and once you have won their heart, they will follow you anywhere."

2. The concept of Leadership, Teamwork and Fatigue run throughout Jesus' Ministry.

A. It is absolutely essential that we know the playing field, have realistic expectations, and a God given strategy if we are to do well in ministry.

B. Jesus, Himself, knew this, and we discover in this text how He dealt with the pressures that come with faithful ministry.

1) Whether it is opposition from the Pharisees (2:1-3:6), the press of the crowd (3:7-12), the failure of a former follower, or the rejection of family,

Jesus provides a model for us to follow!

2) Jesus will accept the pressure that goes with faithful ministry all the way to the cross.

3. Expect to be pressured by those who want something from you.

Mark 3:7-12

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A. Verses 7-8 note the growing popularity of Jesus!

1) The Pharisees and the Herodians may have put out a contract on Him to take Him out, but the people were wildly enthusiastic about Jesus and His ministry!

2) Note from where they came.

- Galilee – Jews and some Gentiles from Northern Israel, Judea and Jerusalem
- Jews from the South and the capital city Idumea
- Southeast of Judea
- A mix of Jews and Gentiles Across the Jordan
- From the east, the area of the Decapolis (ten cities) Tyre and Sidon
- Northwest above Galilee; mostly Gentiles

3) Already there is a multi-ethnic movement in the ministry of Jesus, something He would affirm in the strongest language in Matthew 28:18-20 and The Great Commission.

B. They will impose themselves upon you. Mark 3:7-10

1) Mark will note repeatedly the large crowds that are flocking to Jesus like geese headed south for the winter.

- Wave

after wave they follow and keep coming.

- The pressure had to be immense. The temptations were great.

2) Jesus has withdrawn hoping for some quiet time with His disciples, but this is not going to happen.

- Pictures of Jesus sitting under a tree in beautiful green grass with white fluffy sheep in the background and children in His lap is a myth!

- Mayhem and bedlam more often characterizes the reality of His public ministry.

3) So great is the press of the crowd that He asked the disciples to prepare a "get away boat" so they might not get crushed!

- He was healing the sick (v.10) and casting out demons (v. 11) and the people wanted in on this.

4) As is often the case in ministry, they did not care about Him, only what they could get from Him.

C. Where they concerned about His privacy? No.

- 1) Did they care about His need for time alone? No.
- 2) Did they care about His need for food and rest? (v. 20) No.
- 3) This will often, too often, be the experience of those who work hard for the Lord.
 - It is really unavoidable.
 - You cannot stop it, but you can control it to some degree.
 - But, make sure you understand and accept the reality.
 - People you serve will impose on you and not give it a second thought.
 - It is simply the nature of the work.

D. After that, they may seek to hinder you. Mark 3:11-12

1) Jesus continues to confront and conquer the demonic as a proof that the Kingdom of God has arrived in Him!

- 2) Upon seeing Him they
 - Fall down before Him
 - And cry out, acknowledging that He is the Son of God.
- 3) Jesus again demands their silence.
- 4) A demonic declaration of His deity will not help but hurt His mission.
 - It is the wrong source.
 - It is the wrong time.

5) Jesus will be fully revealed not by demonic confession but by the cross of Calvary.

E. In a futile attempt to control Jesus by identifying Him and limiting His power, the demons are silenced by His sovereign authority.

- 1) Jesus will carry forward and complete His mission on God's terms, on His terms, not theirs.
- 2) What they want from Him they cannot have and will not receive.
- 3) The same must be true for us!
 - We must do the will of God, God's way and in God's time.

- We must not allow ourselves to be manipulated by ungodly agendas regardless of the praise we may receive, the positions we are offered, the prosperity we may be promised.