

STONE HARBOR

P.O. Box 4049
Monterey CA, 93942
831.655.5800
www.stoneharborchurch.org
Pastor Johnny Potter

October 26, 2008

Who Jesus Is & Why He Matters

Mark 3:7-19

Jesus Doesn't Do What I Would Do

Introduction

If I were Jesus I'd heal you all and give you each 7 million dollars so you wouldn't have to work anymore. Then life would be easy and you could have what you want.

But, you might just have so much of what you want that you would have no need, or at least no perceived need, for what really matters most. You'd be fat, happy, and unaware of what could be even better.

What could be better than 7 mil and doing what you want for the rest of your life? Right now that is sounding hard to beat.

As I studied the passage we are about to talk about this past week I found myself processing what is more important than all this life can offer us.

Let's read Mark 3:7-19 and see if we can figure out how Jesus different ways of doing life indicate what is more important than what we naturally want.

Before we read today's passage it is good to remember that Jesus has just come off of a whole series of conflicts with the religious leaders of his day. The conflicts were because of the differences Jesus had with the religious leaders; and the differences were of increasing intensity, ending in last week's passage where the Pharisees went off to figure out how they might destroy Jesus.

What was the big difference between Jesus and the Jewish religious leaders of the day? What did Jesus do that is so different than they would have done? What does Jesus do that you and I would do differently?

Mark 3:7-19...

If I were Jesus, I would have done it differently.

I. He Distances Himself from the Crowd

A. Jesus Action – Part 1: “Jesus withdrew”

First off, look at verse 7. Here Jesus is seen withdrawing. God sounding the retreat? If I were Jesus with His abilities I would have just stood my ground and made my will happen. Jesus enters into conflict, then He withdraws, when He has the power to overcome that's different.

B. Current Setting: Significant Fame

1. People were following Him from all over the region

2. Two Types of People Mentioned in the Crowd other than His Disciples

The crowd was made up NOT of those who heard that the Son of God was here, but as verse 8 says, of “Those who heard of all that He was doing”, i.e., the crowd around Jesus was there because of what He could do for them, not because of who He was in and of Himself. They did not follow Him because they knew Him to be the Son of God, but because they knew Him to be able to heal.

a) Verse 10 describes Jesus' crowd of followers as made up of: “all those who had afflictions...”

They “pressed about Him in order to touch Him” presumably so that they would be healed. Who was following Jesus? The afflicted looking for healing.

b) Verse 11 further notes that the crowd was also made up of those with “unclean spirits”

That is quite the crowd. I'm very thankful for the people of Stone Harbor who are not just the sick and demon possessed.

C. Jesus Action – Part 2: Jesus Distances Himself from the crowd

1. Jesus Has a Boat Readied for Himself

Whether the boat was to be used for transportation, or a speaking platform or for water skiing, is not stated but what is clear from the context is that boat would help Him secure the reality of the crowd there on the shore, distance, and Him on the boat.

Now if I were Jesus at this time, big crowd, everyone focused on me... what would any pastor today do on such an occasion... why we'd take an offering.

D. Why He Distanced Himself from Those Who Followed Him

1. They wanted healing and His agenda was bigger!

What was His agenda? We'll get a peak at it in verse 13. But first. Let's look at another unexpected thing that Jesus did as recorded in this paragraph. You'd think that Jesus would want the word to get out that He was the Son of God. But instead...

II. He Quiets the Proclamation of His Identity

Verse 11 records the proclamation: You are the Son of God. This is the way Mark starts off his gospel. Then God Himself said of Jesus in Mark 1:11 "You are my beloved Son, in You I am well pleased." Jesus is God's Son! The proclamation was accurate.

We can think of no greater thing than letting the truth of who Jesus is be known. If that word gets out, it is a good thing. But here Jesus takes the accurate proclamation of His identity and suppresses it. Verse 12 says, "He earnestly warned them not to make Him known."

Now, I'm sure He didn't want the demons being His spokesmen. I'm sure also that timing mattered. But I am coming to think that the real reason Jesus did not want the message of who He was going out at this time was because even the truth spoken does not convey truth if the people hearing don't understand the words spoken. It would have been as futile as speaking truth to someone in a language they didn't know. Actually, it would have been worse because it would be speaking a truth in a language they did know but the meaning they attached to the words was different than the meaning Jesus attached to them.

The Jews had a different expectation of who the Christ, the Son of God would be than who Jesus wanted to present Himself as. They were thinking that the Messiah would be a political/national ruler who would deliver them from the Roman rule and establish a renewed kingdom under a ruler like their former King David.

This was NOT what Jesus was up to at this point in time. He was inaugurating a new kingdom, but it was not just another kingdom of men to replace the Roman rule. Rather it was the Kingdom of God that would push out, NOT the Roman emperor, but Satan. Jesus was not setting people free from the bondage to a national ruler; but He was setting them free from the greater bondage to sin and death that held captive all men of all kingdoms from all times.

Jesus was NOT the Messiah of their expectations. He was NOT the Son of God according to what they thought the Son of God would be and do. Therefore to proclaim even a true message about Him at that time would be to communicate falsehood. Jesus real identity had to be established first. It would be established not by words but by deeds; two in particular – His crucifixion and His resurrection. When these observable events would happen then His identity would be firmly established and then His identity would be ready to be proclaimed.

If I were Jesus and someone was willing to give me free publicity, I'd most likely take it. But He values not only getting His name out there, but much more importantly the accurate

communication of His identity as King of the Kingdom of God, a kingdom not of this world, but one that is bigger and better in every way. Now we had seen as we started out this morning that Jesus had a bigger agenda than just healing. What was that big agenda?

III. He Calls a Small Number of Men to Himself

How can calling a small number of people to Himself be bigger than healing multitudes? Let's look at verses 13-19.

Jesus' actions and Mark's choice of words in the telling of His story are both laden with meaning accessible only to the initiated. It is as if as Mark spoke his story, he would have given a wink to those in the room who understood on a deeper level than others.

Take the mention of the word "mountain" in verse 13. On one level, a mountain is just a place that is higher than the ground around it. It is a common geological feature that we see all the time. On the other hand, to the Jewish people of that day, a mountain is a place of significant meeting with God. The thoughtful Jewish person would think of the mountain where God made His covenant with the people of Israel as mediated by Moses. (Ex 19, 20). The initiated are filled with anticipation when they hear of Jesus going up to a mountain: What is God up to on the mountain this time? It was big last time!

Then there is the word "summoned" – that is king-speak isn't it. I call you and see if we could get together. Jesus "summoned." That is what people do who are in positions of power.

"He Himself" – Mark uses this combination of words to emphasize that this was the personal desire of Jesus. Jesus selection of these 12 men was His personal and intentional desire. It is as if Mark was already answering the questions of those who would question the choice of men to be the apostles of Jesus – They are who Jesus Himself wanted.

Jesus summoned them and they "came." Jesus who heals just by speaking the word can summon and have people come.

"And He appointed 12" – With another wink to the initiated, Mark recounts Jesus choice of 12 men. God had in the past called to Himself the nation of Israel, interestingly comprised of 12 tribes. These were His chosen people, people with whom He entered into a special covenant relationship. Here we see a restart of the people of God. Jesus is doing a new thing with a new and conspicuously small group.

Now I would have done it differently. I would have called a lot more than 12 men to do the work of bringing the message of hope to the whole world.

What did Jesus want these 12 chosen and appointed to do? Verse 14 says, ...

"that they might be with Him"

"that He might send them out to preach and have authority to cast out demons."

We have to take note that the first thing Jesus wanted of these men was to **be with Him**. The second thing He wanted of them was to **send them out on mission**. I think the order is important and still needs to be how we continue the work of Jesus. First we must simply be with Him and get to know Him, then we go out on the mission He sends us on. We must be with Him and know Him if we are to represent Him well to the world.

He chose them to be with Him – This is huge. Jesus **chose** men to be with Him! God the Son reaches into this broken world and chooses tarnished image bearers like you and me to be with Him. Imagine a perfect marriage. Jesus wants to be the husband to His church body – to you. Jesus wants to be in a good and intimate relationship with you. In Jn 17:20ff Jesus prays for unity and relationship for us and God like He and God enjoy.

In verses 16-19 of Mark 3 he identifies the people that will be His chosen people of focus.

Now if I were Jesus and I wanted to establish a new global church I would have chosen a different set of folks. They probably would have been credentialed folk. Yet here we see that Jesus chose people like you and me – wouldn't it be cool if He still did that? You know what, He does!

John 15:16

"You did not choose Me but I **chose** you, and appointed you that you would go and bear fruit, and that your fruit would remain, so that whatever you ask of the Father in My name He may give to you."

Scripture teaches that God still calls people individually to be with Him. He calls us to make disciples. He calls us to entrust what we know to faithful men that they may in turn entrust it to others.

This pattern of choosing and working with a few at a time IS passed down for us still today.

Conclusion

Who is Jesus & Why does He matter? He is the healer with more of an agenda than physical healing. Physical healing is easy for us to see and want. If you live in chronic pain, you want deliverance from it and it is hard to imagine there to be something more important than receiving that wanted relief.

But this passage with Jesus distancing Himself from those who wanted healing indicates that there is something more important than relieving human suffering related to physical illness. Jesus did not come only to relieve pain. He is not only the healer. He is also the chooser of those who might be **with Him**. Jesus' highest priority is being with the people He chooses. He would rather be with His chosen few than heal the multitudes!

This lands us with the fundamental issue God is apparently trying to deal with in my life and in the lives of many in our church. How do we take joy in our relationship with God when we have so much in our lives that is not what we want it to be?

I have a brother who does not yet believe in Jesus. I have a friend who's daughter struggles with drugs. I have another friend who suffers from anxiety and another who lives with chronic pain and another who suffers from depression and another who's marriage is severely stressed. How are these people to have joy in their walk with the Lord when each step is accompanied by so much pain or at least the heart ache of not having what they want? How can I take joy in the goodness of God and in my relationship with Jesus as the pastor of a church with so much pain?

In reading this passage it is clear that some of those who followed Jesus left the Sea of Galilee unhealed. I wonder what did Jesus hope would come about in their lives?

Mark indicates that Jesus distanced himself from the sick, and instead sought out people of His choosing so that He could be with them – in fellowship with them, union with God in Jesus Christ is the focus! That's what Jesus wants. He values your close and loving relationship with Him in a kingdom that is not of this world. It occurs to me that we live in two kingdoms: one that we see with our natural eyes, and one that we see only with eyes of faith.

By distancing Himself from those who needed healing and by calling some to be with Him Jesus is beginning to help people realize that there is more to life than the life we can see with our natural eyes. I need to be reminded of this all over again. There exists something of greater value than what we naturally value: health, wealth, things going our way. Mark doesn't develop what that thing of greater value is besides that it is about "being with Him [Jesus]" and about being sent us out by Him on a mission of His choosing.

I am called in this passage to a correct understanding of who Jesus is and to a correct valuing of His presence in my life and of my participation in His mission. I am called to repentance all over again -- a changing of my understanding of who Jesus is. Back then the Jews had to change their thinking: He was not the political ruler come to unseat the Roman rule and restore the Jewish Davidic Theocracy, but He was the suffering servant come to atone for our sins that we might have right relationship with God for all eternity.

We in our American Evangelical Christian faith, we need to change our thinking. We need to repent of our understanding of God as the one who blesses us with all things worldly and natural; and instead see Him first and foremost as the one who blesses with other-worldly things, spiritual things: we must see Him as redeemer, forgiver of sins, restorer of right relationship between man and God, as giver of new life, as our king, not of this world, but of one that is even more important – the eternal kingdom.

Faith takes a step in the direction God has pointed us without seeing with the natural mind the wisdom of that step. Faith calls us to come to God and to value and take joy in a good and right relationship with Him. That is where we start our Christian journey. That is the place of center we should start each day.

How do we do that? Maybe you can start each day with a prayer that includes asking God to help you have a right understanding of Him. Ask Him to help you value Him and your relationship with Him more than anything else. Don't stop praying for the things you want. We

have a God who is better than the best of Fathers and wants to bless us in natural ways. But we have first and foremost a God who supernaturally values our personal relationship with Him above the stuff that we naturally desire.

Let's pray.

Rom 15:13 - "May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with the hope by the power of the Holy Spirit."