

Serving with the Lord Jesus

Text: Mark 3:7-21

Introduction:

1. In our last message, the Lord encountered strong opposition in the synagogue. He now withdraws from the hostility of the Pharisees to the Sea of Galilee where he can minister to the multitudes. It is of interest that Mark only records one more visit of Christ to the synagogue after this point.
2. The disciples come more into focus in this section as they serve with the Lord Jesus and twelve are selected to fulfill the unique office of Apostle.
3. This account teaches us some helpful principles that will encourage and challenge us in our service for the Lord.
4. For the purpose of our lesson today, we will divide the text into three sections:

I. **The Serving of the Multitude (Vs. 7-12)**

A. **The Magnitude of the Multitude (Vs. 7-8a)**

1. Twice we have the phrase “a great multitude”. The size of the crowd was above average.
2. The multitude came from near and far, across the whole country.

B. **The Motivation of the Multitude (Vs. 8b)**

1. “when they had heard” = word had spread of this one called Jesus of Nazareth. The news had spread that there was one who could heal, one who could save!
2. “great things he did” = Christ’s works were marvelous and magnificent. The “great multitude” were drawn by the “great things” Christ did. Christ healed the sick, cast out demons, preached the truth and most importantly, cleansed sin sick hearts.

C. **The Mandate because of the Multitude (Vs. 9)**

1. “a small ship” = a small rowboat like those used by fisherman to row to and from their larger fishing vessels.
2. “wait on him” = ‘wait’ means “be at the ready”. The disciples were to keep the rowboat on standby in case the Lord needed it as they made their way along the sea shore.
3. Challenge: The disciples are afforded an opportunity to help Christ’s ministry to the needy multitudes by attending to a small domestic need. Oh, that we might learn to see that the smallest and seemingly insignificant acts of service take on a sacred dimension when performed for our blessed Saviour! Think of the task you least enjoy in your service in the local church. Do you think you would do it differently if you saw it as something done for Christ?
4. Col. 3:23-24 “*And whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men; Knowing that of the Lord ye shall receive the*

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reward of the inheritance: for ye serve the Lord Christ.” The word ‘heartily’ literally means “out of the soul”. Our service is to come from the heart.

D. The Miracles done for the Multitude (Vs. 10-12)

1. Deliverance from Defilement (disease) (Vs. 10)
 - a. ‘for’ = reason now given for command in Vs. 9
 - b. “he had healed many” = Christ’s power had touched a lot of lives and that drew others to Him. Do doubt many came motivated only for physical healing. But the faith of others went deeper as they embraced Him not only as their Deliverer from sickness, but as their Deliverer from sin.
 - c. “pressed upon him for to touch him” = by simply coming into contact with Christ they would be transformed of their ‘plagues’. When we come into contact with Christ by faith, He cleanses us from the plague of sin. Christ had the power to deal with every kind of plague. He still can!
2. Deliverance from Demons (Vs. 11-12)
 - a. The response of the spirits to Christ (Vs. 11)
 - i. “fell down before him” = their bowing down was not one of repentance but they had no other choice in the presence of Christ the Son of God. His very Person and Presence demanded they bow the knee. (See James 2:19)
 - ii. “cried” = they shouted, screamed
 - iii. “thou art the Son of God” = the devil and his demons are in no doubt as to who Christ is! They did not say “you were the Son of God” or “you were created to be the Son of God” or “you became the Son of God” but “**thou art** the Son of God.” Remember, these fallen spirits used to be holy angels in heaven before they were cast out with Lucifer when they rebelled with him against God. Satan may deceive many with lies about Christ, but he himself is in no doubt concerning the Deity of Christ.
 - b. The rebuke of the spirits by Christ (Vs. 12)
 - i. Christ consistently silenced the demon’s testimony concerning Himself even though their words were true.
 - ii. Christ did not want the truth of His Person associated with evil spirits, nor did He want the truth to be communicated through such a vile, corrupt channel.

II. The Selecting of the Men (Vs. 13-19)

This is a significant point in the ministry of Christ where He calls 12 men into special service to fulfil the ministry of an Apostle. Consider 5 aspects of this call.

A. The Prayer before the Call (Luke 6:12-13)

1. Luke’s account reveals that Christ’s call of the 12 was preceded by a night of prayer. Christ would then select 12 men out of His larger group of disciples to fulfil the role of Apostle.
2. Luke 6:12-13 “*And it came to pass in those days, that he went out into a mountain to pray, and **continued all night in prayer to God.** And when it was day, he called unto him his disciples: and of them*

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he chose twelve, whom also he named apostles;”

3. We learn an important principle from Christ’s example that big decisions should be preceded with much prayer in order to know God’s mind and direction. Prolonged seasons of prayer need to precede significant events.

B. The Place of the Call (Vs. 13a)

1. “a mountain” = “A mountain is often associated with God’s specific dealings with His people.” (Hiebert)
2. Think of how many significant things took place on mountains in the Bible (e.g. Abraham and Isaac; the giving of the law; the calling of the twelve; the giving of the Great Commission; the crucifixion)

C. The Prerogative of the Call (Vs. 13b)

1. “calleth unto him whom he would” = the Divine side. It was His Sovereign choice to set aside these men for special service. While God calls us all to serve Him as His people, He does separate certain individuals for specific callings such as pastor, evangelist or missionary.
2. “and they came unto him” = the human side. They willingly submitted to the call of Christ.

D. The Purposes of the Call (Vs. 14-15)

1. Piety – “that they should be with him”
 - a. “Fellowship with him must precede preaching about Him.” (Hiebert)
 - b. It has well been said, “He who would speak much to man for God, must speak much to God for man.” (Cited in *The Preacher and His Preaching*)
 - c. Closeness to Christ is the place of learning. It is the power source for our service that will keep us from becoming dry, cracked and brittle in our labours for Him.
2. Preaching – “that he might send them forth to preach”
 - a. “send forth” = same root word translated ‘apostle’
 - b. “to preach” = to be heralds of Divine, authoritative truth. Note the primacy of preaching. The bold declaration of the truth has been God’s method in every age and is still His primary method today (1 Cor. 1:21)
3. Power – “And to have power”
 - a. Power over disease (Vs. 15a)
 - b. Power over demons (Vs. 15b)
 - c. Note: The Apostles were given special authority in these areas as a part of that unique office. Today we can pray for healing and for deliverance and see God answer miraculously but we do not have Apostolic authority to command it to be so. 2 Cor. 12:12 *“Truly the **signs of an apostle** were wrought among you in all patience, in signs, and wonders, and mighty deeds.”*

E. The People of the Call (Vs. 16-19)

We note some general observations about these men the Lord chose:

1. They were diverse (Vs. 16-19)
 - a. Diversity of backgrounds
 - b. Diversity of gifts
 - c. Diversity of roles – some became Christ’s inner circle (Peter,

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James & John). Some became well known due to their prominence in the Biblical record. Others we know very little about beyond their names (e.g. Thaddaeus; Simon the Canaanite). Most of us are called to be “little people” in God’s service. Our labours are largely unknown and unnoticed on earth but are known of the Saviour in heaven.

2. One was a devil (Vs. 19)

III. The Sacrificing of the Material (Vs. 20-21)

The Lord and His disciples return from their mountain retreat to the house where they are staying (probably Peter’s). The multitudes quickly assemble and its time to serve again! Their service involved:

A. Sacrifice of Rest (Vs. 20a)

1. The Lord and His disciples were too busy to eat, let alone rest!
2. Note: There is a time to rest. We see an appropriate balance in the life and ministry of our Lord Jesus. There were periods of retreat (See Mark 6:31) for the purpose of rest but these were in order that they might return to service with renewed vigour!
3. Challenge: We are living in a generation that knows very little of what sacrifice means in practical terms. We want a convenient and comfortable Christian experience and ministry.

B. Sacrifice of Rights (Vs. 20b)

1. Serving the Lord will sometimes mean we need to deny a legitimate, temporal need such as food.
2. Before we complain about serving, remember the example of our Lord! Most of us still make time to have something to eat!
3. Remember, as bond slaves of Christ, we have no rights!

C. Sacrifice of Reputation (Vs. 21)

1. Sacrificial service and commitment to the work of the Lord will often attract misunderstanding from those closest to us. The word ‘friends’ is literally “those from the side of him” and speaks of His closest acquaintances. From Vs. 31-35, it would appear that it was primarily family.
2. “beside himself” – out of one’s mind. That felt Christ was not acting rationally, that He was being unbalanced.
3. This form of opposition is more subtle and more difficult to discern and deal with than malicious opposition like that of the Pharisees. The Pharisees were motivated by a desire for Christ’s destruction. His family on the other hand seem motivated out of care for His wellbeing. It is particularly hard when you are serving in the centre of God’s will and those you love seek to stop you out of misguided love. Serving the Lord faithfully often requires us to bear the cross of misunderstanding with the closest of earthly ties.

Conclusion: Have you experienced Christ’s healing touch from the plague of sin? Are you doing something for the cause of Christ? Is there any sacrifice for the Lord’s work? Do you need to sign back up for a ministry? “Go labor on, spend and be spent, your joy to do the Father’s will; it is the way the Master went; should not the servant tread it still?”