

Mark 3:7-19

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[0 : 00] So it does matter. It does matter. But that's not our message. Take your Bibles, go and be to the Gospel according to Mark. Mark chapter 3. Mark chapter 3. Start in verse 7. Mark chapter 3, verse 7.

Some of you say, well, the pastor says it doesn't matter all the bad things I do. No, because if you change the bad person we are, it will inevitably change the bad things we do, right? You have to get to the root and plant a new tree before you get new fruit.

So many times we focus on the fruit of our actions rather than the root of our actions, so that is why that is so important. Mark chapter 3. We're going to start in verse 7. We're going to read down to verse 19 as we just continue to make our way through the Gospel according to Mark, and I'm so excited to be together with you.

If you're physically able and desire to do so, would you join with me as we stand together and we read the Word of God with one another. Mark chapter 3, starting at verse 7. Let's read verse 6 so that we can get some things in context.

If you remember, Christ has just healed the man with a withered hand. Luke tells us it was his right hand that was withered on the Sabbath in the synagogue. And verse 6 tells us, the Pharisees went out and immediately began conspiring with the Herodians against him as to how they might destroy him.

[1 : 06] And Jesus withdrew to the sea with his disciples and a great multitude from Galilee followed and also from Judea and from Jerusalem and from Inimaia. And beyond the Jordan, the vicinity of Tyre and Sidon, a great number of people heard of all that he was doing and came to him.

And he told his disciples that a boat should stand ready for him because of the crowd so that they would not crowd him for he had healed many and with the result that all who had affliction pressed around him in order to touch him.

Whenever the unclean spirits saw him, they would fall down before him and shout, You are the Son of God. And he warned them not to tell who he was.

And he went up on the mountain and summoned those whom he himself wanted. And they came to him and he appointed twelve so that they would be with him and that he could send them out to preach and to have authority to cast out the demons.

And he appointed the twelve, Simon, to whom he gave the name Peter, and James, the son of Zebedee, and John, the brother of James. To them he gave the name Bonagius, which means sons of thunder, and Andrew, and Philip, and Bartholomew, and Matthew, and Thomas, and James, the son of Alphaeus, and Thaddeus, and Simon, the zealot, and Judas Iscariot, who betrayed him.

[2 : 22] Let's pray. Father, we thank you for this day. We thank you for the opportunity we have to gather together today. Thankful for the fellowship we've been able to enjoy, for the songs we've been able to lift up on high.

We ask that you be magnified. We ask that you now speak to us through the word of God. What a privilege it is to be able to read it together, to hear it in the company of your people, and we pray now you would speak through it.

May it not be the word of man, but may it be the very word of God that penetrates to the very depth of our being, that it conforms us, molds us, and shapes us to become more and more like your image for your glory and yours alone.

We ask it all in Christ's name. Amen. You may be seated. It does us much good to constantly remind ourselves of the theme of Mark's writing.

We know that we can find the theme of Mark in Mark chapter 10, primarily verse 45, but really we go to verses 43, 44, and 45, and we see that the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to

serve and to give his life for ransom for many.

[3 : 32] That Christ is displaying for us throughout the gospel of Mark what servant discipleship looks like, and he's not just doing it so that he can say, this is what I've come to do. He is doing it as Mark is writing to these believers in the Roman Empire so that he would encourage those believers to follow the example of Christ.

There is this consistent theme which runs throughout the gospel. We find it introduced to us in the very first chapter, and we find it when we get to the end of the chapter, and it is the reality that this Son of Man, this servant who is serving and giving his life a ransom for many is indeed the Son of God.

He is declared to be so in the first few verses of the first chapter. He is declared to be so throughout the text, even in our text this morning by the demons and the unclean spirits, and he is declared to be so by the Roman soldier at the foot of his cross when he dies.

It says, surely this is the Son of God. So there is no veil, there is no secrecy to who Christ in reality is. And before us in our text this morning, I want you to see that he is indeed the undeniable sovereign one.

He is the undeniable sovereign one. In the Gospel of John, there is much made of the lifting up of the Son of Man.

[4 : 52] Jesus himself brings the point to order in the third chapter when Nicodemus comes to him by night. Jesus says, just as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so too must the Son of Man be lifted up.

And we know that throughout the Gospel of John, he is referring to this reality that it would be the manner in which he dies. Had a great question asked by one of our young ones in the church just this past week.

He came up to me and said, Pastor, I've got a question. His mom brought him up and said, Yes, go ahead. He said, Why did Jesus have to be crucified? Why couldn't he die just in any other way?

I said, That's a great question. A question that every believer ought to be able to answer. Right? Why crucifixion? Why is that so important? I'm not going to give you the answer right now because that would take away our message.

But that's a great question. But John, it brings it up in the highlights. And he says again in the eighth chapter, I believe it's in verse 28 of John chapter 8, that the Son of Man will be lifted up, that he must be lifted up.

[5 : 53] And then he again repeats it in the twelfth chapter where he says that if the Son of Man is lifted up, he would draw all men to himself. And he was speaking of the manner in which he would die.

But in this reality, we also see not only in the manner in which he would die, but the person of who he is, that there is this sovereign capability of Christ that he has to do these things and he will do these things.

They are highlighted for us even here in the passage. We see the reality that is testified to us throughout the Gospels that all men of all times will have to do with Christ.

That he is sovereign indeed of all. That everyone will someday be before him. I believe it was Whitefield who said, you can proclaim the Gospel message with boldness that even if people oppose you, there is a certain attraction to the Gospel message that people will listen to it, some to oppose it, some to support it and some to be transformed by it, but all will indeed listen to it because man cannot deny the draw of the sovereign one.

In our passage, we indeed meet a mixed multitude of people and much as is the case in the life and ministry of Christ, we are consistently moving smaller in crowd size.

[7 : 20] We have this large crowd that eventually dwindles down until we get to in our passage is just the 12. We know that with the 12, you can also go down a little bit further and you find the three, right, the inner circle as some call that are called a little bit deeper, but there's always this narrowing focus.

But the reality is in the passage before us, each of us find ourselves somewhere in one of these crowds and we can't refuse that nor refute that because he is sovereign of all.

Not that he draws all men to himself for good, but all are drawn to him. Every knee will bow and every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord. Some one time until they're cast out of his presence and others for all time to the praise and glory of who he is that's on the throne.

But all will indeed be before him. The first thing that we notice in our passage is the attraction of Christ.

And that is because he is sovereign, everyone must deal with him. I know we looked at it last week, but we looked at the sixth verse just a moment ago, but if you notice what is going on there, you can see even in this attractive model that the religious leaders are plotting against him, the crowd is pursuing him because of what he can do, the demons are proclaiming the reality of who he is, and Jesus himself is preparing the smaller crowd to be used by him.

[8 : 49] Everyone is confronted by him. But while the religious people are plotting and scheming with the most unlikely of allies, that is the Herodians, is the only mentioning we have of them in scripture, and they're united with the Pharisees, the legalistic rule keepers, and the Herodians who supported the dynasty of Herod and the rule of that, and all of a sudden they have this common theme of being together, what do we do with this person of Jesus Christ?

By the way, that's another repeated theme we find in scripture is that enemies are often united around their problem with Christ. What do we do with Christ? But it says, and Jesus withdrew to the sea, not that he was afraid, not that he was scared, because in his sovereignty we understand this, I know this, again, this repetition that we find in the gospel of John is that he passes through the crowds because his time had not yet come.

His time had not yet come, his time had not yet come, and then we find in the 13th chapter, knowing that his time had come, that the hour had come, then he gives Judas Iscariot the permission to go and forsake him.

So don't think that he was scared and he was running for his life. No, he's never out of control. As a matter of fact, he's always in control. And so we see that he departs and he goes for a reason. He withdrew to the sea with his disciples and a great multitude, look at this, from Galilee and from Judea, from Jerusalem, from Itamaya, from beyond the Jordan, the vicinity of Tyre, and Sidon. So this is a huge, vast area that while the religious elites are opposing him, the majority of the crowds are drawn to him.

[10 : 29] This is still in what we would call the popularity of Jesus' ministry. This is in the first half of his public ministry where people were attracted to him, but notice what's going on here.

They were drawn to him. Why? Because the people heard of all that he was doing and came to him. Some are attracted to Jesus simply for the reason of their opposition to him.

You don't have to go very far in society that you can spark a pretty good conversation with someone who just wants to refute and refuse the reality of who Christ is and their attraction is solely for antagonistic purposes, much like the religious leaders, so that they can prove you wrong. others, which I think are even sadder. By the way, I would much rather have a conversation with someone who's attempting to prove me wrong because I'm not afraid of that and I hope you're not either because at least they're open to conversation.

That's great conversation, but the ones that concern me most are those who are just drawn to him for what he can do because they have a need in their life because they have heard of all the healing and the wondrous things and now they have this needs-based ministry that only what he can do not because of who he is.

[11 : 50] Read your scripture. The multitudes that were around him because of what he could do for them are also the very first ones that leave him when he begins declaring to them the hard sayings of the gospel.

They are those who come and they have no root. They want to see his word, but in the beauty of Christ, he knows this, but he does not fail to minister to them.

Why? Because he's come to give his life a ransom. He came to serve. He didn't turn them away, so it's not like when people come in and they have a great need and I say, oh, well, all you're coming is because you have a need.

I have no time for you. We don't do that. We need to move them beyond their needs. You say, well, maybe the only reason I came to Christ is because I needed something.

Well, the beautiful thing of scripture is that in his sovereignty he accepts that. He meets that. He's there and he's healing. As a matter of fact, he was doing it in such a phenomenal way that he told his disciples to have a boat ready in case he needed to get into the boat because so many people were pressing in against him.

[12 : 59] I mean, if you think about this, he who spoke it onto existence, who walks across the waves of the sea, who can tell the raging storm to calm down, could have easily just pushed the

crowd back.

Later on, in the Garden of Gethsemane, when he declares that his name is I Am, it says that everyone falls down and they don't get up until he tells them to get up. But yet, in his compassion, knowing that they were coming to him because of all the works and the deeds which he was doing, he still ministered to them.

Now, does that mean that they were all saved and redeemed and their sin was cleansed? No. Because, as we understand in scripture, the rain falls on the righteous and the wicked. There's this common grace, this mercy, this display of God's goodness that is exhibited to all men. The book of Job tells us that if he were to call his spirit back to himself, that every one of us would die.

Right? That the only reason anybody exists is because God allows them to have their existence. Not that they all acknowledge that. But we see this attraction of Christ.

[14:16] in his sovereignty, we cannot miss. The second thing is and that is the aim of Christ. While he ministered to those crowds who came to him with all these physical needs, he did not neglect to heal and to cast out unclean spirits and to cause the lame to walk and the blind to see and the deaf to hear and the mute to speak.

He did all of those things. But if the whole purpose of his coming, don't miss this when you read the gospel, if the whole purpose of Christ's coming was to gain popularity and to attract a crowd, then we can say he accomplished it.

He's done. There are people that oppose him, sure, but the multitudes of people love him. It's one of the most telling events is that even after the feeding of the 5,000, which we would call the height of his popularity, and he crosses the sea and we know that the people, this is after he walks on the sea, the people go to the other side looking for him and there's this multitude of people coming and you would say, wow, look at this mega church he has.

He immediately diminishes He diminishes his mega church. There's all these people and he says, you didn't come to me because you know who I am, you came to me because I gave you something to eat and drink.

And he says, probably one of the hardest things in scripture, he says, but I am the bread that comes out of heaven. Whoever eats of my flesh and drinks of my blood, he has a part in the kingdom.

People are like, well, wait a minute. And they start leaving and he doesn't stop any of them.

[15:42] Turns around and looks at his disciples and said, do you want to leave? Is there Peter says, where can we go? No one has the sayings of life or the word that you have, Lord. And so we understand that the aim of Christ is not to draw a crowd.

He serves them but that's not his aim. His aim is to declare the goodness and the good news of the kingdom.

He came to give his life a ransom for many. And we see this even, this is the second time in the gospel of Mark just in the three chapters in which we've made it to that when he casts out the unclean spirits, that is demonic spirits, they begin, it says, they fall down before him and declare, you are the son of God.

And that's a true statement. And then it says, and immediately Jesus tells them to be quiet, which leads some people historically to refer to a thing called the messianic secret that he was trying to keep that a secret that Jesus never really proclaimed himself to be the Messiah, the Savior, and that's all false.

By the way, we could take a lot of time getting into that, but we need to understand the aim of Christ. Why was he doing that? Where was he at when he did that? This is what, it really does us good to know our scripture so that when someone comes, they say, even Jesus didn't want to acknowledge it.

[17:03] No, well, Jesus, first of all, did not desire the testimony of demonic spirits because they were not doing it to praise him, they were doing it because it to them is an undeniable truth which they have acknowledged for all of eternity.

They were there when he created them and spoke them into existence. They were there when he cast them out because he says, I saw Satan and the angels fall like the stars out of heaven, right? They know for the reality of who he is. He does not desire the praise and the declaration of fallen angels or demonic spirits. That is not his desire. Why? Because while God is a jealous God, he is a consuming fire, he's also not a God with a complex that needs just anybody and everybody to

praise him.

There are myriads and myriads and myriads of angels gathered around his throne offering praises day in and day out. He knows. He does not need someone to reinforce the reality. He will not just take praise and acknowledgement from anyone because he is of utmost confidence because he is the sovereign one.

When you know who you are, then you're unwilling to accept recognition just from anyone. And he doesn't want the demonic spirits.

[18:11] First of all, that would be kind of confusing. Because if the demons are aligning with him, how does this, when we get into the next passage, when he understandably declares that he is the stronger man who binds Satan and kicks him out, what does that mean?

The second reality of this passage is that we know that when this has taken place, this is within the realm of the Jewish people. The Jewish people who had this anticipation of a coming Messiah according to the lineage of David.

They were looking for a king that they could place upon his crown that would deliver them from the rule of the Roman Empire. And it was not the aim of Christ at his first coming to have the crown of man placed upon his head and deliver the people from the Roman rule.

That's not his aim. So he does not want the declaration within the realm of the Jewish world to be declared that he is the son of God so that they would put the crown upon his head and try to force him to be king.

This is why, even after the feeding of the 5,000, he puts the people out until, so that they did not make him king. His aim was to give his life a ransom.

[19:21] He will come someday and be declared to be the king of kings and lord of lords, but that's the second coming, not the first coming. And in his sovereignty, he understands, he did not have to bypass the suffering of the cross and bear the sin of the world because he understood the reality that now the aim is the redemption of man, not to sit upon the throne of man.

So within the confines of the Jewish nation, he did not think about when he went to the other side and he was not in the region of the Jewish people, rather he was in Decapolis and he cast out the demons, this legion of demons that went out of this man who was in the tomb and chained and kept breaking the shackles of the chain and all the demons went into the herd of swine and they ran into the sea and that man said, I'll go with you.

What does he tell that man who is not in Jewish territory? Do you remember? Go back home and tell everyone what the Son of God has done for you.

Why? Because that's not within the Jewish realm. They're not looking for a new king but they want to know that there's a Savior and a Messiah so Jesus never loses focus of his aim.

His aim has come to suffer and to die for the redemption of man. throughout it all the demons try to thwart that purpose and that plan.

[20:46] See the wilderness temptations of Christ where Satan is tempting him for 40 days is just the beginning of the temptations throughout the entirety of his life. He is being tempted to bypass the suffering of the cross but his focus is on the cross.

One of the most telling passages in scripture is found for us in the Gospel of John when it says that Jesus set his face towards Jerusalem and I know we've kind of read it in passing before and it says and his disciples were amazed that they were in wonder of how determined he was to get to Jerusalem and that was the last trip to Jerusalem and he told them that when I get there I'm going to be handed over I'm going to be crucified I'm going to be dead and buried but on the third day I'll rise again and they were amazed at how he went to Jerusalem.

Why? Because that's the aim. He did not lose sight of the aim. Third and finally look at the appointment of Christ. We see his sovereignty displayed here and scripture really highlights the sovereignty in this.

It says in verse 13 and he went up on the mountain the gospel of Luke Luke chapter 6 tells us that when he went up on that mountain he spent all night in prayer on that mountain. So he spends an entire night in prayer because he and the father are one in communion with the father because he is fully God but he's also fully man.

He spends the entire night in prayer and after the entire night spent in prayer he says he summoned those he himself wanted. The wording there really just emphasizes the freedom of his choice and the sovereignty of his decision that he himself chose whom he wanted.

[22 : 42] It's not coincidental. It's not accidental. This was an intentional decision that he himself made and he called them to himself and they came to him.

So he has his disciples there so now we went from the multitude attracted to him to the group of disciples around him to the summoning of the people from within the group of disciples to him and he calls those whom he himself wanted and he chose them and he appointed them it tells us in verse 14 and he appointed twelve.

We know these are the apostles there's a reasoning for the twelve there's a purpose for what's going on here but we notice what the first appointment is so that they would be with him. Now the word apostle means to be sent out the sent out ones right we understand that and so we would think well he's going to call them and appoint them so he can send them out but the very first appointment don't miss this is so that they would be with him so they would be with him and that he could send them out to preach and to have authority to cast out the demons see the reality sent out to preach and to having the authority over the demons was based upon the appointment to be with him the first calling was to be with Christ then there was sent out from he calls those whom he himself wanted he drew them in in the crowd that was gathered around him next to the seashore there are a multitude of people from various regions when we get down to the twelve there's one who's outside the region of Galilee possibly that would be

Judas Iscariot and some might say oh that's the reason well no but there's such a diversity too among the twelve I mean you couldn't get a greater diversity among the twelve you got you know Peter is a good fisherman then you had the sons of thunder I know you say John's the apostle and disciple of love and all that but don't miss the fact that John was declared to be the son of thunder love that we don't want to paint him too soft when God declares that he's pretty righteous he's got some spunk about him and I love that then you have Matthew the tax collector then you have that zealot you know the person who wants to at least revolt against the Roman empire that Matthew was working for so you have this diverse group of people that are together and yet God is doing something amazing with them the first thing he does is call them to be near Christ and in their nearness they grow and in their nearness they learn and in their nearness they begin to understand who he is and then they are sent from him to come back to him and then sent from him and they're sent with some authority and power and for a purpose and a purpose is still the same aim to declare and to preach and proclaim the gospel so you say pastor are you telling me that

God's going to call me to himself and give me authority to cast out demons I'm not telling you that but I'm going to tell you that greater is he that is in you than he that is in the world has your pastor ever been to the point where he's been asked to cast out demons oh yeah I've been in those places before kind of weird places I've been there I've walked in those shoes do I think that it's me that's doing it no but I can assure you that before you get to that place you better have been in his place and been in his presence because the first appointment is to be with Christ then you can be sent out from Christ now the twelve apostles have a special purpose they're the foundation stones of the thing that we call the church and that church is that which God still uses to draw men and women to himself and in the church the first reason would be to appoint one to Christ to come and to draw them

[27 : 04] I had an individual I had the opportunity this past week to do something I never thought I would do I had the opportunity to go lead a devotional on a film set I never thought your pastor would do that but I did it and I was leaving I had a young man that was talking to me and we had great conversations we got to talking about the church and things of that nature and he was asking me questions great strong new believer but strong and asking good questions and he got talking about people leaving churches going to another church and all this other stuff and I said well I understand that but keep in mind that God doesn't move people around to keep pews down he said that's a good word I said there may be times where someone has to move and grow and mature and someone has to get rooted and be near Christ I said but the nearness is always for the commissioning I said so understand that he said that's a good word and it was not necessarily about him it was about a friend of his I said so pastorally we always have concern if anyone's just trying to go blend in somewhere but now if the Lord is moving he's drawing them to him so that he can send them out out because he is sovereign so we see the undeniable sovereign one here that everyone must deal with we find ourselves either as those who oppose him those who are drawn to him because he can do something or those who are called by him to be near him and to be sent out from him the question we ask ourselves is where are we in that group let's pray father I thank you

I thank you for this day and I thank you for your word lord I pray that the truthfulness of scripture would continue to penetrate our lives that it would do in us that which only you can do that it may be only and always for your glory and we ask it in Christ name amen