

Desired by the People

Mark 3: 7-12

The rapid pace we have become accustomed to in Mark's Gospel continues. Jesus seldom stays in one place for extended periods of time. He is continually on the move, ministering to different people, with varied needs, in different places.

Such is the case with our text today. Jesus had encountered opposition in the synagogue, and now He resorts to the outlying areas around the Sea of Galilee. While some hated Jesus, others desired to be near Him. Some wanted rid of the Lord, and others wished He would never depart. Some felt threatened by His presence, and others received great comfort through Him. Unfortunately, this contrast will follow Jesus throughout His ministry.

As we have discovered, Jesus cannot be ignored. His presence demands a response. We must embrace His grace, or reject it, but we cannot fail to respond. I pray we all desire to be near the Lord, seeking to receive all He has to offer. As we continue our study, I want to examine the [details](#) within the text as we consider the thought: [Desired by the People](#).

I. The Popularity of Jesus (7-8) – As Jesus continued to minister among the people, His popularity continued to grow. Word was reaching other regions, and the crowds were swelling in size. Notice:

A. The Challenge (7a) – [But Jesus withdrew himself with his disciples to the sea](#). Here we discover a particular challenge Jesus faced at this moment in ministry. He was forced to withdraw from the cities, and villages, unto the region around the sea. He was accompanied by His disciples. This withdrawal was actually the result of two different factors:

- [Mark 3:6 – And the Pharisees went forth, and straightway took counsel with the Herodians against him, how they might destroy him](#). Following the healing of the withered hand in the synagogue, the Pharisees were determined to destroy Jesus. Now, we know they had no power apart from the Lord, and His time had not yet come. However, their hatred for Jesus, caused Him to minister more often in secluded areas, apart from the cities, towns, and villages.
- Also, as we will discover in a moment, the crowds had grown so large that the synagogues and individual homes could no longer accommodate them. Jesus was forced to minister in open areas in order to accommodate the large numbers of people that followed Him.

- From a spiritual perspective, Jesus would never avoid those who genuinely seek Him. In fact, He will meet you where you are, and attend to the needs you have. However, we must never be guilty as the Pharisees, in revealing that we no longer desire Jesus in our midst.

B. The Crowds (7b-8a) – and a great multitude from Galilee followed him, and from Judaea, ^[8a] And from Jerusalem, and from Idumaea, and from beyond Jordan; and they about Tyre and Sidon, a great multitude. We find that a great multitude from throughout the region came to follow Jesus. This was no longer the residents of Capernaum alone; people from all over came to Him. They came from all over Galilee, a densely populated region that some believe held over 200 cities with populations of 15,000 or more. They came from the south – the areas of Judea, Jerusalem, and even the southernmost region, Idumaea. This would have been a journey of at least 100 miles. They gathered from the regions east of the Jordan River, and from the northernmost regions of Tyre and Sidon along the Mediterranean Sea. Multitudes had descended on the region of Galilee, hoping to find Jesus and follow Him.

C. The Curiosity (8b) – when they had heard what great things he did, came unto him. It didn't take long for word to spread throughout Israel that Jesus worked mighty miracles. As people heard of Him, they came seeking Him, desiring to be in the presence of the one they had heard so much about. Great multitudes came, desiring to see Jesus!

- As I pondered this, I was deeply challenged. They didn't have the modern means of communication or transportation that we enjoy today. The vast majority walked everywhere they went. News was spread primarily by word of mouth. By modern standards, these faced great limitations, and yet word spread of Jesus, and they journeyed to find Him. Consider the advancements we enjoy today. We have many avenues of communication, and yet we fail to tell others of the Good News of Christ our Lord. We have automobiles in which to travel, and yet many fail to ride a few minutes to engage in worship. Oh how we need the desire and commitment these had to get to where Jesus is!

II. The Preparation of Jesus (9-10) – Here we discover some of the preparations Jesus made regarding the crowds that gathered. Notice:

A. The Directive (9) – And he spake to his disciples, that a small ship should wait on him because of the multitude, lest they should throng him. As Jesus ministered to the growing crowds, He instructed the disciples to have a boat ready for Him, near the shore, in case He needed to get away quickly. This was not an angry crowd, but it was a determined crowd. No doubt many of them had traveled

a long distance to find Jesus, and they all wanted to be near Him, likely desiring a touch from Him. In case the crowd got out of hand, and Jesus faced physical harm, due to the sheer numbers, He would have a quick means of escape.

B. The Desire (10) – *For he had healed many; insomuch that they pressed upon him for to touch him, as many as had plagues.* Here we find the potential for the scene to become chaotic easily. Imagine a crowd of literally thousands of people, with the majority of them desiring healing. They all had heard of the power Jesus possessed. They were convinced that merely touching Jesus would bring the healing they desired. As the crowd grew larger, those in the back would have been pushing in an effort to get close enough to touch Jesus. They had faith that a touch would be sufficient, and they were determined to get close enough to touch Him if at all possible.

- No doubt we have watched video accounts of such events. We have watched as crowds gathered around a celebrities, hoping to get close enough to touch them. We have watched in sadness as hungry or desperate people gathered around food or aid vehicles, hoping to receive something they desperately needed. This seems to be the situation with our text. I had to admit though, I have never witnessed such a spectacle at the house of God. I have never experienced a crowd so excited to gather for worship, that were impatiently standing at the door, waiting for someone to open it and let them inside. We need this type of desire for the Lord today!

III. The Preeminence of Jesus (11-12) – Very likely, not everyone recognized the enormity of their encounter, or the deity of Christ. Surely not everyone believed, but Jesus' preeminence was acknowledged that day. Consider:

A. The Recognition (11a) – *And unclean spirits, when they saw him, fell down before him.* Within the multitude of people were those possessed by unclean spirits. While these spirits dominated those within whom they resided, they quickly recognized they were no match for the Lord. There is no mention of Jesus proclaiming His deity among the multitude, but the spirits immediately acknowledged Jesus and submitted to His authority. They fell down before Him in fear.

- We have discussed this in previous studies, and yet once again I am reminded of a great tragedy. No doubt many who encountered Jesus on that faithful day failed to recognize Him as the Christ. Untold millions are alive today who have yet to acknowledge the deity of Christ. He stands as the sole means of salvation for all who come to Him by faith, and yet many will never submit to the Lord in salvation. We must make much of Him, proclaiming the Gospel, in an effort to reach the unsaved while there is time and opportunity.

B. Their Response (11b) – [And unclean spirits, when they saw him, fell down before him, and cried, saying, Thou art the Son of God.](#) These not only bowed in submission to Christ, but they declared Him to be the Son of God. They openly confessed the deity of Jesus, referring to Him as the Son of the true and living God. Sadly, the majority failed to see Jesus for who He really was, but the unclean spirits declared Him to be the Christ.

- These feared the Lord, knowing He had power over them. Mankind must also recognize the Lord and come before Him in humble, reverent fear. We must confess that Jesus is the Christ, the Savior of men. We must place our faith in Him, and in Him alone, in order to receive salvation. I am thankful for the day that the Spirit brought conviction to my heart. At that moment I recognized my need, repented of my sin, and called out unto the Lord, confessing my need for Him. Every knee will bow, and every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord. The question is – when and where? Will it be in humble submission at salvation, or in commanded obedience at the Great White Throne Judgment? I rejoice that I confessed Him as Lord in salvation! [Rom.10:9-10 – That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved.](#) ^[10] [For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.](#)

C. The Rebuke (12) – [And he straitly charged them that they should not make him known.](#) True to His character, Jesus rebuked the spirits, commanding them to remain silent before Him. They were commanded not to speak or make Him known. The spirits knew Jesus was the Christ, but they were not interested in obedience to Him. They remained committed to Satan, their father. Our Lord was not interested in the testimony of evil spirits. He desired the confession of those whose hearts were changed in salvation, desiring to follow and serve Him.

- This reveals that a mere confession is not enough. I have met many who acknowledge that Jesus was the Son of God. Some even believe that He died and rose again for the sin of the world, but they refuse to submit to Christ for salvation. Mere head knowledge and vain words are never enough. One must know Christ personally, having realized their need for salvation, and trusting in Him alone to provide. Knowing about Jesus is much different than really knowing Him!

Conclusion: The desire of the multitude offers a challenge for all who read these words. While their motives were varied, they all came desiring to see Him. We too need to possess that desire each day we live. We must desire to spend quality time with our Lord and Savior. I would challenge you to spend some time each day in worship, not seeking a thing, but genuinely desiring to give Him praise. If there are needs, especially salvation, come to Jesus and call upon Him!