

The Gospel of Mark

Walking with the Servant Savior

Lesson 4 Mark 3:1-35

Day One:

Pressured

What to look for...

Imagine the pressure of living a life that is constantly under a microscope—every word analyzed, every movement scrutinized, and every good deed criticized—all with the intent of planning your destruction. It's no wonder that Jesus often withdrew to be alone with the Father and with His disciples. Those moments must have been precious and necessary as His fame spread and the multitudes grew.

Read Mark 3:1-6

By now the Lord's primary focus was to preach the message of salvation, everything else was secondary. But the people did not come to hear Jesus' words, rather to experience a miracle. It was at this time that the religious leaders who examined Him began to plot His death.

1. When Jesus again entered the synagogue, who was present? vv. 1-4
 - What did Jesus say to the man?
 - What did He say to those looking to accuse Him?
2. When Jesus did not receive an answer, what emotion filled His heart—why? v. 5
 - How did the Pharisees *secretly* respond to what had just happened? v. 6

An unlikely alliance had formed between the religious leaders and the Herodians, a political party that supported Rome. Jesus had become a threat to both groups and together they would, from this point on, secretly work to get rid of Him. While His enemies continued to scrutinize Him, the demands of the growing crowds pressed in on Jesus.

3. Sensing the pressures all around Him, what did Jesus do at this point in time? vv. 7-8

- Twice in these verses it states that a *great multitude* came after Him. For what purpose did they come?

Commentators believe that this great multitude consisted of tens of thousands of people throughout the region. One commentator stated there were *“hoards followed by hoards of needy people, all demanding attention.”*

4. What did Jesus tell His disciples to have ready for Him? vv. 9-10
5. The mounting pressure did not only come from those wanting to be healed. Who else made an appearance? vv. 11-12
 - What did they cry out?
 - How did He warn them?

The picture we’re given here is one of disorder, possibly even chaos. The words in verse 10: *“pressed about Him to touch Him,”* literally mean to *fall upon* or *jostle*. Combine this with the demons who fell down before Him—not in worship, but to shout out His true identity—and you have a scene with stark contrasts.

Come closer . . . Can you figure out what’s wrong with this picture?

Consider the fact that the demons recognized Jesus as the true Son of God, but the people following Him didn’t! But the people weren’t looking for the Messiah; they were looking to have their needs met. Not everyone who recognizes Jesus as God’s Son has the intention of following Him; and not every follower has put himself/herself under the authority of Christ’s lordship.

“Not everyone who says to Me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven.” Matthew 7:21

6. **Personal:** What about you? Are you following Jesus with the intention of obeying Him? What do you hope to gain from Him today? Please record your thoughts.

Heartbeat: (Memory Verse) *“Search me, O God, and know my heart; try me and know my anxieties; and see if there is any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.”* Psalm 139:23-24

Day Two:

In His Steps

What to look for...

When Jesus called the twelve disciples He did not look for raised hands; He hand picked each man to follow Him into service. He called and *they came to Him*—not to a cause or a method or a movement—they came to Him.

Read Mark 3:13-19

1. Jesus left the seashore and went up on the mountain. Before appointing the disciples, according to Luke 6:12, what did Jesus do?

Jesus had many followers but only twelve that were specifically appointed as His *apostles* (messengers). It would be to these twelve that he would invest His time, teaching and individualized training. To them He would entrust His own power and authority; from them He would expect a great harvest.

Getting a workout... (Word study)

Using the resources you have on hand, define the word *apostle* in the space below.

2. What is the difference between a *disciple* and an *apostle*?
3. According to Mark 3:14-15, for what purpose did Jesus call these men?
 - v. 14:
 - v. 15:

Put all these men together on the same team and you have an interesting, very diverse combination.

4. From verses 16-19, see if you can find the name of the disciple(s) to match with the description mentioned below. Noted among the group were:
 - four ordinary fishermen—two with violent tempers:
 - one dishonest tax collector:
 - one doubting pessimist:
 - one political extremist intent on overthrowing the government:
 - one traitor:

If you listed what is known of these men on a job resume, not one would qualify; they would all be turned down! Remarkably, these were the men chosen to build the church of God! Their impact is visible throughout the New Testament. They represented a wide range of talents and abilities, and had differing temperaments and personalities, but the common thread among them was their commitment to Jesus. Their collective strength lay in the fact that they were united for one purpose: to walk alongside the Servant Savior and continue spreading His message of salvation.

5. Last week's study gave you a look into 1 Corinthians 1:26-29. Refer back to that passage and think about the following:
 - Who does God delight to call into service?
 - Why does He want it this way?
 - How does this news encourage you today?

He chooses not on the basis of *who we are*—but rather on the basis of who we *will become* in Him! Would you thank Him as you close your study today?

Review this week's memory verse.

Day Three: The Unpardonable Sin

What to look for...

Did you notice in the first three chapters of Mark how quickly the rise in Jesus' popularity was matched by the escalating opposition of the religious leadership? To His own family now in doubt, He answers with empathy; but to those who attack Him, He counterattacks.

Read Mark 3:20-30

With the press of the crowds becoming the center of attention, Jesus and His disciples did not even have time to enjoy a meal. Now the opposition comes from two sides: His family who mean Him well and the teachers of the law who mean Him harm.

1. What opinion did Jesus' family have about Him and about what was going on?
vv. 20-21
2. Of what did the scribes accuse Him? v. 22

These scribes, along with the Pharisees and the Herodians, could not deny the power of Jesus, but they refused to believe that His power came from God.

Instead of sending the scribes away, Jesus refuted their accusation by speaking to them in *parables*, or short stories that illustrate a simple life lesson. Jesus first addresses the bottom line of their accusation: *it is impossible for Satan to cast himself out of his own workers*.

3. What other two examples does Jesus use to make His point?

- v. 24:
- v. 25

The point Jesus is making here is that Satan would not put an end to himself (verse 26)! But He wasn't finished yet. In verse 27 Jesus pictures Satan as a *strong man* and demons as his *possessions*.

4. What is the only way the strong man could lose his possessions? v. 27

Only one stronger than Satan himself is capable of releasing his victims from his power. Jesus' entrance into the world made it possible for Him to bind Satan's power! Satan is limited in what he can do because God is in control and will one day bind him forever (Revelation 20:10).

5. In verses 28-30, Jesus goes on to issue a chilling warning, what is it?

- Why did He warn them? v. 30

These teachers made the charge that Jesus' power came from Satan; but His power actually came from God. He was not talking about them rejecting Him, but rather the power behind Him. They were getting dangerously close to crossing the line and committing the unforgivable sin.

In practical terms, Jesus was not referring to the unpardonable sin as taking His name in vain (though that is a sin) or committing some other unholy act. He was talking about an irreversible hardness of heart that results in a deliberate, ongoing rejection of the work of the Holy Spirit. It isn't that a person *can't* be forgiven, it is rather that they have a seared conscience to the point that they *will not* bring themselves to *ask* for forgiveness. Such individuals get to the point that forgiveness is not possible because they will not seek it! It is an eternal sin because the consequences of it are eternal.

Selah...

If you are concerned about the possibility of having committed the unpardonable sin—you haven't! But you may know someone today who is close to it. Would you note their name below and take time now to lift them in prayer?

Review this week's memory verse.

Day Four:

Family Ties

What to look for...

We're learning through this week's lesson that hearing God's Word is not the same as obeying it, and that knowing *about* Christ and perhaps even following after Him does not necessarily make one His true disciple.

Read Mark 3:31-35

This passage actually continues on from verses 20-21. Jesus' family had arrived on the scene to "rescue" Him from the surrounding chaos. His own mother and brothers thought that things had gone too far and that Jesus had taken leave of His senses. Unable to get into the house to see Him, they remained outside at the edge of the surging throng of people, sending a message to Him to come out.

1. When told that His mother and brothers had arrived and wanted to see Him, Jesus seized the moment to illustrate a lesson in true discipleship to those sitting around Him. What was His reply in the following verses?
 - v. 33:
 - v. 34:
 - v. 35:

This hard saying of Jesus would have been quite startling to people of Jewish culture where the family was so highly valued. Jesus, however, wasn't demeaning family ties; He held them in very high regard. Later while on the Cross, He made special provision for John to care for His mother. His brother James would become a leader in the early church and would die a martyr. The point He was making is that there is a spiritual relationship that is deeper and more significant than the physical relationship. Those who would become part of His spiritual family would mean even more to Him than His earthly one.

The key to it all is found in Jesus' words in verse 35: "*For whoever does the will of God is My brother and My sister and mother.*" Remember the crowd that followed Jesus and heard Him teach but missed salvation? The answer to being a part of God's family is hearing His Word and putting it into practice.

2. **Personal:** What has God spoken to you through His Word this week? (Please share your thoughts.)
 - ❖ How have you put into practice what He's revealed to you?

Review this week's memory verse.

Day Five:

Praying God's Purpose

It's time to do some *prayer walking*—not in the literal, but the *spiritual* sense. The Holy Spirit will lead you today as you consider three points from your lesson, write them in the form of a prayer, and lift them to the Lord. If practicing the presence of God is new to you—be patient—it will come, and you will be blessed!

"... We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groans that words cannot express. And he who searches our hearts knows the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints in accordance with God's will." Romans 8:26-27 NLT

A prayer for usefulness . . .

As you worked on your lesson this week, did you count yourself among the wise and mighty or among the foolish and weak that God delights to call? Share your thoughts with Him.

A prayer for remembering who you are . . .

Were you touched this week to be reminded once again that you've been brought into the family of God? Think back to who you were before Christ and who you are today in Him. Express to Him how you feel about it.

A prayer for the desire to obey . . .

If you have a hard time applying the truth of God's Word to your daily life, ask Him to give you a desire to obey that is greater than the pull of your flesh. The spirit is willing but the flesh is weak, and His grace is sufficient for your every weakness.

Write out this week's verse from memory:

Notes