

Sunday, April 27, 2025

## More Like Jesus

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### Mark 3:7-19

- Today we're going to pick back up in our series through the Gospel of Mark entitled, More Like Jesus
  - And the last time we were here, we read about how Jesus was pushing lines on the Sabbath, and how the Pharisees and the Herodians began to conspire together to try and destroy Him.
  - But His fame just keeps growing and growing and growing...
  - And we pick back up in Mark chapter 3, beginning in verse 7:
- **MARK 3:7-19 (ESV)**
- *There was a time when I thought that I was a pretty good basketball player. My sophomore year I was at a small Christian school in*

*Harrisburg, PA where I started varsity and had multiple 20 pt games throughout the season.*

- *But then I got a wake up call to how good I really wasn't whenever I transferred to one of the most competitive districts in the state of Virginia.*
- *It was a completely different level of competition and I found myself being like the 12th guy coming off the bench. Coach would only put me in if we were winning by 30 or if we needed free throws to seal a game.*
- *But there was one game where we were playing Petersburg, one of the best teams in the state every year. And we were hanging tough, only down by 7 with about 2 minutes left in the game, still have a chance, and the coach called my name.*
- *I'm looking down the bench like, "There's no way he's calling me??" They call me to the front of the bench and tell me I'm going in, and I'm like "really??"*

- *Then I start trying to conjure up the confidence that I had the previous year, "Like yea, yea, ok I'm gonna come in hit a couple 3's, make a couple good plays and we're gonna beat these guys!"*
- *And I started to really believe it!*
  - *I turned to one of our assistant coaches, "We're gonna win this game, we're gonna win this game, coach!"*
  - *He's loving the confidence, he's hyping me up and pushes me in the game.*
  - *And I sub in, looking up to these guys who are 6'8" 6'9" 6'10" and they're all looking at each other like, "what's this kid doing in the game??"*
- *And in those last 2 minutes....I missed every shot I took, and had a couple of bad turnovers and stupid fouls and we lost handedly....was not a story book ending at all.*
- But do you know why I was in the game?  
Because coach put me in the game....that's the only reason!
- I did not have the qualifications, the talent, the reputation, or really any reason why I deserved to be in that game at that moment but I was in the game simply because the coach chose to put me in the game
- But how many of us feel that way when God calls our number?
  - Whenever it's our turn to step up...whenever we feel the prompting of the Holy Spirit to speak up about our faith, to pray with a stranger, to share our testimony and our default reaction is to think:
  - *"Who me?? I'm not qualified for that! I'm not good enough, talented enough, I'm not eloquent...Somebody else should do it because they would do it better!"*
- And you're right, somebody probably would be better. Heck, someone else would be better preaching to you today!

- But you know why God calls us? Because He calls us. Because He chooses to.
  - God chooses to use broken, untalented, unequipped, and unqualified individuals and puts us in situations that we are not ready or prepared for all of the time.
  - He uses unfit individuals like you and me to represent Him and partner with Him in His work! Why? Because He chooses to.
- We see here in our passage that the crowds that are following Jesus are increasing more and more as time goes on. Even whenever He was 100 miles away from His hometown, the news of Him traveled to well that He makes them have a boat ready on the shoreline in case He needs a quick get-a-away
- Obviously the ministry is growing and Jesus needs some help and He needs to delegate
  - And almost in dramatic fashion, Mark tells us about the 12 that Jesus chose.
- And when you think about it, this is a real rag-tag group of 12 guys
  - Most scholars believe that Peter would have been the oldest of the group at about the age of 21...and John would have been the youngest of the group around the age of 11, (which is why we would read about him leaning on Jesus' chest, because he was just a boy)
  - So Jesus takes this group of mostly teenagers and appoints them to be the apostles
- But why?? Why these guys?? What have they done to deserve this position??
  - *Peter is an impatient loudmouth...he's only there because his brother Andrew drug him along after following John the Baptist*
    - But these guys are just regular blue collar fisherman
  - *They work with the other set of brothers, James and John who get the nickname*

*Son's of Thunder probably because they want to call down fire from Heaven on people's heads*

- *You got Philip who seems to be a very calculated, realist thats scared of risk*
- *You got Bartholomew (also known as Nathaniel) who was a doubter filled with prejudice because of the comments he makes about people from other towns*
- *You got Thomas, the pessimist who becomes known as the doubter*
- *You got James who all we really know is that he is known as James "The Least"*
- *Then you have Simon the Zealot AND Matthew the Tax collector*
  - *One's pretty much a religious terrorist wanting to kill romans, the other works for the romans who are ripping off his own people*
  - *The funny thing is that the Zealots often would track and stalk tax collectors and*

*kidnap them and sometimes kill them if they had the chance*

- *Yet Jesus puts these guys together on His team*
- *Then lastly you have the two Judas' one Not Iscariot, and the other the Traitor*
- *You look down this list and I can't help but think....WHY IN THE WORLD WOULD JESUS PICK THESE GUYS??*
- *And the only explanation that we have and the only explanation that we need is that....Jesus wanted them.*
- ***"And He went up on the mountain and called to Him those whom He desired, and they came to Him. And He appointed twelve..." -Mark 3:13-14a (ESV)***
- *The only 2 things that all of these guys have in common is that:*
  - *1. They were unqualified ...2. Jesus desired them*

- Man, I hope that that is so encouraging to you today. Because I don't know about you, but there are so many days were I feel so under qualified to be serving our Lord
- But you may have heard the famous saying that, "God doesn't call the qualified, He qualifies the called."
- So it doesn't matter how unfit, unprepared, or unqualified you may feel...when God calls you, He calls you because He desires you, and He wants to make something new of you.
- The interesting thing about this verse is that when it says: ***"And He appointed twelve (whom He also named apostles)..." -Mark 3:14 (ESV)***
- That word **Appointed (poieō): to make, to render [to create]**
- You see Jesus did not choose guys who have the best qualities to be apostles...He's making

the 12 to be apostles, He shaping them, He's molding them, He's creating them!

- Remember Paul says in 2 Corinthians, ***"Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come."* -2 Corinthians 5:17 (ESV)**
- This is what so many people misunderstand about coming to Jesus. Because so many times we think that coming to Jesus is just like us switching teams
- We think about what our strengths and talents are and think *"Well I'll just use those things for Jesus now! He's sure lucky to have me on His team!"*
- But whenever you come to Jesus you don't get to just be who you always have been and just add Jesus to your life!
- No! He gives you an entirely new life!

- He gives you a new mind, a new voice, a new heart, a new spirit, a new purpose, a new mission!
  - He creates something completely new within you that you could never manufacture on your own!
  - And no it doesn't happen all at once, but He wants to do something new within you that can make an impact greater than you could ask or imagine...that's what He did with these disciples and that's what He wants to do with you and with me.
  - And all of this begins with His desire:
  - Let's look at these verses again: ***“And He appointed twelve (whom He also named apostles) so that they might be with Him and He might send them out to preach and have authority to cast out demons.” -Mark 3:14-15 (ESV)***
  - So here I believe that we see 3 things that Jesus desires for us....and first:
- **JESUS DESIRES THAT WE BE WITH HIM**
  - Man I hope that is so encouraging to us this morning
  - Because how many of us tend to think that God just tolerates us rather than having a deep desire to be with us
    - So often we have this picture of God up in heaven, just watching our every move making sure that we don't slip up...and if we do He's going to throw some sort of cosmic punishment down on us
    - But the reality is that He is always there, deeply desiring to spend time with us
  - You know Christmas was always such an intimate and special holiday for my family growing up.
  - And some of the hardest Christmases that we had was whenever my dad was deployed.
    - Now we would FaceTime him in whenever we would do presents and have him read the

Christmas story to us from the bible like he would do every year.

- Now we were talking with him, we could see him, but it wasn't the same because, in reality, he wasn't with us
  - And there was nothing more he wanted, or we wanted, in the entire world than for him to just be there
- I think about those Christmases and can't help but wonder how many of us treat our time with the Lord as if it's a phone call or a FaceTime
  - We treat it as if He's way off in the distance and miss out on the intimate time that we can really spend with the Father
  - But Jesus died and rose again to make that intimate time possible for us
  - In John chapter 14, during Jesus' last hours with His disciples before He goes to the cross, He tells them: ***"I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you. Yet a little while and the world will see Me no more, but you***

***will see Me. Because I live, you also will live. In that day you will know that I am in My Father, and you in Me, and I in you. Whoever has My commandments and keeps them, he it is who loves Me. And he who loves Me will be loved by My Father, and I will love him and manifest Myself to him."*** -John 14:18-21 (ESV)

- I'm telling you, what we need to be chasing in our lives as followers of Christ is the manifest presence of Jesus in our lives.
- Now, what does that mean?
- Because the reality is, He is omnipresent. He is in all places at all times.
  - Like the psalmists says, "There is no where that we can go from His presence."
  - In Jeremiah 23:23, The Lord declares that He is a God at Hand, a God that is not far away!
- But you can be in the presence of someone and not acknowledge them. Not engage with them, have zero connection with them at all

- And there are so many of us who let days, weeks, maybe even years go by of being in the presence of God and not acknowledge Him
- But one of the great promises of scripture comes from the book of James when he writes: ***“Draw near to God, and He will draw near to you.” -James 4:8 (ESV)***
- That term Draw Near (engizō), literally means: to turn one's thoughts to God, to become acquainted with Him.
  - And the promise is that whenever we turn our thoughts to Him, pursue becoming more acquainted with Him, He will in turn draw near to us with His manifest presence.
  - Literally meaning in the context of James: God draws near to one in the bestowment of His grace and help
- When Jesus says He will manifest Himself in John 14, in the original language it literally means: **Manifest (emphanizō): Christ giving**

### **evidence by the action of the Holy Spirit on the souls of the disciples that He is alive in Heaven**

- Whenever we intentionally draw near to the presence of Jesus, when we turn our thoughts to Him, when we engage with Him in prayer and His Word to become more acquainted with Him...the Promise of God is that the Holy Spirit will always be here to give evidence to our heart, soul, and mind that He is alive! That He is here! That He is with us and for us!
- And He deeply desires to be near us!
- Just look at the intimate language that Jesus uses in John 14, as He continues: ***“Jesus answered him, “If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word, and My Father will love him, and we will come to him and make Our home with him.” -John 14:23 (ESV)***
- That’s the type of relationship that He wants with us. He wants to be our safe space, our comfort, our place of rest!



- He wants the time He spends with us to feel like home
- No matter what is going on in the world or around us, we have the safety and security of our home with Him.
- I have very few memories of living in our small row home in Northeast Philadelphia as a small child
  - We weren't there long, because our parents got us out as quickly as possible for obvious reasons
- But I remember there would be those nights where I would be woken up by gun shots, screams, sirens, or anything of the like.
- And I would wake up with this feeling of fear, but then I would hear my dad down the hall, laughing at something that he was watching on the tv.
- And as soon as I heard his laugh, the fear would instantly leave me, and I would feel a peace and a security knowing that my Father

was right there, and if he wasn't worried, I didn't have to be worried

- That is the type of peace and security that the manifest presence of God gives us in our lives!
  - No matter what may be going on around us trying to fill us with fear, we have the God of Angel Armies who is our comfort, our refuge, and our stronghold in the time of trouble!
  - Like David says, ***"The Lord is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? The Lord is the stronghold of my life; of whom shall I be afraid?" -Psalm 27:1 (ESV)***
  - All we have to do is draw near to Him, and we are reminded about just how powerful and glorious that He is.
  - How in control that He is, and how safe we are within His loving arms.
- Our first job as believers is to simply be with Him, and He deeply desires for us to do so

- Yes, He has things for us to do and accomplish, as we'll see here in a moment.
  - He has a mission for us, a purpose for us, He has kingdom work for us to be a part of
  - But we will not be able to do any of that if we are not first and foremost *with Him*.
- Man I know of some guys who have engulfed themselves in theological studies and seminary programs and are more educated than I will ever be, but they accomplish NOTHING for the Kingdom of God because they are simply not with Him.
  - And it amazing the way that Jesus molds these guys into the apostles because He doesn't send them off to do hours and hours of study and ministry training...He simply first and foremost brings them to Himself
  - Robert Coleman, in his book *The Master Plan of Evangelism* says this: ***"Jesus had no formal school, no seminaries, no outlined course of study...Amazing as it may seem,***

***all Jesus did to teach these men His way was to draw them close to Himself. He was His own school and curriculum."*** -Robert Coleman: *The Master Plan of Evangelism*

- And Jesus extends the same invitation to us today. We read in Matthew chapter 11 when Jesus says, ***"Come to Me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you, and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls."***  
***-Matthew 11:28-29 (ESV)***
- Of course the yoke was a farm tool that was used to help the cattle plow the fields.
  - So there is work to be done, Jesus isn't inviting us into a life with nothing to do.
  - He's inviting us into a life in which we can work well. Work with Him. and He invites us to learn from Him directly.
- And we need that, because He desires for us to be with Him, and secondly:

- **JESUS DESIRES TO SEND US OUT:** *“And He appointed twelve (whom He also named apostles) so that they might be with Him and He might send them out to preach and have authority to cast out demons.” -Mark 3:14-15 (ESV)*
- The name Apostles literally means, “Sent out Ones”
  - Like we say all of the time, our relationship with God is personal but it was never meant to be private.
  - If what happens in this room, stays in this room, we are failing as a church.
  - We are called to come in, so that we can effectively go out.
- And this call to preach is not reserved for me, Mark, or anyone whoever speaks from this pulpit
- This call is for all of those that would call themselves disciples of Jesus Christ
- We are called to draw close to Him, to learn from Him— so that we can say what He says, and do as He does
- In Psalm 73, Asaph says: *“But for me it is good to be near God; I have made the Lord God my refuge, that I may tell of all Your works.” -Psalm 73:28 (ESV)*
  - Jesus sends us out to preach, to tell of all of His works!
- And remember the literal definition of the word preach here is:
  - **Preach (kēryssō): The Public Proclamation of the Gospel and Matters Pertaining to it**
- So the call that you are sent out to accomplish is to simply publicly proclaim the Gospel in your world and circle of influence
  - You don’t have to put together a 3 point sermon....You just have to publicly proclaim the name of Jesus in your conversations at work

- Publicly proclaim how Jesus has changed your life!
- Publicly proclaim what He did for you yesterday!
- Publicly proclaim the Love of God in your home!
- Publicly proclaim the Hope of Heaven that you have been given!
- Publicly proclaim how Jesus desires to be close to those you are speaking to!
- Publicly proclaim His Grace!
- Publicly Proclaim His Glory!
- Publicly Proclaim His Goodness to all those who are willing to hear!
- And it's not difficult, it's not complicated
- I know the word proclaim sounds all sermon-y and all...but it just simply means to talk about like you really believe it
  - Talk about it with some enthusiasm
- Talk about it as confidently as you would your favorite sports team, hobby, or interest
- I'm telling you we need Christians to stop talking about the Gospel as if we are apologizing about it:
  - We have too many Christians, that when they finally do talk about their faith they just talk like, *"Well, um yes, I actually maybe do believe in Jesus...And um well, I'm sorry but the bible actually would consider that sin... and um, well, I don't want to offend you in any way but I believe that Jesus really might be the only way to Heaven..."*
  - Why would anyone want to believe what we tell them if we don't even sound like we believe it ourselves??
- I don't see that type of timidity anywhere in the Bible...we see Jesus teach them as one who had authority.
  - And His disciples followed suit after He was gone, and went out publicly proclaiming the Gospel and the matters pertaining to it, until

they were referred to as those who turned the world upside down.

- Come on, we need the church today to regain a Passion for the Gospel of Jesus Christ
- And echo the words of Paul who said, ***“For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes” -Romans 1:16 (ESV)***
- Man, this invitation to proclaim the Gospel is the greatest opportunity that we have on this side of eternity.
- Because never again in all of eternity will we ever have this opportunity again.
- We maybe have an average of 70 or 80 years on this planet, Lord willing...but once we're gone and in Heaven, we will never again have opportunity to share the Gospel with someone who doesn't know Jesus
  - So are we going to let this gift, this opportunity to be a part of something as life

changing as this pass us by? Or are we going to make the most of it?

- Pauls says in Romans 10: ***“For everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.” How then will they call on Him in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in Him of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without someone preaching? And how are they to preach unless they are sent? As it is written, “How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the good news!” -Romans 10:13-15 (ESV)***
- Man, one of my greatest prayers for our church will be that we will be a church full of beautiful feet.
  - Going wherever God would call us to go, doing whatever God would call us to do
  - Publicly and Passionately Proclaiming the Gospel in our every day lives

- Even when we experience opposition along the way
- Because Jesus Desires us to be with Him, He Desires to Send us Out and lastly:
- **JESUS DESIRES US TO HAVE SPIRITUAL AUTHORITY: “*And He appointed twelve (whom He also named apostles) so that they might be with Him and He might send them out to preach and have authority to cast out demons.*” -Mark 3:14-15 (ESV)**
- Now, keep in mind that Jesus didn’t send them to have authority over the scribes, the pharisees, or any of the naysayers
  - No, He was sending them with authority over the demons, the darkness
- Because, we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil
- Jesus always wanted His disciples to understand where the fight truly lied
- Because its the enemy that tries to get us to play the blame game, trying make us think that the problems with this world are because of *those other people*
  - *Those other people* who think differently, who act differently, who have different social and political views
  - Those pushing ungodly agendas...most of which are very serious issues
  - However, the fight is not with *those people*... it’s with the spiritual forces that are influencing people, and that are sometimes even influencing you.
- Worst of all, is when we allow the enemy to trick us Christians into thinking that other denominations or other Christians with slightly different theological views are our enemies
  - Instantly dividing the family of God

- But whenever you take the time to realize who the enemy really is, and where the fight truly lies...you will be shocked just how much more grace and patience you have with those people who have opposing opinions to yours
- And we do need to have a working understanding of the spiritual warfare that we are engaged with and sent out into.
  - Because when you begin to walk out your heavenly calling, you will always be met with some sort of demonic attack
  - Demons and spiritual darkness very much do exist, we don't shy away from talking about that here
- And it isn't to make you uncomfortable or to scare you in any way
- Because as children of God, we need to understand that this isn't something that we ever need to be afraid of
  - We may need to be prepared for it, but never be afraid of it
- 2 Timothy 1:7 says, ***“For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind.” -2 Timothy 1:7 (ESV)***
- So when we are sent out in the Power of the Holy Spirit, sharing the love of God...we will be met by spiritual opposition...but the time that we spend with Him, keeps our minds sound enough to understand the futility of the enemy's attacks
- You see, Jesus sent these disciples out to preach, and He knew the demons would try to get in their way...so He gave them the authority to shew them away
  - You see, that word **Authority (exousia)** means: “**Physical and mental power; the ability or strength with which one is endowed [provided]**”
  - So this authority is not something that they grew or matured into...this is something that had been given by Jesus. It was His authority, not theirs!

- And He gives that authority to all of His children who are living on mission for Him.
- I have experienced a lot of spiritual and demonic attacks over the years in various ways...I'm not going to go into a lot of detail, because honestly I just think that some people just may not be ready to hear some of those stories
  - But especially at the beginning of me really walking out my faith and call to ministry, I was experiencing attack after attack in tangible ways and I really believe that the Lord allowed me to go through that season so that I could learn that this wasn't something to be afraid of, but rather annoyed by
- The enemy is not to be ignored...however, they are not to be given more attention than they deserve
  - The enemy can only operate in fear and scare tactics
- But we have already established that we have not been given a Spirit of fear
  - And we need to understand the power of God that lives within us as His children
- We do not let the enemy dictate our day, we don't let the enemy make us lose sleep in fear, we don't spend hours and hours trying to identify unclean spirits and cast them away
  - No, we focus on the mission at hand, we stay close to Jesus, and we go out to proclaim His Gospel, and if the enemy tries to get in the way of that...because of the authority of the Name of Jesus Christ that we bear, we just shew them out of the way and keep moving forward
  - And it will really frustrate the enemy because more often than not, spiritual attack just affirms that we are walking in the right spiritual calling
- You know, we always experience something especially whenever the Lord is doing a new work



- Because a movement of God never happens without a fight
- And I've shared some of our experiences before whenever we first planted the church
- But earlier this year whenever we were going through the Merger, there was opposition that we faced, there were conflicting opinions, there was a lot of moving parts, but we were confident, especially Mark and I that the Lord was in this and we were in His will.
- And one night, right in the middle of all of it I was woken up in the middle of the night with Fletcher screaming and crying incessantly
- And I rushed over to his room but before I opened the door, I couldn't hear anything...it was silent
- Then I went back to the room to check the monitor, and again I heard him wailing and crying...but when I looked in the monitor he was sound asleep
- I literally walked over to the doorway of our bedroom, one foot in, one foot out (I woke Rachel up because she was so confused by what I was doing)
- And I would put my head in the bedroom and I would hear the crying. I would put my head in the hallway and it would be silent.
- So what did I do? Did I pull Rachel out of bed for the rest of the night, march around the house 7 times and anoint the whole house with oil?
- No.... I said, "Well I rebuke that in the Name of Jesus." It stopped. And I went back to sleep.
- The same thing happened to Rachel a few nights later, and she did the same thing!
- And all it did was give us even more confidence that we are doing that the Lord wants us to do, and we got the enemy rattled...and they can't do a thing about it.
- Listen to the way John describes Jesus at the beginning of his gospel:

- ***“In Him was life, and the life was the light of men. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.”***

***-John 1:4-5 (ESV)***

- And the darkness will NEVER overcome Him
- Never forget Christ in you, the Hope of Glory
- If Christ is in you, the Light is in you...and darkness has no choice but to flee in the presence of Light
- Think about it, when you walk into a dark room, and you flip on the light switch...you don't see the darkness struggle and fight with the light...no the darkness has no choice but to scatter
- And the problem we run into is when we experience these spiritual battle and forget to turn on the Light switch
- And we try to navigate fighting the darkness in our own power, tactics, and authority...we'll see more about this in Mark chapter 9

- But we have to remember, it's His Authority, it's His Light, it's His Victory!

- Always!
- But His desire is for you to share in His victory as we stay close to Him, go out to proclaim Him, and experience His authority in and through our lives.