

### Mark 3:7-35

Beginning with this section, Mark starts drawing a more detailed picture of Jesus and his ministry. In 3:7-12, we see Jesus moving away from the centers of Jewish power: synagogues, Pharisees, priests, etc. This theme can be seen both in 7-12 as well as the rest of this section. Notice the following:

3:7 *Then Jesus went away with his disciples to the sea*

3:13 *Now Jesus went up the mountain and called for those he wanted*

3:20 *Now Jesus went home*

This was Mark's way of showing us that Jesus had not come for Israel alone. His intention throughout all eternity is for the whole world. Hence the title of last Sunday's message: A Strategy for a World-wide Ministry.

The original recipients of Mark's Gospel, Roman believers, would receive this truth and draw two conclusions. The first, might best be described like this "Oh, wow, what an awesome Savior!" In application it moves believers to worship. The second conclusion would be, "Yes! Let's get in the game!" They, like Mark, and the twelve apostles before him, were to respond by becoming fully devoted servants of the Suffering Servant. That is the strategy...people receive the grace of God through active faith in Jesus Christ and in turn they join a partnership dedicated to sharing and spreading the Suffering Servant's message

The result, the world-wide strategy for the life-changing message initiated with Jesus and then shared with the apostles would be passed on to the church in Rome...and all Christians beyond and after the original audience who also read, study, and respond to the truth in Mark's Gospel.

**Question:** Who does this obviously include?"

**Transition:** Every strategy needs some tactics. If a strategy if a comprehensive and propositional plan and intention for fulfilling a grand purpose, the means, methods, and maneuvers utilized in the process are the tactics. While there are more, Mark shares at least five of these tactics in this section. Let's break them down and then see if we can have some fun applying them.

#### 1. Read 3:7-12

This passage marks a distinct change to the Lord's preaching venues. Moving away from the synagogues and Pharisees, Jesus took some of his followers and moved toward the sea. The masses followed. Jesus ministered to them. Specifically, we are told:

*"And whenever the unclean spirits saw him, they fell down before him and cried out, 'You are the Son of God.'*

*And he strictly ordered them not to make him known."* (3:11,12)

While the masses followed, it was the Lord's intent to focus his efforts away from the spectacular and powerful.

**Point: A principle tactic in the Lord's world-wide ministry is to disengage with society's power-brokers and engage with society's masses.**

#### 2. Read 3:13-19

One might think the promised Messiah would have a plan for selecting leaders and servants for this new era in God's plan of

redemption from among the priesthood established long ago in the days of Moses and Aaron, but one would be wrong in that thinking. Instead, Jesus chose his servant-leaders from among the masses. He chose fishermen, and tax-collectors...common, everyday people.

**Point: A second principle tactic in the Lord's world-wide ministry is to invest all of his followers with the mission of announcing good news.**

#### 3. Read 3:20-21

Interrupting a meal in first century Judaism was a major taboo. In fact, to fully understand the significance of meals and hospitality during that time and culture you need to read entire books. This can be partly observed in this brief passage. The Lord's family members simply could not reconcile in their minds what Jesus was doing. He had been teaching and ministering at a break-neck speed for days and now hours of the present day. He was now home and it was time for the evening meal. Tradition, ritual, manners, politeness, hospitality, and family cohesion demanded that he break from his activities and eat supper. However, his attention to the people had grown so attractive that he and his followers were being pressed for continued ministry even at the expense of custom, family calm, and every sense of propriety. His family's reaction and thinking tell us something about his thoughts and actions. Surely he continued in teaching, healing, and casting out the darkness even while his family desired him to interrupt his ministry for the sake of the evening meal. This was so great that his family said of him, "He is out of his mind."

**Point: A third principle tactic in the Lord's world-wide ministry is the elevation of biblical values over familial, cultural, and/or traditional values.**

#### 4. 3:22-30

In this passage the opposition is not familial or traditional, but theological and spiritual. Even though Jesus had moved away from the power-brokers, the Jewish scribes (teachers of the law) from Jerusalem found him stirred up trouble. They began saying, "He is possessed by Beelzebul," and "by the prince of demons he casts out the demons." Without hesitation, the Lord Jesus answered their challenge with truth.

**Point: A fourth principle tactic in the Lord's strategy for world-wide ministry is the necessity of meeting all challenges with biblical truth.**

#### 5. 3:31-35

Finally, even in the presence of his mother and his brothers, Jesus asked, "Who are my mother and brothers?" Not really looking for someone else to answer, he immediately provided his own, "whoever does the will of God, he is my brother and sister and mother."

**Point: A fifth principle tactic in the Lord's strategy for world-wide ministry is the true family of God.**

#### Application:

On the flip side you will find two case studies. Break your group into two teams. Each group will take one of the case studies.

## The Case of the Preaching Blues

It's Sunday morning. The sun is bright. The birds are chirping. You awake with an absolute thrill in your heart.

At home all is well. You simply find it near impossible to thank God enough for the many blessings being showered on you during this season of your life where your family is concerned.

At work all is well. The boss is happy. Production is up. Those under you think you are not only a great supervisor, but a good and trustworthy friend. Once again, you want to pinch yourself when you think about your employment. You often find yourself thinking, "Man, how did I get so lucky?"

Yesterday you had a great visit with some of your extended family. They all seem to be doing well. This, of course, reminded you of some of your very best friends. Next Saturday you are planning to have some of them over. You can hardly wait. Good friends equal good times...and next Saturday will have its share of both.

Man, life is good, so you hop out of bed, head for the shower, and quietly begin to thank God for his many blessings. Cleaned up and all Sunday morning fit, you drive to church. It also is a source of great joy for you. Things are going really well. It's growing. The preacher is dynamic. Your Small Group is a source of comfort, learning, and support. You find yourself absolutely beaming as you drive yourself to an encounter with God and his people.

During the service, the music is great, a testimony moves you to tears, the preacher opens with a side-splitting story that not only makes you laugh, but really opens your heart to some rather profound theology. But then you find yourself staring at the preacher with a look of uncertainty. You ask yourself, "Did he say what I think he just said?" And then, while not using the exact same words, the preacher reiterates his point: "My friends, I know that we have often been told — and I myself have often taught — that the resurrection of our Savior is central to our faith, but that is really a surface story. As you grow closer to God, you come to realize that the need for a historical resurrection where Jesus is concerned not only is unnecessary, but it is also an obstacle for some people in their quest for spiritual wholeness. This being the case, let's be a church that begins to focus on what is real for people. The story of the resurrection, as a metaphor, helps us to center ourselves around the idea of and the need for seasons of renewal in our lives...the need for profound change. Maybe my resurrection story will involve my deep seated need for education. Maybe your resurrection story requires you to find new employment. Maybe another of you needs to get out of a poor marriage. My friends, I guess what I'm driving at is this: when you consider the story about the resurrection of Jesus, do not take it so literal; instead, find your own — more personal — story and meaning within it."

You think, "What!?"

Your great morning just passed away into a morning of grief.

Allow enough time for everyone to carefully read the case study. Once everyone in your group is ready, discuss how you might deal with the problem presented using one or more of the tactics found in Mark 3:7-35.

Put yourselves into the situation. Pay attention to what you think feelings, actions, attitudes, and explanations, might feel like, look like, and sound like. Ask yourselves how the principle character in your case study might feel, think, and respond.

After you have come to some solid conclusions, bring the two groups back together. Let each group report on their process and conclusions.

Use your remaining time for further discussion and prayer.

## The Case of the Lady in Flux

It's Thursday evening. You just wrapped up a great lesson on The Doctrine of God at your small group. People really seemed to "get a lot out of it." There was a ton of conversation. Several people asked very meaningful questions. You were able to offer several good biblical insights to answer the questions. A few participants added some of their own opinions.

However, throughout the evening you couldn't seem to get the new lady — let's call her Mary — off your mind. Right from the beginning of everyone's evening together she acted as though every word was penetrating deep in her heart. At one point you even thought she was about to cry.

While people began to leave, Mary approached you and asked, "Could I ask a question?"

Naturally, you said, "Of course." So, inviting her to sit back down, you listened.

Rather than asking a question right away, she began to tell you about herself. She said she wanted to believe and accept all that you had taught about God, but was finding it somewhat difficult. "...after all," she said, "it doesn't seem like anything goes right in my life...I can't even imagine experiencing God the way you talked about."

She went on to relate how, from the time she could remember, there was never any stability in her life. "My Dad left when I was just two years old. Mom remarried two years later. That marriage also failed. When I was about eight my step-dad left. Mom got very depressed. She started abusing drugs. She couldn't take care of us, so the social workers took my two brothers and I away from her. We went to a foster home for a few months. Then they put us back with our Mom. She tried, but she just couldn't quit the drugs, so we went to another foster home. One of my brothers was very angry and simply couldn't be controlled very well, so that family asked to have us removed. We stayed in a group home for awhile. Then they separated us. Each of us went to a different foster home. By the time I was sixteen I had lived with eight different families. I thought things were getting better when I met Bob. We fell in love, so I moved in with him. I wasn't quite seventeen. Then my first baby came. Bob said he never wanted children, so he left. You see, I could just keep going. It just seems like I can never count on anything. Nothing stays the same. Just when I think something is beginning to go right all hell breaks loose. I'm really thankful for Judy's friendship...and I'm glad she invited me to come tonight, but I just know I'm in for another disappointment. So, what is it about life...about God that I just seem to keep missing?"