

# The Gospel of *Mark*

## The Servant Leadership of Jesus

### The Servant's Ministry in and around Galilee (cont) (1:14 – 9:50)

#### A Period of Popularity: *Jesus Ministers to the Crowds* (3:7-12)

**3:7-8** After healing the man with the withered hand in the synagogue <sup>v.1-5</sup>, Jesus left with His disciples to go to the Sea of Galilee, but they were not able to get any rest, because a large crowd came from all parts of Israel (north, south, west and even east of the Jordan) and found him there <sup>Matthew 4:25</sup>.

Mark is the only Gospel that notes the popularity Jesus had with the ordinary people at this point in His ministry, despite the many conflicts He had with the Pharisees and the Scribes.

**9-10** Jesus told His disciples to get a boat so He could teach the people from the water, close to the shoreline, without the many sick people pressing in close to Him, giving Him no chance to teach.

Again, Mark is the only Gospel writer who mentioned these details. Earlier, a woman was healed from twelve years of bleeding by simply touching the edge of Jesus' cloak <sup>Matthew 9:20</sup>. Having knowledge of this, the crowd exerted great effort to get close enough to touch Jesus.

**11-12** Whenever unclean spirits came close, they knowingly announced that Jesus was the Messiah ("Son of God" or "Holy One of God" <sup>Mark 1:24</sup>), but He immediately rebuked them <sup>Mark 1:25</sup> and "gave them strict orders not to tell who he was" <sup>Matthew 8:4, Mark 1:34</sup>. There seems to be two reasons Jesus said this: (1) He wanted the power of His teaching and actions, not the impure words of unclean spirits to proclaim who He was and (2) He did not want to prematurely enrage the Romans or the Jewish leadership, because it was not the right time (i.e., his time had "not yet come" <sup>John 2:4</sup>).

The demons' actions mimicked the power of pride in unbelievers' lives. They knew Jesus was God the Son who was sent by God the Father <sup>Mark 1:23-24</sup>, and they were already aware of their own eventual fate <sup>Matthew 8:29</sup>, and yet they continued to war against God as if they might win.

Note how these six verses <sup>v.7-12</sup> illustrate the emphasis on action that Mark had in writing his Gospel: withdrawing to the sea <sup>v.7-8</sup>, in the boat to teach <sup>v.9-10</sup>, seeing many evil spirits <sup>v.11-12</sup>.

**A Period of Popularity: *Jesus Commissions the Twelve Apostles* (3:13-19)**

**13** Jesus withdrew to a mountainside <sup>Matthew 5:1</sup> and “called” some of His disciples to go with Him.

The Greek word translated “called” emphasized the sovereign interest of Jesus <sup>John 15:16</sup>.

**14-15** Jesus appointed (*poieō* : to endow a person with a certain quality) His twelve closest disciples (He designated them “apostles” [*apostolos* : one who is sent or ambassador], but they were also often referred to as “the Twelve” <sup>Matthew 26:20, Mark 4:10, Luke 8:1, John 20:24</sup>). During His earthly ministry, Jesus spent the greatest amount of time mentoring His apostles, in order to give them the ability, power and authority to carry on His work of teaching and spiritual healing <sup>Luke 9:1</sup> after His death.

Some manuscripts have the phrase “designating them apostles” and some do not; however, the title is used definitively by other authors <sup>Matthew 10:2, Mark 6:30, Luke 6:13, Acts 1:26, Revelation 21:14</sup>.

Twelve is a key Biblical number (e.g., tribes of Israel <sup>Genesis 49:28</sup>, New Jerusalem <sup>Revelation 21-22</sup>).

**16-19** The special disciples were named <sup>Matthew 10:2-4, Luke 6:13-16</sup>: Simon (who Jesus named Peter), James (son of Zebedee), John (brother of James), Andrew, Philip, Bartholomew, Matthew, Thomas, James (son of Alphaeus), Thaddaeus, Simon (the Zealot) and Judas Iscariot (who betrayed Jesus).

Jesus renamed Simon, Peter <sup>John 1:42</sup> (Greek *Pētrōs*, Aramaic *Cephas*: small rock <sup>Matthew 16:18</sup>).

Jesus gave John & James the descriptive name *Boanerges* (Aramaic for Sons of Thunder) <sup>v.17</sup>.

Paul wrote that the apostles and prophets were the foundation of the Church <sup>Ephesians 2:19-22</sup>.

**A Period of Popularity: *Jesus Rebukes the Scribes* (3:20-30)**

**20** Jesus “entered” the house in Capernaum <sup>Mark 1:29</sup>; so many came they had no time to eat <sup>Mark 6:31</sup>.

As discussed in an earlier study <sup>Mark 2:12</sup>, the people of Capernaum were enthusiastic about being with Jesus, but their hearts were focused on experience, not repentance <sup>Matthew 11:23-24</sup>.

**21** Having heard of His activities and the unruly crowds, the family of Jesus left their home(s) to go and take custody of (arrest) Him <sup>v.31-32</sup>, because they assumed He was not in His right mind <sup>Acts 26:24</sup>.

The family of Jesus did not believe in who He was <sup>John 7:1-5</sup> until after the resurrection <sup>Acts 1:14</sup>.

**22** Seeing Jesus expel many evil spirits, the “teacher of the law” (in an ongoing effort to discredit Jesus) used the opportunity to accuse Jesus of only being able to drive out demons because of power received from being possessed by Beelzebub <sup>John 10:20</sup>, prince of demons (Satan) <sup>Matthew 9:34, Luke 11:15</sup>.

**Beelzebub: originally referred to as Baal-Zebul (prince Baal or exalted lord), chief god of the Philistine city of Ekron <sup>2 Kings 1:2</sup>, but the Israelites called him Baal-Zebub (Lord of the Flies).**

**23-27** Jesus responded to the scribes with a parable: someone would have to be more powerful than Satan in order to overpower those under Satan’s control (demons). And, since Jesus was doing that, it showed that Jesus was more powerful than Satan <sup>Hebrews 2:14-15</sup>, and therefore could not be his ally.

**28-30** In a clear statement of the unforgivable sin, Jesus confronted the scribes with their denial of who Jesus was, even though they had witnessed the unfolding of the OT predictions of the Messiah in the life of Jesus. Jesus powers were obviously from God, but they blamed them on the devil.

**The phrase “I tell you the truth” appears in all the Gospels, and an expression Jesus used to begin His truthful/authoritative teachings <sup>Mark 6:11, 8:12, 9:1,41, 10:15,29, 11:23, 12:43, 13:30, 14:9,18,25,30</sup>.**

**Sins performed in ignorance (deceived & blind to the truth) <sup>1 Timothy 1:13</sup> (even sins that are spoken against Jesus – “the Son of Man” <sup>Matthew 12:32, Luke 12:10</sup>) can be forgiven when unbelief turns to genuine repentance. However, anyone who deliberately, disrespectfully, continually slanders the person/ministry of the Holy Spirit who testifies to the lordship and redemption of Jesus <sup>John 15:26</sup> has no hope of forgiveness or restoration <sup>Matthew 12:31-32, Luke 12:10, Hebrews 10:26-27</sup>.**

**A Period of Popularity: *Jesus Identifies His Spiritual Family* (3:31-35)**

**31** The family of Jesus, who had left home earlier <sup>v.21</sup> to take Jesus to safety, arrived. They did not want to go inside, but sent someone to get Jesus, thinking He would immediately come out to them.

**The siblings of Jesus were four half-brothers and at least 2 half-sisters <sup>Matthew 13:55-56, Mark 6:3</sup>.**

**32-34** When told of the arrival of His mother and brothers, Jesus surprisingly responded by asking the crowd, “Who are my mother and my brothers?”. Probably after a pause of silence by those gathered in the house who were caught off guard by the question and wondering what Jesus meant, Jesus answered the question Himself: His “family” consisted of all true believers, like those around Him.

**35** Jesus explained He was defining the spiritual relationship that transcends the physical family.