

**CHOSEN TO SERVE**

Mark 3:7-21

**Intro:** Have you ever wondered why the ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ on earth was so short? Luke 3:23 tells us that it was when He was about thirty years old He was baptized, and that marked the beginning of His public ministry. And it seems from the best calculations that our Lord was probably about thirty-three when He was crucified. So His ministry on earth was very, very short.

Or, let me ask you another question. Have you ever wondered why He had any public ministry at all? He could have entered upon His ministry and been immediately arrested by the Jews and put to death. But that is not the way it all happened. Instead, the course of His life when He moved into His ministry took a very natural course, even though it was very short.

In answer to the second question I believe we can say that He had a public ministry so that people would be able to tell from His character, and from His teaching, and from the works that He did, His miracles, that He truly was the Son of God in human flesh. That is, they could tell Who He was if their hearts were opened by the Spirit of God so that they could identify Him. Of course, His compassion upon people in physical need was demonstrated by the many miracles of healing which He performed. No one ever spoke and taught like He did. No one performed the number of miracles that He performed. In His public ministry people were able to observe the Lord under many different circumstances. He never committed a single sin. He never broke any law of Rome, nor any law of God. Although He did not hesitate to break the traditions of the elders which were not a part of God's laws. I repeat, His life, His teachings, and His works fully supported His claim to be the Son of God.

In the Gospel of Mark he, John Mark, in writing the shortest of the four Gospel records, made use of the Greek word εὐθύς which is translated by words like *immediately*, or *straightway*, or *forthwith* in the KJV. Out of over fifty times this word is used in the NT, over 40 of them are found in the Gospel of Mark. So not only is this a fast-moving record of the life of Christ, but it emphasizes how much our Lord accomplished in a relatively short period of time. The word I am sure that no one in all of history ever accomplished as much as our Lord did in such a short period of time.

In the verses which I have chosen for my text for today the word εὐθύς does not appear, yet the text itself is fast-moving. As evidence of this we see in the first verse much evidence of:

### **I. THE IMMENSE POPULARITY OF THE LORD (Mark 3:7-12).**

All of this was going on while the Pharisees and the Herodians, who were bitter enemies, one group Jewish, and the other Gentile, were plotting already the death of the Lord Jesus. That fact alone gave an urgency to our Lord's ministry. Of course the healing ministry of our Lord attracted much attention from the people, but His teaching was also popular with them.

The number of our Lord's disciples was growing. We see from verse 7 that the Lord was trying to get away to spend some time with His disciples. But the crowd followed Him, and they came from everywhere! Read the places that are mentioned in the latter part of verse 7, and also in verse 8. (Read.) Notice that Mark tells us at the end of verse 8 that the people had come to the Lord because "they had heard what great things He did." This means that they were attracted by the miracles our Lord had performed, and undoubtedly it was His miracles of healing.

Verse 10 tells us that on this occasion our Lord had healed many, and many who were still hoping to be healed, and so the sick were seeking to get close enough to touch Him, believing that if they could only touch Him, they would be healed also. So there was a great problem here of crowd control. Many who were demon-possessed were healed, and the demons recognized that the Lord was the Son of God, *and they said so!* But the Lord did not want their testimony, and so He told the demons to be quiet, and not make Him known.

But there is a real indication of what the Lord wanted to do in verse 9 when He asked the disciples to get a small ship for Him. This probably would have been what we would call a row boat, or possibly something a little larger. It was probably a boat used by fisherman. Matthew 13:2 and Luke 5:1-3 tell us that this was a way that the Lord often taught the crowds of people who came to Him. The Lord very willingly healed people, but He did not want to be known primarily as a healer, but as a preacher of the truth. So, although we are not told here that He taught the people, yet it is clearly indicated, and so we are to understand that there was some teaching done on this occasion as probably was the case in

most situations when the Lord was healing people. The healing was a means to an end, but the end was preaching. He came to call sinners to repentance.

But the time came when the day's work was done. The people somehow were dismissed, and the Lord continued to do what He was doing when He was interrupted by the crowd. Although now, instead of staying by the sea of Galilee, He took His disciples up into a nearby mountain. As I have mentioned to you before, the two places the Lord loved to go was to the sea of Galilee, or to some high place called a mountain (which were more like a high hill).

And then the Lord did a most important thing:

## **II. THE ORDINATION OF TWELVE MEN (Mark 3:13-19).**

This was one of the most important, one of the most significant, things that He did during His public ministry: "He ordained twelve," twelve men. Note that this was not something that originated among His disciples; *this was what the Lord did.*

*Up to this point we have read that the Lord called five men to follow Him. They were Andrew and Simon (brothers), and James and John (also brothers), and Levi. The two sets of brothers were fishermen; Levi was a publican, a hated tax collector.*

Now notice how they and the remaining seven were chosen. They did not volunteer. They were not elected by some popular vote. They were chosen and called by the Lord. They were down to the last man chosen by the Lord. It was the expression of the will of the Lord, and since He came into the world to do the will of the Father, we must also say that they were chosen by God. I don't think that Mark was talking about their salvation. They were already disciples, or professing disciples, but the Lord was calling them to a higher ministry.

All of us who are saved, know that while at the time we thought that it was our decision to come to Christ, yet as we got more acquainted with the Lord and His Word, we learned that we are saved because the Lord chose us before the foundation of the world, and that He called us to Himself, and we came because He called us. I hope we all understand that. Our salvation was not our idea; it was His! And so He gets all of the

glory. He didn't get much when He called me, and you would probably say the same thing about yourself, but He called us regardless, by His grace. We may have struggled against our calling for a time, but eventually *we came!*

When the Lord Jesus was with His disciples for the last time before His arrest and crucifixion, one of the things that He said to them was this:

16 Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain: that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it you (John 15:16).

And if you are concerned about who the Lord chose, and are wondering why He did not call some more prominent and outstanding people, remember what the Apostle Paul wrote to the Corinthian church about those of us whom the Lord has called to be saved. You will find Paul's words in 1 Corinthians 1:26-31:

26 For ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called:

27 But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty;

28 And base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are:

29 That no flesh should glory in his presence.

30 But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption:

31 That, according as it is written, He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord.

These verses that I have been talking to you about have to do with salvation. But the same basic principle applies when the Lord sets us apart for some ministry.

Now Mark tells us that the Lord "ordained twelve." What does the word "ordained" mean? It is the very common word, ποιέω, which the Lord used when He called Simon and Andrew, saying, "Come ye after me, and I will make you to become fishers of men" (Mark 1:17). It did not mean simply that the Lord would give them a title, but that the Lord was making Himself responsible to equip those whom He chose to do the work that He was calling them to do.

This point cannot be emphasized too strongly. When the Lord calls us to do a work, He makes Himself responsible to see that we will be able to fulfil the purpose for which we have been called.

And to fulfil that purpose the first point in our calling is *that we should be with Him*, not for just a period of training, but for a lifetime of fellowship with the Lord Himself. Sometimes we get so busy living, or doing some work that God has called us to do, that we forget that the Lord has not called us to do some work, but He has called us to Himself. He doesn't just want us for the service that we can render to Him; He wants us for Himself. He wants our time with Him to be the most important part of our day, so that it will become longer and more important the longer we live. For us this means reading the Word. It means spending time in prayer. It means study and meditation on the Word, asking the Holy Spirit to be our Teacher. It is not just reading and praying, but it is to be a time with the Lord.

**Illus:** Dr. Tidwell's young son coming into his study on a busy Saturday morning.

Remember 1 Corinthians 1:9, "God is faithful, by whom ye were called unto the fellowship of His Son Jesus Christ our Lord."

What comes next?

"And that He might send them forth to preach." The best preaching that is ever heard, is the preaching that a preacher does after having been with the Lord. It is possible to have a full notebook, but a cold heart. We learn to preach and to teach when we are with the Lord. Preaching had a major place in the life of our Lord here on earth, and He wants the giving out of the Word to have priority over any and everything else that we might say. If we are with the Lord and in the Word, it will be apparent when we preach. Paul's exhortation to "preach the Word," gives us our orders as we minister to people one on one, or one to a group of whatever size. We are not called upon to preach politics, or humanistic psychology, or legalistic religion. We are called to preach Christ.

But there is one other thing. You will find it in verse 15.

The Lord hasn't given me the power to heal sicknesses, or to cast out demons. And I don't believe He has given anybody the power to heal

diseases, or to cast out demons. But I'll tell you what He has given me, and you too. He has given us the privilege of being a blessing to the people to whom we minister, of ministering to their souls. Some sicknesses are due to sin, and if that is the case, if we can see them get right with the Lord, they may get well. But, oh, what a need there is today for people to be blessed through the ministry of the Word.

But next we come to:

### **III. THE NAMES OF THE ORIGINAL TWELVE (Mark 3:16-19).**

(Read through the list commenting on the fact that we don't know anything about some of them, and very little about the rest. We are here today, but forgotten by tomorrow – except the Lord never forgets us.

But what business does Judas Iscariot have in being on this list? I don't know that I have the answer to that question. You know, it is always easier to ask questions than it is to answer them. Why do you think that Judas was called to be an apostle?

I personally think that it was as a warning. Here was a man who had the title of an apostle. He probably spent as much time with the Lord as any of the other apostles. He preached the Gospel. He probably was the instrument that the Lord used in reaching people who truly believed in the Lord, and were saved. *But he was not saved himself.*

Don't tell me that he once was saved, but he turned against the Lord, and so was lost. Such a thing has never happened. It can't happen. You can't be born again, and then unborn. There is no such thing. "My sheep hear my voice . . ." (John 10:27-28). It is possible to know a lot about the Bible, and to hold important positions in a church, without ever having come to Christ for salvation. No one is ever saved because his parents are saved. The Lord called Judas as a warning for us to make our calling and election sure.

Our text closes with a reference to:

### **IV. THE RETURN OF THE PEOPLE (Mark 1:20-21).**

The Lord had friends who could not understand the zeal of the Lord. The Lord and His chosen one had such a zeal for the salvation of the lost that

they did not even take time to eat. How great is our desire to see people come to Christ?

**Concl:** Most of you will never be a pastor or a missionary to go to another country with the Gospel. But we all have a place of ministry, and we need to know the way to have a fruitful ministry. The Lord knew that He had but a short time here on earth, and He was determined to make it a fruitful time. So He moved rapidly through His life, touching as many lives as He could, knowing how very terrible it is to go out of this life without Christ. Let's pray for the people in our generation. People are definitely in need of Christ. Let us put into practice what the Lord indicates in this passage how the people of God need to prepare and to keep on practicing the words given in the Word for the ministry of those twelve men who were chosen, called, and made to be the kind of men who were taught and constrained to seek the lost with the Gospel.