

- We are working our way between now and Christmas through the book of Mark.
- This biography of Jesus was written by John Mark to people who were non-Jews. Mark wanted them to understand Jesus as God who lived as a servant on the behalf of people. It was totally different than the experience of that day with those in power.
- Our homework each week was to read the next chapter of Mark and ask two questions. "What do I learn about God from the life of Jesus?" and "So what?"
- Have you ever noticed how much we grow up to be like our parents?
- If you are a teenager now, you are thinking – not me. I've got news for you. Yes you will. There will always be ways you that you will end up acting, feeling or living like your parents. Those of us that are a little older understand this.
- Why is that?
- What person(s) have had the greatest influence on your life? That person who maybe changed how you look at yourself? Perhaps they influenced what was important to you? Maybe they were the ones who actually inspired you to go in a new direction, start a business, pick a particular school?
- Let me ask you this. How did they get the cache to influence you in that way? There are lots of people and voices telling us what to do and how to live and think. What made them the one(s) who made a difference in your life?
- As we go through this document that John Mark wrote, you will notice that there are three groups of people that Mark focuses on over and over. We have been introduced to the first two and today we get introduced to the third.
- Mark frequently mentions the religious leaders. We saw them appear in every single episode last week. He presents them as opponents of Jesus. The counterpoint to what he is doing and teaching.
- The second group are the crowds. Mark mentions the crowd 32 times in this short little book.
- Chapter 3 keeps both of these in mind. It starts with Jesus healing a man with a shriveled hand on the Sabbath. The Pharisees / religious leaders have a serious issue with Jesus doing this.
- Mark continues by showing the crowds. There were so many people near him.
- They were always there. People wanted to get close to Jesus. These were not nice smelling, wonderful people. It was sick people. Desperate people. People in a time when you couldn't take a shower every day. It was constant.
- It created such an issue he had to step into a boat to teach people from the lake because people were crowding him.
- Then we are introduced to the third group of people – the disciples.
- Pay attention to these three groups. Mark spends his entire book showing the different responses that each of these had to Jesus. How did the religious leaders respond? How did the crowds respond? How did the disciples respond?
- For today, we will focus on how Jesus initiated his group of 12 disciples that are so familiar in the gospel stories.
- There are some things that are really important that can help us as we follow Jesus. And there is the one important phrase that sets it all up. It is the most challenging, most crucial phrase in these 6 verses.
- It is the phrase that changed the course of the lives of these men and can change yours. It begins like this:

13 *Jesus went up on a mountainside*

- We know from some other accounts of Jesus that this trip up the mountain included much prayer. He was about to make an enormous decision. He knew it and it he did not do it lightly.

and called to him those he wanted, and they came to him. 14 He appointed twelve that they might be with him and that he might send them out to preach 15 and to have authority to drive out demons. 16 These are the twelve he appointed: Simon (to whom he gave the name Peter), 17 James son of Zebedee and his brother John (to them he gave the name Boanerges, which means "sons of thunder"), 18 Andrew, Philip, Bartholomew, Matthew, Thomas, James son of Alphaeus, Thaddaeus, Simon the Zealot 19 and Judas Iscariot, who betrayed him.

I. Jesus invited them to himself. (v13, 16-18)

13 *Jesus went up on a mountainside and called to him those he wanted, and they came to him.*

- Jesus invites these men into his life and ministry.
- The question that pops into my mind is: "Why these 12?" There were already a number of people that were following Jesus. It was not just these guys.
- We cannot see anything particularly special about these 12.
- I can almost guarantee that there were more educated and qualified men in the group that had been following Jesus.
- Yet Jesus invited these men in. They were ordinary men. They did not appear to have any formal theological education.

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- One of them turned out to be a traitor.
- There were really young men among them. Aggressive personalities. As we will see, they were largely clueless as to who Jesus was and the real point of his life. At this point, they did not even believe or have any idea that Jesus was the Messiah.
- The point is they were the ones He wanted they were the ones who fulfilled His purpose.
- Consider this. He did not force them. He did not manipulate or guilt them into it.
- There is a critical thing to note here – their response.
- He invited them and "*they came to him.*"
- They could have said no. At this point, they might have sensed that Jesus was upping the ante. Asking for a commitment. More than one could have said, "I'm pretty busy. I got lots of stuff with my kids and all their activities. Work is pretty crazy. I can give you some of my energy, but this is too much. I'll just pop in and out where I can."
- These 12 responded. They wanted to be with him. There was something about a desire to be a part of what Jesus is doing that was important.
- Takeaway: Jesus calls you. Not because of your qualifications, your talent, your experience. He simply wants you. If you are a follower of Jesus, it is so gratifying to know you have been specifically chosen by God just as these men were.
- God is inviting you today and you always have the opportunity to choose. "I will come."

II. He chose them to be WITH him. (v14)

- Do you remember what I said that there is a phrase in hear that changed their lives? That could change yours?

14 *He appointed twelve that they might be with him and that he might send them out to preach 15 and to have authority to drive out demons.*

- I am going to touch on the idea of mission and power in a minutes, but if you get tired and zone out, please remember this.
- The number one thing that Jesus invited these 12 disciples into was relationship.
- The most important, the greatest responsibility, the biggest opportunity they had was to be WITH him.
- **CHRIST'S MOST IMPORTANT INVITATION TO YOU IS TO BE WITH HIM.**
- More than what they were going to do for him. More important that the message they were going to communicate. More important than ANYTHING was this simple word. "WITH"
- In fact, we are told that he appointed them to be with him.
- To be with him was simply to spend time together. But it was deeper than that. It meant listening, learning and patterning their lives after him.
- When they were with him, his presence was constant. It meant they followed his lead. It meant that Jesus set the agenda. It meant they listened to his teaching. It meant they copied his lifestyle. It meant that they worked through their struggles with him.
- The reason that we end up like our parents. The reason that person had such an influence on our life, is because we spent so much time WITH them.
- We absorb their ideas, their behavior, their ideas.
- My friends, Jesus is inviting you to be with him. He is not asking you to read your Daily Bread and do your devotions and then leave him there and head out into your day.
- He is inviting you to be with him. All the time. In every situation. In your times with him. As you speak to your spouse. As you work. When you go out on Friday night. At that family barbecue. When you have conversations with those who don't know him. When you are alone. When you are with others. When you are on vacation. When you are stressed. When things are relaxed and chill.
- If the entire goal of your life. If what you poured your life into was to be WITH Jesus, then your life would be complete and purposeful.
- Jesus was all about being with him. That was enough. Two things flowed from this.

III. "WITH" gave them a mission. (v14)

14 He appointed twelve that they might be with him and that he might send them out to preach.

- Jesus was going to give these men a mission.
- Your thought is that if preaching is the mission, then I just as well am happy on the sidelines.
- That misses the point.
- To preach is not necessarily to do what I am doing right now. It is simply to share what you have learned to be true.
- Think about it. When someone gets going about a topic that they are particularly passionate about, what do we say. "Preach it sister!"
- Jesus wants these men to be with him to learn and experience what the message of the kingdom was. By being with him, they began to understand the message of the good news. Being with him showed them that they did not want them to keep it to themselves but to tell others.
- He trained on the content of the good news and how to share it, but it was being WITH Jesus that inspired them to do it. In fact, they could not help themselves.
- Jesus did not invite them to his mission so that they could gain knowledge, be important and have others look up to them. It wasn't even primarily so their own lives would get better.
- Jesus invited them to be WITH him and catch his passion for this amazing, greater vision.
- Takeaway

- Jesus has invited you to be with him. Not to just fix all your problems and let you live the American Dream with your family. He did not save you so that you can make a good living, feel good, do some good church things and live out your life in comfort.
- He gave you a larger purpose. A purpose that should infiltrate and inform everything you do. To live the good news of Jesus in front of others and tell them about it.
- The disciples did not get to do whatever they wanted. They were not the ones deciding what happened next. Jesus set the agenda. That's part of the invitation.
- **CHRIST'S MOST IMPORTANT INVITATION TO YOU IS TO BE WITH HIM.**
- You cannot focus on being WITH Jesus and not be inspired to participate in his mission.
- I'm left with this question. "If I am not sharing any good news about Jesus with anyone, then I wonder to what degree am living WITH Jesus myself?"

IV. "WITH" empowered them. (v15)

14 He appointed twelve that they might be with him and that he might send them out to preach 15 and to have authority to drive out demons.

- This is huge.
- It's not that Jesus just gave them a job to go do. To tell other people about Jesus.
- He gave them his authority and power.
- By being with Jesus, they saw his power. They saw him act with authority. They saw him drive out demons, deal with opposition, teach the crowds and generally make an enormous impact.
- As they spent time with him, Jesus sent them out but he never asked them to do anything without giving him his authority and power. Neither does he do this with you.
- They did not operate on their own. Jesus did not ask them to do things in their own power. Remember, he was not picking them because they were the best orators, planners or leaders. He picked them to be WITH him.
- They were going to have his power and authority. What does that mean?
- This authority was a spiritual authority. He was not giving them authority over other people to dictate their lives.
- He gave them power and authority to uproot the works of Satan. To bring about the kingdom of God.
- As Christ-followers, we have power. You speak on Christ's behalf. Your words of encouragement can break depression in another. Your service to another can lead them away from Satan's hold on their life. Your involvement has the power to heal marriages and relationship. We have the power to pray for healing and see people made whole. We do not have to be afraid of Satan or anything he does. The more time we spend WITH Jesus, the more we tap into that power.
- **CHRIST'S MOST IMPORTANT INVITATION TO YOU IS TO BE WITH HIM.**
- Some have said to me that in this past few months Satan is attacking people in our church. We have seen sickness, death, conflict and more.
- Do you know what that means? Satan is worried. He wants to distract us and take us off our mission. He desires for us to be fearful and forget that we have God's authority and power.
- He does this by keeping us from being WITH Jesus. He will use bad things like death, sickness and conflict to do so. He will use good things like busyness, activities, jobs and hobbies to keep us from WITH.

- Our mission and his authority flow from being with him. The disciples had a mission and they had power because they spent time WITH Jesus.
 - If we are not WITH him, the mission will become our mission, not his. The mission we are on will become pointless and irrelevant and our lives will amount to nada.
 - If we are not WITH him, we will operate in our own power, our own talents, our own agenda and we will fail.
 - Without “with” we will have no power.
 - Without “with” we will lose our direction.
 - Without “with” we will give up.
 - Without “with” we will get derailed.
 - Without “with” our mission will be too small.
 - Without “with” we will settle.
 - Without “with” we will live fearfully.
- **CHRIST’S MOST IMPORTANT INVITATION TO YOU IS TO BE WITH HIM.**
 - But let me tell you this. WITH requires commitment.
 - When I got married, I promised to be WITH my wife for the rest of my life. It was more than a commitment to share the same house and live together.
 - I committed to think of her first. To put her interests before my own. To not just talk in passing when we were busy with the kids, but to invest long amounts of one-on-one time together. I had to give up putting what I wanted to do first. I had to learn what was important to her, to understand her moods and needs. I had to spend my resources and money on her, not just myself. I had to learn what it looked like to love and serve her unconditionally. I had to practice humility.
 - She had to commit to do all those same things. We have, imperfectly, tried to do these things for 30 years. As a result, our relationship is closer, better and more awesome today than ever.
 - When Jesus called these guys to himself they left everything in order to be WITH him. It changed their lives. It changed the world. Today we are studying what was written because of that commitment to WITH.
 - Jesus invites you to be WITH him. Will you commit to it?
 - Charles Francis Adams, son of President John Quincy Adams and grandson of President John Adams, kept a diary. One day he entered: “Went fishing with my son today—a day wasted.”
 - His son, Brook Adams, also kept a diary, which is still in existence. On that same day, Brook Adams made this entry: “Went fishing with my father—the most wonderful day of my life!” The father thought he was wasting time while fishing with his son, but his son saw it as an investment of time.
 - When you spend time WITH Jesus, it is never wasted. He doesn’t think so and no matter what it feels like to you, it is always worth it.
 - Jesus wants to be WITH you. Will you commit to be WITH him? It’s worth it!