

## **WHEN CROWDS CRUSH**

Monday, July 17

Reading: Mark 3:7-20

**Mark 3:13** *Jesus went up on a mountainside 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*

Mark presents Jesus' early ministry as one of ever-increasing pressure. Not only are the religious leaders watching His every move with malicious intent, but the crowds will simply not leave Him alone. They "came to Him from everywhere" (1:45). They "gathered in such large numbers that there was no room left, not even outside the door" (2:2). The crowds were getting so large that they kept a "getaway boat" handy so Jesus would not get crushed. People were pushing and shoving to get to Him (3:7-12). It was getting so bad that "He and His disciples were not even able to eat" (3:20).

While Jesus was God, we must not forget that He was also human. He got tired! The continuous pressure and crush of the crowds, the constant scrutiny of the Pharisees, and the howls and harassment from the demon-possessed took its toll. How did Jesus deal with all this pressure?

**HE GOT AWAY** (3:7-13). Jesus left the crowds and went up a mountain to regain His strength and get a break from the stress of ministry.

**HE PRAYED** (Luke 6:12): The parallel passage in Luke's gospel tells us that Jesus prayed all night before selecting the Twelve. He knew that His strength came from the Father and so He spent much necessary time in prayer.

**HE SHARED HIS MINISTRY WITH OTHERS** (3:14-19): Jesus chose twelve apostles to share in the ministry of spreading the kingdom of God. He would pour His life into these men and they would become the leaders when He went back the heaven.

### **POINTS TO PONDER:**

1. "Jesus Withdrew." Jesus left us with a wonderful example of how to deal with the pressure of living for Him. Do you take time out of your busy schedule to be still and refresh your body and mind? Do you spend essential time in prayer to Your heavenly Father? How do you share your life and ministry with others who love the Lord?
2. "That They Might Be with Him and That He might Send Them Out to Preach." Jesus' plan for the Twelve started with being "with Him." He shared His life with them. They lived, ate, walked, and talked with Him. Jesus invested His life into them. Years later when the apostles were on trial before the Jewish religious leaders for preaching, these enemies of the gospel saw their boldness and realized that it was because they had been with Jesus (Acts 4:13). He had so transformed these ordinary fishermen that they spoke and acted like Jesus. The second part of Jesus' plan was to "send them out." They gained practical experience in ministry to prepare them for when Jesus would no longer be with them. The apostle Paul instructed Timothy to follow this pattern as well (see 2 Timothy 2:2). Are you spending time with Jesus as you should? How do you invest your life into others? How can people tell that you belong to Jesus?