

**Grace to You** :: *esp Unleashing God's Truth, One Verse at a Time*

## **Mark's Sweeping Summary of Jesus**

Scripture: Mark 3:7–12

Code: 41-13

I invite you to turn in the Scripture to Mark chapter 3, verses 7 through 12. Mark chapter 3, verses 7 through 12. We're going to be reading that in just a few moments, but since it's been over three months since our last look at the Gospel of Mark, we need to kind of prepare our hearts and our minds for what is before us this morning.

There are four Gospels in the New Testament, as you know – Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. These four Gospels have a singular purpose, and that purpose is summed up in the final Gospel, the Gospel of John. In John's Gospel, chapter 20 and verse 31, John says this, "These have been written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing, you may have life in His name."

John tells us that the reason that the histories of the life and ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ have been written is so that we may believe that He is the Spirit of God, and by believing, have eternal life in His name.

The four Gospels, then, are designed as proof or evidence of the deity of Jesus Christ. All four Gospels are written for the same reason: to tell us that Jesus is no mere man, no mere prophet, no mere religious leader, but rather He is the Son of God. Any Jew would understand that term, the Son of God to mean that He shares in the very nature of God. He is God Himself; He is deity.

Eternal life comes to those who believe that, but you can't believe that unless you have evidence. And the evidence of the deity of Jesus Christ is contained in the four Gospels. All of them present that evidence to us. Here at Grace Church, we've had immense privilege for many, many years to go through this evidence. We spent about eight-and-a-half years going through every verse in Matthew, almost three years going through every verse in John, ten years going through every verse in Luke, and now we have begun to go through Mark.

For those of us who have been a part of all of this, or some of this, the evidence is compelling; it is overwhelming; it is unmistakable that He is the Son of God, and thus we believe. Because we believe, we have eternal life.

We gather together on a day like this, as we do on every Sunday, to worship the one in whom we believe. We are gathered here because we love the Lord Jesus Christ; we honor Him; we praise Him; we worship Him. That's what gathers us together. We collectively make the confession that He is the Son of God, that He is the Messiah and the Savior. That is what Mark wants us to know, as did Matthew, Luke, and John.

And so, Mark begins his Gospel in a very unambiguous way, chapter 1, verse 1, by telling us that what is about to be read is the beginning of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God. And then starting in verse 2, he begins to amass the evidence that this pronouncement is true.

You have, then, as in all four Gospels, in the Gospel of Mark, the unfolding record of evidence regarding the deity of Jesus Christ. There are some who would tell us that Jesus was an influential man for a brief period of time in a very small part of the world. Anything but that is the case. He is God in human flesh; the proof is unmistakable. We have come to know that proof. We have come to believe it, and we affirm our faith in Him and have received eternal life, and thus we gather to worship His glorious name.

As we study the Gospel of Mark, the evidence will overwhelm us. We will acknowledge it because we already know it to be true, and the Spirit of God confirms it to our hearts. But for those who are not believers, the evidence is still overwhelming. There was never an argument about His teaching that succeeded to undo any truth that He proclaimed. No one ever denied His miracles. No one ever denied a miracle or the mass of miracles that He did. Not even the people who resented Him the greatest and hated Him the most ever denied His miracles. They never denied His authority and power over the demon forces of hell. They never denied that.

And so, without being able to refute His teachings, without denying His miracles or denying His power over the forces of hell, you might assume that they would have believed in Him and received eternal life; they did not.

Strangely enough, even in the fourth chapter of Mark, well into the story, well into the evidence, not written but seen and experienced by the disciples who are following Jesus, it is the disciples who ask the question, after Jesus controls the wind and the waves, "What kind of man is this?"

In fact, all through the Gospel of Mark, you never find the disciples saying, "You're the Son of God." In chapter 8, verse 29, Peter says, "You're the Christ; You're the Messiah." But in Mark's Gospel, no one says, "You are the Son of God," until the fifteenth chapter and the thirty-ninth verse. And of all things, it's a Roman soldier.

There is testimony in the early part of this Gospel that Jesus is the Son of God. It comes from God the Father at His baptism, as we read in chapter one, "This is My beloved Son in whom I am well pleased." There is testimony also in chapter 1 from a demon who says, "You are the Holy One of God." There is further testimony, in the section before us in chapter 3, from another demon, that this is the Son of God. Heaven knows He's the Son of God. Hell knows He's the Son of God. Mark lays out, with the other Gospel writers, the evidence for all men to know that He is the Son of God, but in spite of all of that evidence, He is rejected by the nation and executed as a criminal. We stand with that Roman soldier.

In chapter 15, verse 39, he said, "Truly, this is the Son of God." That's where we stand. And because we believe that, we have eternal life in His name. We all gather on Sunday like this, as worshippers, to make an open confession of Christ. We gather as a church to exalt and worship the Lord Jesus Christ, the divine Son of God. He's the object of our worship both personal and corporate. We worship not only collectively here together, we worship personally. We are those who worship Christ.

Day by day, hour by hour, we sing His praises. We obey Him. We express our love to Him. He is the Son of God; He is our Lord, our Master, our Sovereign King, our Redeemer. He is the object of our greatest affection, the source of greatest joy. In fact, although we are not yet in heaven, we are a part

of the redeemed, and we on earth replicate what's going on in heaven in terms of worship being directed at Him. You will remember that in Revelation chapter 5, there is a scene in heaven which pictures the throne of God, and gathered around the throne of God are saints and angels.

And the focus, in chapter 5, turns toward Christ, and He becomes the object of this glorious, heavenly worship. They adore Him in heaven as a Lion. And then they adore Him in heaven as a Lamb. And on both counts, they sing His praises, and they will sing His praises forever and ever and ever. And we do the same here on earth: not yet glorified in heaven, we still offer Him the same worship that He now receives from the saints who are in His presence in heaven.

We adore Him as the Lion: powerful, majestic, deadly to His enemies. And at the same time, we adore Him as the Lamb: meek, humble, dead, and risen from the dead. He is the Lamb who slays His enemies. He is the Lamb slain by His enemies. He is the one who bought our eternal salvation with His sacrifice as the Lamb, and He is the one who conquered all our enemies with His sovereign power as the Lion.

And we join the souls of every tongue and tribe and nation and people who love Him savingly, and we compose a kingdom of worshippers who will reign with Him forever and praise Him forever and ever. And so, those who know Him and love Him and possess eternal life gather in heaven incessantly to praise Him and gather on earth to praise Him as well.

How have we come to give Him this honor? How have we come to praise Him alone; to trust in Him alone; to love Him alone as the only hope, the only Redeemer, the only Savior? It is because of the testimony of Scripture. We have read, and we believe.

While all Scripture is His story, from Genesis on, that's why He Himself, on the Emmaus Road, taught two disciples all the things concerning Himself from the Old Testament. The four Gospels are the focal point of His story because they revealed in history what the prophet said would come to pass. It is the four Gospels that tell the story that reveals the full preeminence of Christ.

We see the glory of God revealed in Christ. God presents Himself to us a more clear way than any way in the Old Testament previously in the arrival of Jesus Christ. Why are we studying Mark? We are studying Mark so that again we may celebrate the truth that this is the Son of God. We believe, and in believing we have eternal life. He has given us this gift, and therefore we offer Him our praise.

For those of you who do not yet believe, the story of Mark – like Matthew, Luke, and John – is to bring the evidence to you that you might believe in the Son of God and, believing, have life in His name.

How blessed are we to gather again on another Sunday, then, and do this? Though we have spent 20 plus years in these 4 Gospels in the past, we eagerly come every Sunday, don't we, for the next section of the next Gospel? And if the Lord gives me a long, long, long life and a functioning brain, someday I may even go through the Gospel of John again.

You say, "Why do you do that? Isn't enough enough?"

You can never get enough of Christ. You can never get enough of His majesty and His glory. How

blessed are we today to gaze again at the wonder of our Redeemer?

Now, chapter 3, verse 7 to 12, is a good place to restart our study. It's a good place because it's a summary. From chapter 1, verse 1 through chapter 3, verse 6, you kind of have the first act in Mark. And then you have a kind of summary. Summaries are good. Summaries look back and sort of gather up the truth. It is kind of like we've been watching a video, or watching a play unfold. And it's just constant action up to now. And all of a sudden, Mark hits the Pause button. In chapter 3, verses 7 to 12, he says, "Let me give you a still photo. Let me give you a snapshot now. Let's stop the action; let's freeze the frame and sum up what we've learned.

Not only does this kind of summary look back, but it looks forward, because it gathers up everything we know, which then generates momentum for moving ahead. Mark introduced his subject, chapter 1, verse 1, the gospel of Jesus Christ identified Jesus Christ as the Son of God. Immediately he affirmed that Jesus is the Son of God because Jesus is the fulfillment of Isaiah's prophecy, verses 2 and 3.

He again affirms that Jesus is the Son of God by the testimony of the greatest Old Testament prophet: John the Baptist. In chapter 1, verses 9 to 11, he affirms Jesus is the Son of God by the testimony of God Himself, from heaven, who speaks audibly and says, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased;" affirmed by the Holy Spirit, who comes and descends and rests on Christ.

In chapter 1, verses 12 and 13, he again affirms the deity of Jesus Christ by demonstrating His triumph over Satan in the great temptation. And then in chapter 1, verse 14, Mark shows us how Jesus begins the ministry of preaching the Gospel of salvation. He shows how He calls His apostles and disciples to follow Him. He gives us an account of how Jesus unleashes His power over disease and over demons. He tells us several stories about healings and then comments on the fact that there were many more healings. He tells us incidents about the casting out of demons – testimony to the fact that the Lord Jesus has power over the natural world and power over the supernatural world, power over the physical world and power over the spiritual world. And only God has that kind of power.

As a healer, He creates eyes that can see where there were none. He creates ears that can hear where there were none. He creates limbs and internal organs and gives life to dead people. There is no explanation for that other than that He is divine.

He engaged the supernatural world with such power that the demons panic and scream in His presence as He banishes them from their sad victims.

In chapter 2, verse 23 to chapter 3, verse 6, the end of the first section, He attacks Judaism by saying He's the Lord of the Sabbath. The Sabbath observance was the heart of Judaistic religion. Jesus says, "I am Lord of the Sabbath," thus striking a deadly blow against that religious system.

Now, after that kind of flow evidencing that Jesus is the Son of God - for only He could have authority over disease, authority over demons, and authority over the heretofore revealed law of God regarding the Sabbath - His authority is divine; His power is divine. And Mark hits the Pause button. And this is the still photo.

Let's look at verse 7, "Jesus withdrew to the sea with His disciples, and a great multitude from Galilee followed, and also from Judea, and from Jerusalem, and from Idumaea, and beyond the Jordan, and the vicinity of Tyre and Sidon, a great number of people heard of all that He was doing and came to Him.

"He told His disciples that a boat should stand ready for Him because of the crowd so that they would not crowd Him, for He had healed many, with the result that all those who had afflictions pressed around Him in order to touch Him.

"And whenever the unclean spirits saw Him, they would fall down before Him and shout, 'You are the Son of God.' And He earnestly warned them not to tell who He was."

The demons knew who he was. God declared who He was. The evidence made it obvious who He was. Why did the people not get it? Why do you go through the whole book and no one ever says, "Yes, you are the Son of God. God says it. The demons say it. And finally, at the end, a Roman soldier says it, but what about the Jews? Wasn't this convincing enough?

There was a barrier, a massive barrier. You get an insight into it back in chapter 2, verses 21 and 22, "No one sews a patch of unshrunk cloth on an old garment, otherwise the patch pulls away from it, the new from the old, and a worse tear results. No one puts new wine into old wineskins, otherwise the wine will burst the skins, the wine is lost, and skins as well; but one puts new wine into fresh wineskins."

Jesus is saying, "The message I bring can't be connected to Judaism. You can't sew them together. It can't be contained in Judaism. It is completely separate." And this poses the massive barrier. Jesus never offered Himself as some kind of reformer simply wanting to reform Judaism. He did not come as one was saying, "You've got a lot of things that are wrong in your worship, and I'm here to fix them." He came to abolish Judaism. He came to abrogate it, to nullify it, to bring it to an absolute end.

He is the inaugurator of a completely new religion, the new covenant which would bring about the end of the old. And I mean the end of the old. And I mean not just the end of apostate Judaism as it existed in first century Israel, but the end of Old Testament Judaism. He came to end Judaism as a religion. And since the arrival and work of the Lord Jesus Christ, Judaism is a dead religion. It is unacceptable to God.

Jesus ended the old covenant era. He ended the shadow era. The old covenant shadow religion that always pointed to life and salvation, but never provided it. Because by the means of the old covenant, the keeping of the law, no one could be saved because no one could keep it. The old covenant said there was life – there was eternal life - but couldn't provide it. The old message was that sinners must come to God, but sinners can't come to God. There was life for sinners, but not by this system.

In fact, in 2 Corinthians 3, Paul calls the old covenant "a ministry of death." The old covenant said, "God is separate; God is distant. You can't get near Him." And how is that illustrated? All the people were out in the courtyard, and inside there was a Holy Place. And then there was the Holy of Holies, where God dwelt, and no one could ever go there except once a year when the high priest went in

for a brief moment on the Day of Atonement and hurried out.

So, the old covenant said there was eternal life, there was forgiveness, there was salvation, there was heaven, there was intimacy with God, but not through that system. You see, this is what made the acceptance of Jesus so difficult, because it means the forsaking of Judaism totally. Totally.

When Jesus began His ministry, according to the Gospel of John the first thing He did was go in and – into the temple, at the festival time, and make a whip and threw people out. One can hardly imagine the sheer force of personality that would allow one man to do that. I mean they had a lot at stake in there. That was a place where there were tens of thousands of people all milling around.

The Sadducees, the chief priests, the high priests were running basically a den of thieves, and operation where they're scamming people, taking their money by illicit exchange of coins for the temple offerings and illegitimate prices placed on acceptable animals for sacrifice. There were a lot of reasons to resist the efforts of Jesus to clean the place out, but that's not what happened. Nobody could withstand His power, and so He literally evacuated the place. He was striking a blow at the heart of Judaism, "This has nothing to do with my Father."

At the end of His ministry, the last week of His life, when He came into Jerusalem on Passover week, He did the same thing again. Mark tells us that story in chapter 11, verses 15 to 19. He did the same thing, struck a devastating blow at the heart and soul of Judaism temple worship. Through the years, this has been called the cleansing of the temple.

And as I thought about it – and I've used that phrase through the years – that's really not a good phrase, because this is not the cleansing of the temple. Jesus wasn't saying, "You know, if we can just clean this up a little bit, this thing can – this can go on. If we can just get this act kind of washed a little bit, if we can just fix some of the aberrations, if we can just clean out some of the corruption, hey, this temple has a future."

Listen, the day Jesus Christ arrived, the temple had no future. That was not the cleansing of the temple; that was the pronouncement of the abolition and devastation and destruction of the temple. And at the last week of Jesus' life, what did He say? Not one stone will be left on another. The whole thing is coming down. That happened in 70 A.D. The Romans came in, smashed it to bits. No more Holy Place, no more Holy of Holies. And that was an act of God's judgment through the Romans. The system was done. Jesus was pronouncing destruction on the temple. He was giving them previews of coming attractions both the times He went in and did that. He was not saying, "If we just clean this thing up, it has a future." There was no future for the temple. There was no future for sacrifices. There was no future for priests. There was no future for a system of law and ceremony, and that's why it's obliterated.

There never has been a replacement temple. There never has been another sacrifice. There never has been a priesthood. The whole system was brought to an end. And the Lord Jesus brought the new covenant, which established what has always been true: that salvation was by faith alone, and that faith had to be placed in Him. Not by law, not by works, not by ceremony. Salvation is by faith and faith alone. It's always been that way. And the faith had to be placed in Him. Again, John 20:31, "These things are written that you may believe, and believing have life in His name."

So, as Mark unfolds his story, it is centered on Jesus Christ and His credentials as the Son of God. And the credentials are just stunning. And as I said, nobody really argued against them. Nobody ever denied them. Nobody ever tried to explain them away. And yet, the people didn't accept Him.

The barrier was they had to turn their backs on Judaism which had woven its way into every bit of their lives. It was so profoundly embedded in their persona that they couldn't even conceive of live without Judaism. There is no explanation for Jesus other than that He is divine. No explanation. But human depravity is deep, an unbelief is deep, and religion provides a very thick tomb in which to bury that unbelief.

Nonetheless, after the first act in Mark, Jesus has achieved tremendous popularity, and we get a glimpse of that in the text I just read you. Let me give you three aspects to the little snapshot here. Number one, the popularity of Jesus. Verses 7 and 8, "Jesus withdrew to the sea with His disciples. A great multitude from Galilee followed, and also from Judea, and from Jerusalem, and Idumaea, and beyond the Jordan. In the vicinity of Tyre and Sidon, a great number of people heard of all that He was doing and came to Him."

No one has ever been this popular. No one has ever come close to this popularity – no prophet, no sage, no rabbi, no wise man, no philosopher, no hero. Jesus has, in a brief period of time, managed to garner unparalleled fame demonstrated here.

Verse 7 says, "He withdrew to the sea with His disciples." Backing up to the previous paragraph to tell us why, chapter 3, verse 1, "He was in the synagogue in Capernaum." Capernaum is the main city at the top, right at the crown point of the Sea of Galilee, that lake that's in Galilee, where the Jordan River comes in at the top and flows out at the bottom, down through the Jordan Valley to the Dead Sea. A familiar area of Jesus' ministry. Israel is divided into two sections: southern section called Judea, northern section called Galilee. Up at the Galilee section at the north tip of the Sea of Galilee is this city called Capernaum, Jesus' headquarters during the year plus that He had a ministry in Galilee.

He's in that city. He's in a synagogue. There's a man there. He heals the man, which irritates the Pharisees because they think it's a violation of Sabbath law. So, in verse 6, "The Pharisees went out and immediately began conspiring with the Herodians" - who are called Herodians because they were attached to Herod - they were politically motivated, the Pharisees religiously motivated; they came together mutually against Jesus and met – "conspiring as to how they might destroy Him." Hmm.

Now, this is understandable because they get it. They understand that the power is unmistakable; it is not arguable. They also understand that the message of Jesus is that Judaism is finished. They knew when Jesus made a whip and did what He did in the temple that this was not some kind of temporary cleansing. This was not saying to them, "Hey, you guys, if you can clean this thing up, it has a future." He knew – they knew exactly what He was doing. They knew by His message that He was offering something completely distinct from what they taught. They knew He was calling for the destruction of their system. And so, they wanted to kill Him.

Now verse 7 makes sense. "Jesus withdrew to the sea with His disciples." It's really an act of protection, an act of common sense. Now, He's already had four confrontations with the religious

leaders. Three of them occurred in chapter 2, and then the one I just pointed out in chapter 3, which is the most hostile one. But this is not going to go away. This is not going to change. It's just going to go on and on and on through His whole ministry.

And that, by the way, is the subject of a new book I've written called *The Jesus You Can't Ignore*, which talks about Jesus' confrontations with the false leaders of Israel.

So, Jesus knows that He needs to get away from the immediate anger. It's not God's time, yet, for Him to be arrested. That doesn't come for a long time. He doesn't want to expose His disciples to any danger either. And so, it says that He withdrew to the sea.

Now, Capernaum is right on the lake. He just simply left that location and went somewhere along the north end of the Sea of Galilee to a more isolated place. He's wise to put Himself and His disciples at someone distance from these murderous men.

Now, just exactly who are His disciples? Well, a broad word, *mathētēs*, learners. People who had gone beyond the attraction of miracles and wanted to hear what He had to say. They were a little more interested in His theology to varying degrees. Among them – and there are many nameless ones; we don't know how many at this point – but among them are some familiar names who later become apostles. In fact, we're going to actually meet the apostles in the next paragraph in Mark.

But at this particular time, according to chapter 1, verses 16 to 20, He has already called Simon and Andrew – Peter and Andrew – and James and John. According to chapter 2, verses 13 and 14, He's called Matthew, the tax collector. So, there are five. According to John's Gospel, chapter 1, verses 35 to 51, He's called Philip and Nathanael. So, there are already seven of the apostles, five more to be named in the next paragraph, along with other followers. They are at various stages of interest in His teaching. They even don't come to any great confession until chapter 8, when Peter, no doubt speaking for them, says, "You are the Christ." They are following, for the moment, and Jesus gives them some momentary relief from potential open conflict with His enemies by going to a different location.

However, you might get away from the enemies, but you can't get away from the friends, "And a great multitude from Galilee followed." It's a big crowd. It says "great multitude" in verse. It says "great number" in verse 8. The Bible always tends to understate things. This is a massive crowd. We can estimate it in the tens of thousands of people rather readily. His fame has been spreading everywhere.

It says here that the crowd comes from both Galilee, which is in the north, and Judea in the south. If you go back to chapter 1, you can see how this has been growing over the weeks and months – 1:21, "They went to Capernaum. Immediately on the Sabbath, He entered the synagogue and began to teach. They were all amazed at His teaching." The effect of this is quick. Verse 28, "Immediately the news about Him spread everywhere into all the surrounding district of Galilee." The word goes like a grass fire.

Verse 32, "When evening came" – still in Capernaum – "after the sun had set, they began bringing to Him all who were ill and those who were demon possessed. And the whole city had gathered at the door. And he healed many, cast out many demons."



Verse 39, “He went all around into synagogues throughout all Galilee, preaching, casting out demons.” Verse 45, again it tells us that He went everywhere. And trying to avoid undue publicity, He found Himself having to go into unpopulated areas, where the crowd continued to find Him and press against Him.

Chapter 2, verse 13, “And He went again by the seashore; all the people were coming to Him, and He was teaching them.” That’s the way it was everywhere He went in Galilee. And the crowd kept growing and growing and growing and growing. Nothing like it in the history of the world. Nothing certainly like it in the experience of these people. Massive healings happening before their eyes. People being delivered from demons. It was a wonder of wonders, the likes of which no one could ever imagine.

Now, understand, this is a period of time in which there is no medical care, there is no real healing by the medical arts. This is a time when people are dominated and obsessed and oppressed and indwelt by demons. This is a horrible time. This is a difficult world. Life expectancy is short. There is massive amounts of illness, and the attraction for those who were ill and had friends and family members is just unbelievable.

The relief of suffering, the relief of demon torment was far more interesting to them than Jesus’ theology; so, they came. They even came from the capital of Israel, from Jerusalem. They came from Idumaea. Idumaea would be south and east of Judah, way down in the desert, south of Jerusalem in Judah. This would be populated by historic Edomites, descendents of Esau, as indicated in Genesis 36. And it was also largely populated by Jews, and it was a mix of Jews and Edomites, but that area was generally considered as part of Israel.

So, you had kind of the Jews from Galilee and Judea and Jerusalem, and then you had the mix of Jew and Gentile from Idumaea. Then it says beyond the Jordan, which would be east of the Jordan River, east of Galilee, running north and south, an area called Perea – also mixed Jew and Gentile under the rule of Herod Antipas.

And then the vicinity of Tyre and Sidon, northwest of Galilee, to the Mediterranean shore, the old area of the great seafaring world of the Phoenicians. That would be a strictly Gentile area. So, the Jewish areas, the mixed Jew and Gentile areas, and the Gentile areas also, literally giving up masses of people flooding in and around Capernaum and the region of Galilee, bringing their desperate, demon-possessed, and diseased friends and family, drawn by the fame of Jesus.

It says a great number, end of verse 8, came because they heard of all He was doing, and they came to Him. And again I say, as a footnote, this is a remarkable testimony that indicts the ultimate unbelief and rejection of Jesus Christ by the leaders and the people. No one denies the miracles; they all affirm the miracles. No one denies that He had power over the kingdom of darkness, over the agents of hell. And still they reject the Lord Jesus Christ.

No one tries to dismiss Jesus as a fraud ever. No one, not any of their leaders. His miracles are daily. They are public. They are undeniable testimony and evidence of His deity. Yet, in the end, they will scream for His blood and say, “Crucify Him; Crucify Him!”

And we are reminded again of why false religion is called demon doctrine, because it captures souls and sends them to hell. In fact, the crowd is so threatening, that verse 9 says He told His disciples that a boat should stand ready for Him because of the crowd, so they wouldn't crowd Him.

What do we mean a boat? The diminutive is used in the Greek, a little boat. Just a little boat. If you look at the last word in verse 9 "would not crowd" Him, it's a verb there. It means – it's *thlibōsin*, it means to squeeze. It means to crush. It means to press. Jesus was literally afraid that the crowd would crush Him. They were a mob. They were, in one sense, a desperate mob. And in that sense, they are a wild mob, clamoring to get near Him to be healed.

And the little boat, what would that do? He could get in the little boat and be pushed out into the lake, get away from the shore, and thus away from the people. If you look over at chapter 4, verse 1, "He began to teach again by the sea, and such a very large crowd gathered to Him that He got into a boat, in the sea, and sat down, and the whole crowd was by the sea on the land." Literally, they forced Him into the water.

I like to see the fact that Jesus uses common sense here, even though He's the Son of God and has supernatural power; in spite of His divine power, He does what makes good sense to protect Himself from harm.

So, the popularity of Jesus is unmistakable. The general response is that they – they come after Him. They want the miracles, never the Gospel. And sadly, at the end, He pronounces judgment on them and on their unbelief. And many of them are the very people He had healed and delivered.

The second thing that we see, in the snapshot that Mark gives us here, is not only the popularity of Jesus, but the power of Jesus. His fame is driven by His power, verse 10, "He had healed many with the result that all those who had afflictions pressed around Him in order to touch Him." He had healed many. You remember back in chapter 1, verses 29 to 31, 32 to 34, verse 40 and following; chapter 2, verses 1 to 12. We've gone through the healings and the references to many other healings, a constant display going on all the time.

And remember this, folks, healing is a creative act. Healing is a creative act. He had made everything - John 1:3 – "not anything was made that was not made by Him." He is the Creator, and He created limbs and organs. He created them right before the people. That's why Romans 1:4 says, "He was declared to be the Son of God with power," and it drew everyone. The result, back to verse 10, was that all those who had afflictions pressed around Him in order to touch Him. Afflictions – fascinating. "Afflictions" is the word *mastigas*. It's the Greek word for a scourge, a whip. It's a funny way to refer to your illness, isn't it? You can refer to – we use the word "affliction," it's kind of a benign word in one sense. But the Greek word *mastigas* is a whip, a scourge. It is the very word for scourge or whip. Why would they refer to their illnesses and disabilities as a whip, as if someone is whipping them and scourging them because, in their system of theology, anybody who had such an infirmity was under the judgment of - whom? - God in their theology.

That's why they asked Him about the blind man, "Who sinned? This man or his parents?" People who were under the scourge of God and would view themselves that way, because that's what they were taught, saw themselves as being punished by God. And that gave a reason for people to keep them out of the synagogue, out of the social discourse. They were outcasts; sometimes not only cut

off from the synagogue, cut off from their own family, isolated.

And all these people who saw themselves as under the scourge of God came in their desperation. It says they pressed around Him, *epipiptein* literally means to fall on Him, to crush Him. It's a mob. Why? Because they're all trying to do one thing; they want to touch Him. Why? Because He had healed people with a touch. And the word had spread that when He touched someone, they were healed. Chapter 1, verse 41, "Jesus stretched out His hand and touched Him," and he was healed immediately, and the leprosy left him.

In chapter 6, it's verse 56, whenever He entered villages or cities or countryside, they were laying the sick in the marketplaces, imploring Him that they might just touch the fringe of His cloak. And as many as touched it were being cured. That didn't help them go away. When they touched Him, and when He touched them, they were instantly and totally healed. And so, the crush is on, and His power is explosive as He heals everybody.

The second category of power displayed is in verse 11, "Whenever the unclean spirits saw Him, they would fall down before Him." Let's stop at that point for a moment. Unclean spirits, another term for demons, agents of Satan, falling angels. They were everywhere; they were indwelling people.

We already met a situation like this in Capernaum. Chapter 1, verse 23, there's a man in the synagogue. Jesus is there on Sabbath teaching. Verse 23, "This man is in the synagogue; he has an unclean spirit. He screams." Demons don't want to blow their cover; they don't want to be seen as evil and wretched. They want to hide. They want to hide and do their deadly, damning work. But when Jesus showed up, they went into panic.

It shouldn't surprise you, if you know James 2:19, where it says, "The devils believe and" – what? – "tremble." They're terrified of Him, and their terror caused them to be unable to keep silent. When Jesus comes in the synagogue, the demon screams in terror and says, "What business do we have with each other, Jesus of Nazareth? Have you come to destroy us? Is this the time for our destruction? I know who you are, the Holy One of God." Wow.

"Jesus rebuked him saying, 'Be quiet, come out of him,' and threw the man into convulsions. The unclean spirit screamed again with a loud voice and came out of him.

"They were all amazed and debated among themselves, 'What is this? A new teaching with authority. He commands even the unclean spirits, and they obey Him,' and the news spread everywhere."

This is crucial proof that He has power not only of the natural world, but the supernatural world. If He is the Son of God, He has power over His creation both material and immaterial. If He is the Son of God, He has power over His creation, physical and spiritual. If He is the Son of God, He must have power over Satan and demons, and He did. And He did.

And the demons were terrified in His presence. And what did they do to respond? Whenever He appeared and they saw Him, it says they literally would fall down. The person they were living in would go to the ground. They would literally throw the person down. *Prosepipton* is the verb, and it's used eight times in the New Testament, and every time it means an inferior bowing to a superior. They knew who their Lord was, their Sovereign. So, Mark gives us a picture here of the popularity of

Jesus and the power of Jesus.

And then thirdly, there's a testimony here of the person of Jesus. It comes from this most unlikely source. The unclean spirits not only bow down before Him, but scream, "You are the Son of God." Wow. You know, they know the truth. They believe the truth, and they are terrified.

This is testimony added to the testimony of God the Father, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased," chapter 1, verse 11.

This is testimony added to the testimony of the demon in chapter 1, verse 24, "You are the Son of God." And the demons will go on saying this, chapter 5, verse 7. You have that really bizarre man, with an unclean spirit, living in the tombs, who breaks the chains that are bound upon Him; screams in the tombs, the mountains; gashes himself with stones; "Sees Jesus" - verse 6, chapter 5 - "from a distance, ran up" - and what does he do - "he falls down before Him" - knowing He's his Lord, his Sovereign - "screams, 'What business do we have with You or with each other, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? Don't torment me.'"

Who is this? Who is this Jesus? None other than the Son of God. The Father states it; the demons know it. The disciples struggle with it. They wonder, in chapter 4, "Who is this man?" In chapter 8, they say, "You are the Christ, the Messiah." Eventually they come to believe He's the Son of God. But the nation never does, never confesses Him, and therefore never believes, and therefore never receives eternal life.

No, the critics are wrong; Jesus is no mere man with a small sphere of influence. He is the Son of God, the Messiah, the King, the Sovereign, the Savior. The Old Testament religion was a system that emphasized the distance between God and the sinner. Though God was at work in the nation, He was distant. The arrival of Jesus obliterates the distance, obliterates the separation. The law kept us at a distance and frightened us with smoke and fire and burning. Jesus comes near and welcomes us.

You can't come to God by the law; it'll destroy you. You can only come to God through faith in Christ. That's why Hebrews 10 says, "Draw near in full assurance of faith. All that is written by Mark, all that is written by Matthew, Luke, and John, is to show you who Jesus is, that You might believe and have eternal life.

A closing comment in verse 12, Jesus earnestly warned them not to tell who He was. He had authority over the demons, and He exercised it. He told them never, never to say who He was. He didn't want that. Not all the demons were there that day. Some didn't get the memo as we find out in chapter 5. But He didn't want them affirming who He was, because that's very confusing. Jesus didn't want people to think demons were His allies, demons were His press agents, demons were His representatives. He wants no promotion from the filthy realm of Satan. It reminds me of Paul in Acts 16, when the demon-possessed girl comes running along and says, "These are the servants of the true High - true and Most High God."

Paul says, "Quiet." Silenced the demon. "Don't say anything." And I think that even leaks to His disciples. He doesn't want them spreading around who He is as the Son of God too wildly because his is liable to foment a kind of reaction that He's not ready for. It's not yet time. Because the people

would be prone like they were after they were fed free food to try to force Him to take His messianic place. All in God's good time.

The most important thing was that individual people - seeing the miracles, understanding this - make the conclusion of who He is, accept His message that He came to end Judaism and to bring salvation by faith alone in Him alone, and embrace Him as Lord and Savior.

So, Mark has established His purpose to tell the story of Jesus Christ who is the Son of God - the title of deity that no Jew would ever mistake, and He has proven it. The only thing left is for you to respond to it. Have you received the evidence, embraced the truth concerning Jesus Christ? Do you believe in Him as God's Son and your Redeemer? If you do, you have eternal life.

Father, thank You again for the power of the truth; again a glimpse of Christ as riveting, and compelling, and transforming. And again, we are swept up in wondrous truth.

Lord, what can we say to You about the gift that we've received of faith in Him? We're so grateful that You didn't leave us in the darkness, that You gave us the Word. We're so grateful that You unfolded it to us through teachers and through the Spirit of God so that we saw the evidence, we embraced the evidence, and by Your power we believed the evidence. And we came to the confession, "This is the Christ, the Son of the living God," and that believing that, we've received eternal life.

We rejoice in that, O Lord. We thank You that we don't stand with the darkened souls of those who are captive in false and damning religion. Lord, we can only ask today that You would rescue sinners, that You would free people from the delusions, free them from error, free them from false religion. And may everyone know and understand and believe that Jesus is the Christ and there's no salvation in any other than Him.

END

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