

With Jesus

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[0 : 0 0] here. And we're glad that you're here, not because we're trying to fill seats, but because we're following Jesus together as one community. And as we follow Jesus together, we become convinced that there's no one so good. They don't need God's grace and no one so bad that they can't have it.

And that's why we come back week after week to look at what God has to say to us in his word, because we believe that God has something to say to everyone. He has something to say to people who've been Christians for a short amount of time. He has something to say to people who've been Christians their entire lives. And he has something to say to people who would not consider themselves Christians, people who have doubts and questions and objections to Christianity.

We're continuing together our study in the Gospel of Mark. And you'll remember that the Gospels tell the story of Jesus in his life and his death and his resurrection. And as we study these together, we're asking two questions. First, who is Jesus? And how do we respond to him? We just ended last week a series of five different conflicts that Jesus had with the religious leaders. We most recently looked at following Jesus in the Sabbath, and we looked at the principle that one man has given, that the law reflects the heart or the values of the lawgiver. And so the Sabbath reflects God's desire to protect life. And it's meant to be a day of life. This morning, we're returning back to the theme that we've seen before in the Gospel of Mark, which is Jesus' call on people. And so we're asking these questions, what is the nature of Jesus' call? What does it look like for us if we're called by Jesus?

How does that play out for us in our daily lives? And so I invite you to turn with me to the Gospel of Mark. We're in chapter 3, starting at verse 7. You can turn on your phone. You can turn with me in your worship guide. You can turn in your Bible. No matter where you turn, remember that this is God's word, and God tells us that his word is a lamp to our feet and a light to our path, which means that God has not left us to stumble alone in the dark, but instead he's given us his word to show us the way to go.

And so that's why we read together now, starting at verse 7. Verse 13.

[2 : 5 5] Verse 16.

Verse 20. I invite you to pray with me as we come to this portion of God's Word.

Our Father in heaven, we thank you again that we're your children. And we can call you Father. And that we know as a good and loving Father, you want to instruct us and show us the way to go.

And as a good and loving Father, you're someone we can look to and trust in. We ask that you would use your Word this morning to do that. That we would look to you and that we would trust you. We would know your love for us and we would respond to it in love for you.

We thank you that we don't have to worry about whether we've earned these things or deserve them. But instead, we simply ask them in the mighty name of Jesus Christ. Amen. Amen. In the summer of 1997, I guess really near the end of the summer in Labor Day, we spent the weekend with my grandmother who lived down in North Carolina.

[4 : 44] And that weekend, I learned a new word that I had never heard before. I learned about the paparazzi. And I never heard this word before. I don't hear it very often anymore.

But if you're familiar, you know it refers to photographers whose job it is to capture these pictures of celebrities, typically against their will. Now, if you were around and conscious in 1997, you know exactly where I'm headed.

That Sunday of Labor Day was when Princess Diana died. She was being chased by the paparazzi. She was fleeing from them. She had almost 30 photographers waiting for her outside of the Ritz Paris Hotel.

And so what we learned from the news is that she'd been playing this game of cat and mouse with them. And she'd found a side exit, a back exit to go out from. They had a decoy car to try to pull these photographers away so that she could sneak away.

But her life was one of where she couldn't go anywhere, even when she was on a yacht thinking that she was in privacy. There would be people with telescopes looking in, trying to catch photographs of her.

[5 : 50] And so I think for a while after that, my brothers and I, of course, we processed things. I turned eight that summer, right before that happened. So we processed things through our stuffed animals. And I think for a while, they had trouble with the paparazzi as well.

They were being chased by photographers. But I bring this all up because Jesus here is in a similar situation. He is not being chased by people looking for expensive photographs.

He is being chased by people who are looking for priceless healing. You'll look with me in verse 10. We're told he had healed so many that all who had diseases pressed around him to touch him.

Now, Diana had no privacy, not even in her private yacht. We see the same thing for Jesus as well. Verse 7, he withdrew with his disciples to the sea, and a great crowd followed. And we have this long list of locations to let us know they are coming after Jesus from everywhere.

Diana had a getaway car ready. Jesus has his getaway boat that's been set up. Verse 9, and he told his disciples to have a boat ready for him because of the crowd.

[6 : 56] In other words, things are getting dangerous for Jesus. And if you think it's some sort of exaggeration for me to compare him to Princess Diana running away from the paparazzi, I want you to remember verse 9 and verse 10.

Verse 9 tells us he needed the boat lest they crush him. Jesus here, it seems, is in a life and death situation. There is a possibility that he could be trampled by all these people who are coming to him.

As his fame spreads around the region of Capernaum, they know this is the place where they can come for healing and miracles. Everyone, in other words, wants a piece of Jesus.

And so the point is this, that Jesus' fame is growing and growing. He is becoming greater and greater in this area, and so that the pressures of ministry are becoming more and more on him.

It used to be not as many people knew about Jesus. Look back, remember, to the days when it was just people outside his house in Capernaum. Maybe we would trade this for that. Now, it seemed great at the time.

[7 : 57] Now things are getting so bad. Jesus has to have a getaway boat set up so that he can escape before he is trampled. And so we see here a glimpse of Jesus' humanity.

Yes, he is God, and he is still human. Jesus is not Superman. He still needs to sleep. Jesus still needs to eat. Jesus can't do ministry all by himself.

Jesus actually can't be in two places at the same time. There is a limit to how much healing that he can actually do. And so Jesus, in his humanity, needs help.

And it's with that context that we come here to verse 13, where Jesus goes up on a mountain and calls the disciples and names the apostles. It's no surprise for us that as Jesus' popularity grows, as the pressures of ministry become more and more intense, that it's at this moment that he surrounds himself with the help that he needs.

We see here in Mark the beginning of a new section to the book, a section where he has these 12 apostles who are with him in this part of the gospel. In other words, as Jesus' needs increase and increase, as the pressure grows, as his fame becomes greater and greater, it's at this moment that Jesus chooses his disciples.

[9 : 15] He brings men around him who can help. He surrounds himself with the help that he needs. And so that's why we see in verse 13, he calls to him those he desired, and they came to him.

And he seems here to finally be able to escape. And remember, our question is, what does it look like to be called by Jesus?

And we see our first answer here in verse 13. Now, I'm going to tell you something that I've already told you in the gospel of Mark. I apologize, but I am in no way sorry.

Okay? Bible gives us repetition for a reason, which is to drive these things into our hearts over and over, that we would learn not to hear something once, but multiple times. And so we've seen this before, but verse 13 reminds us, which is that Jesus is the one in control and in charge.

Jesus is the one who comes to call people to him. In other words, you, if you're a Christian, did not choose Jesus. Jesus chose you. You, if you're a Christian, did not call Jesus.

[10 : 25] Jesus called you. You, if you're a Christian, didn't see Jesus. Jesus saw you. And I say this as repetition because we've already seen this pattern over and over in chapter one and chapter two.

Remember chapter one, verse 16, he saw Simon and Andrew, the brother of Simon. Verse 19, he saw James, the son of Zebedee, and John, his brother. Verse 17, he says, follow me. Verse 20, he says, he called them.

Then we move on to chapter two. Chapter two, verse 14, he saw Levi. And then he calls Levi and says, follow me. Jesus is always the one who does the calling.

Mark is not going to let us escape from this reality of discipleship, that no matter how and when and where we heard about Jesus, whether you heard about Jesus as you were watching a YouTube video, whether you heard about him as your mother or your father taught you, as you heard about him maybe when you went to a college fellowship for the first time.

No matter how or when or where it was, ultimately it was Jesus's idea. Jesus is the one who saw you and called you. Remember Luke chapter 19, verse 10, for the son of man came to seek and to save the lost.

[11 : 40] Simon, Andrew, James, John, Levi, they were not seeking Jesus out. Jesus was seeking them out. As I told you before, you did not see Jesus.

Jesus saw you. That is how needy you are. Mark chapter 10, verse 15, Now, I don't know all of your stories.

I don't know how every single one of you came to know about Jesus. I do know this one thing. If you're a Christian, Jesus saw you long before you ever saw him.

Jesus saw you long before you ever saw him. What does it look like to be a disciple?

What does it look like to have Jesus call you? It looks like someone who could not find Jesus on their own. It looks like someone who needed Jesus to come and pick them and choose them and call them.

[12 : 52] Verse 30, he went up on the mountain and called to him those whom he desired, and they came to him. Now, we've been looking at this larger group of disciples here.

Verse 7, we saw a great crowd that followed Jesus. Verse 13, it sounds like he's just calling a large group of people. We get to narrow in on this passage, though, because we see not this just the general call.

We also see a particular call in verse 14 when Jesus calls these apostles. These apostles give us a greater clarity about what Jesus' call looks like. This is a narrower group that Jesus chooses to be with him and to work most closely with him.

And so that's why in verse 14 it says, He appointed the twelve so that they might be with him and he might send them out to preach. Now, I've said this recently, but this morning is our morning of repetitions.

If you've had any sort of power for any length of time, you know the difference between someone who is interested in you for you and someone who's interested in you for what they can get from you.

[14 : 04] The person who's interested in you for you, your presence is enough for them. You're enough for them. They want to be with you, whether you can give them something or not.

The person who's only interested in what they can get from you is very friendly and loves to shake your hand when they need something. They seem far away when they don't need something anymore.

As we look at Jesus here, we cannot miss the purpose that we're given in verse 14. Verse 14 tells us why Jesus called these apostles.

And the first reason is this, so that they might be with him. In other words, Jesus does not call them primarily so that they can do things for him.

He doesn't call them primarily because they've impressed him with their ability or their competence. Jesus doesn't call them because of their wealth. Jesus doesn't call them because he thinks they're going to be great organizational leaders.

[15 : 24] In fact, we barely hear about some of these names throughout the Gospels. No, Jesus saw them first. He calls them to be with him. In other words, brothers and sisters, you are not instrumental to Jesus, which is a way of saying that when Jesus and you come together, you are not a means to an end.

You are not a means to an end. Jesus is interested in you for you. He calls the disciples first and foremost to be with him.

He does the same for us. And if you still don't believe me, remember this. Jesus calls them in chapter 3. Now, he doesn't just call them to be with him.

He does call them to preach and cast out demons. He does not send them to do that until chapter 6. Jesus calls them in chapter 3. He doesn't send them out until chapter 6.

Remember the story. Jesus needs help here. He's surrounded by the crowds. They are pressing in on him. It's so bad that he needs an escape boat.

[16 : 38] The needs are great. And Jesus never forgets his priorities. Jesus doesn't forget the proper order of things. He doesn't forget that it's his people and their presence with him that comes first.

Oh, and by the way, it's not just the religious leaders who are coming at him with opposition anymore. It's not just the crowds who are coming to trample him. We find out at the very end, verses 20 and 21, even his family doesn't understand his mission.

In the midst of those pressures, Jesus does not come first for his apostles to do anything for him. In the midst of those pressures, Jesus does not give in to the temptation that he can instantly and quickly begin handing ministry away.

Because these men, those who are with him, are not a means to an end. The same is true for us. It has been said many times, Jesus calls us to work with him, not for him.

Jesus calls us to work with him, not for him. You are not an employee at Jesus Incorporated. No, you are a son or a daughter of God that Jesus has called to be with him in relationship and community before and more than anything else.

[18 : 06] Jesus always calls us to be with him before he sends us out. Jesus always calls us to be with him before he ever sends us out.

The indicatives come before the imperatives. God's grace comes before obedience. A relationship with Jesus comes before anything else.

And Jesus is simply copying the pattern that he's learned from his father. Remember Mark chapter 1. Jesus had to hear his father's words. This is my beloved son with whom I'm well pleased. Before he ever went out and did any ministry.

Not only was that true, but we saw him retreating in prayer, returning to his father, knowing that he had to minister out of and because of a secure attachment with his heavenly father.

That it was in the relationship and out of the relationship that anything else happened. The same is also true for us first and before anything else is our relationship with Jesus.

[19 : 11] First and before anything else, Jesus calls us to be with him. Now the disciples here had sort of a unique, non-repeatable experience.

So as we're talking about this and Jesus' call for the disciples to be with him, there are certain things about us that are not true of this. So you're not one of the 12 apostles. Jesus has not called you to cast out demons.

I just hate to break it to you, okay? There are, however, things that we have in common. Jesus is still with us.

He's just with us in a different way. Jesus is limited in his humanity, right? That's part of the reason the crowds are pressing in on him. And in his humanity, he is limited in the range and the scope of his presence.

There are only so many people who can be with Jesus. Jesus has all these things to do in his earthly ministry, and he only has 12 people who are close to him, right? So we come again to that mysterious sort of confusing statement in the Gospel of John.

[20 : 16] Jesus says in John 16, verse 7, Now in what sense could it be any good for Jesus to leave earth?

In other words, wouldn't it be better if Jesus was here still with us on this earth? Wouldn't we trade that for the Holy Spirit? Because wouldn't it be great to actually be with Jesus, to walk with him and talk with him, be able to see him, and to ask him whatever questions that we wanted?

No, it would not, and here's why. Jesus would still be a man who could not be in more than one place at one time. Jesus probably would not visit Cheyenne Mountain Presbyterian Church on his schedule, okay?

Thousands, hundreds of thousands of churches in the world. Jesus would be extremely limited in what he'd be able to do. He's extremely limited in his earthly ministry. Geographically, he does not travel very far.

He only has 12 apostles that he works with closely. We today, in other words, have more, in a sense, than the apostles could ever dream about. We have the full canon of Scripture.

[21 : 25] We have all four Gospels giving us, in summary, Jesus' teachings, which they did not have access to in that moment. We have more now than anyone in Mark chapter 3 did. We know more than anyone in Mark chapter 3 knew.

Jesus has sent his Spirit, which can be present with each and every Christian at all times. We're not waiting to see and know whether or not we can have access to Jesus. Think about what's happening here.

This is just in one geographical area, and yet there's too many people. Odds that you're going to be able to get to the front of the crowd to see Jesus are low. Odds that in the millions of Christians around the world, you're going to be one of the 12 that's able to walk with him are extremely low.

No, Jesus is correct when he tells us that it is better that he can go back to heaven and he would send the Spirit to be with us. In other words, you, brothers and sisters, are in a better position than the apostles in Mark chapter 3.

Jesus is still with us today. He is not with us in the exact same way he was with the apostles. He is not here physically with us because he is seated at the right hand of God the Father in the heavenly places.

[22 : 39] And he is still with us right now today. Jesus is with us through his words in Scripture that he's given us, even these words this morning from Mark chapter 3. Jesus is with us by his Spirit as the Spirit renews us and changes our lives and our hearts that we would be able to love what is good more and more and hate what is evil more and more.

Jesus is with us physically in what we call the body of Christ for a reason because as we're here in the church with one another, we experience each other as Jesus' hands and feet.

Jesus is with us as he gives us the full teaching that the apostles could only dream about. We also have Jesus with us.

Part of the reason we come here to worship, to be with one another, is not that we would have some religious experience or enter some type of community center, but because we believe that Jesus is here with us by his Spirit, leading us in worship as we come to speak to him and hear from him.

When I give the call to worship at the beginning of the service, it is ultimately not me speaking to you, but Jesus calling his people to come together into his presence that we would know him more.

[23 : 55] In other words, Jesus still calls his followers today, first and foremost, to be with him. That is true of you right now.

Jesus is with his people. We are actually following Jesus together as one community. That's what we're doing right now.

We are actually with Jesus. And so who is Jesus? Jesus is the one who sees us and calls us.

Jesus is the one who chooses us first and foremost before anything else, to be with him. How do we respond to him?

We say, yes, we choose to be with him as well. We follow him as individuals, as we study God's words to us, as we have community with him through prayer.

[25 : 05] We are with him together as one community, as we do those same things corporately as a group. We are with him as you all gather as smaller groups throughout the week to hear Jesus' words together.

He is with you by his Holy Spirit, calling to mind the things that he has taught. He's with you by his Holy Spirit, changing your heart so that you would love what is good more and more, that you would love God and you would love others.

We respond to him by coming together each and every Sunday that we could be part of the body of Christ, listening to and hearing God's word, praising him with our voices, knowing that he's using that by his presence to make us look more and more like Jesus.

That is how we respond to him. We see that he calls us to be with him, and so we show up. We are with him as well.

Hebrews 2, verse 11, teaching us about Jesus, says this, For he who sanctifies and those who are sanctified all have one source. That is why he is not ashamed to call them brothers.

[26 : 19] That is why he's not ashamed to call them brothers. Brothers here is an inclusive term, meaning it's including everyone in the church, men and women. We are Jesus' siblings.

We are not with him in the sense that we live down the street and we knock on Jesus' door sometimes to see if he'll come out to play. We are with him in the sense that we're his brothers and sisters.

He has made us members of his family. And as we know, he's made us members of his family through adoption. He has brought us in, and he has paid that price by his death on the cross.

That when Jesus died, taking the penalty for sin that we deserved, when he lived the perfect life that we should have lived, when he rose again from the dead and destroyed death forever, he paid the price for us to be his brothers and sisters.

That he would be with us not just now. He would be with us forever. This past summer, I bought a new bike, and it's a type of bike that I haven't had before.

[27 : 38] It's called a gravel bike. And if you're wondering what that is, you're in good company. I didn't know what it was until this year. But a gravel bike's basically in between a road bike and a mountain bike. So it can do more than a road bike can do.

It can go off pavement, which road bikes should never be doing. It can go on gravel. That's why it's called a gravel bike. It can't do as much as a mountain bike can, so it doesn't have the suspension. So basically, think of it as a road bike, but just with much thicker, better tires.

And some of the components are stronger to take a beating on the trails. So I bought this because my friend told me, if you buy this, I'll go gravel biking with you. So I said, that sounds like a good deal. I'll be with you. Now, as you can imagine, with a gravel bike, it gets a lot dirtier than a road bike because you're riding it on gravel.

There's all kinds of dirt being kicked up. And so it's important, like it would be with every bike, that you need to wash it on a regular basis. So I hang mine up on, I put the bike rack on my car, and I put the bike on that so it's out in my driveway so I can spray it down.

And when I do this, there are some neighborhood kids who decide that this is my call, my cry for help. Clearly, I'm not competent to wash the bike on my own.

[28 : 47] And so it's essential that those who are toddlers and in early elementary school should come and help with the washing of the bike. Which, you know, we've got to roll with it, right?

So they're there. They're there to help out with the whole process. So I have to find things, you know, that kind of fit with their skill set. So I've decided they're excellent at hose spraying. So I let them point the hose and spray it at the bike.

It gets a little bit more complicated when it gets to cleaning the chain. So I have a lot more supervision in that situation. There's less that they can get involved in. It gets kind of interesting when we get to drying the bike because they want to use the paper towels to dry the treads on the tires, which is unnecessary.

You just need to dry the frame. But they're there. They're there to help out, right? Do I need these kids to come help me?

No. I can actually do it a lot more quicker and more efficiently myself. But here we are, right? Do I want something out of them? Are they instrumental to me?

[29 : 51] Are they a means to an end? No. It would actually be a lot easier if they'd go home. But they're there because they want in on the action.

They want to be with me. And so I make room for them. It's exciting, right? Here's someone who's an adult, and he's washing a bike. In fact, one of these kids was talking to me about how we could go biking together in the neighborhood, and I had to break it to him.

That's just not the cards for us. So I think he understood. It took him, you know, it's a sad day. But I accommodate the process to them, right?

I let them join in. There's one who's a toddler. He can't do anything, but he is allowed to spray the hose. Whether it hits the bike or not, that's another question. But they get to be with me in the process.

They are with me, learning and growing. They are with me, excited to know that they get to be a part of cleaning the bike. Brothers and sisters, the same is true for us.

[30 : 57] Jesus calls us not because he needs anything from us. Jesus calls us not because we are a means to an end. Jesus calls us to be with him.

And we join him in the process. We're like toddlers who only know how to spray a hose and think sometimes it's important to dry the tires.

And Jesus invites us to join him. Jesus has called us. We run to be with him. Let's pray. Our Father in heaven, we thank you for your word, which humbles us and encourages us.

We thank you that you don't need us and you also use us. We thank you that we're not cogs in the system of the kingdom. We're not employees of Kingdom Incorporated, but instead we are your sons and your daughters.

We ask that you would drive that deep into our hearts, that we would know that first and foremost, that nothing we do comes out of anything except your grace. We thank you that that's the reason that we can pray to you with confidence that you hear us and that you're with us.

[32 : 11] And so we ask these things in Jesus' name. Amen.