

OpenTheo

Mark 3:1 - 3:19



Gospel of Mark - Steve Gregg

In this segment, Steve Gregg delves into Mark 3:1 - 3:19, focusing on the controversies surrounding the Sabbath and the selection of Jesus' apostles. He explains how Jesus healed a man with a withered hand on the Sabbath, an action that irked the religious leaders of his time. Steve also explores how Jesus chose his twelve apostles, including Judas, despite their lack of theological education or training. The apostles were selected and trained to become the face of Jesus' movement, with a special relationship with him, and the power to perform signs and wonders to confirm their message.

Transcript

This morning we're turning to the Gospel of Mark, and the last time we looked at Mark, we finished Chapter 2. There was, at the end of Chapter 2, a controversy over the Sabbath. The Sabbath was a very controversial issue in the ministry of Jesus because it was central to the Jewish conception of Israel's identity with God. In Exodus Chapter 31, God mentioned to Israel that keeping the Sabbath was the sign of the covenant that he had made with them as a nation at Mount Sinai.

And it was that covenant at Mount Sinai that identified Israel as a special people. It's not for the covenant. They would be just any other people.

But, of course, Israel, over the centuries before Christ, had reason to come see themselves as God's chosen people based on that covenant that he'd made. And they were jealous over the distinctives that marked them out as the covenant people. There were two such distinctives.

One was circumcision, and the other was Sabbath-keeping. Now, Jesus was circumcised as a baby, as we read in Luke's Gospel in Chapter 1 or 2, but he had nothing to say about that. But he did have something to say about his Sabbath-keeping, and he was continually doing things on the Sabbath which tended to offend many of the religious Jews.

Now, the interesting thing is that he did it on purpose. Jesus very well knew how the Jews felt about Sabbath-keeping. He was raised Jewish.

He was Jewish. He had been taught from childhood, you do no work of any kind on the Sabbath. But when he went into public ministry, he just kind of ignored that.

He did everything the same on the Sabbath as any other day of the week. If he would heal on a different day of the week, he'd heal on the Sabbath. If he would allow his disciples to pick grain on some other day of the week, he'd let them do it on the Sabbath, too.

He didn't treat the Sabbath any differently than any other day. And this was a glaring offense to the Jews, and he, of course, knew it would be. In John 5, we know that they criticized him because he healed the man at the Pool of Bethesda on the Sabbath day.

And when they criticized Jesus for that, he said, well, my father works every day, and so I work every day. Why not? I'm doing my father's work. The son doesn't know how to do work by himself.

He just observes what the father does, and he does the same thing the father does. My father works every day. I work every day.

I'm working on his work week. And so it's clear that Jesus, you know, he could have been more discreet if he wanted to heal on the Sabbath. He could have said to the sick person, listen, see me after the service.

We're going to an afterglow meeting back there where the scribes and the Pharisees won't see us. I'll heal you. But Jesus did these things right in front of people on purpose.

Now, at the end of chapter two, there had been this controversy because his disciples have been picking and eating grain on the Sabbath as they walk through the grain field. He defended them by saying that the Sabbath was made for man. Man was not made for the Sabbath.

That is to say, the needs of man preempt the demands of the Sabbath. If the Sabbath is used as some kind of a club to afflict man when he has an actual need, but he's not allowed to meet his needs because it's the Sabbath. Suddenly, the Sabbath has become oppressive to mankind as if the Sabbath takes precedence over man's needs.

He said it does not. God didn't make man so that there'd be somebody to keep the Sabbath as if the Sabbath was the thing God cared most about. And man was secondary.

Jesus said, no, the Sabbath is made for man's benefit, not vice versa. And then, of course, he said at the end of chapter two, the Son of Man is Lord also of the Sabbath, meaning, I believe he means that the Son of Man is the Lord of every day and therefore the disciples of Jesus having only one duty, and that is the will of their Lord. Then they should do the will of their Lord any day of the week, no matter what day it is.

And that's no different on the Sabbath than any other day. Now, in chapter three, there's another Sabbath controversy and there will be others. But Mark has linked these together.

They actually happened at least a week apart from each other. I believe it's Matthew's gospel. It tells us this is the following Sabbath.

But in chapter three, verse one, it says he entered the synagogue again and a man was there who had a withered hand and they watched Jesus closely, whether he would heal him on the Sabbath so that they might accuse him. Now, they ordinarily would not watch a rabbi to see if he's going to heal on the Sabbath for two reasons. One, most rabbis couldn't heal.

And secondly, most rabbis, if they could heal, wouldn't do it on the Sabbath. There was a tradition, a Talmudic tradition, as it became, that a physician whose job it was to cure people of sickness could not do so on the Sabbath day. With the exception of those cases where a person's life is in danger, a person is on the verge of death and they need treatment now.

If it happened to be a Sabbath day, they could heal him. But if they could linger and if they could be expected to live to the next day, then the physician was required to wait till the Sabbath was over. That's, of course, why in after Jesus cast the demon out in the synagogue in Capernaum on an earlier Sabbath and in the earlier story in chapter one, the people waited till sundown to bring all their sick to Jesus at the house of Peter's mother-in-law, because, well, because it was the end of the Sabbath at sundown.

The Sabbath ended, and so they didn't bring their sick to Jesus while it was the Sabbath, assuming that he would not heal on the Sabbath. Of course, they didn't know Jesus very well. He would have healed on the Sabbath, too, but they didn't bring the sick to him until the Sabbath ended, because that was the understood rule.

If you can heal people, well, you'll heal them on some other day other than the Sabbath day. That's the idea. Now, it says they watched Jesus to see if he would heal on the Sabbath.

Why would they wonder about that? Well, already he had demonstrated that he did not share their scruples about Sabbath keeping. And so they also knew that he had a habit of healing people when they were there and needy. Now, a man with a withered hand has a lifetime handicap, but he's not going to die that day from that condition anyway.

It's not a life threatening situation. Obviously, if you're going to heal a man like that, you could wait till the next day. And Jesus could have done so, too.

He could have gone up to the man, said, Listen, I'll be in town tomorrow or even after sundown tonight. Why don't you come over to my place? I'll heal you from that. But he

didn't.

And he did heal this man, even in the context of knowing that his enemies were there just to accuse him if he would do so. That is, he knew they were going to find fault with him and he did it anyway. And it says, Then he said to the man who had the withered hand, step forward.

Now, he was not oblivious to the thinking of the scribes and so forth who were looking to accuse him. Because he spoke to them. The man stands up and before Jesus addresses the man or he'll and he looks at the people that are wanting to accuse him.

And he said to them, Is it lawful? On the Sabbath to do good or to do evil, to save life or to kill? But they kept silent. Or what could they say? He this is what we call the horns of a dilemma in rhetoric, in logic, to have your opponent on the horns of the dilemma. You give him two options.

Now, you could, of course, be guilty of using a false dichotomy, which is to say you give them two choices as if they are the only two choices. And really, there are other choices in between, but you're only mentioning two. That's a false dichotomy in logic.

But but the horns of the dilemma are where there really are only two options. And your opponent doesn't really want to admit either of them. On another occasion, Jesus did this with them when they came to Jesus said, By what authority to do these things? This happened much later in the passion week.

They said, Well, let me ask you a question. John's baptism. Was that from God or from man? What had to be only one of those are the only two options.

But he had them then on the horns of the dilemma, because if they said it was from God, then Jesus said, Well, then why did you people reject him if he was from God? And if they said he was from man, that would not be acceptable to the crowds. They didn't want to say that they thought he's from man. So they said, We can't answer you.

And then he said, Well, then I won't answer you either. If you're not going to be honest with me, I'm not going to bother with you. But you see, sometimes that's an effective and legitimate way of showing an opponent that they are mistaken.

To show that, well, there's this option and there's this option. Which one do you approve of? They're the only two that exist. And here he does the same thing.

He knows they want to find fault with him because he's going to heal this man. Jesus already knows he's going to heal a man and he already knows they want to find fault. So he addresses them first.

Let me ask you something. What is lawful to do on the Sabbath? Now, you see, if they

would say, Well, it's lawful to do X, then whatever X is, they couldn't find fault with him if he did it because they said it was lawful to do it on the Sabbath. So he said, Is it lawful to do good or to do evil? Now, they might say this is a false dichotomy because there are some things that are neither good nor evil, but neutral.

But there are some things that are good and some things that are evil. And by all accounts, healing a man who is disabled is a good thing, not an evil thing. Right.

And so he's saying to them, Which thing would you approve of being done on the Sabbath? A good thing or a bad thing? Now, of course, the option he's leaving out is they have nothing. We don't approve doing anything on the Sabbath. And yet they do do things.

They put on their clothes in the morning on the Sabbath. They go to synagogue on the Sabbath. There are things you can do.

Those are good things. It's much better to put on your clothes before you go outside than not to do so. And it's good to go to the synagogue on the Sabbath.

So they would have to approve of doing good things on the Sabbath. And yet who could deny that healing a man is a good thing? So he gives them two options that they don't like either, because, of course, they're not going to say, Well, since we don't want to tell him it's lawful to do good on the Sabbath, because that will give him permission to do the thing we're trying to find fault with him doing. Then the other option is to say it's lawful to do bad on the Sabbath.

And who's going to say that? Really, they can't say, Oh, it's lawful to do evil. Of course not. So they're stuck.

Just like when he said, Well, did baptism with John, is that from man or from God? They were stuck because neither answer and one answer had to be correct, but neither answer made them look right. And on that other occasion, we can't answer you. Here's the same thing.

They didn't answer him. They kept silent. They recognized that no answer would work for them.

And what he had done this way is to show that they were thinking wrongly. If you can't say that it's right to do good on the Sabbath, then there must be something wrong with your theology. And so he was angry at them.

This is the only time in the Bible that speaks of Jesus being angry, except in the book of Revelation. The book of Revelation talks about the wrath of the Lamb, which is Jesus. But in the Gospels, we never read that Jesus is angry, except here.

So when he looked around upon them with anger, being grieved by the hardness of their hearts, he said to the man, Stretch out your hand. And he stretched it out and his hand was restored as whole as the other. Now, about the anger issue, you might say, Well, why didn't Jesus show anger on other occasions? What about when he drove the money changers out of the temple? I didn't say he was never angry.

I'm saying the Bible never mentions that he was angry. Elsewhere than here, I believe he was angry when he drove the money changes out of the temple, but it doesn't use the word doesn't say Jesus was angry and therefore he did this. It seems like he exhibited what we would recognize as angry behavior.

And so I'm willing to believe that this is not the only time he's angry. But what I'm saying is, if not for this particular statement in Mark's gospel, we would have no direct statement in the Gospels of Jesus ever specifically being angry. One could argue, perhaps, that his driving the money changes out of the temple was not anger, but something else that motivated him.

Since the Bible doesn't tell us what his attitude was, it only tells us what he did. But this tells us that he was angry and he didn't do anything violent like he did when he drove the money changes out. He just was angry inside.

He just felt anger and grief over the hardness of their hearts. You see, what was he angry about? And when is it OK to be angry? You know, in Ephesians chapter four, Paul talks about anger and one could get the impression, at least from one thing that Paul says that anger is always a sin. Because in Ephesians 4:31, Paul says, let all bitterness, wrath, anger, clamor and evil speaking be put away from you with all malice.

These are things that must be put away, including anger, all anger. So one gets the impression we should have a zero tolerance for anger in our lives. But a few verses earlier in Ephesians 4, verse 26, Paul says, be angry and do not sin.

Do not let the sun go down on your wrath. Now, the angry and do not sin is actually a quotation from Psalm 4:4. That's not Paul's original instructions, but he is quoting it as approvingly in Psalm 4:4. It says, be angry and do not sin. Paul quotes that as if there is a place for being angry, but not sinful.

There must be some kind of being angry that isn't sinful. If you can be angry and not sin, now, when does anger become? Simple. Well, Paul, in commenting on this verse in the Psalms, says, Do not let the sun go down on your wrath.

Apparently, Paul recognizes that anger is an appropriate, maybe maybe unavoidable emotion in certain circumstances. But you must not let it remain. You know, emotions are not sins, but emotions can lead to sin.

Fear is an emotion. And yet fear is something that you can't entirely control by the will. If

a grizzly bear was seen walking around outside these windows, we saw the door was open and it's sniffing around and looks like it may be coming in here.

Suddenly, many of us would be alarmed. That'd be natural. That'd be that's a survival instinct.

God even made animals to feel such fear. That can't be a sin of animals. Feel it because animals aren't sinners.

Fear is something that is part of the survival instinct that God has given animals and man. And it's frankly, to fear certain things is simply wisdom. It says in the Proverbs, the wise man foresees the evil and hides himself.

There's a sense in which fear is intended to motivate you to do wise things and not do foolish things. And the same thing is true of anger. Anger is an emotion that has a use.

Also, there are things that would be sin. It would be a sin to be complacent about. When you hear about injustice, when you hear blasphemies, when you hear about people victimizing other people, if that doesn't make you angry, then there's something wrong with you because you should never be complacent about such things.

God isn't. Jesus isn't. You see, there's a place for anger and there's a place for fear.

There's a place for many emotions that you don't want to really give the reign over your life over to. Because emotions themselves are not sin, but they are motivators and they can motivate you to sin or to do what's right. For example, the same fear that would make you wisely hide from a grizzly bear that's sniffing around here.

That same emotion of anger might cause you to run away from your duty to protect your children or to protect some person from harm. If somebody's drowning out in the water and they're calling for you to help them and you run away because you're afraid that you'll drown. Rather than doing something, fear can lead you to do cowardly things that you should not do.

Anger can lead you to do evil things to anger can lead you to want to retaliate against somebody when you shouldn't or strike out violently at someone when you shouldn't. The point here is that I'm using fear and anger because both of them are treated in the Bible as if they are troublesome. There's probably no command in scripture given more often than do not fear.

Every time an angel appeared, they said, do not fear. And there's many times about this. Don't fear.

In fact, somebody said there's 365 times in the Bible that says, do not fear once for every day of the year. And I guess that's true. I've never counted them, but that's a very

common command.

Do not fear. And yet the wise man sees danger and is moved by fear. It says that by faith, Noah being warned of things not yet seen, moved by fear, built an ark to the preserving of his household.

That's good. He should fear the flood. It's a dangerous thing.

He can do something about it. And if fear causes you to compromise your faith to deny Christ or to fall short of doing your duty, then fear leads to sin. But if fear leads you to do something wise and good, then fear has its good result.

Fear itself is neutral. It's what it induces you to do that is either sinful or right. Same thing with anger.

It's an emotion that you have. You don't ask for it. It just comes.

It should come. Some things should not be tolerable to you. There are some things that you should think are absolutely intolerable.

They make your blood boil. But Paul says, OK, be angry, but don't sin. Don't let your anger move you to do something that would be wrong to do.

Furthermore, don't even let it linger. You can't help it if you feel a sudden urge of fear or anger in certain situations. Certain things in our environment justly stimulate those emotions.

But once they are there, don't let them continue to have an effect on your behavior. Don't even don't even let the sun go down. You get get over it.

Probably don't let the sun go down. Your wrath means go and get it right with the person that you're angry at, because Jesus always taught that that should be done. But the point here is that Paul does say, be angry and don't sin.

Don't let the sun go down in Iraq. And then in verse thirty one, he says, let all bitterness, wrath, anger and clamor be put away. That is before sundown.

It's not wrong always to have anger and wrath. Jesus himself and God have wrath, but put it away once you get angry, deal with it in a righteous way. And then put it behind you.

Don't let the sun go down on it. And then you may be angry and end up not sinning. But you should always be somewhat angry towards sin, not obviously toward the person who is sinning against you.

You should be forgiving for the person against you. These people were not technically

sinning against Jesus. His anger was not that they were looking to accuse him.

I mean, think about when when they not only accused of a crucified. He said, Father, forgive them. They don't know what they do.

Jesus is very forgiving of those who hurt him and who judged him wrongly and so forth. Yeah, they were actually wanting to accuse him, but that's not what was bothering him. What was bothering him was that they cared more about their religious rituals.

Then they cared about this man who had spent his whole life handicapped and that this man had the opportunity to be helped for the first time in his life and they knew it. They knew Jesus could heal this guy. And that's an interesting thing, too.

Sitting there in criticism of a man that you know has the power to heal a withered hand. You know, somehow the penny is not dropping there. You're not you're not putting it together right.

If you know he can heal that guy and you still want to stand in criticism of him. You know, what's that all about? I mean, you obviously recognize the man is God. He's either from God or from the devil, but his works are not the works of the devil.

And yet you find that if he is doing the works of God, there are works that you don't want God to be doing on the Sabbath day. Even though it's going to change this man's life and his family's life forever. Well, the Sabbath is more important than man to these people.

That's what made Jesus angry. I think is that these people had gotten God wrong and represented God wrong and God's priorities. These people had gotten place where they were willing to judge and condemn people.

Because of ceremonial issues that God had ordained the ceremonies that God didn't put the priority of the ceremony over the over the needs of man, that is how religion oppresses people. And Jesus, I think, was angry at what had happened to religion, what had happened to the Sabbath, what had happened to the religious instincts and teachings of the Jewish people and of these people who were there, who would rather see this man go home crippled than have their Sabbath seem to be violated. And so he was also no doubt angry that they wouldn't answer him.

They couldn't answer him without showing the fault of their own thinking when he said, is it right to do? Is it is it lawful to do good or do evil on the Sabbath? Well, they wouldn't answer. Why not? Because they're not being honest. They should have said to shame.

Good point. We see our error now, but they and even if they did see their error, they wouldn't admit it. They just were they remain silent because they did not want to give in to the truth.

That he had just shown them that no doubt made him angry as well. And it says he was he looked around at them with anger, being grieved at their hardness of heart. He was sad, grieved, made him angry that religious leaders, the ones who are the leaders of God's people and teaching God's peasant Jews who didn't know thing one about the law, except what the religious leaders taught him, that they were teaching this false view of God, of God's priorities and so forth.

They were presenting to the people a religious notion of God rather than of God as a father of God, as a person who cares about his people. And so he said to the man, stretch out your hand and he stretched it out and his hand was restored as whole as the other. Now, when Jesus commanded him, stretch out your hand, he was told to do something that he couldn't do.

If the man could stretch out his hand, he would have done it long before his hand was withered, his his arm was atrophied, it was paralyzed or something. And the man did not have power to stretch his hand out. But Jesus commanded him to do it.

It sounds like an unfair command. It's not like Jesus is giving a command to do something that man simply can't do. It may seem that some of the commands of Christ he gives us are things that we just can't do that.

Love your enemies. I can't do that. Turn the other cheek.

I can't do that. Put away all anger. I can't do that.

Forgive everybody. I can't do that. I just can't do that.

That's an unfair thing to ask. You don't know what I've been through. You don't know how I'm tormented day by day by these people.

You don't know the injustice I've suffered. Don't tell me to forgive them. I can't.

Well, this man couldn't stretch his arm out either, but Jesus told him to do it. But, you know, whenever Jesus tells someone to do something, suddenly they can, because remember when the earth was formless and void and darkness was upon the face of the deep and God said, let there be light. Well, who's he talking to? He's talking to the creation.

Come to light. Let light be here. I mean, the creation is that what are you talking about? We don't know how we can't produce any light.

This is darkness here. We don't have the ability to create light. We're just elements.

But you see, if he commands it, it can happen. His word creates the reality that he commands. There's something about God's commands are different than the commands of anyone else, because God's creative fiat, his word, which is Christ, has not only the

power to communicate, but to effect the desired result.

And that's why when Peter wanted to walk on the water, he saw Jesus walking on the water and he was afraid and Jesus said, don't be afraid. It's not. And he said, well, Lord, if it's you, you command me to walk on the water.

Why didn't Peter just say, Lord, I'm coming. I want to be with you. You're walking.

I'm going to come walk on the water to you. Peter knew he couldn't do that. People can't walk on water.

That's silly to think he could walk on water. Men can't do that. That's impossible.

But if Jesus commands me, then I can. He said, Lord, you tell me to come there and I will, because Peter knew that a command from Christ is a command from God and God's word. When he gives the order, it comes with all the necessary assistance and power to fulfill it.

It only requires a commitment to obey on the part and a faith. In that power of that command. And so this man who'd never been able to stretch his hand out, Jesus gives what seems like a really unfair order to them.

Stretch your hand out. The man does it. He did it because he had faith.

He knew that the command of Christ could be obeyed, not by human power. Certainly he didn't heal himself. Jesus healed him.

The command healed him. And that's why we are so privileged to have the commands of Christ given to us. The commands that command us to live a different quality of life than we've ever lived or than anyone else can live or than we ourselves can live, except by walking in the spirit.

It's when we walk in the spirit that we don't fulfill the desires of the flesh and that's supernatural life. The saddest thing is that Christians often, you know, they see the commands of Christ and they just take them just like they're the commands of some other person. They're just orders.

They're just obligations. They don't receive them by faith. They don't receive them as the living word of God and recognize that the very command is almost in itself a promise.

If Jesus loves your enemies, it's almost in itself a promise. You can do this if you'll obey me. If you respond to my word and faith, it'll happen.

It won't happen otherwise. And it wouldn't happen if I didn't command you to because you couldn't do it. But anyone else could command you to do it and it just be an

unreasonable request.

It would just be an obligation and nothing more. But the words of Christ are different because they are the words of God. And so the man was healed and then the Pharisees went out and immediately plotted with the Herodians against him, how they might destroy him.

Jesus is the great uniter of people who have very little in common. The Pharisees despised the Roman overlords in Israel. The Herodians were collaborators with the Romans.

The Herodians were those people, Jewish people who had gone to work for Herod. Now, Herod was the the the king. This is King Herod Antipas up in Galilee.

He is the ruler, the son of Herod the Great, whose authority derived from Rome. Herod the Great, his father, had been appointed by the Roman emperors to be the king of the Jews. And when Herod died, his sons divided up parts of his former empire and they had authority under the appointment of Rome.

So the Herodians, they were they were Jews attached to his household. They were his stewards, his servants, his even maybe staff members. Herodian, like the word Christian, it's formed the same way, isn't it? You add I am at the end of the word Herod or Christ.

Herodians were those who belonged to Herod, the servants of Herod. Of course, Christians are those who are. They belong to Christ.

They're the servants of Christ. By the way, the term Christian was not coined by Christians. Apparently, it was apparently it was a coin by the Gentiles in Antioch to apply to the Christians.

But regardless, you see, Herodians were to Herod what Christians are to Christ. And therefore, the Herodians were collaborators with the Roman government. The Pharisees were deeply opposed to the Roman government.

But when it came to being against Jesus, these guys were willing to let their differences be put aside because they both were interested in getting rid of Jesus for whatever reasons. They had their own reasons. We see a similar situation.

Once Herod, the same Herod Antipas, had had Jesus on trial and wanted to see a miracle. But Jesus wouldn't give a miracle. This is what Luke records.

And Herod sent him back to Pilate. And it says both Herod and Pilate, of course, in their courts, condemned Jesus. And it actually tells us in the scripture that before that time, Herod and Pilate hated each other.

But from this time on, they were friends. They had something in common, the most

important thing in common. They both condemned Jesus.

Really, Jesus is the most important issue in any in any life. What you do about Jesus, do you follow him or do you condemn him? If you condemn him, then you're one with all others who condemn even if they have other political views than yours. If you've had other quarrels with them, the fact that Jesus stands as the great.

Divider in a way of humanity. When Polycarp, the church leader in Smyrna, was condemned by the Romans to death, the Jews who hated the Romans joined with the Romans and helped, it says in the in the martyrdom of Polycarp, one of the ancient church documents says that the Jews went and they gathered the sticks to burn him. And they they volunteered to help the Romans to get rid of this Christian leader.

Now, the Jews hated the Romans. But when it came to get rid of Christians, that's something they could all agree on. They were all against Christ.

And likewise, those who are for Christ put away their differences because we find that Levi, the tax collector, a collaborator with the Roman government and Simon, the zealot of a violent revolutionary against the Roman government. Both became disciples and more than that, Jews and Gentiles eventually became one. The middle wall of partition of hostility between them is taken away in Christ so that in Christ there's no Jew or Gentile so that Christ unites all people who are favorable toward him into one, regardless of their other differences.

And he unites all people who are against him into one, regardless of their differences. Christ is a great polarizer. People can have all kinds of different things.

They have quarrels with each other about until Jesus walked into the picture when he walked in. Suddenly, everyone polarizes into two camps. And so we see the Pharisees and the Herodians.

They joined forces against him, both interested in plotting to destroy him. Verse seven, but Jesus withdrew with his disciples to the sea and a great multitude from Galilee followed him and from Judea and Jerusalem and Idumea. Now, Idumea was the area southeast of Judah, which had been the Edomite capital.

Remember, I told you the Edomites had been conquered and incorporated sort of into Israel in the time of the Maccabees in the second century BC. And instead of Edomites, they were called Idumeans. And Herod was an Idumean.

And Idumea was the region which had been once the Edomite kingdom. And so there were Jews from that area, maybe Idumeans also from Idumea, who were following Jesus and those from Tyre and Sidon. Now, Tyre and Sidon are Phoenician pagan cities.

I don't know that, however, we're supposed to see this as Gentiles following Jesus at this

point. There were Jews, of course, of the Diaspora everywhere, including in these cities. And my impression is that the people coming to hear Jesus at this point were still primarily Jewish people, but from these various geographical areas.

And so there's a great multitude came when they heard at the end of verse eight, how many things he was doing. They came to him. That's the problem.

That's why Jesus always told people, don't tell anyone when he healed someone or did something because people, they had a boy boring life. And even if you had a rather interesting life to hear of someone who raises the dead or who cast out demons, who heals withered hands at the command or raises up paralytics. That's going to be more interesting than most of the stuff of your day.

You're going to find someone to watch the kids and you're going to bring them in tow and you're going to go out and hear him because you don't want to miss out on this. Nothing like this happens very often in this town or in this world. And so people were fascinated by the miraculous and the sensational.

And they were drawn in great crowds. But that wasn't the kind of people Jesus was wanting to draw. I think it's significant that thousands of people in Galilee followed Jesus.

But at the end of his life, there were only 120 people in the upper room who were committed because lots of people came who were not committed to him. They were just curious. And Jesus was not really interested in having a curious crowd.

He wanted a committed band of disciples, of followers. It's interesting, it says in verse nine, he told his disciples that a small boat should be kept ready for him because of the multitude, lest they should crush him. Now, I don't know that I don't know that this is a hyperbole.

You can get trampled in a crowd, an excited mob whenever there are riots and things like that. It seems like you hear about so a certain number of people got trampled and crushed in the crowd because the people, a few ranks behind those who are in front of them, they can't see what's going on. They're trying to press in and that pushes the person from him, which is the first time.

Finally, the people who write up next to Jesus, a crowd and then and push him. And if there's enough force of people coming, trying to get close, I mean, it could literally squeeze the breath out of it. You can die in a crowd.

I mean, it's interesting to think that Jesus, the way it's worded, sounds like was perhaps in danger of being crushed by the crowds. His life was even in danger. So he told the disciples, keep a boat ready because he had a policy he had already used previously of occasionally preaching from a boat.

It was a great idea. I mean, it's a really smart idea, because if he just went a few yards offshore in the boat where it's too deep for the people to stand right up next to him, then there could be any number of crowds on the shore and they and they just there'd be a barrier. They couldn't crush him, and that distance would mean his voice could carry to further.

I mean, if there's people right in front of your face, their heads are going to catch all the volume of your voice and people back there won't be able to hear you. But the water actually carries like a natural amphitheater, the sound across. It worked out really well for him, and he did it on a number of occasions here.

We don't read that he actually preached from the boat on this occasion, but he told the disciples, keep one ready just in case we need it. For he healed many so that as many as had afflictions pressed about him and to touch him. And the unclean spirits, whenever they saw him, fell down before him and cried out, saying, You're the son of God, but he sternly warned them that they should not make him known.

At this point, Jesus decided to or was led to turn a certain corner in his ministry. At this point, he'd been the only preacher in the kingdom. There were lots of disciples, perhaps scores or hundreds of disciples, people who were following him around wherever he went, who really believed in him, who really, you know, wanted to be part of what he was doing.

They weren't just there to watch the spectacle of the healings. They believed he was the Messiah. They wanted to be part of his movement.

But up to this point, he was the only leader. He was the only person who had who had any kind of supervisory roles over this growing movement. And so at this point, he decides it's time to choose some lieutenants, some subordinates who will then be leaders over the crowds and over the congregation eventually.

So we find him picking the twelve at this point, and it does represent a certain departure. He is the Messiah. He is the rabbi.

He is the teacher everyone wants to hear. He's the leader, but now he's delegating some leadership to others. And, you know, this eventually happens when a movement grows, a lot of churches have been started, perhaps by one preacher, one man who had some anointing and drew a crowd that eventually he couldn't manage everything.

You know, maybe he was a good preacher, but administrating the whole movement became unwieldy. And so he had to delegate authority. Once once the movement gets to a place where the leader has to delegate authority to others, it means the movement's growing a little bit beyond the manageable point for one leader to handle.

And, of course, Jesus knew also what the disciples did not. And that is that he was not

going to be there long term himself. He would someday die.

He'd someday rise from the dead and go to heaven. And there and his movement would have to continue. And therefore, he had to have qualified men to take over when he would be gone.

And so he begins to make arrangements for that. Now, he makes a selection of, as it turns out, 12 men. In verse 13, he went up on the mountain and called to him those he himself wanted and they came to him.

Then he appointed 12 that they might be with him, that he might send them out to preach and to have power to heal sicknesses and to cast out demons. Then we have their names, Simon, to whom he gave the name Peter, James, the son of Zebedee and his brother, John. To whom he gave the name Bonerges, that means the sons of thunder.

Andrew, Philip, Bartholomew, Matthew, Thomas, James, the son of Alpheus, Thaddeus, Simon, the Canaanite and Judas Iscariot, who also betrayed him. And then they went into a house. Now, this selection was made on a mountain.

In Luke's gospel, the selection of these 12 was made on the mountain where Jesus gave the sermon, which we usually call the Sermon on the Mount. And in Luke chapter six, he made this choice of the 12 and then immediately gave the sermon to them so that the Sermon on the Mount or in Luke, we sometimes call it the Sermon on the Plain, because it says he came down to a level place, probably a level place on the side of the mountain, but still on the mountain, sat down with his 12 and he gave that sermon. But in Luke 6, 12, we read similar information, a little more.

Detailed, I suppose, than what Mark has given us. In Luke 6, 12, it says, Now it came to pass in those days that he went out to the mountain to pray. Only Luke mentions that he spent the whole night in prayer before he chose the 12 and he continued all night in prayer to God.

And when it was day, he called his disciples, which was a large group. To him and from them, he chose 12, whom he named apostles. So here we have, of course, the distinction between the word disciple and the word apostle.

Now, the apostles is a much more narrow term. These 12 were called apostles. Apart from them, there were many disciples.

He called all the disciples who many chose some of them, 12 of them to be apostles. Now, you will find in the rest of the Gospels that sometimes the apostles are simply referred to as the disciples. There are sometimes where the context makes it clear that the term the disciples is a reference to the apostles.

But that's simply because an apostle is still a disciple. Until this point, all these people

were called disciples, but now 12 of them got an additional title. They were still disciples, but they're also now apostles, a more specific designation.

And then it goes on and gives their names in Luke. And after that, in verse 17, he says he came down with them and stood on a level place in the crowd with a crowd of his disciples, the much more disciples than the 12, a crowd of his disciples and a great multitude of people. And it says there that he began to teach them the Beatitudes and what we usually think of as the Sermon on the Mount.

So Mark doesn't actually include the Sermon on the Mount, so he doesn't mention that here. But what we gather from comparing Luke with Mark is that both say that he went up on a mountain. He called him the ones he wanted in Luke.

He called his disciples to him and both say he selected 12. It's Luke who tells us that he prayed all night before he made the selection. So I think we have to assume that Jesus considered this is a decision that involved a fair bit of gravity.

There was a lot at stake after all. These men were going to be trained for something like two years and then they were going to take over the whole movement. When he selected them, they had no theological training, no theological background.

They were fishermen, tax collectors, revolutionaries, peasants. They were they were not really the kind of people that normally head up religious organizations, and yet they were the ones. How did he pick them? He picked them after he prayed all night.

I think we have to understand that he knew he needed guidance in his selection, because if he picked the wrong guys, it would be a bad deal. Now, we might say we did pick a wrong guy, pick Judas. But actually, the Bible says that Jesus knew from the beginning who it would be, who would betray him.

He actually picked a devil among the 12 on purpose. So, I mean, it's interesting. God led him to choose the 12 he chose, including knowingly choosing one who would betray him.

But the other 11 had to be the kind of men who he trusted completely to stand by his principles, to live by them, to not exploit the movement. I mean, think about it. Jesus had the power to rally probably tens of thousands of people to come and hear him.

Ambitious leaders with an ego might very happily say, I'll take over this for you. And then once they have that power, once they have that influence, you know, they corrupt it. They use it to make a lot of money for themselves.

I mean, let's face it, it happens all the time. This happens all the time in the religious world, even when a godly man starts a movement. A lot of times once he's gone, those who come up to lead the movement after him, they just exploit the power and institutionalize it and make it a money making thing or otherwise corrupt.

I mean, power corrupts people. And Jesus was going to give these people a lot of power, so to speak. I mean, he was going to give them Holy Spirit power so they could work miracles.

That certainly is something that men often exploit for bad purposes. Even men who can't work real miracles and can only fake miracles often exploit that for evil purposes. But if you really did have the power, Jesus had to heal the sick and so forth.

Just think of how you could use that to promote yourself. Jesus had to pick men who not only appeared to be the right stuff at that moment, but who would remain the right stuff after he was no longer there to supervise them. Who would be humble enough that they wouldn't take the movement in the wrong direction, who would be true to his principles, which were not easy principles, by the way.

After all, he told them in one place, freely you've received, freely give. In other words, they're going to have to go out there and not charge. They're going to serve and give to others for free.

That's a principle that not many religious leaders had practiced or even since his time would want to practice. You know, all of his teachings were pretty demanding, and those teachings fell the most heavily on leaders, as James tells us. Brethren, do not be many teachers, for we will receive the stricter judgment.

Why? Because teachers and leaders. They don't only lead their own lives, they lead other people's lives. So if they go the wrong way, they don't only hurt themselves like the average person would.

They hurt themselves and everyone who's following them. So the responsibility is immense here, and Jesus has to make the choice. He prays and his father gives him guidance and he chooses these men.

And we can see he made the right choice. I mean, given the fact that Judas was supposed to be in there, the other 11 amazingly remained faithful, not just faithful to his principles, but faithful to death. I have known Christians who seem pretty zealous when I when I met them.

I've even been on the ministry with in the ministry with people who were zealous for God at the time, but they weren't faithful to death. In fact, they're not even faithful to God now and they're not dead. They were unfaithful even without the threat of death.

They just got bored, they just got tired, they just got drawn away by the world. I mean, it's hard to find people who can be faithful to death, even if they seem like the type now in the Jesus movement. There were hundreds or thousands of people that I knew a little bit.

Some of them I knew well that I would have sworn these these guys are like the disciples of Jesus because they acted like it then. They were zealous, they were committed to ministry. And a lot of about probably about 50 percent of them have fallen away now, not at gunpoint, not under torture.

They just fell away because they got interested in something else. Shameful, shameful disloyalty. But you would have never predicted that disloyalty from them when you knew them in the 70s, when they were young.

And these men were no doubt young men, pretty young, probably no later than their 20s in age. Zealous, apparently, they left everything to follow Jesus. They were like the Jesus people I knew.

The thing is, these ones stayed faithful. They stayed pure, they stayed uncompromised and they stayed faithful to death. Jesus obviously made a good choice, but he didn't make the choice that was obviously good because although they were zealous, they didn't have innate or obvious credentials.

None of them, as far as you know, had ever been a public speaker. None of them, as far as you know, had ever run an organization. Peter had a fishing business.

And, you know, Matthew had been an accountant, but those were not really the kinds of skills that were going to be useful in running a spiritual movement. They didn't have natural abilities. What they had was, of course, natural faith.

I mean, they had faithfulness and because they were faithful, God gave him their spirit, gave them his spirit. And and that's all that's all the qualification they needed. Well, they needed a qualification of having been taught by Jesus because he told him, now go and teach all the nations to do what I've commanded you to do.

So these people needed only two years of training under the master. Then they needed the anointing. They needed the Holy Spirit.

And apart from those two things, they had nothing at all to really look promising as choices. But obviously, the choice was the right one. Now, what did you choose them for real quickly? Here's what the apostles were chosen for, and this is made more clear in Mark than in the other Gospels.

The list of the twelve are found in four places in the New Testament here. Also, in Matthew, chapter 10, verses two through four, we have the twelve listed there. Although on that occasion, it's not it's not the occasion of him choosing them in Matthew 10.

It's talking after the fact they've been chosen at an earlier time and just names who his twelve were there. But but here in in Matthew 10, also here in Mark three, it tells of the chosen. We saw Luke six that also has the choosing of the twelve in verses 14 through

16.

And then their names are given in a list also again by Luke in the book of Acts. Acts one thirteen, it gives their names without Judas because he had hanged himself by then. So we have four lists of the apostles.

Now, the names are not identical in all four lists. Obviously, Luke's two lists are the same because the same author, Luke, wrote Luke and Acts. And Matthew and Mark give essentially the same list, too, with the exception that some of the disciples have more than one name.

But only Mark gives us as much detail about the reason that Jesus chose them, what he chose them for. It says in verse 14, then he appointed twelve that they might be with him and that he might send them out to preach. And have power to heal sicknesses and cast out demons for things.

First, that they might be with him, not everyone was allowed to be with him all the time. Sometimes people who have complained, well, there were people back when I was younger who were my friends or wanted to be our friends who came to our school and they kind of had dreamed that, you know, we're just going to hang out all the time. And when they found out that I had things to do and other people, you know, making demands of my time, they got kind of missed.

I've had people say, well, you know, that's not very Christlike. Jesus was approachable by everyone. Well, yeah, he's approachable by everyone, but not available to everyone.

Anyone could approach him, but not everyone could hang out with him. He spent a lot of his time trying to get away from the crowds, but not from his disciples. His disciples were selected, his apostles were selected specifically to be privileged, to be with him all the time.

Other people could be with him some of the time he'd come out of hiding and minister to the crowds, but he'd retreat with his apostles. He'd cross the sea in order to get away from the people so he could be alone with his apostles. Why? These were trainees.

He had to train them. He had a special relationship with these men. And that was like the whole world state hang hung on that relationship, because if he didn't train them right and he left, then everything's going to go wrong after that.

And so he knew how to apportion his time among the many people who wanted his time. He knew there were some relationships that God wanted him to get close to for important reasons. Even among the apostles, they weren't all equally close to him.

There were three, the first three mentioned in the list, Peter, James and John, who scholars sometimes refer to them as the inner circle because they clearly had access to

Jesus even more than the others. There were a few times where Jesus went into a private situation to raise up Jairus's daughter or up on the Mount of Transfiguration or into the Garden of Gethsemane to pray. And he would just take those three men.

The other three or the other nine were not brought in. The other nine were able to be with him far more than anyone else outside the group, but those three were closer than others. Paul referred to those three as the pillars of the church in Galatians.

And among them, there's one who's said to be the disciple who Jesus loved, apparently one that he was even closer to than the others. Jesus, like everybody else, had differing degrees of closeness of relationship with different people. He wasn't available to everyone equally, and therefore he needed to select these men to be with him more to be with him as much as possible so that they could get intensive training.

For their future mission, but not only that they might be with him, but that he might send them out to preach now, send them out is related to their title apostle. The word apostle means one who is sent and it specifically means an emissary or an ambassador or somebody who is sent on official mission from an authoritative agency or person. And the apostle speaks with the authority of that agency or that person, and that's what he wanted them for.

The other disciples, some of them are going to preach to on one occasion. He sent out 70 to preach in Luke chapter 10. But these ones are going to be the main preachers.

When you come into the book of Acts, the opening chapters, you find thousands of people being saved. But you find 12 preachers. You find that, you know, it'll say in the book of Acts and chapter two, the the multitude of the disciples continued daily under the apostles teaching and in fellowship and breaking bread and prayers.

And with great boldness, the apostles gave witness to the resurrection of Christ. There were thousands of Christians, but there were these 12 men giving the public witness. Now, a lot of times we think that every Christian should be a preacher.

And I think that's because we read some of the commands of Christ that he gave to the apostles and assume these are blanket commands to every Christian. And this actually puts some Christians under condemnation because they don't feel like they've got it. They don't have what it takes to be a preacher.

They're not good at public speaking. They're shy. They don't strike up a conversation with strangers easily.

And when they do, they get tongue tied and they feel like, oh, man, I feel so guilty. I'm supposed to be preaching the gospel, but I'm I just don't seem to have the gift. Well, don't feel guilty.

Not everyone is called to preach. Everyone has a gift for something, but it's not always preaching. The body of Christ has many members and many functions.

Preaching is only one of them. And in the book of Acts, the minority of Christians were actually public preachers. It's probably best because you get a baby Christian preaching because he's zealous, but he doesn't even know what the message is.

And I've seen it. I've seen new Christians so zealous they go out and preach on the streets. And you listen to think, oh, my gosh, I hope no one hears them because they're saying all the wrong things.

They got the gospel wrong. They got their attitude wrong. Everything's wrong.

They're not the people you want to put up as the front man to represent the kingdom of God to the world. Jesus selected the ones he wanted to put forward as the front man. He wanted to have them thoroughly trained, make sure they had his spirit, make sure that they had his attitude, his understanding of things.

He explained all things privately to them. The Bible says. Then he could trust them to go out there and face the world and represent him in his movement.

That's what he called them for and then given them power to heal sicknesses and and cast out demons. You might say, well, don't all Christians have that? Not equally, I mean, not in equal measure. I believe that any Christian might pray for the sick and see God work and answer his prayers.

I believe any Christian might command demons and might see deliverance. My experience has been that many times some Christians do pray for the sick or cast, try to cast demons out. And even though they have great faith, it just doesn't happen for them.

I believe that God heals the sick and that he cast out demons. But I don't think that it's done with. I don't think the equal anointing is on every Christian about that.

If God wants you to do it, the anointing will be there for you to do it. But these guys, it was always God's will for them to do it. That was their ministry.

Their ministry was to give signs and wonders and cast out demons and heal the sick to confirm the message that he is appointing them to preach. There were others besides the apostles who preached and who did signs and wonders. Stephen, for example, one of the deacons and Philip, the evangelist, both of them did signs and wonders.

Both of them preached. There are other people who preach besides apostles, fortunately, because there's not many apostles. And there are evangelists, there are miracle workers, there are different gifts of the spirit, the gifts of healing, the gifts of working in miracles.

The apostles had all these gifts. Among the rest of us, these gifts are distributed, this person has one, this person has one, this person has one or two, and therefore not all of us are going to be equally involved in healing the sick or casting out demons or even preaching. These men were this is going to be their primary calling.

They're going to do it all the time. And that's why he chose them. Now, I would say something about the names that were kind of over time here.

Suffice it to say that most of the names are unambiguous. We've been introduced to some of them already, the four fishermen, you know, they're they're kind of at the top of the list. And then you've got Philip and Bartholomew are mentioned.

They have not been mentioned in Mark previously, but they are mentioned in John's gospel as the earliest disciples, Jesus called Philip and John chapter one is called. And he got his friend Nathaniel and Nathaniel is usually believed to be the same man as Bartholomew. Bartholomew means son of Tholomew bar means son of in Hebrew.

So Bartholomew actually means son of Tholomew or in Greek, son of Ptolemy. And apparently Nathaniel was that man's name, as per the gospel of John, John only refers to him as Nathaniel, the other gospels only refer to as Bartholomew, but he was apparently Nathaniel, son of Tholomew, and therefore he could be called by his own name or simply as son of the man who was his father. But Philip and Nathaniel, Philip and Bartholomew are mentioned next here, though they have not been mentioned in the synoptics.

Otherwise, they are mentioned in John as among the first call. Matthew has been mentioned only under the name of Levi earlier in this gospel. So Mark uses the same, uses both names for him.

He's called Levi in chapter two. He's called Matthew here. Thomas James, the son of Alpheus, Thaddeus, Simon, the Canaanite.

I might just say Simon, the Canaanite. That's a holdover in the New King James from the old King James. The old King James translated Canaanite.

That's misleading. This man was not a Canaanite in the Greek text. It's Canaanian.

Canaan, A-N-A-E-A-N. It's kind of like a Canaanian. Someone from Canaan, no, Canaanian is Aramaic for zealot.

It's an Aramaic transliteration. It's the Aramaic word that means zealot in Luke and Acts in the list. He's called Simon, the zealot in Matthew and Mark.

He's called Simon, the Canaanian in the Greek. But the King James transliteration in 1611, they didn't know Aramaic very well. And they mistook the word to mean a Canaanite.

So King James calls him Simon, the Canaanite. The New King James slavishly follows wrongfully. But he's not a Canaanite.

He's a zealot. He's a member of the zealot party. And then Thaddeus is mentioned there.

He's also sometimes in the other list called Judas, not Iscariot. And in one list, he's also called Lebbeus. He's the three named disciple, Lebbeus, Thaddeus and Judas, not Iscariot.

And then you've got in verse 19, Judas Iscariot, who also betrayed him. No mystery left for us here as to which one's going to be the guy. As soon as we meet Judas Iscariot, we're told he's the one who did it.

Mark would not be a good mystery writer. It's like at the beginning of history, says the butler did it before you even know the case. But anyway, Judas is the one who betrayed him.

And then they went into the house and there we have to take a break. And we'll come back in a little bit.