

“The Mixed Multitude”
Mark 3:6-19
(Preached at Trinity, December 2, 2009)

I’m supplying these notes for the benefit of busy pastors who may be engaged in bi-vocational work, feeling the pressure of preparing to preach twice on the Lord’s Day while trying to balance full-time secular work as well as caring for their families. While the notes of another man are no substitute for personal study, I pray that these may aid in the process of preparing to preach.

Disclaimer: These are the actual notes I bring with me to the pulpit, which I follow loosely. They are not designed for publication. While I try to make every effort to give proper credit to my sources from the pulpit, adequate citations will sometimes be absent from my notes. If anyone feels their intellectual material has been used without adequate citation, please contact me and I’ll make immediate correction giving credit.

1. In the previous chapter Mark recorded several collisions between Jesus and the Scribes and Pharisees.
 - A. In Capernaum when Jesus forgave a paralytic’s sins they Scribes and Pharisees accused Him of blasphemy – a sin punishable by death.
 - B. Next, when Jesus called the hated publican, Matthew, as one of His disciples and then shared a meal with the low-life of Capernaum the Pharisees accused Him of consorting with sinners.
 - C. Then the Pharisees and the disciples of John accused Jesus of frivolity as He feasted instead of fasted.
 - D. Finally, Jesus collided with the Pharisees over the issue of the Sabbath.
2. This was the last straw. The Pharisees formed an alliance with the Herodians and plotted the death of Christ.

Mark 3:6 – “And the Pharisees went forth, and straightway took counsel with the Herodians against him, how they might destroy him.”
3. This led to Jesus and His disciples departing for the Sea of Galilee.

In the following verses we find three different classes of people, a mixed multitude, each responding to Jesus in a different way. The same groups still exist today. Only one of the three groups are Christian.
- I. The first group is the Scribes and Pharisees
 - A. The Scribes and Pharisees wanted Jesus out of the way
 1. He was a threat to their life
 - a. They loved their life the way it was
 - b. They loved the precision of their rules and regulations
 - c. They loved the comfort of their heritage in Abraham
 - d. They loved their position. They were respected. They had authority
 2. There was no place for Jesus in their lives.
 3. No matter how glorious Jesus appeared they would not have Him. He healed with love and compassion, He taught like no one ever had, yet they would not have Him.
 4. Their main problem was their pride. They were self-assured and confident to the point of arrogance.
 - B. Most people are like this today
 1. They are comfortable with their life – satisfied
 2. Jesus poses a threat to the life they love.

They will not have Him. They see no value in Him.
 3. The Gospel seems like nonsense. Paul described them:

1 Corinthians 1:18 – “For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness. . .”

4. No matter how glorious you present Christ to them they will not have Him.
5. Most may not outwardly seem as hostile as the Pharisees but just like the Pharisees they want Jesus taken out of the way. He is a threat.
6. And like the Pharisees most people are comfortable in their pride. They are self-assured, confident. There is no fear in them. When a man comes to Christ he has to be broken. He is changed from arrogant self-confidence to humility, meekness, brokenness.

II. The second group was the multitudes flocking to Christ

A. There was a great multitude coming to Christ

1. First there was the Galilean multitude, locals who had seen and heard of the recent miracles. It was a large crowd – Galilee was densely populated. Some commentators estimate that there were tens of thousands present.
2. With these others had come from Jerusalem and still more came from Idumea. There were thousands who gathered to see and hear Jesus.
3. Mark described them as a “great multitude.”

Mark 3:7-8 – “But Jesus withdrew himself with his disciples to the sea: and a great multitude from Galilee followed him, and from Judaea, ⁸ And from Jerusalem, and from Idumaea, and *from* beyond Jordan; and they about Tyre and Sidon, a great multitude, when they had heard what great things he did, came unto him.”

4. There so many that the safety of Jesus was in question.

Mark 3:9 – “And he spake to his disciples, that a small ship should wait on him because of the multitude, lest they should throng him.” The word for “throng” literally points to crushing like the crushing of grapes. Jesus was in danger of being crushed by the crowd.

B. This multitude came with great zeal

1. Many had traveled a great distance
2. You can imagine their excitement as they hoped to see some new miracle
3. The problem with this multitude is they were not drawn by the person of Christ. They were not amazed by His glory. They were not filled with a sense of His infinite worth.
4. In the end they would despise Him.
 - a. We see the same thing in John’s Gospel

John 6:1-2 – “After these things Jesus went over the sea of Galilee, which is *the sea* of Tiberias. ² And a great multitude followed him, because they saw his miracles which he did on them that were diseased.”
 - b. But when He taught them concerning Himself and His demands they quickly turned away.

John 6:66 – “From that *time* many of his disciples went back, and walked no more with him.”

- c. Again in Chapter 8
John 8:30-32 As he spake these words, many believed on him. ³¹ Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on him, If ye continue in my word, *then* are ye my disciples indeed; ³² And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.
John 8:59 – “Then took they up stones to cast at him: but Jesus hid himself, and went out of the temple, going through the midst of them, and so passed by.”

5. The problem with the multitude that flocked to Jesus was they all came to have their needs fulfilled. They came selfishly.
John 6:26 – “Jesus answered them and said, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Ye seek me, not because ye saw the miracles, but because ye did eat of the loaves, and were filled.”

C. This describes much of the Christianity we see in the United States today

1. They come not for the person of Christ but because of a desire to receive something from Him.
2. Much of the preaching today is focused on our “felt needs.”
3. Worship is judged according to what it does for us, not according to what is pleasing to God. We have become the focus
MacArthur – “We don’t evaluate worship on the basis of what it does for us, asking questions like, “Is this going to meet my needs? Is it going to give me a good feeling? Is it going to inspire me? Is it going to bless me?” To evaluate worship like that is to substitute affection for objective trust. When we gather to worship God, He is the object, and our purpose is to give to Him.
4. This is why there is such a lack of service in the church today. People don’t come to give. They come to receive. They move from church to church seeking to have their needs met.
5. Genuine Christianity is seeing Christ as most precious. It is all about Him.
John 6:66-69 – “From that *time* many of his disciples went back, and walked no more with him. ⁶⁷ Then said Jesus unto the twelve, Will ye also go away? ⁶⁸ Then Simon Peter answered him, Lord, to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life. ⁶⁹ And we believe and are sure that thou art that Christ, the Son of the living God.”

III. The final group was the disciples

- A. They were Christ’s by calling
Mark 3:13 – “And he goeth up into a mountain, and calleth *unto him* whom he would: and they came unto him.”
1. Jesus called them and they came
 2. They saw Jesus as one worth following
 3. Following Jesus would mean being willing to leave all else behind, yet these disciples saw Jesus as worthy forsake all else
Luke 14:33 – “So likewise, whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple.”
- B. Of His disciples Jesus chose twelve to be His apostles

1. This was the first office of the church
2. They were sent out to preach
3. They were given the power to heal sickness and cast out demons
2 Corinthians 12:12 – “Truly the signs of an apostle were wrought among you in all patience, in signs, and wonders, and mighty deeds.”
Acts 5:12 – “And by the hands of the apostles were many signs and wonders wrought among the people;”

- C. Jesus called disciples of all sorts
1. He called Simon whom He named Peter (Πέτρος) . Impulsive and vocal, Peter would deny Christ but would ultimately become a solid rock.
 2. He called James and John that he surnamed Boanerges which means “Sons of Thunder,” referring to their pugnacious personality. At one point when a Samaritan village refused to receive Jesus and His disciples James and John exclaimed, “Lord, wilt thou that we command fire to come down from heaven, and consume them, even as Elias did?” (**Luke 9:54**)
 John, of course was the disciple whose special love for Christ brought him continually to sit at our Lord’s bosom.
 3. He called Thomas the skeptic that would become a great man of faith.
 4. He called Simon the Zealot who would become zealous for Christ.
 5. He called Levi who would be transformed from the hated tax collector to Matthew, the lover of Christ and writer of one of the Gospels.
 6. And so it was with each of our Lord’s disciples. They were all different. They all had their shortcomings and failures, yet they were all beloved of Christ.
 7. Such is the nature of all of our Lord’s disciples. Such is the nature of all who are a part of this church. We are all different. We all share various strengths and weaknesses. And we all share the common bond – we are loved by Christ and we all love Him.

Conclusion:

1. Have you not seen these three groups in your experience?
 - A. There are those who have no place for Christ. They are satisfied. They wish He didn’t exist. He stands continually as a threat to their way of life.
 - B. There are the religious – those who gladly follow in religion as long as it doesn’t make demands upon their life. They are content to go about the details of religion, often with great zeal, but it is a Christless religion. While they may profess to know Jesus He is not the passion of their lives. In times of persecution or great difficulty they soon fall away. They have no real commitment to Christ or His church.
 - C. Then there are the true disciples. They have been called of Christ and they follow Him. He is the focus of their lives. They love Him with a passionate love.
2. Which type are you? It is easy to confuse the second two types. The second type may be zealous in their religion.
 Jesus said that the Day of Judgment will be a great revelation:

Matthew 7:22-23 – “Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? ²³ And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity.”

3. The difference is a holy life and a life filled with Christ. Which type are you?