



Growth Group Questions
January 19, 2025
“Getting Closer to Jesus”

CONTEXT:

People are coming from great distances to listen to Jesus’ teaching as well as to be healed. The opening scene is one of great commotion with people pushing and shoving and trying to get closer to Jesus. They are not so much seeking to follow Jesus, as they are to be healed and restored.

As we have seen before the demons know who Jesus is. In Mark 1:24 one had called Jesus the “holy one of God.” In our text they say he is the “Son of God.” However, their confession of Jesus does not come from a place of faith, but of fear and opposition. Jesus does not allow them to speak about him being the “Son of God” because it will not be fully understood until after his death and resurrection. There is a strange irony in that the demons know who Jesus is and the religious leaders of Israel completely miss it.

Jesus goes up to the mountains again and this time calls and names the apostles. This reminds us of Moses going up the mountain to meet with God and being given the commandments that were to govern the lives of the people of Israel. Twelve disciples also connects with the twelve tribes of Israel.

Jesus is doing something new in the appointing of the twelve. The word for “appoint” is actually the word “make.” Jesus is creating and making something new, just as God had created/made the heavens and earth back in Genesis 1. The mission of Jesus will be carried out by these twelve who are called and named and then sent out.

The last part of verse 14 and the first part of verse 15 make clear what Jesus was calling them to do. First, they are to spend time with Jesus and be his apprentices. Secondly, they are going to be sent out to proclaim the coming of his kingdom, as well as to demonstrate the arrival of God’s kingdom by pushing back the evil and casting out demons.

SCRIPTURE:

Mark 3:7-19

⁷ Jesus withdrew with his disciples to the lake, and a large crowd from Galilee followed. ⁸ When they heard about all he was doing, many people came to him from Judea, Jerusalem, Idumea, and the regions across the Jordan and around Tyre and Sidon. ⁹ Because of the crowd he told his disciples to have a small boat ready for him, to keep the people from crowding him. ¹⁰ For he had healed many, so that those with diseases were pushing forward to touch him. ¹¹ Whenever the impure spirits saw him, they fell down before him and cried out, “You are the Son of God.” ¹² But he gave them strict orders not to tell others about him.

¹³ Jesus went up on a mountainside and called to him those he wanted, and they came to him. ¹⁴ He appointed twelve^[a] that they might be with him and that he might send them out to preach ¹⁵ and to have authority to drive out demons. ¹⁶ These are the twelve he appointed: Simon (to whom he gave the name Peter), ¹⁷ James son of Zebedee and his brother John (to them he gave the name Boanerges, which means “sons of thunder”), ¹⁸ Andrew, Philip, Bartholomew, Matthew, Thomas, James son of Alphaeus, Thaddaeus, Simon the Zealot ¹⁹ and Judas Iscariot, who betrayed him.

John 12:20-26

²⁰ Now there were some Greeks among those who went up to worship at the festival. ²¹ They came to Philip, who was from Bethsaida in Galilee, with a request. “Sir,” they said, “we would like to see Jesus.” ²² Philip went to tell Andrew; Andrew and Philip in turn told Jesus. ²³ Jesus replied, “The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified. ²⁴ Very truly I tell you, unless a kernel of wheat falls to the ground and dies, it remains only a single seed. But if it dies, it produces many seeds. ²⁵ Anyone who loves their life will lose it, while anyone who hates their life in this world will keep it for eternal life. ²⁶ Whoever serves me must follow me; and where I am, my servant also will be. My Father will honor the one who serves me.

Revelation 2:17

¹⁷ Whoever has ears, let them hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To the one who is victorious, I will give some of the hidden manna. I will also give that person a white stone with a new name written on it, known only to the one who receives it.

Acts 4:13

¹³ When they saw the courage of Peter and John and realized that they were unschooled, ordinary men, they were astonished and they took note that these men had been with Jesus.

QUESTIONS:

1. In Mark 3:7-19, we read of the crowd that was following Jesus as well as the twelve apostles who were called by Him. What do you see as the differences between the crowd and the twelve apostles?
2. What do we know or notice about the 12 men that Jesus appointed as apostles? What does the choice of these 12 men reveal to us about Jesus’ plan for His ministry?

3. Why do you think Jesus chose to ignore the request of the Greeks who wanted to see him and, instead, spoke about His mission and what it meant to follow Him?
4. Carefully read through John 12:24-26. What do you think Jesus was saying in these verses?
5. What did Jesus mean when He said, “Anyone who loves their life will lose it, while anyone who hates their life in this world will keep it for eternal life.”?
6. Pastor Paul said that the white stone referred to in Revelation 2:17 could reference a “ticket” or “entry pass” to God’s Kingdom. What do you think is the significance that this white stone will contain a “new name” written on it?
7. Pastor Paul asked us to consider what it would be like if Jesus wrote the word “beloved” on each of our stones to indicate that we are beloved by God. What does it mean to you to be “beloved by God”?
8. In Acts 4:13, we read that the religious leaders were astonished by what they heard from Peter and John, whose knowledge could only have come from being “with” Jesus. What does it mean to you to be “with Jesus”?
9. Pastor Paul’s sermon focused Mark 3:7-19. As you read through the entire chapter during the week, was there anything else in Chapter 3 that particularly spoke to you?

Pastor Paul’s Sermon Questions:

1. What are the implications of being God’s “beloved”?
2. What is one thing you can do this week to move closer to Jesus?