

Gospel of Mark

Change of Tactics

December 27, 2009

Mark 3

I. Jesus Changes His Tactics!

In Chapter 2, we are provided some of the detail as to why Jesus was prosecuted. Four episodes are summarized, plus an additional one in the first six verses of Chapter 3. By the time that we get to Mark 3:6, the Pharisees and teachers of the Law were plotting to kill Jesus.

As a result in Chapter 3, we see Jesus changing His tactics. Does this mean that He was unsuccessful with His original methods? Of course not! Just as we see Him employ different means for healing people, and as we see God dealing differently within our own lives, so Jesus changes His tactics because that was His choice, from before the creation of the universe.

It is God's choice to go one way with us and then to go another. From our limited viewpoint, this can be confusing. Yet, we should always remember that God has a plan that is working just exactly the way that He wants it to work. The question for us is whether we have sufficient faith to trust in Him.

II. Jesus Gets Angry: Mark 3:1-6

Mark 3:1-6

3:1 Another time he went into the synagogue, and a man with a shriveled hand was there. 2 Some of them were looking for a reason to accuse Jesus, so they watched him closely to see if he would heal him on the Sabbath. 3 Jesus said to the man with the shriveled hand, "Stand up in front of everyone." 4 Then Jesus asked them, "Which is lawful on the Sabbath: to do good or to do evil, to save life or to kill?" But they remained silent. 5 He looked around at them in anger and, deeply distressed at their stubborn hearts, said to the man, "Stretch out your hand." He stretched it out, and his hand was completely restored. 6 Then the Pharisees went out and began to plot with the Herodians how they might kill Jesus.

NIV

The counterparts are Matthew 12:9-14 and Luke 6:6-11.

Verse 1: We are not told when the man received the injury. He might have been born this way. Although we naturally think of Capernaum, the synagogue could have been located in any Galilean city.

Verse 2: The Pharisees and their disciples appear to be still trying to convict Jesus. In the Matthew account, the Pharisees asked if it was lawful to heal on the Sabbath. How would describe how the Pharisees viewed the man with the handicapped hand.

Verse 4: Jesus calls their bluff. As with situation of gathering the grain on the Sabbath at the end of the last chapter, Jesus notes that there are greater good than keeping the Sabbath in the ways that the Pharisees wanted to keep it according to their interpretation of the law.

Verse 5: Although we might speculate that Jesus was angry at other times (such as when He called the Pharisees a "brood of vipers"), this is the only time that this is the only time in Scripture that it is said that He was angry.

Verse 5: What is righteous anger? When is it appropriate to use? (Hint: Most of the time when you think that it is appropriate, it is probably not appropriate!)

Verse 6: Jesus had looked them in the eye and told them what He thought of their religious system of rules. Having been rebuked, the Pharisees started to work with Jews associated with the Roman government to get rid of their problem permanently.

Discussion Point: God is a God of people, not a God of rules. When is it ok for us to break the law? When it is ok for us not to obey Him?

III. The Crowds Continue to Follow: Mark 3:7-12

Mark 3:7-12

7 Jesus withdrew with his disciples to the lake, and a large crowd from Galilee followed. 8 When they heard 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 evil 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 who he was.

NIV

The counterpart is Matthew 12:15-21.

Verse 7: Once again after a major event, we see Jesus withdrawing from the crowds, but His respite is short-lived as the crowds continued to follow Him...as was also a usual event. In this case, He might also have withdrawn because His final time of confrontation with the authorities had not yet come.

Verse 8: There are all the areas around Galilee. All of them would have been included, at least partially, in the area allocated to Israel as the Promise Land.

Verse 12: While the demons would like to have exposed Jesus and compromise His mission as laid out by God. As before, they must obey Him. (Question for though: If Jesus had not quieted the demons but allowed them to tell others who He was, would people have believed more in Him? Would the Pharisees have to admit that He was exactly who He said that He was? If we hypothetically answer these questions with a "yes," how would Jesus' ministry have been changed?)

IV. Selection of 12 Apostles: Mark 3:13-19

Mark 3:13-19

13 Jesus went up on a mountainside and called to him those he wanted, and they came to him. 14 He appointed twelve — designating them apostles—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.

NIV

The counterpart is Luke 6:12-15.

Verse 13: Perhaps, Jesus left to get away from the teachers or temporarily from some of the crowd. In any case, he is followed by many people. After healings and crowd interactions, we often see Jesus removing Himself from the crowds to be by Himself or with only His immediate disciples. Why? (See Mark 6:31)

Verse 19: Why would Jesus after praying to the Father (in Luke 6:12) all night appoint one who would betray Him? "Iscariot" mean "man of Kerioth," which is in southern Judah. He appears to be the only one not from Galilee.

There He appointed the twelve apostles. Given that the names vary (although only slightly), the twelve might not always be the same twelve men, although many have attempted some kind of possible reconciliation that goes beyond what the Bible actual says. At a minimum, we know that one of the twelve is replaced (Judas with Matthias). Below is a listing of the names:

What were the names of the apostles?			
Matthew 10:2-4	Mark 3:16-19	Luke 6:14-16	Acts 1:13
Simon (Peter) Andrew James (son of Zebedee) John Philip Bartholomew Thomas Matthew James (son of Alphaeus) Lebbaeus (surname Thaddeus) Simon the Canaanite Judas Iscariot	Simon (Peter) James (son of Zebedee) John Andrew Philip Bartholomew Matthew Thomas James (son of Alphaeus) Thaddeus Simon the Canaanite Judas Iscariot	Simon (Peter) Andrew James John Philip Bartholomew Matthew Thomas James (son of Alphaeus) Simon (Zeolotes) Judas (brother of James) Judas (Iscariot)	Peter James John Andrew Philip Thomas Bartholomew Matthew James (son of Alphaeus) Simon Zeolotes Judas (brother of James) <i>(Matthias)</i>

V. Jesus Accused of Being Satan: Mark 3:20-30

Mark 3:20-30

20 Then Jesus entered a house, and again a crowd gathered, so that he and his disciples were not even able to eat. **21** When his family heard about this, they went to take charge of him, for they said, "He is out of his mind." **22** And the teachers of the law who came down from Jerusalem said, "He is possessed by Beelzebub! By the prince of demons he is driving out demons." **23** So Jesus called them and spoke to them in parables: "How can Satan drive out Satan? **24** If a kingdom is divided against itself, that kingdom cannot stand. **25** If a house is divided against itself, that house cannot stand. **26** And if Satan opposes himself and is divided, he cannot stand; his end has come. **27** In fact, no one can enter a strong man's house and carry off his possessions unless he first ties up the strong man. Then he can rob his house. **28** I tell you the truth, all the sins and blasphemies of men will be forgiven them. **29** But whoever blasphemes against the Holy Spirit will never be forgiven; he is guilty of an eternal sin." **30** He said this because they were saying, "He has an evil spirit."

NIV

The counterpart is Matthew 12:22-37.

Verse 20: The city is not identified, but the most likely location is Capernaum.

Verse 21: Certainly, we can understand why His brothers might not believe:

John 7:5

5 For even his own brothers did not believe in him.

NIV

Joseph was likely living no longer by now since His name is not noted when Jesus is an adult. Mary's reaction is the most interesting. Given the miraculous nature of His birth and the special events surrounding it, she must have known that He was special. When He was 12 and lost, Jesus said this to His parents:

Luke 2:49-50

**49 "Why were you searching for me?" he asked. "Didn't you know I had to be in my Father's house?"
50 But they did not understand what he was saying to them.**

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So, even she did not fully understand how significant Jesus was.

Verse 22: With even His only family thinking that "he is out of his mind," who would argue with the teachers of the law that He was not also demon possessed?

Verse 22: The meaning of Beelzebub is unknown. However, its connotation is obvious.

Verse 25: Abraham Lincoln made this verse famous in a speech on June 16, 1858 when he was seeking the Illinois Republican senate nomination. As the Republican candidate, he lost that election, but this freed him up to run for President two years later.

Verse 28: "I tell you the truth" is the way that the NIV translates "Amen, Amen." "Amen" is an OT Hebraic word that is transliterated, not translated, into Greek. The underlying word is translated with meanings such as faithfulness and truthfulness. Typically, when Jesus uses these two words, He is telling us something that was new to Him, not through some other tradition that He is using for His own purposes.

Verse 29: Jesus can and will forgive all sins except for one. The Holy Spirit works in us so that we can see our sin. These sins can be forgiven if we see them and if we ask for forgiveness at the command of the Holy Spirit. If we resist the Holy Spirit, we cannot take access to the forgiveness that Jesus represents. Blaspheming the Holy Spirit is sometimes referred to as the unforgivable sin. If someone is feeling convicted by the Holy Spirit, they have not yet committed it fully. Eventually, though, through death or insensitivity, one might commit this sin.

VI. Family Troubles: Mark 2:23-28

Mark 2:23-28

31 Then Jesus' mother and brothers arrived. Standing outside, they sent someone in to call him. 32 A crowd was sitting around him, and they told him, "Your mother and brothers are outside looking for you." 33 "Who are my mother and my brothers?" he asked. 34 Then he looked at those seated in a circle around him and said, "Here are my mother and my brothers! 35 Whoever does God's will is my brother and sister and mother."

NIV

The counterparts are Math 12:46-50 and Luke 8:19-21.

In the last part of this chapter, we have a contrast:

- Adoring crowds wanting to follow Jesus wherever He goes.
- Pharisees wanting to kill Him, accusing Him of being a devil or demon
- Family thinking that He is crazy

Do we see anything like this today in how people respond to Jesus?

Verse 23: Generally, an individual would probably give access to his family. Since Jesus appears to know what His family wants, He would prefer to stay with His followers. Indeed, everyone who believes belongs to Jesus' family:

Eph 2:18-19

18 For through him we both have access to the Father by one Spirit. 19 Consequently, you are no longer foreigners and aliens, but fellow citizens with God's people and members of God's household,

NIV