

Mark 3:1-21 PREPARING FOR MINISTRY

PRELIMS. We are having a **cursor**y read through Mark (to help with Christianity Explored). We are at chapter 3.

Why do **you** go to church? To worship? I am sure that was **why** Jesus went! He went to the synagogue to worship His Father. And that **is** why we ought to go to church. Well, Jesus goes to the synagogue, and I am sure He was **looking forward** to worshipping His Father! But guess what? He was **distracted** on 2 accounts!

One, was the ‘theological spies’ from the Pharisee camp were on the ‘prowl’! They knew who would be there, this **handicapped** man, so *“They **watched** Jesus to see whether He would heal on the Sabbath, so that they might **accuse** Him”*[1] They must have **suspected** His compassion would result in this man being healed. Jesus spotted these Phars as soon as He went in! I suppose that is why He spoke the 1st word to them **before** He performed the miracle. So this hostile situation **must** have distracted Him to some degree at least, from full concentration on worshipping His Father!

Second, there was someone there who **needed help** - thus **handicapped** man - the man with the withered hand! So being the pure, holy, compassionate, merciful Person He was, His **interest** would be diverted towards this poor man. **That** distracted Him - because Jesus was the **sympathizer** ‘par excellence’! He knew what sin was, and when He saw the **victims** of sin’s **curse**, He always zoned-in and helped. No matter the class or religion or culpability of the individual, He cared. Being in **human mode**, He had to give this man His attention! So.....rather than **concentrate** on worshipping His Father, His attention was given to aiding this man.

Now of course, we know that Jesus would have worshipped His Father **in** healing this man, but it was **not** the same as **expressing joyful praise** to His heavenly Father. **APP** That is life for you/I also! We ‘plan’ for this enjoyable relaxing event, and ping, different things crop up which demand our attention. Things which are our **duty** to attend to! Our lives are not our own. God is the **disposer** of our lives!

It is God's world, and He **arranges** events and circumstances to fulfill His great plan and **purpose**. Each event is His doing!

Rather than **enjoying** the worship, Jesus experienced **emotional stress!** "*He looked around at them with anger, grieved at their hardness of heart*"[5] The very **opposite** of what one should expect in God's house! **APP** Again, that is life. How often in the morning we find ourselves in **good tune** and feel we can **ride any storm**, but within an hour, we are **sinning in anger** (not that Jesus sinned in being angry, it was righteous anger). Life is full of situations that are **contrary** to our **expectations**. When our expectations are **thwarted**, we get angry, don't we? So often, it is not righteous anger!

Hard hearts, is not what one should expect in the house of God! But, sadly, that is what we do find! A hard heart is a heart that **will** not change! It is too **proud** to **admit** it was wrong! It is a heart that is **not changed** or **affected** by the power of clear evidence! **Immediate** healing, as here, is clear evidence of **divine** power!

Two definitions of miracle - no means; and **immediately** healed! So often 'straightway he got up and walked'! Yet it did nothing to those Pharisees! Rather than submit to the evidence, they **refused** to be **persuaded** and held a meeting with, of all people, the Herodians, to see if they could **kill** Jesus![6] The Herodians were not religious but ungodly/worldly/political! But that did not matter to them, as long as they could help get rid of Jesus! The very presence of Jesus annoyed!

Crowds followed Jesus, no doubt because He "*healed many*"[10]. Note the **behaviour** and **testimony** of the unclean spirits, "*they fell down before Him... 'You are the Son of God'*"[11] Wonderful to **see!** Being spirits, they may well have perceptions and knowledge that we humans do not have! Their testimony here at least, is **so accurate!** They seem to have **no problem** believing Jesus is God's Son!!

In the Bible we read a lot about '**calling**' as do the Confessions! It's a very important concept. To be called by God is a great **privilege** - but it is also a great **responsibility!** We are called to a **service** - to be **servants** of God in a special way! We are **all** called in some way by

God - to respond to situations/duties! Even Jesus did not **assume** His office of being Mediator, Saviour! *“no one takes this honor for himself, but **only** when **called** by God, just as Aaron was. **So also Christ** did not exalt himself...but was **appointed**”*

Mark now informs us about one of the most important qualifications for **preachers!** Jesus **prepared** His disciples **for** preaching! *“He appointed twelve...so that...He might **send** them out to preach”*[14] Do you know what these apostles did most of the time they were with Jesus? It wasn't learning **Greek!** It wasn't **systematic** theology! It wasn't church **history** or church **polity!** Do you know how they learned and were **prepared** for their ministries? By **watching** and **listening, seeing** and **hearing** the Lord Jesus in His **daily life!**

Note how Mark puts it, *“And He appointed twelve... **that** they might be **with Him**”*[14] They **had** to be **with** Jesus in order to **hear** the Truth **AND** see the Truth **in action!** ‘Seeing is believing’! **Gandhi** said he needed to see Xns **live** the Xn **life** before he would be convinced of its truth! He said the problem with Xnity, is Xns!

The disciples were with Jesus for **three years**, every day! You get to know people when you stay/live with them! Jesus got to know them of course, but they got to know Him and were often **astonished!** They were **affected** for the rest of their lives by what they saw in X!

APP How can candidates for preaching today, be ‘with Jesus’? **Only** by **fellowship** in **prayer** and **meditation** ‘**in**’ the **Word** (which is X)! **Not** meditating simply on the Word **as a document**, but by being **immersed** in the **revelation** which the Word gives of Jesus! Captivated by the Person revealed! There are some people who love theology. Their **psyche** is such that they must be satisfied as to ‘What is Truth? And once they have found a **consistent** theology, that’s it! They are no longer interested! Their curiosity has been satisfied. But it is the Christ revealed in Scripture that we must adore/worship! Reading the Scriptures is a **means** to an end!

Jesus also gave these Apostles **authority!** There is a difference between authority and power. One can have authority and be

powerless, and one can have power and have no authority! To have authority is to have the **right**, the **official permission**, the **license** to do something which not everyone has the right to do. To have the **power**, means you have the **strength**, the **capacity**, the **ability** to do something! Eg: Falklands War - the Navy sailed with their **warships** and guns to the Falklands. They had the power/strength to destroy the enemy. But they could not fire a shot **until** Prime Minister Mrs Thatcher gave the **order** to fire! Although the generals had the power they had no authority to fire until Mrs Thatcher gave the word!

When X gives authority, He **also** gives the power. That is because **all** power is from God. The strength you/I have to lift a pencil, or to lift your voice is from God. **Anything** you do, is as a result of God-given strength. The reason many of us do not perform the way we should as Xns, is because **we have not appropriated** the authority God has conferred upon us! We have not taken **possession** of it, we have not **grasped** it for ourselves. ***Fear** is sometimes a reason why Xns do not do what they ought. Imagine the war generals afraid to carry out the orders to fire! Why should anyone fear when they have authority? Xns, too often, are **afraid** to exercise the authority God had given to them to do great things for Him, to spread His Word, to witness.

But then there is a **risk** in being diligent to our calling and exercising our authority in Christ - a **big** risk? The risk that Jesus took here,. I refer to the risk of being called and named an **imbecile!** "*He is out of His mind*"[21]! X's **own family** came and 'rescued' Him, as it were - probably because they were **embarrassed** about Him!!

Paul talks of being **fools for Christ!** He talked about being a **spectacle** before the world. Do you know how Paul **felt**? This is how Paul felt: "*For I think that God has exhibited us apostles as last of all, like men sentenced to death, because we have become a spectacle to the world, to angels, and to men. We are fools for Christ's sake, but you are wise in Christ. We are weak, but you are strong. You are held in honor, but we in disrepute*"[1 Cor 4:10]

It seems that to be a strong Xn you need to be prepared to suffer abuse - to be **wrongly accused!** But Jesus Christ is worth it!