

Daily Bread with Brother Hwa-Chi (Not reviewed by the speaker, for personal use only)

Mark 03: 07-12

Brothers and sisters, peace be with you, this is Hwa-Chi. Thank the Lord, it's time to read the Bible again; today we'll continue to read Mark chapter 3, verses 7 to 12.

Yesterday we mentioned that Mark recorded five examples. On the one hand, it clarifies the process of people receiving grace and salvation, starting from the forgiveness of sins, all the way to the healing of the withered hand, enabling them to start doing God's work and serving God. And among these five examples, on the other hand, it also points out that the force of the enemy's opposition gradually increased, to the point where the Pharisees and the Herodians joined together to plot to destroy Jesus.

According to the record in the Gospel of Mark, by this time, Jesus had called five disciples, namely Peter, Andrew, James, John, and Matthew. According to the timeline of Jesus' earthly ministry, it had also entered the final one and a half years. Although wherever Jesus went, there was always a crowd following Him, Jesus clearly knew that He could not entrust the ministry to these crowds. He must call some disciples who could truly undertake the entrustment. He would rather spend time on these disciples and intensify the discipleship training work. The increase of opposing forces from the outside was also the turning point for this change.

From verse 7 to verse 12, it records the environment at the time before Jesus called the twelve disciples and how Jesus disregarded the crowds, preferring to seek out those one or two individuals who were pure and wholeheartedly following the Lord. Let's read through verses 7 to 12: "But Jesus withdrew with His disciples to the sea. And a great multitude from Galilee followed Him, and from Judea and Jerusalem and Idumea and beyond the Jordan; and those from Tyre and Sidon, a great multitude, when they heard how many things He was doing, came to Him. So, He told His disciples that a small boat should be kept ready for Him because of the multitude, lest they should crush Him. For He healed many, so that as many as had afflictions pressed about Him to touch Him. And the unclean spirits, whenever they

saw Him, fell down before Him and cried out, saying, 'You are the Son of God.' But He sternly warned them that they should not make Him known." Now let's examine it verse by verse.

Verse 7: "But Jesus withdrew with His disciples to the sea. And a great multitude from Galilee followed Him."

When the Pharisees and Herodians secretly watched Jesus, seeking an opportunity to accuse Him of healing on the Sabbath, Jesus did not resist. Faced with such opposition, Jesus chose not to retaliate. In verse 7, Jesus and His disciples withdrew to the sea. He had been working in the city of Capernaum, but when opposition arose, He chose to leave and retreat to the seaside. This is a principle that Christians often need to grasp: when the environment is favorable, we thank the Lord and work diligently according to our calling; if opposition arises, we don't need to engage in conflict, but rather, wisely, we retreat to the seaside. The result? A great multitude followed Him from Galilee.

Galilee was where Jesus grew up, and His first sermon was delivered there. It is recorded in Luke chapter 4, "The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, Because He has anointed Me To preach the gospel to the poor; He has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives And recovery of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed; To proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord." And He also said to the Galileans, "Today this Scripture is fulfilled in your hearing." (Luke 4:18-19, 21, NKJV) Despite their desire for miracles, Jesus refrained from performing them, leading to His expulsion from the synagogue and an attempt to throw Him off a cliff, but He passed through the midst of them and went His way. Even so, many from Galilee came to follow Him amidst His miracles in the region of Capernaum.

Verse 8: "and from Judea and Jerusalem and Idumea and beyond the Jordan; and those from Tyre and Sidon, a great multitude, when they heard how many things He was doing, came to Him."

Here we note that it was upon hearing about the great things He had done, indicating that His miracles had spread far and wide. We understand that Jesus' primary role on Earth was preaching, with healing and casting out demons being incidental. However, His reputation for healing and casting out demons spread far and wide. As a result, many people came from various regions: from Judea, west of the Sea of Galilee; from Jerusalem, the capital at the time; from Idumea, the land of the Edomites, to the south; from beyond the Jordan to the east; and from the regions around Tyre and Sidon to the north. Virtually the whole land was included. From all directions, people heard about His deeds and many came to Him. On the one hand, this was beneficial as many people were in need of healing and deliverance from demons. Hearing that Jesus could heal and cast out demons, people from far and wide, from every direction, came. Jesus withdrew to the seaside, the Sea of Galilee, and consequently, these people followed Him there.

Verse 9: "So He told His disciples that a small boat should be kept ready for Him because of the multitude, lest they should crush Him."

For someone inclined to work, this was a great opportunity; His fame had spread far and wide, and people came from distant places to see Jesus. Yet, Jesus instructed His disciples to prepare a boat so that He could stand in it, thus avoiding being crushed by the crowd. Jesus was acutely aware that those who came seeking Him today could turn against Him tomorrow. Just as on His final entry into Jerusalem, where the crowd hailed Him with "Hosanna! Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord!" only to demand His crucifixion a few days later. Therefore, Jesus understood His mission clearly. He did not seek a crowd pressing upon Him; He sought those whom He had called. He was willing to invest His time in them, knowing that once they were developed, they would continue His work on Earth. Of course, Jesus, being the Son of God, was full of compassion and mercy towards

people. When they came to Him in need, He healed them. However, He did not entrust Himself to those who sought healing through miracles.

Verse 10: "For He healed many, so that as many as had afflictions pressed about Him to touch Him."

This illustrates the human condition—people are concerned about immediate needs. If they are sick today, they seek God's help for healing; if they are jobless, they pray for employment; if they are hungry, they ask God to provide five loaves and two fish. Yet, despite witnessing these miracles, few followed Jesus. Therefore, Jesus did not welcome the crowd pressing upon Him. However, due to His compassion, He healed them, leading even more people to gather around Him, not just those in need but also those curious to touch Him.

Verse 11: "And the unclean spirits, whenever they saw Him, fell down before Him and cried out, saying, 'You are the Son of God.'"

While many people didn't recognize Jesus as the Son of God, acknowledging only His ability to perform miracles, the unclean spirits were acutely aware. Regardless of where they encountered Him, they fell down and proclaimed, "You are the Son of God." This testimony from the demons underscores the extraordinary nature of Jesus' identity, as even demons bore witness to Him.

Verse 12: "But He sternly warned them that they should not make Him known."

In the Chinese version, the phrase "sternly warned" or "commanded" is rendered with elegance. However, in the original text, it's a rebuke; Jesus rebuked these demons, instructing them not to reveal Him. This raises an intriguing question: while these demons recognize Jesus as the Son of God, which humans often fail to do, Jesus does not accept their testimony. Not only does He reject their testimony,

but He also rebukes them, commanding them not to reveal Him. This starkly contrasts with our situation today. Wherever Jesus goes, there are extraordinary powers, miracles, and wonders accompanying Him. Jesus performs miracles, heals, and casts out demons solely for the sake of people's needs, not for His own glory. Because He came to earth as a servant Savior, all glory belongs entirely to the Father God. Furthermore, He sternly refuses to accept the testimony given by demons. Jesus knows that these demons originate from Satan, and He rejects any testimony that doesn't align with the truth. Not only does He reject it, but He also rebukes it.

God's servant, Jesus, not only ensures that things are done well but also insists on correctness in the process and the source of things. He only does what the Father God commands Him to do. Even when demons attempt to testify on His behalf, He sharply rebukes them. This stands in stark contrast to many of today's charismatic experiences, where we often come to God seeking personal assistance. Our motives, sources, and processes must be correct for the end result to be correct.

Many times, when issues are resolved or illnesses are healed, it may not necessarily be a miracle, and the source may not necessarily be God. Yet, we often proclaim it loudly. Jesus' preaching, healing, and demon-casting are entirely in accordance with the will of the Father God. Even in such situations, when demons testify for Him, He completely rejects it. Mark specifically points this out because he knows the hearts of people are deceitful. Further down, you'll see some say that He casts out demons by Beelzebub. In learning to serve God and the church, we must learn from Jesus' purity. In our service, our motives must be correct, our sources must be accurate, and our methods and processes must be correct to fulfill the work God has commanded us to do.

Let us pray together: Lord, we thank You for being the best example of service for us. Help us in our learning process of serving not to rush to see the results but to willingly humble ourselves before You. May our service be motivated solely by our love for You; may our ability to serve come entirely from prayer and the Holy Spirit; may we learn not to have any mixture in our service. Please guard us and bless every aspect of our service. Thank You, we pray in the name of Jesus Christ.