

The New Me and the Right People

Redefining the New Me

Mark Series #14

1.21.18

Mark 3:7–12 (NIV)

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.

1. Recap of "Redefining the New Me".

A. The past few weeks, we have talked about ways that Spiritual Disciplines can change us.

1. We've talked about fasting.
2. We've discussed the importance of a Sabbath to refresh and renew us.
3. Last week, we talked about the importance of ministering to others. (All these notes are available for download at Lickingag.com).

B. This week's passage comes on the heels of Jesus' conflict with the Pharisees.

1. The Pharisees weren't happy that Jesus' disciples weren't fasting.
2. The Pharisees were angry that Jesus' disciples worked on the Sabbath by picking grain.

3. Then the Pharisees became so angry after Jesus healed a man on the Sabbath that they started to plot against Jesus' life.

4. For the next 2 plus years, these men would try to find a way to get rid of Jesus.

C. More than likely, you have your own antagonists.

1. We all have our own critics.

2. We all have habits, behaviors, or addictions that try to sabotage our walk with Jesus.

3. As you work toward being more like Jesus, what are we supposed to do with those things and those voices that don't want us to succeed or do good?

D. This morning, we are going to look at how Jesus dealt with this criticism and how we can fulfill God's purpose for our lives.

The first thing Jesus did after the previous 3 incidents with the Pharisees is that...

2. Jesus withdrew with his disciples.

A. Jesus put some distance between himself and the negativity of the Pharisees.

1. The Pharisees didn't want Jesus to heal the sick.

a. The Pharisees didn't want Jesus to change their religion for the better.

b. The Pharisees wanted Jesus to either shut-up or get in line.

c. When he refused, they tried to kill him.

2. This is exactly what the enemy of your soul wants you to do.

a. Some of you are living for Jesus like you never have before.

b. You are serving God more than any time in your life.

- c. And the enemy of your soul doesn't like it.
- d. The devil wants you to either shut-up, get in line or die.
- e. John 10:10 says, Satan comes to "steal, kill, and destroy".
- f. That is what he does.

B. But this was not an option for Jesus.

- 1. Jesus had people to heal.
 - a. Jesus had demons to cast out.
 - b. Jesus had a Kingdom to establish.
- 2. Someday Jesus would die.
 - a. But he wouldn't die because of the hatred of a group of people.
 - b. Jesus didn't die a victim or a martyr.
 - c. Jesus gave up his life so that we might live.
 - d. Because of Jesus' death, we have victory over our most feared enemies.
 - 1. If your enemy's name is alcohol, you have victory over that.
 - 2. If your enemy is named after someone who hates you or hurt you, you have victory over the feelings and emotions you are feeling.
 - 3. Jesus came to give us a victory complex, not a victim complex.

C. So Mark says, Jesus withdrew with his disciples, and a large crowd from Galilee followed.

- 1. This was not a retreat or a sign of defeat.
- 2. This was a strategic decision on Jesus' part.

3. *He put distance between himself and his enemy.*

4. Why?

D. The key is found in those who followed after he withdrew.

1. **Jesus left the Pharisees not for his sake but for the sake of those who followed him.**

2. In the crowd that followed were people susceptible to the teachings of the Pharisees.

a. In that crowd were those being oppressed by the false teachings on Sabbath.

b. In that crowd were people in need of healing, desperate for God, who found nothing but powerless religion.

c. In that crowd were those who needed salvation, deliverance, and hope.

d. And as long as the Pharisees were around, some of those people would miss out on the power of God.

3. *So Jesus withdrew from those who did not want him in order to be with those who did.*

3. **We need to put some distance between us and our negative influences.**

A. We can't listen to every voice that is out there.

1. Jesus knew who he was.

a. Jesus knew what he was called to do.

b. Jesus knew what was right even when it wasn't popular.

c. That's why Jesus didn't give in to the pressure of the Pharisees.

2. You need to know who you are in Christ too!

a. When your identity is firm in Jesus, the opinions of others doesn't have as much influence.

b. When your identity is established in Jesus, He becomes the guiding voice of your life.

3. It's hard to hear the voice of Jesus among the shouts of the enemy.

B. We must ruthlessly eliminate anything from our lives that detracts us from Jesus.

1. That's why we have to put some distance between us and our enemy.

a. If alcohol is the biggest thing keeping you from a closer relationship with Jesus or with your family, get away from it and put some distance between you and the temptation.

b. If Porn is your biggest enemy, cancel HBO, have your spouse put a password on Netflix, and get a program to screen your internet.

c. If you have friends that bring out the worst in you every time you are around them, then put some distance between you and them.

2. Jesus and his disciples made a conscious decision when they left.

a. They knew that by leaving, they would have friends who would no longer talk to them.

b. They knew that their old synagogue/church would not accept them anymore.

c. They knew that they were making a break with their past.

d. Yet, they realized that this was what they must do in order to be the men of God that Jesus was calling them to be.

3. That is exactly what Jesus still asks us to do today.

a. Some of us need to leave behind our old life so we can take hold of our new one.

- b. Notice that Jesus didn't lock himself away from the world.
- c. Jesus didn't remain distant from everyone, but He surrounded himself with people who needed him.

4. Because Jesus separated himself from the negative influences, He was able to draw more people.

A. Jesus was always able to draw a crowd.

1. When Jesus taught, people showed up.
2. When Jesus did miracles, crowds came.
3. That's because "The Power of Jesus attracts a crowd".

B. There was something different about this crowd.

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.

1. What's the difference?
2. The crowd was no longer limited to local people, but people from all over the Middle East.

C. As Jesus put distance between himself and the hypocrisy of the Pharisees, more people came to Jesus.

1. And Jesus didn't disappoint.
2. He healed the sick.
3. Cast out demons.
4. And made a spectacle of the forces of darkness.
5. As Jesus made the difficult choice of separating himself from the Pharisees, He had the opportunity of doing more good than ever before.

5. Many of us have hamstrung our effectiveness by allowing negative influences to stick around.

A. Horses used to be an important weapon of war.

1. Horses were used for the mighty war chariots.
2. Later on, the best-bred horses were used for the powerful cavalry charges, long before there were tanks and machine guns.
3. Because horses were a vital weapon in warfare, conquering armies couldn't allow defeated people to hang on to their horses.
 - a. One option for conquering armies was to hamstring the horses.
 - b. The soldiers would cut the hamstrings of the horses, making sure that they could never run again.
 - c. The horses could work, but they would never be effective in battle.

B. When we refuse to put distance between us and those things that hinder us, we have hamstrung our relationship with Jesus and our effectiveness in our world.

1. The writer of Hebrews agrees with this thought.

Hebrews 12:1 (NIV)

Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, **let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles.** And let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us,

2. What is it that is hindering you right now?

- a. What is holding your relationship with Jesus back?
 1. Is it unforgiveness?
 2. Is it fear?

b. Are there relationships in your life that you know are toxic?

1. I'm not talking about your spouse.
2. Friends that lead you to wrong thoughts.
3. Coworkers that tempt you to do or say things you know you shouldn't.

c. What lies have you believed and made a truth?

1. Some of you believe that God can't forgive you.
2. Some of you believe that nobody loves you.
3. Some of you believe that you'll never be good enough, pretty enough, or worthy enough.
4. How do we overcome this?

3. It isn't enough to run away from something. You must run to SOMEONE.

6. Making room for the "right" kind of people will allow you to follow and serve Jesus like never before.

A. Our vertical relationship with God must be a priority.

1. If our relationship with Jesus isn't right, nothing else will be either.

a. "If I can just stop looking at porn...my life will be perfect."

b. "If I could just win the lottery all of my problems will be solved."

2. Thoughts like this simply aren't true.

a. It isn't enough to run away from temptations or problems.

b. We must run away from temptation, and run to Jesus.

3. How do you run to Jesus?

- a. Next time you are overwhelmed with anxiety and fear, write down what you are worried about and pray about it.
 - b. Run to Jesus by worshipping throughout your day.
 - c. Run to Jesus by investing time in prayer.
4. Find ways to make Jesus a priority in your life.
- a. This may mean you don't watch Games of Thrones anymore.
 - b. Or maybe you have to change who you hang out with after work.
 - c. Whatever it is the Lord puts on your heart, don't be afraid to give it to him.
 - d. Because **what Jesus asks you to give up he replaces with something far better!**
 - e. We all must make room for Jesus in our lives.

B. We also must make room for the right people in our lives (horizontal).

1. When I say right kind of people, I'm not talking about their looks, their income, or anything like that.
 - a. Those things don't matter to God.
 - b. And they shouldn't matter to us.
2. **We all need two kinds of people in our lives:**
 - a. Those who love Jesus and encourage us.**
 - b. Those who need Jesus and challenge us.**
3. Find some people in your life who love Jesus and encourage you.
 - a. Spend time with them.
 - b. Worship with them on Sunday.

- c. Take them out to breakfast or give them a call.
 - d. Surround yourself with people who don't just make you feel good, but who want you to be all you can be in Jesus.
4. Also, find people who need Jesus and challenge you.
- a. Just as much as you need a positive influence in your life, there are those around you who you are called to be that influence to them.
 - b. **How will people know about the love and hope of Jesus unless they see it in you?**
 - c. **We can't cut our self-off from the world that we have been called to minister to.**

Close: This morning, we all find ourselves in different places of life.

A. For some, the Lord is dealing with you in an area or two.

- 1. If so, He isn't doing this because He hates you but because HE loves you.
- 2. Maybe you have been thinking or feeling that something needs to change in your life.
- 3. It could be that Jesus is inviting you to take a huge step forward with Him by putting some distance between you and whatever it is that is holding you back.
- 4. If that is you, I want you to know that the Holy Spirit is ready to help you.
- 5. You are not alone, and you don't have to face it alone.

B. For some of us, the Holy Spirit is challenging you to surround yourself with the right kind of people.

- 1. Maybe you need to be more intentional about putting positive role-models in your life.
- 2. Or maybe you look around and realize that all of your friends already know Jesus and you need to befriend some people who challenge you to show them the love of Jesus.

C. The Lord is working on all of us this morning.

1. Let's take a moment and pray.
2. And ask the Holy Spirit to help us respond.