

Mark 3

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Preacher: James Chu

[0 : 00] Good evening. I bring you warm greetings from your brothers and sisters in Manila and Pilgrim Community Church.

! As we come to God's Word, I'd like to turn with me again to Mark's Gospel in chapter 3. And I'll read a passage for us. This is verses 7 to 12.

Let's hear now God's Word. Jesus withdrew with his disciples to the sea, and a great crowd followed, from Galilee and Judea and Jerusalem and Edomia, and from beyond the Jordan and from around Tyre and Sidon.

When the great crowd heard all that he was doing, they came to him. And he told his disciples to have a boat ready for him, because of the crowd, lest they crush him.

For he had healed so many, for he had healed many, so that all who had diseases pressed around him to touch him.

[1 : 26] And whenever the unclean spirits saw him, they fell down before him and cried out, You are the Son of God! And he strictly ordered them not to make him known.

Father, we give you thanks for this hour of worship.

We give you thanks that in your wisdom and in your providence, you have given us six days to go about our vocation. But you've set apart one day out of seven, a day of rest and gladness, a day to ascend Mount Zion, to worship.

This is the day that you have promised in your word. You have said that in every place that you cause your name to be remembered, you will come and you will meet us and you will bless us. And so we ask now, as we come again, to consider your word, to hear your word, that you, by your Holy Spirit, give us ears to hear, eyes to see, and hearts to obey.

[2 : 32] We pray these things in Jesus' name. Amen. Well, it's an honor to be back here in Ealing with all of you this morning. I was last back here, I think it was 2019, and then COVID happened.

And then I was supposed to come back last year, and then my visa, I had visa problems. So it's so good to be back here. As was mentioned earlier, our church just celebrated our 10th anniversary. So that was two weeks ago. We had a simple Thanksgiving celebration. And it's been so encouraging for myself to look back on 10 years and to see how the Lord has held our hand and has grown the ministry.

I still recall the early days of church planting, when we would only have a handful of people come to our gatherings. Despite the occasional discouragement and doubt, the Lord has faithfully sustained us and has kept us faithful to his gospel.

Indeed, slowly but surely, the Lord added to our number those who wanted and needed to hear the good news that Jesus Christ is the only Savior of sinners.

[4 : 00] But we need to understand that not everyone comes to Jesus or indeed comes to church for the right reasons. This is true not only in our time, but also in Jesus' time.

Different people were drawn to him for different reasons. In fact, not everyone in the crowds that we just read that were following him actually believed in him.

Some came to Jesus because they saw him as a healer, as someone who could make things better.

Others followed him because they perceived him to be a hero, someone who could fight their battles for them.

Many today who claim to be Christians view Jesus in a similar way. They view Jesus as a key to the victorious life that they desire and that they were destined for.

[5 : 13] Some people, they come to church because they think, well, you know, it's a tit for tat. I come to church, Jesus blessed me. Some people, they come to church because probably they've

encountered a difficult thing in life.

And they think, I got to go to church to make it all better. Now, many tend to think that following Jesus means assured prosperity or assured health.

Perhaps for some of us here today, there is still some sense of this within us as well. So the question that I'd like for all of us to consider this evening is this.

It's a very simple question. You know Jesus. But what kind of a savior is Jesus for us?

This evening, as we turn our attention to our text in the Gospel of Mark, the Word of God is teaching us that many people want Jesus as a healer or as a hero.

[6 : 23] But his compassion for sinners, that's the good news that we all need. I have three points for us to consider this evening. Number one, a savior who can make life easier.

Number two, a savior who can vanquish our enemies. And number three, a savior who has compassion for sinners.

Now, for the boys and girls, and I also do this at Pilgrim, I want to give you three key words. Okay?

So these are just three words. They all start with the letter H.

And I want you to remember them. And the reason why I want you to remember them is because you might not understand everything I say this evening. But your parents will. So remember the three key words so that when you go home, you ask, Mommy, what does healer mean?

What does hero mean? What does heart mean? Those are the three key words. Healer, hero, heart. Okay?

[7 : 34] So let's look at the first point. A savior who can make life easier. Look at me in verses 7 to 8 again. Jesus withdrew with his disciples to the sea, and a great crowd followed, from Galilee and Judea, and Jerusalem and Edomia, and from beyond the Jordan, and from around Tyre and Sidon.

When the great crowd heard all that he was doing, they came to him. Now Jesus was withdrawing with his disciples to the Sea of Galilee because the religious leaders, and Paul read this earlier when we read chapter 3, the religious leaders were plotting to destroy him.

They wanted to kill him. Jesus withdrew then to the lakeside, but he didn't stop what he was out to do. He kept preaching. He kept healing.

He kept casting out demons, as he did. And so as a result, as you would expect, as I would expect, a great crowd from different places in Israel.

This is representative of Palestine. The heydays of Old Testament Israel. People from all over were coming to follow Jesus.

[8 : 49] And Jesus' reputation, you see, had spread. And what was that reputation? There's a miracle worker down in Galilee. There's an exorcist down in Galilee.

And so people are coming. But we want to ask the question, why exactly were the people coming to him?

Was it to hear him preach the gospel? Jesus said that was his mission, to preach the kingdom of God. The preaching, sorry, the healing, the casting out of demons, these are signs of his authority in the way that he preached the gospel.

So were the people coming because of the preaching? Were the people coming in order to be his disciples? Well, I want you to look in verse 8 again. When the great crowd heard all that he was teaching?

No. All that he was doing, they came to him. The great crowd came to him when they heard all that he was doing. People were coming to Jesus because of what they have heard that he was able to do for them.

[10 : 12] For many in the crowd, they were following Jesus because he was pretty impressive. He was a miracle worker. He was a healer. Verse 10 tells us that the sick were pressing in on him and they were healed by merely touching him.

The crowds were seeking Jesus because they saw him as a savior who was a healer, who could make their lives easier. Now friends, many people today have the same idea about Jesus.

Many come to church because they think that Jesus can make their lives better or easier. Many people are attracted to Jesus for what they perceive that they could get from him.

And make no mistake, this also happens in Reformed and Presbyterian churches. We are not immune.

There are people who come to our churches and I'll speak of my own church. There are a lot of people who come to our church in search of what they perceive to be theological precision and

doctrinal depth.

[11 : 28] They want to come because they can learn something. But how many people do we know? How many people do you know?

People who are young people, very intelligent, very zealous, who discover the riches of the Reformed faith. They get plugged into the various activities of the church.

They show great promise for a time. But then they suddenly disappear from our fellowship without notice. And we later find out that they had encountered difficulties and troubles in their lives.

And so they have since abandoned Christianity when it started to hurt. The theological discussions may have been stimulating.

The socials were fun. They came to know a lot of things about God. but they knew God very little. When the pressures of life pressed in, they realized that following Jesus was no longer worth it.

[12 : 40] And suddenly they've outgrown the theology they once found exciting and attractive.

Beloved, if we come to Jesus for anything other than Jesus, then we're really just fetching blessings for ourselves.

We're really just paying lip service to Him. Now, don't get me wrong. There's certainly nothing wrong with wanting to have an easier life.

Who doesn't want to have an easier life? I want to have an easier life. There's a sense in which true saving faith in Christ should result in some sense in a positive change in our present lives.

But that change may not be what we expect it to be. The change that the gospel brings about is a change in perspective. We gain a proper biblical vista on our life, on our suffering, and of the present hope of future glory.

But if we view Jesus merely as the stepping stone to this easier and better life that we desire or that we think that we deserve, then we will end up just like those people in the crowd who only saw Jesus as a healer, a Savior who could make their lives easier.

[14 : 20] Which brings me to point number two, a Savior who can vanquish our enemies. We'd like that, don't we? Another reason why the crowds were pressing in on Jesus was because of the promise of deliverance from unclean spirits.

Look at verses 11 and 12. And whenever the unclean spirits saw him, they fell down before him and cried out, you are the Son of God. And he strictly ordered them not to make him known.

Again, there's nothing wrong with wanting to be delivered from our hardships and from our adversities. We all want and need a Savior who can and will subdue all his and our enemies.

But if we are only coming to Jesus because he is able to grant us temporal relief from our troubles, our pains, our confusions, our sufferings and our griefs, then we're still largely missing the point of the gospel.

If we are coming to church to be rid of our problems, then we do not understand what kind of a place the church is. Can I say to you, the church is not a place where we can be freed from our problems.

[15 : 42] It is a place where our problems become intelligent. understandable. It is a place where as we come sitting under the preached word week in and week out that we find that our problems begin to make sense.

And they make sense because the Bible teaches us that God is in control. He is sovereign. He is at work in history and he is working all things together for good.

when Jesus returns, he will reconcile all things to himself and he will make all things new. But if we come to Jesus with our own schedule, as you would say, our own timeline, and we demand that he deal with finality, with our problems now, then what we really want is not a savior who will save us from all our sins.

What we want is a hero who will act like our personal bodyguard. For many in the crowd, this was their thinking too. They wanted a savior who could drive away their enemies.

For many of them, as they heard the unclean spirits' true yet malicious words, you are the son of God, their minds were not led to think of Jesus as the son of God, coming into the world as a savior, as a redeemer of sinners.

[17 : 20] You see, in those times, the messianic expectations that were swirling around in their minds was that of a strong military and political leader who would restore the kingdom of Israel, who would vanquish the occupiers.

Many think that Jesus is the champion who, if only they could just get him to be on their side, will ensure that everything will turn out okay for them.

But this is to miss the heart behind Jesus' earthly mission, which is what the third point in my sermon points us to, a savior who has compassion for sinners.

We have seen that there were two wrong reasons why people were crowding around Jesus, some wanted a healer, some wanted a hero, but what about us? What kind of savior is Jesus to you, to us?

What do we want from him? Do we just want to use him as an instrument for our personal fulfillment? Do we want him as a healer to make our lives easier?

[18 : 36] Do we want him as a hero? Jesus, remove all the obstacles, stand in way of the fulfillment of my hopes and aspirations? Well, the middle two verses in our text reveal something to us about Jesus' compassion.

I want us to focus on this in this point. Verses 9 and 10, 10 and he told his disciples to have a boat ready for him because of the crowd lest they crush him.

For he had healed many so that all who had diseases pressed around him to touch him. The crowds were following Jesus, they were pressing in on him. You know, he was actually at risk of being crushed by the sheer amount of people.

At any point in time, he could have just said, Peter, can you tell them it's enough for today? Can you can just send them home? I'm tired.

Let's do it again tomorrow. At any point, he could have done that. He does not do this. He does not hinder the crowd.

[19 : 44] And he still continues to heal them. Instead, he instructs his disciples, have a boat ready just in case. Now, in this instance, he doesn't use it.

Later on, he does. But what was the wisdom behind having a boat ready? And why didn't Jesus just send the crowds away? Well, it was so that he could keep preaching to them, isn't it?

Earlier in Mark chapter 1, verses 38, 28 to 30, we read there that he said to his disciples, let us that I may preach there also.

For, because, that is why I came out. Being in a boat while the crowd remained at the lake shore would have provided a great opportunity to proclaim the gospel to even more people.

He would have had occasion to call more people to repentance, to put their faith in him. Jesus' instruction here to have a boat ready reveals to us the kind of compassionate heart that he had.

[20 : 58] And brothers and sisters, this is the kind of savior that Jesus is. One whose heart is for the needy sinners. He had not come only to heal their physical diseases, but to resurrect them from spiritual death.

He had come not only to give them a boost so that they could overcome the obstacles that they faced in life. You can do it. Here's some grace. He had come to overcome their greatest enemies, sin, Satan, and the stronghold of secularism.

So as we close, let's reflect on a few things. If you're here and you're a Christian, I want to challenge you to have a heart check.

What kind of a savior is Jesus to you? Is he only a healer? Is he only a hero? Or is he, as that ancient and beloved hymn reminds us, heart of my own heart, whatever befall, still be my vision, O ruler of all.

Speaking of the savior's heart, what could we learn about his approach to those who had legitimate material needs? There was no dichotomy in Jesus' mind, oh, but I'm just here to preach the gospel.

[22 : 27] If you need some material help, please approach our deacons. They are very good at what they're doing. No. The ministry of word indeed were in Jesus' imperfect complementarity.

He's out for the needy. He compassionately helped them. And he did it because he could, not because they deserved it.

He showed mercy and grace. And should we not do likewise sacrifice, when we are in a position to help other people.

Ask yourself, what are my requirements for helping people? Because for Jesus, the only requirement was this, they need help, and I'm able.

Now, maybe you're here and you're not sure if you're a Christian. maybe you're here and you're exploring, what does it mean to follow Jesus?

[23 : 41] Well, the same question is being asked of you by the text today. What kind of a savior do you think Jesus is? is he someone who can make your life easier?

Is he someone who can fight off your enemies? Or someone who truly loves you? I hope what is shown through in this text for you is Jesus' compassionate heart.

Someone who desires to give himself to you. And I hope that you see that this is the great need of your life.

The great need of our lives is to belong to Jesus. My friend, the salvation that he offers is not just for the here and now.

He promises you everlasting life in himself. And so if you will repent of your sins, if you will repent of, if you will forsake all of your efforts to save yourself, and if you will believe in him today, if you will see with open eyes his compassion for you, and if you come to Jesus and you say, forgive me, my sins, save me, you know what he will do?

[25 : 26] He will save you. He will forgive you your sins. And you know why he'll do it? Because only he can.

my dear friend, this is the kind of savior that Jesus is. If he is not yet your savior today, look to him, turn to him in faith, and he will save you.

Let's pray. Father in heaven, we give you thanks for sending your son, the Lord Jesus Christ, who has come, for this purpose, which is to preach the gospel.

And we give you thanks that it is very clear in the gospels what kind of a savior he is. He has come to be among us.

He has come to champion for us, yes, but he has come to take us home to you through the great sacrifice of his own death.

[26 : 38] God will And tonight I pray, Lord, that as we continue to meditate upon these things by your Holy Spirit, you will reveal to us those wrong ideas that we may have of Jesus.

Some of us might be looking to Jesus and wanting Jesus as a healer. Oh, I hope Jesus makes everything right.

He will. love of Jesus. Maybe some of us, Lord, are here and we're looking for a champion, a hero. We give you thanks that he is our true champion against sin, Satan, and secularism.

But more than all of that, I pray, Lord, you will make clear in each one of our hearts the love of Jesus and that, Lord, you will enable us to believe in him and to want Jesus for Jesus, to belong to him.

Would you do this? We pray you would by your Holy Spirit. We pray these in Jesus' name.