The Team is Assembled

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[0:00] This is the First Mustang Pulpit Podcast, a podcast of the weekly preaching and teaching at First Mustang.! Thank you for joining us.!

This is a passage we've got to understand. I feel that way every single, I felt that way my entire life in ministry and I certainly feel that urgency today.
This is such an incredibly important passage. Mark 3, verses 7 to 19, Jesus is assembling His team. He's picking the men who are going to be His apostles, who are going to be the closest to Him.
I don't know if they still do this on playgrounds or not, but back in my day, you know what's coming? You pick teams. And they did not, I can tell you by a first-hand example, they did not typically pick the shortest, skinniest, scrawniest, slowest people first.
That was my testimony. I give you a first example, first-hand, that the skinniest, scrawniest, weakest, slowest are not the ones that are often picked first. It usually ends up being, you know what, we've got seven, we've got six, we've got to have one more.
[1:35] I guess we'll take you. Thank you so much for that. Now, when you pick teams, you say, that's a big, strong guy. That's a fast girl. I want that one on my team.

It's interesting, as Jesus symbols His team, it is not the team that most people would have expected. In fact, not the team that anybody would have expected. We'll see that as we walk through this text together.
Mark 3, verse 7. And Jesus withdrew with His disciples to the sea, and a great crowd followed from Galilee and Judea and Jerusalem and in Jumea and from beyond the Jordan and around Tyre and Sidon.
And 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 many, so that all who had diseases pressed around Him to touch Him.
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.
[2:50] I want to show you three things this morning from this passage and the one to follow. First, Jesus refuses the testimony of the impure.

Jesus refuses the testimony of the impure. I'm speaking specifically here of the demons, of the demonic realm.
Let's go back to the context here in verse 7. Jesus withdrew with His disciples to the sea, and a great crowd followed. So Jesus leaving Capernaum. We've been talking about that place a lot in this gospel.
And at this point in the ministry of Jesus, the religious leaders have made their verdict. We looked at it last week, chapter 3, verse 6. The Pharisees went out and immediately held counsel with the Herodians against Him how to destroy Him.
The religious leaders cast their verdict. We want to destroy. We want to completely do away with this man named Jesus. But the people are still highly intrigued.
[4:02] Maybe not so much for His message, but certainly for His miracles. I mean, after all, who wouldn't be intrigued by someone who could heal if your body is wracked with pain?

We all would. And so, some for sure want to hear what Jesus says, but most are interested just in what Jesus can do.
And Mark tells us that there's a big crowd that follows Him, and he lists all these different places. And there is some detail here that's significant.
He mentions a number of these locations. And if you map out the locations, what you find is you've got people coming from all different directions. You've got people coming from the south, people

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coming from even further down in the south, those from beyond the Jordan over to the east, those to the north and the west from Tyre and Sidon.
So you've got people coming from all locations. If you look at the people in the geography, you also notice you've got people coming from largely Jewish population circles.
[5:11] You've got people coming from largely Gentile population circles. You've got people in areas that are mixed Jew and Gentile. And so, with just a few words, what Mark makes clear is it's not just a large crowd that's following Jesus.

It's all kinds of people from all over. This is not limited to just one category or just one place. This is from all over in terms of geography and all over in terms of the groups of people who are coming out to see Him.
And Jesus is just doing what He always did. He's preaching the gospel. He's calling on people to repent. Let me just remind you, make note, Mark 1, 14, 15.
We've looked at this a number of times already in our weeks in Mark. Jesus came proclaiming the gospel, verse 15, saying, The time is fulfilled.
The kingdom of God is at hand. Repent and believe in the gospel. Jesus was always teaching. He was always proclaiming the gospel. He was healing and He was casting out demons.
[6:21] And the Bible tells us that the great crowd heard what He was doing and they came to Him. Thousands of people are coming to Him. And it's interesting as you follow the life of Christ that Jesus never lets the response of the people dictate His message.

He preached the same gospel. And sometimes there were many people there who wanted to hear. And sometimes there were people there that were trying to trap and accuse Him.
And sometimes He would declare the truth and nobody would be around Him. But Jesus never let the fact that His message was drawing crowds get Him to change His message.
And He never let the fact that many people didn't even believe in what He was saying cause Him to change His message either. Jesus is not deterred by apparent success.
He's not deterred by threats or opposition. For Jesus, it's simply one thing.
[7:29] Preach the gospel. That's it. And some will cheer Him and some will conspire how to destroy Him.

But the message will not change. In verse 9, He told His disciples to have a boat ready for Him because of the crowd lest they crush Him. The picture here is that all these people are gathering in and they're wanting to touch Him.
They're wanting to get near Him. They're wanting to have His power come and heal their sickness and heal their bodies. And everyone's pressing in all around Him.
He says, have a boat ready. Why? Because He's just making the wise, practical kinds of preparation, which is helpful for us. What Jesus says is, if all these people are pressing in on me, I may need to be able to get away for pure safety.
So He tells His disciples, have a boat prepared. Here's why that's important. Being people of faith and being people of trust is not in contradiction with making wise, practical plans for the future.
[8:49] Make those plans through the eyes of faith. Make those plans in a way that honors Christ. But there's nothing wrong with being prepared.

There's nothing wrong with making decisions for your life that make sense. If the goal of your life is just simply to always be comfortable and have life easy, then you're going to find yourself going against what God has called us to do.
But Jesus says, there's a bunch of people here. They're all crowding in on me. And He tells His disciples, have a boat in case we need to get away. It wasn't just that, though.
He would often, if the crowds were very big, use that boat as a pulpit. He would get away from the crowds, get in the boat as a center point, a focus point, and He would then teach them. You see that in chapter 4, verse 1.
He began to teach beside the sea, and a very large crowd gathered about Him, so that He got into a boat and sat in it on the sea, and the whole crowd was beside the sea on the land.
[9:58] And so it's just this image of hundreds and hundreds and hundreds and hundreds and hundreds of people pressing in, pushing in. They're coming from all directions. They're coming from all over.

Everybody wants to get near Him. And in this throng of people, Jesus is going to speak. Verse 11, Whenever the unclean spirits saw Him, they fell down before Him and cried out, You are the Son of

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God.
These are impure, demonic spirits. At the time of Jesus, demonic activity is ramped up all the more. And He encounters these demons possessing people everywhere.
And it's very interesting if you look at what is going on here, as these demons in verse 11 say, You are the Son of God.
That's true. He is. And it's not the first time that we've seen that happen. If you go back to chapter 1, verse 24, What have you to do with us, Jesus of Nazareth?
[11:07] Have you come to destroy us? I know who you are. You're the Holy One of God. If you go to chapter 5, verse 7, Crying out in a loud voice, this is from the demon, What have you to do with me, Jesus, Son of the Most High God?

What's interesting is what you see is many times these demons, these impure spirits are declaring actually what is true of who Christ is.
They don't love Jesus. They don't worship Him. They are in rebellion to Him. But what they declare is true. He is the Son of the Most High God.
You recall James 2, 19, Even the demons believe there is one God, and they shudder. So the demons understand who God is. They understand who Jesus Christ, the Son of God is.
And in fact, at this point in the gospel, you've got to take a step back and recognize that what we've already seen is God the Father, at the baptism of Jesus, Jesus has declared that Jesus is His beloved Son.
[12:24] Jesus Himself has declared who He is. And now, even the demons declare who He is. Yet the religious leaders won't believe in Him.

The Father's declared He's God. The Son's declared He's God. Even the demons declared He's God. The demons have a more clear theology of Jesus than the religious leaders of the day do. And they say, You are the Son of God. Now look at verse 12. And He strictly ordered them not to make Him known. It's interesting.
Jesus does not accept the testimony of the impure. Now why is that?
I think there's a couple of things that are going on here. One, we're going to see in verses 22 and following in a couple of weeks, this very important section known as the blasphemy of the Holy Spirit.
[13:43] And what they're going to do is they are going to say, Jesus, we see your miracles. We can't argue or dispute that you do miracles. We refuse to believe that you are from God.

So our only choice left is to assign to you that you are demonic. You are satanic. You do the devil's work. Jesus actually preemptively will show how foolish that is by every time He cuts the demons off and says, I don't want you to even speak of who I am, even if what you say is true.
He wants nothing to do with them. He is cutting out the legs from their charges even before the charge gets leveled.
But beyond that, Jesus also here just has no interest in the impure speaking even the things that are true. And I think there's some implications for us today.
That if you are somebody who does not love Jesus, you know the Word, you sit under the teaching of the Word, but you do not believe or submit yourself to the Word.
[15:02] If you think He will be satisfied or pleased because you sang a few songs or gave an offering today or wrote down a few sermon notes, just understand Jesus is never pleased with the testimony or worship of those who do not love Him.

That may sound shocking to you. Just understand God is not in heaven lonely and desperate and just thinking, I'll just take anybody who will sing my song.
No. No. He is the sovereign of the universe. And it's true. He delights in the praises of His people. He does. But He does not accept the testimony of the impure. Does He accept worship from imperfect people?
Absolutely, as we'll see in just a minute. But from the impure, from those who do not believe, from those who do not love, from those who are not connected to Him, He never seeks or approves of their testimony.
[16:24] So I'll just say to you today that if for you, you don't love Christ, but you think that maybe He owes you a favor because you came to church anyway.

You don't love Him, but you went ahead and sang the songs anyway. Just understand, while we as a congregation love that you're here, and you're welcome here every single Sunday as an

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unbeliever, just do understand that God needs no favors done for Him.
He's looking for worshipers, not deal makers. And if you have this idea that if I go to church enough and go through emotions enough, even if I do not believe, if I die, and it turns out I was wrong, maybe God will have pity on me.
Just understand, God did have pity on you, and He sent His Son, Jesus Christ, as a Savior for your sin. But if you reject Him, there is no other way.
Jesus refuses the testimony of the impure. The good news, number two, is that Jesus welcomes the ministry of the imperfect.
[17:52] Jesus welcomes the ministry of the imperfect. Speaking here of the disciples, verses 13 to 18 gives us the listing of the first 11 disciples, and verse 19 adds Judas Iscariot the 12th who betrayed Him.

It says in verse 13 that Jesus is going to graciously call these imperfect men to be His apostles. So while Christ will not accept the testimony of the impure who do not know, believe, or love Him, aren't you grateful that He still welcomes the ministry of the imperfect?
If the standard was that you have to be perfect to teach your class today, or to preach the sermon today, or to lead the songs today, or to drive those really cool new carts out there for hospitality, if you have to be perfect to serve, it goes without saying there would be nobody here to do anything.
I can point to a dozen ministries in our church where the Lord is blessing and doing great things, and every single one of them have imperfect leaders. Everyone.
And every sermon you hear from this church comes from an imperfect man. Everyone. Yet God, in His grace, welcomes the ministry of imperfect people.
[19:34] Let me show you how this happens. He's going to call together the 12. The New Testament gives us four different times where the disciples are listed. Peter is always first.

Judas is always last. We'll look at them in detail next week. But the names of who He calls, it's mentioned there in verses 13 to 19. Verse 16, you've got Simon, James, John, Andrew, Philip, Bartholomew, Matthew, Thomas, another James, Thaddeus, Simon, and Judas Iscariot.
You know what this is? This is a complete rejection of the religious system of the day. That's what this is. Jesus assembles His team and He does not say, where are the leaders?
Where are the influential people? Where are the guys with all the power? Where are the guys that are the most highly educated? I've got to have the most influential men. He says, no, I'll take the untrained.
I'll take the unskilled. I'll take the common man. 1 Corinthians 1, 26-27, Paul says, consider your calling, brothers.
[20:56] Not many of you were wise according to worldly standards. Not many were powerful. Not many were of noble birth. But God chose what is foolish in the world to shame the wise.

And God chose what is weak in the world to shame the strong. God does not come through Christ the Son to call to Himself the elite.
He doesn't go to the faithless yet powerful religious leaders. He calls fishermen and tax collectors the common, even the outcast as a clear repudiation of the religious leaders of that day.
The religious, I've been showing you the last several weeks case after case of how Jesus attacks the religious system of the day and now, now he's just gone over the top with this in their mind. He's telling the religious leaders they need to repent. He's telling the religious leaders that their works are of no value. And now, he's going to say, I will call and assemble my team and I do not need the elite, the powerful, or the scholarly to do this.
[22:25] Because he's going to completely reject their system entirely. Now, what does he do when he calls these disciples? Verse 13, he went up on the mountain and he called to him those whom he desired and they came to him.

And he appointed twelve, whom he also named apostles, that they might be with him and might send them out to preach and have authority to cast out demons.
I want you to make note of this, all right? Jesus calls these imperfect men to be his apostles. Make note of these three things. One, he calls them. Luke 6 tells us this same exact encounter but adds in verse 12 that Jesus spent the entire night in prayer before he did this.
I want you to notice that Jesus, as he calls them, takes time to withdraw and pray. how much more should that be true of us?

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Friends, do you have time in your day where you withdraw and pray? Are you making prayer a priority in your life?
[23:38] Jesus would withdraw and then he prayed. He called them to himself. Secondly, verse 14, he appointed twelve that the language here, the New Testament, appoint, actually is the idea behind the word of creating.

He's creating these disciples, these apostles. And then, thirdly, he's going to send them. He calls them, he appoints them, establishes them, and then he's going to send them.
Verse 14 and 15, send them to preach and have authority. This is so critical to understand that he's going to call these men to himself to spend time with him and then he's going to send them out to do ministry.
This is true for us as well, my friends, that we must, as Christians, spend time in communion with the Lord. First, we spend time with him, then we go speak for him.
this world has far too many men calling themselves pastors who do not spend time with the Lord.
[24:53] Do we need preachers? You bet, but they must be men who have spent time with the Lord. Young men, there's some guys in this service who may feel a call to preach.

Let me help you understand this. You better love the study more than you love the microphone. You must. If you don't, you will become a showman.
Jesus called them to himself and the men spent time with him, communing with him, talking to him, getting to know him, learning from him, then we will send them out to preach.
teach. And let me hit both sides of that. For those of us who teach, I mean, this is true for all of us, but specifically for those of us in the body of Christ who teach, if we try to get with God's people to teach them and we haven't first been with the Lord, then the best thing we can do is impress people with us.
That's the best we can do, which will do them no good. you must first be with the Lord. But let me also say this to those who teach.
[26:11] While we must first be with the Lord, it is then appropriate and fitting that we have to leave the study and go serve people.

And sometimes you get teachers or pastors who love to teach but don't love to study and that is a mess, but sometimes you get other people who are just the opposite. They love to be alone, they love to read, they love to study, they love to pray, they love to write, they just don't like all the people around them.
There's no ministry where there's not people. So just understand that if you're doing ministry without first being with Christ, you're going to make a mess. But if you spend time with the Lord, that is what propels you then to go and feed His sheep.
the leaders in the church should always make sure that they are first with God and then faithfully with God's people.
So He calls them, He appoints them, He sends them. Verses 16 and 19, He names them, we find out who they are, and He wants these men to go and preach the good news.
[27:31] But they're first going to be summoned to know Him. So Jesus refuses the testimony of the impure. He tells the demon, don't even want you to even speak.

But secondly, Jesus welcomes the ministry of the imperfect. That's really good news for us. And let me just say briefly, thirdly, in a very strange reality that Jesus allows the friendship of the insincere. Jesus allows the friendship of the insincere. Let me walk you through what I mean here. Verse 19, when you get to the ending of the list of the 12, verse 19, and Judas Iscariot who betrayed him. One of the 12 disciples was a fraud. It's kind of hard to wrap our minds around, isn't it? And then you've got 12 men who Jesus poured most of his time into.
12 men who saw the miracles, heard the preaching, not only heard the formal teaching of Jesus, but just the oh by the way, on the way teaching of walking streets after streets and yet one of them wasn't even a legitimate believer in him.
[29:09] And I want you to understand that while he refused the testimony of the impure, the demon, he does allow the friendship of the insincere, namely Judas.

For three years, Judas is with Jesus and he appears to be just like the other 11. So much so that in the upper room before Christ is crucified, when Jesus says, one of you will betray me.
If you have in your mind that everybody thinks, well, it's Judas, that's not how it played out. It's not like the other 11 suspected Judas was a fraud.

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the disciples say, it's not me, is it? I'm not the betrayer, it's not me, right? It's not like 11 fingers went straight to the face of Judas and said, we knew it, we knew all along he was a fraud.
It's not how it was. Because for three years, Judas looked just like them and sang just like them and ministered just like them.
[30:35] And at any point in those three years, if you'd have taken a snapshot of Judas, it would have seemed he was a friend of Jesus.

which does have a couple of highly significant implications for us today.
One, proximity does not equal relationship. Jesus shut down the demon but allowed Judas to walk with him for three years.
Judas was physically as close to Jesus as you could possibly get. But his proximity did not mean he had a true relationship with Jesus.
Friend, that could be true of you today. You're physically surrounded! He's by hundreds!
[31:47] and hundreds of people in this room. You have heard the same songs that the rest of us have heard. You have sung the same songs that we have sung.

you have witnessed the same baptism that we have. You have engaged in the same prayers that we have. You have opened your Bible and followed along with the scripture reading like everybody else has.
You've heard the preaching like everybody else has. You are talking all morning long to believers and you look just like us. You don't stand out.
We don't know who is in this room that's a fraud. You ought to check yourself.
You ought to make sure that you love the Lord Jesus Christ because just proximity alone does not mean there's a true relationship.
[32:55] You may even be friendly with the church. Judas was friendly with Jesus too. Jesus immediately shut down the demon but Judas kept walking with him for three years.

If you say to yourself if the Lord were really displeased with me he surely would have zapped me dead already please my dear friend do not mistake his patience and grace with his acceptance of what you've done.
The fact he has tolerated your sin speaks not that you have him fooled but that he has been more gracious to you than you could have ever deserved.
Second convincing others provides no security. Convincing others that you really believe provides no security.
Judas had done that. Judas had convinced all the others that he was really one of the believers and the truth is he was not.
[34:20] can I say to you my dear friends that your friends are not your final judge the Lord is.

You may have fooled your friends. You may have fooled this church. You may have fooled me. You will not fool the Lord.
You may comfort yourself by saying everybody thinks I'm genuine. You may have even gone a step further and you have now gone from fooling those around you.
You may have even fooled yourself. And you say I guess I really am a believer because surely an unbeliever wouldn't go to church.
An unbeliever wouldn't sing the songs. An unbeliever would not volunteer to teach the children. An unbeliever wouldn't sacrifice their time and money to do the work of ministry.
[35:26] Surely those things must mean I am a believer. And to that Mark says to you in chapter 3 verse 19 Judas and Judasmumbles who betrayed him.

Judas sang every song and listened to every sermon. And though he convinced others it brought him no security.
what you see in this passage is that the Lord Jesus refuses the testimony of the impure he's not looking for someone just to sing songs of praise he's looking for genuine worshippers in his grace he welcomes the ministry of the imperfect he calls these common ordinary men to do his work and he even allowed the friendship of the insincere but the purpose behind that was to warn was to warn that you may be physically close and spiritually dead do not mistake your hobbies or interest for conversion you tell me people would go to church that don't really love Jesus sure it's the nicest people I know the most kind most generous most giving people I know in my life are in this room and they'll serve you they'll help you they'll bring meals to you when you're sick they'll go help the elderly when storms come through and not down trees

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I've watched people in this church do it for years this world's discouraging you come in this place and you're around people who think differently who have hope who have joy I'll give you 30 reasons why people would come to this church every Sunday that do not love Jesus and it will not save you you're so close but being close to the Savior in proximity will not bring life to a dead heart repent and believe in Him repent and believe in Him call out to the Lord Jesus confess confess your sin acknowledge that Christ is the Son of God ask Him to forgive you ask Him to save you ask Him to wash you ask Him to make you new that is what the unbeliever needs new life in Christ new life in Christ three things

Jesus has made clear to us today in the text Jesus does not care for the testimony of those who do not love Him He welcomes the service and ministry of imperfect people who will trust in Him and He warns to make sure that your heart belongs to Him my dear friends make sure today that you know Him and that you love Him and that you belong to Him and if we can help you this church is here to do that take your connection card and you tell us your need your question your struggle your doubts your fears drop it in one of those giving boxes and let us have the privilege of sitting down with you this week with an open Bible and giving you not our mind but the mind of God so that we can help you you say

`[40:52]` Michael do you think there's people at this church who come every single Sunday who don't know Christ as Savior the Lord did many will say to me on that day Lord Lord did we not do did we not say you may convince everybody else the Lord knows your heart here's the good news he still is a Savior for those who trust in him he's a healer for those who call upon his name he is a redeemer for those who love and trust and repent he is a hard one for those who who trust in him can he get up in your mind can he see you he can see you he can get up on thatain they're fathers fathers fathers fathers fathers fathers fathers slaves fathers fathers fathers

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