

JESUS' IMPACT UPON CROWDS AND EVIL SPIRITS: SEEKING AND FEARING CHRIST MARK 03:07–12

Introduction: Crowds Follow Jesus Christ

Jesus' impact upon people was unbelievable; it was incomprehensible. In just a few months, the whole nation was aroused to seek after the One called Jesus of Nazareth, the promised Messiah. A fact that is often unnoticed is the fact covered in this passage: "A large crowd...followed [Him]." The multitude is called "large" and "many" twice (vv. 7, 8). The crowds were enormous (remember the feeding of five thousand men, not counting the women and children). The multitudes did what we so desperately need to do: they truly sought Him, even to the point of *crowding Him* (v. 9) and *were pushing forward to touch Him and crushing in upon Him* (v. 10).

Jesus' impact upon evil spirits was just as dramatic. They were stricken to bow before Him and to acknowledge His Messiahship — two acts that desperately need to be done by men.

- I. Jesus withdrew (v.7).
- II. His impact upon people (vv.7-10).
- III. His impact upon evil spirits (vv. 11-12).

I. *Mark 03:07 Response to Jesus Christ*

Jesus was forced to withdraw to the Sea of Galilee. There seemed to be two reasons for this move.

1. The leaders, both religious and political, were now plotting His death (see note, Mt. 12:14-16). He still had much to teach before He could face the end. As He had said on several occasions, His hour had not yet come. He must not allow His death — not yet. Thus, He had to move out of the synagogue into the open country.
2. The crowds had become too large for the synagogues and the cities to handle. People by the multitudes were flocking to Him, even to the point of endangering His life by the crush of bodies (see vv. 8-9).

Note this: Mark says Jesus also withdrew in Mk. 6:31, 46: 7:24, 31; 10:1; 14:34-35.

II. *Mark 03:07–10 Impact of Jesus Christ*

The impact of Jesus upon the crowds was phenomenal. This fact is often overlooked or minimized. The crowds demonstrate how eagerly men should seek after Jesus. Note two eye-opening facts.

First, teeming crowds flocked to Jesus and truly sought Him.

1. They came from all over the nation, and some even came from foreign nations.
 - a. Crowds came from all over Galilee. Imagine a district so heavily populated that it embraced over two hundred cities with populations of fifteen thousand or more (see note, Mt. 4:12-13). Teeming crowds streamed to Jesus from all over the district (William Barclay. *The Gospel of Mathew*, Vol. 1. "The Daily Study Bible." Philadelphia, PA: The Westminster Press, 1956, p.66).
 - b. Crowds came from Judea and Jerusalem. This was a hundred-mile journey.
 - c. Crowds came from Idumea which lay in the deep south, bordering Palestine and Arabia. Idumea was the Greek and Roman name for Edom or the land of Esau (Gen. 25:30; 36:1, 8). The significant point is that these people travelled a great distance to reach Jesus.
 - d. Crowds came from beyond Jordan which refers to the populations who lived on the east side of the Jordan River.
 - e. Crowds came from the north, from the foreign land of Phoenicia and from the nation's two major cities, Tyre and Sidon.
2. The reason the crowds flocked to Jesus is given (v. 8). The people heard the testimony of those who had seen and heard Jesus themselves or else had been told by others about Jesus. The testimony that the Messiah had come — the prophet who could meet the needs of mankind — spread like wild-fire. And when the people heard, many arose, packed their bags and "came to Him" (v. 8).

Thought 1. The importance of witnessing and talking about the marvellous work of God's grace is strongly seen in Jesus' ministry. How many more would be flocking to Jesus and following Him if we were more faithful in sharing the glorious salvation in Him.

Mark 5:18-19 *As Jesus was getting into the boat, the man who had been demon-possessed begged to go with him. Jesus did not let him, but said, "Go home to your family and tell them how much the Lord has done for you, and how he has had mercy on you."*

Mat 28:19-20 *"Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."*

Acts 1:8 *"But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth."*

Eph 5:19 *Speak to one another with psalms, hymns and spiritual songs. Sing and make music in your heart to the Lord.*

1 Pet 3:15 But in your hearts set apart Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect,

1 John 1:3 We proclaim to you what we have seen and heard, so that you also may have fellowship with us. And our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son, Jesus Christ.

Second, crowds crushed Him, even to the point of crushing Him and threatening His life. They pushed forward “to touch Him,” hoping that some *power* from Him might flow through their body and meet their need (v. 10). Jesus had to order a small boat to sit just a short distance off shore to rescue Him in case the crushing crowd became too much for Him to handle.

Thought 1. How desperately men need the same kind of fervour to seek after Jesus today. Men desperately need to touch Jesus. Men need the *power, the saving strength of Jesus*.

Mat 7:7 “Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you.”

Deu 04:29 *But if from there [from sin] you seek the LORD your God, you will find him if you look for him with all our heart and with all our soul.*

Psa 105:04 *Look to the LORD and his strength; seek his face always.*

Isa 55:6 *Seek the LORD while he may be found; call on him while he is near.*

Jer 29:13 *You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart.*

III. Mark 03:11–12 The Impact on Evil Spirits

The impact of Jesus upon evil spirits was dramatic. His presence struck a terrible fear within them. Yet His power over evil spirits was both comforting and assuring to the believer (see note, Lk. 8:26-39).

1. The evil spirits were subject to Jesus. They “fell down before Him.” They knew Him, for He had been the greater power in the spiritual world or dimension of being. They could do nothing beyond His control. “Whenever they saw Him, [they] fell down before Him” (v. 11).
2. The evil spirits acknowledged Jesus to be the Son of God (see note, Mk. 1:23-24). They acknowledged His Messiahship. The crowd had “pushed forward” to touch Jesus, hoping and praying for help; but the evil spirits “fell down before Him,” being stricken to acknowledge His deity. But note: they did not fall down out of devotion — not because they were seeking Him — but they fell down because they...

- acknowledged Him to be who He claimed to be.
- feared Him, lest He cast them out, sending them to their destined hell before the end time.

Thought 1. Every *evil spirit*, every evil man needs to fall down before Christ — fearing, standing in awe, and confessing lest he be destined for hell.

Mat 10:32-33 “Whoever acknowledges me before men, I will also acknowledge him before my Father in heaven. But whoever disowns me before men, I will disown him before my Father in heaven.”

Mark 8:38 “If anyone is ashamed of me and my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, the Son of Man will be ashamed of him when he comes in his Father’s glory with the holy angels.”

Luke 12:8 “I tell you, whoever acknowledges me before men, the Son of Man will also acknowledge him before the angels of God.”

Rom 10:9-10 That if you confess with your mouth, “Jesus is Lord,” and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you confess and are saved.

1 John 4:15 If anyone acknowledges that Jesus is the Son of God, God lives in him and he in God.

Prov 28:13 He who conceals his sins does not prosper, but whoever confesses and renounces them finds mercy.

3. Jesus rebuked the confession of the evil spirits (see note, Mk. 1: 25-26).

Thought 1. The confession Christ wants is the confession of a broken and contrite heart, a changed and repentant life.

Psa 34:18 The LORD is close to the brokenhearted and saves those who are crushed in spirit.

Psa 51:17 The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart, O God, you will not despise.

Isa 57:15 For this is what the high and lofty One says — he who lives forever, whose name is holy: “I live in a high and holy place, but also with him who is contrite and lowly in spirit, to revive the spirit of the lowly and to revive the heart of the contrite.”

Isa 66:2 “Has not my hand made all these things, and so they came into being?” declares the LORD. “This is the one I esteem: he who is humble and contrite in spirit, and trembles at my word.” ■