

Mark 3:7-11
The International Ministry of Jesus Christ
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Tonight, we come back to the gospel of Mark, and this has been a great journey for me. I don't know if you have been blessed as much as I have. But it's just exciting to me to see the life and ministry of Christ; to see His life played out before us; and to see His love for people, His passion for the truth; and to see the relentless pursuit of those whom the Father has given to Him. We see that again tonight in Mark 3.

It was in 1773, there were some islands in the south Pacific that were explored by Captain James Cook, and he named them the New Hebrides. It was in 1839 that two missionaries from the London missionary society landed on one of the islands of New Hebrides, John Williams and James Harris. Both of these missionaries were killed and eaten by cannibals on November 20th of that year. A later missionary wrote this of their deaths, "Thus were the New Hebrides baptized with blood of martyrs. And Christ thereby told the whole Christian world that He claimed these islands as His own." When a man named John Paton announced 19 years after their deaths that he intended to go to the New Hebrides, one of the elders of his church replied, "the cannibals, you will be eaten by cannibals!" This was John Paton's response. He said,

"Mr. Dixon, you are advanced in years now and your own prospect is soon to be laid in the grave there to be eaten by worms. I confess to you that if I can but live and die serving and honoring the Lord Jesus, it will make no difference to me whether I am eaten by cannibals or by worms. And in the great day my resurrection body will rise as fair as yours in the likeness of our risen Redeemer."

What a great response. Where did John Paton get such a passion to make Christ known even at such a great cost? It was from both the commands of the New Testament and the examples of the New Testament starting as we will learn tonight with our Lord Himself. Let me read for you the text that we come to in our study of the gospel of Mark, its Mark ;3:7.

"Jesus withdrew to the sea with His disciples; and a great multitude from Galilee followed; and *also* from Judea, and from Jerusalem, and from Idumea, and beyond the Jordan, and the vicinity of Tyre and Sidon, a great number of people

heard of all that He was doing and came to Him. And He told His disciples that a boat should stand ready for Him because of the crowd, so that they would not crowd Him; for He had healed many, with the result that all those who had afflictions pressed around Him in order to touch Him. Whenever the unclean spirits saw Him, they would fall down before Him and shout, “You are the Son of God!” And He earnestly warned them not to tell who He was.”

In this summary of Jesus’ ministry, Mark shows us just a little glimpse of how wide the geographical impact of the ministry of Jesus Christ was. Jesus’ earthly ministry reached both Israel and the nations by God’s design. In fact, we could put it like this when you think of this section of Scripture, essentially this is how I would encapsulate its meaning. Jesus’ ministry beyond Israel anticipates, authenticates, and commands the churches mission to the world.

The fact that Jesus’ ministry reached beyond the borders of Israel to the surrounding countries gives a sort of glimpse of what is to come. But more than a glimpse, it both authenticates and commands us as Christians to be concerned beyond the little sphere in which we live. We can become very wrapped up in our little worlds, what we have to do today, tomorrow, next week. But the life of Jesus, the ministry of Jesus and later the commands of Jesus will not let us do that; will not let us live in our little circle, in our little world, doing our little thing. We have instead a mandate from our Master for world missions, and you see it in His ministry, even in this paragraph.

I want to begin by looking at the international outreach of Christ’s ministry. In verses 7 and 8 we’re given a glimpse of just how broad that ministry went. Let me remind you of the context. After Jesus’ healing of the man with the withered hand in the first six verses of this chapter, on the Sabbath probably in the synagogue in Capernaum the tension ratchets up pretty significantly. In fact, Mark 3:6 says this, “The Pharisees went out and immediately *began* conspiring with the Herodians against Him, as to how they might destroy Him.” That didn’t mean ruin His reputation that meant kill Him, see Him put to death on accusation of violating the Sabbath.

Matthew tells us that Jesus was aware of this. Matthew 12:15, “But Jesus, aware of this, withdrew from there and many followed Him.” Mark puts it like this, “Jesus withdrew to the sea with His disciples.” The word “withdrew” here, the Greek word is a word used of “wisely dodging danger”. As one writer puts it, it’s a tactical withdrawal.

Capernaum was right on the Sea of Galilee you remember on the northwest corner of the Sea of Galilee. So, He apparently left the city of Capernaum still along this outskirts of the Sea of Galilee, probably for one of the less inhabited parts of the shoreline that would have been east toward where the Jordan River enters into the northern portion of the Sea of Galilee. It would have been probably, you see the map here, you see Capernaum on the north side of the lake. This direction is north up here; there's the Golan Heights. Right in this area the Jordan River enters the Sea of Galilee on the north side, and then flows out the south end of the Sea of Galilee on the south side. Probably in this area toward Bethsaida over in this region is where Jesus goes. This is kind of that area in a close up. There's where the Jordan enters the Sea of Galilee and another glimpse of it.

So, around this area is probably where Jesus withdrew. Why? Well one writer puts it like this, "the retreat before His enemies was not prompted by fear, but by wise discretion." You see the Father had given Jesus a mission, that mission was to die, but before He died, Jesus was to disciple and raise up a group of followers who would be able to take His mission beyond Him after His death. And so, it was just as important for Jesus to make tactical decisions to keep that confrontation from happening prematurely that would initiate His death. And so, that's exactly what He does. He leaves and goes probably east. Verse 7 says,

"and a great multitude from Galilee followed; and also from Judea, and from Jerusalem, and from Idumea, and beyond the Jordan and the vicinity of Tyre and Sidon, a great number of people heard of all that He was doing and came to Him."

Now, if you look at Mark's language carefully, there were clearly two separate crowds or multitudes that were present here. One of those crowds was a great multitude from Galilee that followed Him. These are the people who had been observing His ministry in Capernaum and the surrounding cities of Galilee. But then there's another crowd from various other places, Mark tells us, "a great multitude hearing what He was doing, came to Him." So here you have a second crowd. There were those who followed Him out of Capernaum, out of the crowded city over to the coastline, but then there were others who began to gather from all over because of what they had heard about the ministry of Jesus.

Let me show you where these folks came from. This is a map of Israel. Just to orient you, here's the Mediterranean; here's the Sea of Galilee; here at the north end the Jordan River runs down

through here to the Dead Sea. So, that's kind of a general area. Here's Jerusalem; that just gives you sort of a broad picture of this area. Notice that Mark says that there were people who came from, obviously from, Galilee, that's the region right there around the Sea on the northwest corner, that sort of pink area up here. But also, he says from Judea. Here's Judea, the northern part of this pink area down here near the north end of the Dead Sea. There is Judea. So, there were those who came from the area of Jerusalem and Judea.

And then he says Idumea. You see that Idumea is the area even south of that. This is down toward the Negev. It was settled by the Edomites, and it was about 120 miles south of Capernaum. About 6 days journey in the ancient world. So, these people traveled a week away from their jobs, away from their livelihoods in order to find Jesus.

Then notice, he says, beyond the Jordan. Josephus defines that phrase for us, essentially it is Perea. It's this darker yellow area here on the east side of the Jordan and up by the Dead Sea. That's Perea, that's beyond the Jordan. And he says, as well, the vicinity of Tyre and Sidon. That's the green up here on the coast, that's Phoenicia that you learned about in your history classes. Tyre and Sidon are in Phoenicia. And so, you can see then that it begins to be encapsulated. Matthew adds Decapolis which is this yellow area here on the east side of the Jordan as well, and then in other places we find that people came from Syria which is up here in this corner.

So, what you need to see, the big picture is that people came from all the nations and regions that bordered Israel. There was no exception, there were people who came from all of those areas that bordered the nation of Israel, and they came to see Jesus; to seek Him out. But not only did people come to see Jesus from all these places, but except from Idumea in the far south down there, except for Idumea, Jesus would actually go to all these places Himself.

He certainly went to Galilee; we've already seen that, that's where His ministry is rooted. Judea and Jerusalem is a constant. He goes to the feasts and other occasions we've learned from other gospels, as well as the area on the other side of the Jordan. Twice Mark mentions that Jesus went there. And Tyre and Sidon, up in Phoenicia, Jesus went up into that area as well. So, not only did these people come seeking Him in Israel, but He actually went into these various communities as well. An assortment of compass directions from the north, from the south, from the east, and of

course, on the west was the Mediterranean so no one came from that direction, but also an assortment of people.

You had Judean and Jerusalem which were primarily Jewish, you had Idumea and beyond the Jordan which was a mixed population; Jew and Gentile. Galilee, which was mixed, but primarily Jewish, but it was also called Galilee of the Gentiles because it was surrounded by Gentiles. There were entire Gentile cities within Galilee. And then you have three regions, or three cities, region and two cities mentioned, Decapolis and Tyre and Sidon which is up in Phoenicia that are almost exclusively Gentile.

So, what I want you to see, and I think what Mark wants us to see, is that Jesus has more than just a local ministry. We've been looking at Jesus' ministry to the city of Capernaum to the region of Galilee and then to Israel. And if you're not careful you might be left with the impression that that's all Jesus ever did. But the truth is people came from the neighboring countries to find Jesus. And Jesus Himself went to several of these regions at various points in His ministry. So, there was an international flavor to the ministry of Jesus Christ.

But regardless of where He ministered and to whom He ministered, there was also a consistent character to His ministry. We're told in the first two verses that He had this sort of international appeal, people were coming from all over, but even though they were coming from all over Jesus didn't change the character of His ministry. The character of His ministry was exactly the same whatever the cultural context. It was the same among Jews and Gentiles. It was the same among God-fearing people as pagans. It was the same among the fundamentalist Pharisees as well as the sort of sort of liberal Sadducees, it didn't matter, Jesus' ministry was the same.

There are some today who tell us that depending on where we minister whether it's Seattle or wherever that we have to sort contextualize the gospel so that people will receive it. There is absolutely no indication that Jesus ever did that in any way. Instead, whatever the nature of the crowd was, the character of His ministry never changed. As always there were three basic components, and Mark reminds us of them here.

First of all, there was teaching. Look at verse 9, "And He told His disciples that a boat should stand ready for Him because of the crowd,"

Now remember, His disciples owned fishing businesses in this very area. And while they had abandoned their businesses to follow Christ, they apparently had kept some of their resources and used them in ministry because in Mark's gospel alone there are six different distinct trips across the Sea of Galilee in a boat. And here Jesus asks that a small boat stand ready for Him because of the crowd.

Now there're two reasons for such a boat, one of them is mentioned here, notice verse 9 says, "so that they would not crowd Him." The Greek word for crowd is press or squeeze or even crush, it's like the crowd was falling on Jesus, and the reason for that is because they wanted to touch Him, because people were healed by touching Him. The word here describes the push of the crowd as almost frightening. It was more like a mob than anything else. These are desperate people; some of whom have traveled for six days through hostile territory to get a family member to Jesus to see this family member healed. Such people could easily in their desperation be a danger.

As one commentator writes, "Pastoral and folksy stereotypes of Jesus surrounded by lambs and children are skewed caricatures of Mark's description of Jesus' early ministry in Galilee. The arrival of a popular leader jostled by crowds and hassled by reporters is far more appropriate." Very interesting.

What's very interesting here is as a note aside, is Jesus makes provision to escape from the danger, you see that in the text? There's no indication this boat is ever used, but He says I want one to be ready for Me. One of the disciples is to keep a small boat near the shore so that if Jesus needs to escape from the danger and the press of the crowd, He can.

William Hendrickson, the great commentator, seizes on this and argues that this little expression that a boat be kept ready for Him so that they would not crush Him; he says that has huge implications for how Christians live their lives. Listen to what he writes.

"Jesus made wise use of precautions, measures taken beforehand against possible danger. Think of the student heading for the ministry and neglecting the study of the Scripture in the original; of the would be enthusiastic missionary preaching the gospel in his own native tongue in a foreign land, the people who do not understand a word of what he's saying; and of the man who is down on medical care for himself and for his family because, as he puts it, he trusts wholly in God.

On that particular occasion the small boat may not have been used, but the point is, it was there, always ready, ever available. That little vessel,” [Hendrickson said,] “teaches a big lesson.”

Jesus Himself, the Son of God on earth, took precautions against the future and in so doing, I think Hendrickson is right, teaches us a huge lesson. But there’s another reason for this boat beyond just an escape from danger. Look over in chapter 4:1.

He began to teach again by the sea. And such a very large crowd gathered to Him that He got into a boat in the sea and sat down; and the whole crowd was by the sea on the land. And He was teaching them many things in parables, and was saying to them in His teaching, “Listen *to this!*”

So, what you have here is when the Lord told them to keep a boat ready, it was also so that He could more easily carry out the core aspect of His ministry which was His teaching. That was always His greatest priority. You remember back in chapter 1 we discovered that Jesus came into Galilee preaching. This was the thrust of Jesus’ ministry.

Another aspect of Jesus’ ministry beyond His teaching was also His healing ministry. This was His consistent ministry wherever He went. He taught. That was the primary thrust of His ministry and in verse 10, He also healed. And here, part of the reason for the boat is because of the crush of the crowd for He had healed many with the result that all those who had afflictions pressed around Him in order to touch Him. The word “afflictions” is an interesting word. It’s a Greek word that literally means “to whip or to scourge”. All those who had scourges pressed around Him in order to touch Him. Originally, it referred to sicknesses thought to be God’s judgment on people, they were the scourge of God. They were the whip of God. But by the time of the New Testament, it had come to refer just as a general word to various sicknesses.

Why did they want to touch Jesus? Well, because as we’ll see in 5:25, when people touched Jesus, they got healed. And so, there’s this crush to be healed. So, Jesus to these internationals coming from outside the land of Israel, His number one priority was teaching, but He also healed them as He had before with the same reason, by the way. Remember His healing was like an object lesson of His power to change people on the inside. He couldn’t prove His power to change on the inside, but He could prove that power by changing them on the outside, by healing them and showing that He had the capacity to radically alter who they were.

The same thing happened with the third phase or character of His ministry, and that was casting out demons. Verse 11, it says, “Whenever the unclean spirit’s saw Him, they would fall down before Him and shout, ‘You are the Son of God!’”

It’s interesting, unclean spirits, morally and inherently unclean, they were malevolent and obscene beings. And they rendered everyone that they touched, unclean. Those who had sicknesses fell on Jesus, the demons fell before Him. This word that says, “they fall down before Him” describes “an inferior prostrating himself before a person he recognizes as his superior”. They were doing obeisance; they were treating Him as the Person that He was.

As we’ve seen before, the demon takes complete control of the person, and here he uses his body and his voice. It’s the demon driving this body to the ground. It’s the demon speaking through the man’s voice. And they would shout out, “You are the Son of God!” It’s fascinating to me that at this point there were only a few who understood that. The demons understood it. We see it in several passages; we’ve already seen it in one before in 1:24. We’ve seen it here; we’ll see it again in 5:7.

The Father understood this, you remember back in Mark 1? Mark 1:11, at His baptism a voice came out of the heavens, “You are My beloved Son, in You I am well pleased.” The Father obviously knew who He was. Later three disciples will acknowledge it in 9:7. At Jesus’ trial it’ll come up as the big issue in chapter 14. And the one with the final word is a Roman Centurion, remember this gospel is written to the Roman’s and so a Roman centurion is the last one to echo this cry “surely this was the Son of God’.

But at this point the crowds don’t get it. It’s ironic isn’t it that the crowds at this point just see Jesus as a miracle worker who could fulfill their needs, but ironically the demons understood who He really was. And they were afraid in His presence. James 2 reminds us of that, remember, demons also believe and what? Shudder, they tremble at the reality of who God is. They may be in rebellion, but they know who’s in charge.

So, you have Jesus teaching and healing and casting out demons and verse 12 says,

“When they would cry out, “You are the Son of God!” He earnestly warned them not to tell who He was.”

He was greatly warning them, literally it says in the Greek text the word order is this: He greatly was warning them not to tell who He was. Why? Why would Jesus not want them to say this? Well, because of who they were, He didn't need their witness, their evil characters. But also remember what the Pharisees had accused Jesus of? Being in league with whom? With Satan. This would merely confirm their accusations that somehow they were in league together. And also, Jesus was not yet ready for this message to be fully known and revealed. So, with sovereign authority Jesus commands the demons, and they have to obey.

This runs contrary to the spirit of our age in which some in the Christian community believe that Satan is sovereign and that the demons do whatever they want, and that God is almost fretting, and we have to do something to control them or to bind them; or somehow we have to do something because they are running out of control. In this encounter between Jesus and the demons it's very clear who's in charge. One commentator says in this encounter, "authority confronted authority and the unclean spirits were silenced before Jesus' sovereign word of rebuke, the demons were helpless." And that's still true today.

So, Jesus' ministry was international in scope, but even though He was reaching other nations, the character of His ministry didn't change. He was still doing the very same things we've seen Him do all along. Primarily He was teaching, teaching, teaching; as we'll see next Sunday morning, the word of God is the agent for change that God has designed in the lives of believers. Without the word of God, without the teaching of the word of God you will not change, and neither will I. And so, Jesus' ministry was teaching, teaching, teaching bringing the gospel to those who were not His own followers and to those who were teaching them the ways of the kingdom. And then He healed to illustrate His power to change, and He cast out demons to illustrate His power over the powers of darkness; that His kingdom was greater than the kingdom of darkness.

Now, I want us to look thirdly at the international design of Christ's ministry, because this was intentional, this paragraph is intentional. As you'll see in a moment, it's there to teach us an important lesson. Now, it's a little confusing because at times when you read the gospels, you might be left with the idea that Jesus was really only solely to minister to Israel. You'll read a passage like Matthew 10 that says, "these twelve Jesus sent out after instructing them, do not go in the way of the Gentiles, do not enter any city of the Samaritans, but rather go to the lost sheep

of the house of Israel.” In isolation, that could give you the idea that Jesus intentionally limited His ministry to Jews.

But Matthew argues that the international flavor of Jesus’ earthly ministry was not unintentional. It wasn’t just a consequence of the fact that Jesus was really popular, so people came. Rather, Jesus’ international ministry was a reflection of God’s design. God intended for it to happen like that. God had long before determined that Jesus’ ministry would reach beyond the Jews.

Let me show you this in Matthew’s account in the parallel passage. Matthew, as he typically does, brings in an Old Testament prophecy. He wants us to understand why this is here. Matthew 12:15 is the parallel section to what we’re looking at in Mark. Matthew 12; 15, “But Jesus, aware of this, withdrew from there. Many followed Him, and He healed them all, He warned them not to tell who He was.”

So, there you have that international ministry of Jesus shortened by Matthew, a longer version given to us by Mark. But notice the point Matthew makes because this is the same point in Mark. This was to fulfill. So, in other words, what happened in Jesus’ ministry when these people from all these other nations came and sought Him out, and He ministered to them, and He served them, this was to fulfill what was spoken through Isaiah the prophet. Folks Isaiah wrote in the 700’s before Christ; 700 years before Christ showed up God had told us that the ministry of Jesus would reach beyond Israel. Notice what he quotes from Isaiah 42:1 through 4, a paragraph about the Messiah about the Servant, the suffering Servant. He says this was to fulfill what was spoken and here it is,

“Behold, My Servant whom I ... [have] chosen; My ... [beloved] *in whom* My soul ... [is well-pleased], I ... [will] put My spirit upon Him; and He ... [shall proclaim] justice to the ... [Gentiles.] He will not ... [quarrel, nor] cry out; Nor ... [will anyone hear His voice] ... in the street.

[Matthew 12:20-21] A BATTERED REED HE WILL NOT BREAK OFF, AND A SMOLDERING WICK HE WILL NOT PUT OUT,” [It speaks of His gentleness with people.] “UNTIL HE LEADS JUSTICE TO VICTORY.” [And watch this verse 21, here’s the punch line,] “AND IN HIS NAME THE GENTILES WILL HOPE.”

Guess what “Gentiles” means? It’s the nations; all those outside of Israel. This is how the Jewish people referred to all of those outside of Israel who were non-Jewish. They were the nations, the Gentiles. And here Matthew tells us that all these people were coming from these various nations to find Jesus. Jesus was ministering to them, and this was no accident. This didn’t just happen because of the tabloids in their local supermarket line. They came because 700 years before the prophet Isaiah had said this would happen. In His name the Gentiles will hope. And here they come, hoping in Christ.

Folks, this is the consistent message of Scripture, throughout the Scripture wherever you look. You look in the Old Testament, look at the Abrahamic covenant, it’s repeated in a number of places, but you remember in Genesis 12 God shows up to Abraham, Abraham is an uncircumcised pagan from the land of Ur. He’s an idolater, and God saves him, redeems him and then makes him this unconditional promise. He says listen, here’s what I’m going to do. In you, all the nations of the earth will be blessed. What I’m going to do in you and the ones who come out of you is I’m going to bless the entire world.

Who do you think He was talking about? We’ll see in a minute. But that’s consistently repeated. In you all the nations of the earth will be blessed. All of those passages I’ve sited from Genesis, the Abrahamic covenant is repeated, and in every place that’s repeated, that is at the core of the promise, the covenant God made with Abraham. It was a unilateral covenant, that is it was one sided. God didn’t say, if you keep the conditions, then I’ll do My part, God said, I’m going to do this – period. And He said, in you Abraham all the nations of the earth will be blessed.

It shouldn’t be surprising then when we get to the foot of Mount Sinai in Exodus 19, the nation is there to get their new constitution. They’re going to be constituted as a nation. Some 2 million Israelites come out of the land of Egypt, and they’re there at the foot of Mount Sinai, and they get their constitution, and they are told that they are going to be a kingdom of priests.

Now what does that mean? What does a priest do? A priest serves as one who is an intermediary between the people and God. That’s why we don’t have priests today, human priests. We have one priest, the great high Priest, our Lord Jesus Christ. He is the only mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus. That’s what a priest does. So, when God said to the Israelites, I’m going to make you a kingdom of priests, what He was saying to them is you are going to represent Me to the nations.

That's exactly how Peter understood it when he applies that same passage to us who had been redeemed by Christ. He tells us that we are now a holy nation, a royal priesthood. He says this is why, so that, in order that you may proclaim the excellencies of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light. You're priests in that you represent God to people. This was the mission, to reach the nations. Isaiah 42:6, "I am the LORD, I have called You in righteousness, I will also hold You by the hand and watch over You." [He says to the Messiah,] "And I will appoint You as a covenant to the people, As a light to the nations."

This was God's design for the Messiah. And when we come to the New Testament, you see this played out. The same message is there, you remember Simeon comes and finds the young child Jesus in the temple. He's been told, he gets a chance to see the Messiah before he dies, and he's able to hold the Messiah in his arms. Imagine what that would have been like. Here's this godly man waiting for the true spiritual redemption of Israel, and God indicates to him, there's the Child over there. And he goes over and he takes this Child in his arms, and he says some remarkable things that show his understanding of what God was going to do. But this is what he says,

"... My eyes have seen Your salvation, Which You have prepared in the presence of all peoples," [This isn't just about Israel. He will be] A light of revelation to the Gentiles [as well as] the glory of Your people Israel.'

You see it in the outreach of the early church, if we had time, I'd take you through these passages in Acts, and you would see time after time, God makes it clear the Gentiles are in. The Gentiles are in, the nations are . This isn't just about you. You need to reach out to them with the gospel. You see it in the focus of Paul's mission. In fact, look at Acts 9 because here at the outset of his ministry when he's actually saved and called, Acts 9. You remember he goes to the street called Straight and went to the house of Judas, and then Ananias is sent or is supposed to be sent, verse 13,

"But Ananias answered, "Lord, I have heard from many about this man, how much harm he did to Your saints at Jerusalem; and here he has authority from the chief priests to bind all who call on Your name. But the Lord said to him, "Go, for he is a chosen instrument of Mine to bear My name before the Gentiles...."

And whenever Paul gives his testimony, he always comes back to this. Read it in Acts, read it in these other passages, he always comes back to say, that is God's intention, that is my ministry and message.

You see it in a couple of important passages in the New Testament. Turn with me to Romans 15, Romans 15:8. Paul is dealing with interacting; Jews and Gentiles the differences that can create in the church. He's just dealt with issues of conscience in verse in chapter 14 and the beginning of chapter 15. And he says,

Therefore, [Verse 7,] accept one another, [Get along.] just as Christ also accepted us to the glory of God. For I say that Christ has become a servant to the circumcision, [That's the Jewish people,] on behalf of the truth of God to confirm the promises given to the fathers, and for the Gentiles to glorify God for His mercy; as it is written,

And he launches into this series of quotes to prove from the Old Testament that God intended the Gentiles to be included in the ministry and the fruit of the ministry of Jesus Christ.

"THEREFORE I WILL GIVE PRAISE TO YOU AMONG THE GENTILES, AND I WILL SING YOUR NAME. Again he says, "REJOICE, O GENTILES, WITH HIS PEOPLE." And again, "PRAISE THE LORD ALL YOU GENTILES, AND LET ALL THE PEOPLES PRAISE HIM." Again Isaiah says, "THERE SHALL COME FROM THE ROOT OF JESSE, AND HE WHO ARISES TO RULE OVER THE GENTILES, IN HIM SHALL THE GENTILES HOPE."

This was God's intention from the beginning. Now turn over to Galatians 3. This is where I want to bring you, Galatians 3. Going all the way back to the beginning, the Abrahamic covenant why did God say that over and over again? "In You all nations of the earth will be blessed." Here He gives us the punch line, Galatians 3:8.

"The Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the nations or the Gentiles by faith, preached the gospel beforehand to Abraham, and this is what it said, "All the nations will be blessed in You."

You say how is that the gospel? Folks, God can't bless sinners who deserve His wrath. So, in the very fact that out of Abraham there were going to be people from every tribe and tongue and

nation who would be blessed by God, there was in that statement the seed implication that God was going to act in some gracious, amazing, miraculous way to bring people who deserved His wrath under His blessing. That's why God said it. So, all the way back in Genesis 12 when God chose Abraham, the father of the Jewish people it wasn't about just the Jewish people. It was about people from the nations.

This was what God intended even in this passage in Mark 3 when you see these people coming, Matthew says it's because it was to fulfill what Isaiah predicted. It was the fulfillment of the promises of God that He, through Jesus the Messiah, would reach beyond Israel and become a hope for us. Some of us here are Jewish, many of us are not. Many of us are from the nations, the Gentiles. And this was God's plan. Now there are two primary implications of this passage for us.

Number one, God intended that all the world benefit from the ministry of Christ. In other words, let me put it more personally, that included you and me. If you're sitting here tonight, and you're in Christ, and you're a Gentile, what happened to you is not an afterthought in the mind of God. It's not plan B. This was God's plan from the beginning. It was through Abraham and his descendants that He would put Himself on display, and that others in the nations of the world would see His glory, would get His word, and ultimately would experience the Messiah. This is by design. You are not an afterthought. You are a part of God's eternal plan. And you see this in a variety of texts.

Let me just show you a couple of them, John 10. I love this statement by Jesus in the middle of this passage about the good shepherd, listen to what Jesus says, John 10 16. It's talking about being a shepherd of sheep, having His own sheep, and then He says verse 16, "I have other sheep, which are not of this fold; I must bring them also, and they will hear My voice; and they will become one flock with one shepherd."

Who is the other sheep? Folks, that's us. That's the nations. That's Gentiles. That's outside of the nation of Israel. This was God's intention. Look over at chapter 11 of John. Chapter 11, you remember that in unintentional prophesy by Caiaphas where he said one man needed to die for the nation. Verse 51 of John 11,

"Now he did not say this on his own initiative, but being high priest that year, he prophesied that Jesus was going to die for the nation. and not for the nation

only;” [Not just for the Jews.] “but in order that He might also gather together into one the children of God who are scattered abroad.”

It was clear even in the earliest days when the Apostle John wrote that this was God’s intention. You were not an afterthought. We saw it in Ephesians 2, didn’t we? He brought us together, making peace.

There’s one other implication, and that is: that Jesus’ international ministry, as I said at the beginning, anticipates, authenticates and demands the church’s mission to the world. Look at Luke 24 with me. Luke 24. At the very end of Jesus’ life and ministry, verse 44, after He’s fed them by the sea.

“Now He said to them, “These are My words which I spoke to you while I was still with you, that all things which are written about Me in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms must be fulfilled. Then He opened their minds to understand the Scriptures.”

So, get what’s going on here. Jesus is giving them a Christology lesson from the Old Testament. He’s saying here’s who I was to be; here’s what I was to do; here’s what My mission was all about; and He opened their minds to understand it. Wouldn’t you have loved to have been a part of that Scripture lesson?

“And He said to them,” [verse 46,] “thus it is written” [here’s the summary of what He taught them,] “that the Messiah would suffer, that He would rise again from the dead the third day, and that repentance for forgiveness of sins would be proclaimed in His name” [watch this] “to all the nations beginning from Jerusalem.”

Jesus taught His disciples after His resurrection that the Old Testament demands it, that all the nations hear the good news of the gospel.

Now let me ask you tonight. Do you embrace that mission? When is the last time you prayed for people outside of your own little sphere? When’s the last time you prayed for one of our missionaries? When’s the last time you prayed that God would raise up missionaries from this church who would take the message of Christ to the nations? When’s the last time you asked God to raise up one of your children to take the message of the gospel to the nations? When’s the

last time you offered yourself to God and said God whatever You want to do with me; if You want me to be John Paton; if You'll equip me; if You'll affirm that you've gifted me through the leadership of the church, I'll go.

Folks, we don't have the luxury of living our own little lives doing whatever we want, satisfying our desires. We are here, as Jesus our Lord was, on a mission; and that mission is clear; and that is that in His name the nations might hope. And we don't do that just for the people who hear, we do it for the sake of His name, to put Him on display, to make Him great. Even if no one ever responds, listen there are missionaries who serve ten, fifteen years and don't see one convert. It's not about even the converts; it's to put our God on display.

Let me just challenge you, we have missionaries that we support in this church who are in a number of cases true first century kind of missionaries, on the ground in foreign fields sharing the gospel. Would you take up their cause before the Lord? Would you care for them? Would you pray for them? Would you just jot them a note and say I'm praying for you, and I want you to know that you're not forgotten, how can we serve you?

Some of you need to do as, right now, two of our own are on a short-term missions trip using skills God has given them for the sake of the nations. Ask God to lift your eyes beyond Southlake, beyond Dallas Fort Worth, beyond Texas, beyond the US and to give you a vision for what God intends to do in putting His Son on display in the nations.

Because, fast forward, fast forward to Revelation, and I love what we read there because it says that in that day there will be people from every tribe and nation and tongue every background who gather round the throne together and give praise and worship to the Lamb and say worthy is the Lamb that was slain. How did that happen? Paul says in Romans 10, how shall they hear without what? Preachers, someone to share.

Two hundred years ago was the age of the mission movement in the church, and today it has died because we are so concerned about our own spiritual navels; about our little relationships. May God give us a passion, as Jesus Himself demonstrated, as the Apostles demonstrated, outside of our little worlds, may we catch a glimpse for ways we can participate in seeing Jesus Christ's glory displayed among the nations. Will you pray that? Will you just pray that? God help me to see how I can get involved in the mission to the nations. Yes, we ought to be evangelizing here.

But we ought to have a global vision for the sake of His name. As we sang earlier tonight, because Jesus will have the prize for which He died, an inheritance of nations.

Let's pray together.

Father, forgive us for being so provincial. Forgive us for being so self-absorbed with our own issues, our own temporal pleasure.

Father, give each one of us as believers a heart for the world. Lord even if You haven't called us to go, help us to love those people and to pray for them; maybe to pray for a particular city and that God would raise up missionaries there, a particular country. Pray for the missionaries we have and for their fruitful ministry to support them in every way we can, to give, to go, to take short term missions trips.

Father, teach us ways to get involved in the mission that Jesus intends to put Himself on display in our day even as He did in the first century to the nations. And Father may our concern not even be so much the people, although our hearts need to love them, but Father may our first concern be the display of Your glory, May we go for the sake of the name. Father, make this church have a heart that beats for the mission of Christ.

We pray it in Jesus' name and for His sake, Amen.