

Introduction

1. Mark began his gospel with a declaration that Jesus is the Christ (e.g. Messiah), the Son of God
2. In his prologue, he points to the coming of John the Baptist as evidence of Jesus's as Messiah, and God's declaration at Jesus's baptism as evidence that Jesus is the son of God
3. We learned that Jesus came preaching the arrival of the Gospel of God, and a new era of God's redemptive plan for mankind
4. And last week Mark we learned of the opposition Jesus faced from Israel's leadership
5. Today, Mark provides a brief summary of Jesus ministry followed by a discussion on what I am going to refer to as the insiders vs. the outsiders
6. The insiders were those who welcomed Jesus and the coming of the kingdom of God and the outsiders were those who rejected Jesus and the kingdom of God

A. Mark summarizes Jesus's ministry (READ 7-12)

Mark appears to have a number of purposes in mind:

1. One purpose was to show the influence and popularity of Jesus among the general population, both in sheer numbers and in geography:
 - a. Mark refers to the crowds that followed Jesus out to the Sea of Galilee as a **"great multitude"** and **"a great number of people"**—the numbers were so great Jesus called for a boat to be ready in case He needed to head out into the water to avoid being crushed
 - b. The list of regions reveals the huge distances from which people came (in some cases well over 120 miles or more)—pretty much from as far north, south, east and west as they could come from
2. Another purpose appears to be that of showing the primary reason people were drawn to Jesus --to seek relief and healing from their afflictions:
 - a. According to v. 8, people came because they **"heard of all that He was doing"**
 - b. They were so desperate for physical healing that **"all those who had afflictions pressed around Him in order to touch Him"** (10)
 - c. While it is tempting to present the crowds here as selfish and only interested in what Jesus could do for them, it better serves to reveal the desperate straights in which they found themselves and the oppression they were under by the enemy—especially considering the number of times Mark references demon possession and Jesus casting out demons in his Gospel
3. Another purpose is related to this issue of demonic activity and involves a bit of foreshadowing:
 - a. Mark makes an interesting comment in vs. 11-12: **"Whenever the unclean spirits saw Him, they would fall down before Him and shout, 'You are the Son of God'"** (11):
 - 1) The wording indicates this was a common occurrence (also evidenced by the number of references elsewhere in Mark's Gospel)
 - 2) This is important in Mark's Gospel because he presents Jesus as preaching the Gospel of God, which is that **"The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand"** (1:15)

- 3) In just a few verses from now, Jesus will explain to the Scribes His purpose in exercising His authority over demons and it has everything to do with putting an end to Satan's rule and dominion and ushering in the Kingdom of God
 - 4) Notice there (as well as in other places), when the demons encounter Jesus they recognize His authority over them (in this instance by bowing down, at other times by showing fear), reveal His identity as God, and sometimes even address Him by name (as in 1:24)
- b. Jesus's command for the demons not to reveal who He was is a bit puzzling at first (12): **"And He earnestly warned them not to tell who He was."**
- 1) We see Jesus do this elsewhere like in 1:25, 34 where He commanded demons to be quiet and not reveal who he was
 - 2) This is similar to when he told His disciples not to reveal that He was the Messiah or those He healed to not reveal what He had done for them or who He was
 - 3) Why wouldn't Jesus want people to know?
 - a) One practical reason is that the more popular Jesus became the more difficult it became for Him to minister in the major cities (Mark 1:44-45)
 - b) Matthew, however, provides a more direct reason—it was to fulfill a prophecy from Isaiah regarding the nature of Christ's ministry (READ Matthew 12:15-21):
 - He came to preach justice to the nations (Jew and Gentile)
 - But, He would not do it with quarreling, crying out or making noise in the streets
 - He would be mild and meek...until He accomplished victory
 - In other words, Jesus wasn't interested in coming with tons of fanfare and public acclaim—He wasn't interested in starting the big Messianic revolution that the Jews expected (like when they wanted to take Him by force and make Him king as told in John 6:15)
 - He came to seek and save the lost by starting a spiritual revolution, not a political one

B. Mark provides insight into who becomes insiders and who remains outsiders when it comes to the Kingdom of God (13-30)

He does this in a bit of a chiastic structure (insiders, outsiders, outsiders, insiders)

1. The first group of insiders are the Twelve Apostles (13-19):
 - a. They were hand picked and divinely appointed by Christ for a specific purpose (13): **"And He went up on the mountain and summoned those whom He Himself wanted, and they came to Him."**
 - b. They number 12 is significant because it is symbolic of the 12 tribes of Israel and identifies them as having a special role in God's redemptive plan for Israel and all the nations (14): **"And He appointed twelve, so that they would be with Him and that He could send them out to preach."**
 - 1) They would have special interpersonal access to Jesus
 - 2) He would send them out to preach the Gospel, both during His earthly ministry (6:7-13) and after His resurrection (16:14-18)
- c. The order of the names is important as well (16-19):

- 1) Peter is mentioned first which is no surprise because of the prominent role he played in Jesus's life and ministry:
 - a. He was the source for Mark's Gospel
 - b. He was part of Jesus's inner circle
 - c. He was the first disciple to declare Jesus as the Christ
 - d. When the angel at the tomb tells the women to go tell the disciples the Good News, he mentions only Peter by name
 - e. Jesus singled out Peter on the beach for a private discussion and charges him with the task of feeding His sheep
 - f. He was the primary leader of the early Church

- 2) The next two names, James and John, made up the inner circle with Peter:
 - a. They were the only three present at the Transfiguration of Christ
 - b. They were the only three of His disciples that He took with Him when He healed the synagogue official's daughter
 - c. He engaged them in private conversations that didn't include others (except Andrew)
 - d. He took these three with Him when He prayed in the Garden before His crucifixion

- 3) The last name on the list is Judas, who is also identified as the one who betrayed Jesus and ultimately proved himself to be an outsider

- d. All of these men (with the exception of Judas) are certainly presented by Mark as insiders (here and in the rest of his Gospel) due to their willingness to give up everything and follow Christ, but throughout the gospels we see how even they continued to struggle, some even running away and denying Him at His resurrection, and not coming to complete and total faith until after His resurrection

2. The second group Mark mentions is Jesus's immediate family—and they are portrayed as outsiders during Jesus' earthly ministry (20-21): **“And He came home, and the crowd gathered again, to such an extent that they could not even eat a meal. 21 When His own people heard of this, they went out to take custody of Him; for they were saying, “He has lost His senses.”**
 - a. Once again, Jesus is surrounded by a crowd so great in size that it limited His ability to take a break for a meal
 - b. When His family heard of this, they set out to stop Him:
 - 1) **“His own people”** is a more literal translation of the Greek but it clearly refers to Jesus' family because they are identified as his mother and brothers in 3:32
 - 2) The phrase **“take custody of Him”** more specifically refers to grabbing or seizing someone and in this context other translations like the NET, ESB, Holman get it right by indicating they wanted to seize Him in an effort to restrain Him from doing what He was doing
 - 3) The reason? They thought Jesus had **“lost His mind”** as the NIV says (21b)
 - c. While Mark only mentions Jesus's family one more time, John gives us some additional insight into how Jesus's brothers felt about Him (READ John 7:1-8, esp. 5)
 - d. This serves to show that even those who should have known Jesus best, those who spent 30 years growing up with Him in the same house, were outsiders during Jesus's earthly ministry because they failed to recognize Him for Who He was

- e. Fortunately, shortly after His resurrection His family came to accept His claims and became insiders, with James and Jude even becoming leaders in the early Church
3. The third group mentioned by Mark is also a group of outsiders: the Scribes (READ 22-30):
 - a. Mark has already revealed the opposition Jesus faced from the Scribes and other leaders in Israel--They had already accused Him of being a blasphemer (2:7) and Law-breaker by healing on the Sabbath
 - b. But now, Mark describes an organized effort and plan to discredit Jesus and destroy His reputation by making more egregious accusations against Him (22):
 - 1) These scribes **“came down from Jerusalem”**—they weren’t local scribes but part of a delegation sent by the leaders in Jerusalem
 - 2) Mark indicates that they’re claims were ongoing (by use of the imperfect tense)—**“they were saying”** indicates an ongoing effort, likely speaking to the people directly making accusations against Jesus rather than confronting Him directly
 - 3) Their accusations were two fold:
 - a) They accused Him of being **“possessed by Beelzebul”** (another name for Satan; 22a)
 - b) They accused Him of casting out demons **“by the ruler of the demons”** (22b)
 - c. Jesus’s response is brilliant and comes with a warning (READ 23-30):
 - 1) He dismantles their accusation with a question and three parables or illustrations (23): **“How can Satan cast out Satan?”**:
 - a) **“If a kingdom is divided against itself, that kingdom cannot stand.”**
 - b) **“If a house is divided against itself, that house will not be able to stand.”**
 - c) **“If Satan has risen up against himself and is divided, he cannot stand, but he is finished!”**
 - 2) He then uses another parable to illustrate His necessity in exercising authority over Satan and His demons (27):
 - a) If you’re going to plunder a strongman’s house, you need to bind him first (this is actually an allusion to Isaiah 49:24-26)
 - b) Satan is the strongman, the world and present age are his house, and his possessions (if you will) are the people he has taken captive:
 - On multiple occasions the Bible refers to Satan as the god or ruler of this world who blinds the minds of people and takes them captive (2 Corinthians 4:4; John 12:31)
 - It refers to him as the **“prince of the power of the air, of the spirit that is now working in the sons of disobedience”** (Ephesians 2:2)
 - But, Jesus disarmed him (Colossians 2:14-15)
 - c) However, if you remember Jesus came preaching that **“The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand...”** (Mark 1:15):
 - By ushering in the kingdom of God and His rule, Jesus was putting an end to Satan’s rule and his kingdom
 - This is a somewhat major theme for Mark, and may be why he begins His gospel with the Holy Spirit leading Jesus out into the wilderness to confront Satan face-to-face (notice that Jesus didn’t wait for Satan to come to Him—the Spirit led Him to Satan to be tempted—and Satan lost that first battle)

- By exercising His authority over demons Jesus was binding the Strongman so He could plunder Him and take back the captives!
- 3) Jesus's response also came with a rebuke and a warning (RE-READ 28-30):
 - a) This passage is nearly identical to Luke 12:10 where it says that God will forgive blasphemy even against Christ, but not blasphemy against the Holy Spirit
 - b) To blaspheme means to slander or speak a word against
 - c) In essence, what these passages say is that God can forgive every kind of sin—even blasphemy against Himself and His Son—with one exception, blasphemy against the Holy Spirit
 - d) The reason is simple: repentance and forgiveness require the work of the Holy Spirit and to reject that work as the Scribes were doing by attributing it to Satan made it impossible for them to be forgiven
 - d. The scribes opposition and blasphemy against the Holy Spirit made them the ultimate outsiders
 4. The fourth and final group mentioned by Mark is another group of insiders--the true family of Jesus (READ 31-35):
 - a. Mark returns to the discussion of Jesus's immediately family from vs. 20-21
 - b. They finally arrive to take hold of Jesus and put an end to His crazy ways
 - c. However, when they notify Jesus that his family is there, He flips things on it's head and uses it as an opportunity to address what it really means to be a part of His family by posing a rhetorical question (33): **"Answering them, He said, 'Who are My mother and My brothers?'"**
 - d. His answer? Those who were sitting around Him and following Him with a desire to do the will of God are His true and genuine family (35)
 - e. These are the ultimate insiders

Conclusion

1. These groups of people are representative of even our world today
2. There are those like the apostles who call themselves followers of Jesus, spending time in the Word and at church, many are genuinely saved and a part of God's kingdom, but some—like Judas—are all show with no real relationship with Jesus and outsiders to God's kingdom
3. There are those like Jesus' immediate family who have been exposed to the Truth about Jesus over and over again but just can't bring themselves to accept it—some struggle for years right up to and through death, while others (also like Jesus's family) finally have their eyes open and accept Him for Who He is and enter the Kingdom of God
4. There are still others, like the Scribes who absolutely refuse to believe and reject Christ no matter what they see, and are ultimately excluded from the kingdom of God
5. In the end, it comes down to one simple truth—the only way to be a insider when it comes to the kingdom of God is through doing the will of God through acceptance of Jesus Christ