



mark: chapter 3

that sabbath thing again

Jesus returns to the synagogue and finds a man with a crippled hand. All eyes were on Jesus to see if he was going to do something about it on the sabbath - so this looks like something of a setup. Jesus names the tension in the room by asking if it's lawful to do good things on the sabbath day. No one answers him.

Without any incantation, touch, or any other healing actin, he asks the man to stretch out his hand, and when he does it's healed. The religious authorities are incensed, and they begin to plot against him.

star power

Jesus takes his followers to the Sea of Galilee and finds that a great crowd has begun to follow him - so great that he has to worry about having a boat on the ready to escape.

the apostles

Having already called 5 disciples, Jesus rounds out the field by calling 7 more.

However, while the others were all found down by the Sea, here we have a trip up the mountain.

In the Greek Jesus "went up," "he summoned," and "he chose." He chooses the, that "they might be with him." Being "with him" is a feature of being a disciple, as is "following him."

How can we "be with Jesus" today? What constitutes "being with?" What does this say about discipleship?

sons of thunder

The Zebedee brothers were given the nickname "the sons of thunder." It's an interesting detail.

zealot

There is a second Simon who is identified as a "zealot." Zealots were a band of men dedicated to the overthrowing of the Roman Empire's hold on Israel. To the Jewish people they were seen as patriots, to the Romans they were seen as terrorists.

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family ties

A fascinating detail follows the naming of the twelve disciples: his family attempts to seize him, convinced that he is out of his mind. The word here, “seize” is a strong one - connoting “arrest.” Its interesting that the Gospel presents Jesus’ own family as thinking he’s nuts. This isn’t particularly flattering.

beelzebul

While Jesus’ family is worried that he’s nuts, the religious authorities begin to claim that he’s an agent of Satan. Jesus tries to use logic here to thwart their attack: why would an agent of evil be casting out other agents of evil?

“Beezebul” never shows up in the Hebrew Bible. In the New Testament it is found only here and Q. (Luke 11:15, 18-19; Matthew 10:25; 12:24, 27)

“Baalzebul” which literally means “Lord of the Flies” is found in 2 Kings 1:3, 6 as a way to poke fun of the god Baal.

In this chapter Jesus is accused of being out of his mind by his family and of being a demonic sorcerer by the religious authorities. These don’t seem to be things that would inspire people to follow him. Why do you

think Mark includes them?

blasphemy of the Holy Spirit

The kind of transgression here is curiously unclear, and has been interpreted in wildly various ways throughout history.

the family

Who is Jesus’ family? Well obviously it’s his mother, father, and any siblings, right? Except Jesus extends the reach of his family to be anyone who is aligned with him. He opens the possibility for anyone to be a member of his family. So, not only can we be a follower of his, but we can also become a relative of his.

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