

95-02-19Mark

That's how the Gospel of Matthew closes, with that injunction, with what we have come to call the Great Commission. We noticed on Wednesday night that there is one verb there that's in the command voice of all of the words that talk about going and teaching and baptizing and making disciples and so forth. There's one of those words that is an imperative.

It's the command. All of these others are things that are associated with that single command. And that command is, make disciples.

Make disciples. That implies a lot, because for someone to be a disciple, of course, they have to be a believer in the Lord Jesus Christ. And that gives us our commission to be witnesses to Him, to preach the Gospel so that people can come to a saving knowledge of Him.

But the command encompasses far more than that. In addition to hearing and believing the Gospel, our goal as believers is to become disciples. And in order to make disciples and fulfill that Great Commission, we have to first know how to be disciples.

And we looked at the concept of being a disciple on Wednesday night. And we find ourselves looking at that same concept this morning in Mark chapter 3. We will be finishing chapter 3 this morning. And we've seen thus far that Jesus has been preaching by the seaside.

Huge crowds have gathered. He withdrew to a mountain and called who? He called His disciples, didn't He? He called those that He desired, those that He Himself wanted in verse 13 of chapter 3. And they came to Him. And then He appointed 12 that they might be with Him and that He might send them out to preach.

And He gives their names. Then they descend from the mountain and return to the house. And the multitude comes together so that they cannot so much as eat bread.

And then it says, when His own people, when His family heard about this, they went out to lay hold of Him. For it was being said, He is out of His mind. And the scribes who came down from Jerusalem were saying, He has Beelzebub.

And by the ruler of demons, He casts out demons. So He called them to Himself. Now this is the second time in this chapter that we have this idea of calling.

Jesus has gone up in the mountain and called His disciples. Now He is down in the house and these people that are making false claims and are misconstruing His ministry, He calls them to Himself. We discover the fact that Jesus calls everyone, doesn't He? If I be lifted up, I will draw all men to Myself.

That call is made to everyone, but the responses to that call differ. And we find ourselves in a relative minority as those who respond to the call to believe the gospel. And once we become

believers in Jesus Christ, we may find ourselves in a minority of those who pursue the call to become disciples.

We can take advantage of the wonderful saving work of Jesus Christ and know that we are eternally secure, that we will spend the rest of our existence, which is indefinite, into the future with the Lord. And yet we don't respond to that further call to become a disciple and as a disciple to go and make disciples. Now, we want to review a little bit where we stand because we're going to tie this together with the concept of being a disciple.

Now, Jesus had attracted crowds before in this situation. And yet, on this occasion, His family decides to come up and see Him. What is it that is different about this situation so that His family decides to make the trip from down in Nazareth to come all the way up to Capernaum and see Him? This is a fairly lengthy journey, something on the order of 40 miles.

Probably would take at least one day and probably part of another to make that trip. But His mother and His brothers make this trip to see Him. Why do they decide at this point to come up and see Jesus? We're told here that when His own people heard, they went out to lay hold of Him.

And they heard two things. They heard what the people were saying and they heard what the religious leaders were saying. What is it that the people are saying about Jesus? He's beside Himself.

He's lost His senses. He's out of His mind. We reviewed the circumstances here.

These huge crowds have gathered. Now, Jesus has gathered crowds. If you go back and review just here in the Gospel of Mark, in chapter 1, verse 33, a crowd had gathered at the doorway after He healed the man in the synagogue and healed Peter's mother-in-law.

A crowd gathered. There was a crowd in chapter 2, verse 2. There was a crowd in chapter 2, verse 13. There was a crowd in chapter 2, verse 15.

Crowds coming and observing Jesus, listening to Him, watching Him heal, are not unusual. There's something unusual about this crowd, about this situation, and what His family hears about it. They hear that things have gotten to such a stage that Jesus is out of His senses.

There's something wrong with Him. There's something peculiar about Him. These enormous crowds, people are flinging themselves at Him.

He's saying strange things and doing strange things. And His family, at this distance, hearing this by word of mouth, has gotten concerned. They're concerned about their brother, their son.

And so they make this trip up to see Him. So, these crowds have become unmanageable. We know that this was unusual because Jesus told the disciples, you'd better get a boat ready.

If this crowd gets too unmanageable, I'm going to have to get clear off of the land and get away from them so that they don't crush Me. And as a side observation there, you might notice that Jesus Christ took precautions. Do you find that significant? We live in a day where we have insurance companies, we have people who say you had better make provision in case of an accident, in case of a sudden spell of ill health.

And we sometimes wrestle with how much should we be trusting God to take care of us, and how much should we make a prudent sort of provision. But notice here, Jesus Christ, the Son of God, with the power to flatten or disintegrate everybody in the crowd, says prepare a boat. So if the crowd gets too rowdy, I have the option of getting into that boat and escaping the crush of their numbers.

Jesus Christ, in His humanity, took a precaution. And I think that's a significant point to observe. So, He took this precaution.

Now, why did He not walk on the water? We know He can do that. Why does He need a boat? The crowd gets too severe, why can't He just step out a few feet on the waves? Why can't He simply issue a command and cause them all to fall down, as happens in the Garden of Gethsemane when they come to arrest Him. He simply announces His identity in the garden, and the entire assembly of people who have come to capture Him fall to the ground.

Why is it that Jesus takes a normal human type of precaution here, instead of doing something miraculous? This is also something we take note of. Jesus Christ exercised the power of the Holy Spirit for a purpose. His healing ministry, His casting out of demons has a specific purpose.

Do you remember what it is? It's a ministry of identification. It's a ministry that allows those in Israel to identify Him as Jesus Christ, the Messiah, the Son of God. That's the purpose for which He has this power, the power to heal.

Later on when this power is given to the disciples, this identifies them with Jesus Christ, identifies them as having a true message from God. It is a ministry of authentication, of identification, of proving that the messenger is in fact from God. Now we see this many places in the Old Testament, that when the Messiah would come, He would have the power of God upon Him.

You recall that great passage in Isaiah that gives the names of Jesus Christ? It's a part of the Messiah music that George Frederick Handel put together. His name shall be called what? Wonderful, Counselor, the Mighty God. The Mighty God.

Who can cast out demons but God alone? Who can give the blind sight but God alone? The blind man that Jesus will heal a little later goes to the synagogue and they're questioning Him and trying to figure out who He is and why He can suddenly see and what all the ruckus is about. And He says, it doesn't take a scholar, it doesn't take a rocket scientist to realize that if I was blind and now I see, this power is from God. This was a ministry of identification and authentication for

Jesus Christ.

Jesus Christ did not do gratuitous miracles. He didn't just toss out a miracle to please the crowd. He didn't do miracles that weren't necessary.

You recall His testing by Satan. He could have called 10,000 angels at any point in His ministry up to and including the cross. But He did not.

Why? Because He had a clear vision of His purpose. He knew why God had given Him power. And He knew what His purpose was.

And those two things went together. We reviewed again on Wednesday what our purpose is. Our purpose is to be disciples and to make disciples.

That's why God enables us with His Spirit. That's why God gives us His Word. To become disciples, to make disciples.

That's our purpose. And if we keep our purpose clearly in mind, we will know when and how to access the power of God in our lives, just as Jesus did. Walking on the water in front of the crowd.

You notice Jesus never walked on the water in front of a crowd. Who saw Him walk on the water? The disciples in the boat. And there was a purpose.

He was coming to them because they were in distress. They needed His presence. And He came to them.

He saw them from the mountaintop rowing against the wind, laboring all through the night trying to get across the lake. He had compassion on them. And He didn't have a boat.

He needed to get to them. So He came to them. So Jesus Christ uses the resources that God puts at His disposal as a human being to accomplish His purpose.

His purpose is to be identified as the Messiah. And His family hears of these extraordinary goings-on. They hear what the crowds are saying.

He's beside Himself. Why do you think they're saying that? Why are they saying this? Think back to the first teaching episode we saw in chapter 1 of Mark. Remember when He went to the synagogue and He taught and the people were remarking to each other and they said, We've never heard teaching like this.

He teaches with such authority, not like the scribes and the Pharisees. What new teaching is this? We've never heard anything like this. And they couldn't make sense of it.

They couldn't understand it. They couldn't comprehend what it was He was saying. You think

about some of the things that Jesus said.

Think about the Sermon on the Mount. Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth. Think about His teaching.

If your right eye offends you, pluck it out. If your right hand offends you, cut it off. Think about later on, John records where he says, Unless you eat my flesh and drink my blood, you can have no part with me.

These things falling on the ears of people that did not have spiritual sensitivity sounded crazy. What do you mean turn the other cheek? We're under Roman oppression here. We need someone to go and fight them and overcome them and drive them out of our land.

What do you mean a Roman soldier has me carry his pack a mile and I should go a second mile? The law doesn't require that. Moses never said that. That's ridiculous.

You're crazy. You're out of your mind. The teaching that Jesus did by the seashore doesn't make sense to the people who assemble.

The vast majority of them cannot comprehend what He's saying. Why do you suppose that is? There are none so blind as those who will not see. Jesus said when He told the story of the rich man and Lazarus, and at the end of the story the rich man says, Send Lazarus back to my brothers to tell them the way things really are so that they won't come to this awful place.

And Abraham, speaking in this parable, tells the rich man, If they do not believe Moses and the prophets, they won't believe even a person that rises from the dead. Jesus Christ is going to be that person. He's going to rise from the dead and authenticate every word that He ever uttered in the presence of these huge crowds.

Why do these people not believe Him? Because they don't believe Moses and the prophets. They never made themselves disciples of God. They never made themselves students of the Old Testament.

They are caught up in a system of tradition. They are caught up in a system of human works, human energy, human appearances. They are so enmeshed in it, we're going to see this morning, that when the truth comes and stands before them in bodily form, they can't identify it.

It's crazy. It makes no sense. And this is the word that goes out about Jesus.

Boy, He's a great healer. He commands the demons and they come out. He utters a word and the blind see, and the deaf hear, and the lame walk.

But when He starts talking, I can't figure out what He is saying. He says the craziest, nuttiest things. He's just out of His mind, but He's fun to watch.

He's a sensation. He's very entertaining. I can't figure out what He's talking about, but He's a great show.

This is the word that has gone forth. They hear this clear down in Nazareth. And people are saying, oh, there's a crazy man up there by the Sea of Galilee.

We hear talk of all of these incredible, strange things happening. There are demons involved some kind of way. There's demon activity and a crazy man.

And Jesus is involved and the people down there hear that. Well, they love Jesus as a member of their family. And they're concerned.

They say, well, if something has happened to Him, if He's crazy and there's demons and all of these crowds and dangerous circumstances, we'd better get up there and see what we can do. And so they take off. And it's important.

We get that idea introduced to us before Jesus talks to the scribes about the power that He exercises. And it's important. It's another one of those structural clues in this story that tells us what's important.

It tells us what to watch for. So we have His family introduced back here in verse 21. And they come down to lay hold of Him.

They're not going to arrest Him. They're not going to drag Him away. They want to seize Him to take care of Him.

We saw last week it's the same word that's used for a man grabbing one of His sheep that has fallen into a pit and pulling it out for its own good. To rescue it. To aid it.

To take hold of it for benefit. That's the idea here. His family is not going to have Him committed to a loony bin.

They're concerned. They heard these wild stories. Now the scribes who came down from Jerusalem in verse 22 said, He has Beelzebub or Beelzebul.

And by the ruler of demons, He casts out demons. Where in your Old Testament Scriptures does it talk about Beelzebul? Do you remember? There's only one Old Testament passage that talks about Beelzebul. And that's back in 1 Samuel.

It's back in the place where we are told about the gods of the Philistines. He was a Philistine god. There was an interesting observation.

Someone pointed out that in the ancient world they would have these countries and they would eventually split up and what used to be friends would become enemies. It's kind of like over in

Croatia and Serbia today. These people have been Yugoslavians for years and years.

Before that they were separate. They were welded together into Yugoslavia and now they've split up and the Serbs and the Croats are fighting one another. And when this happens, when a country splits up, everything about that other faction becomes evil and bad.

And so you had a case where you had the Aryans in the ancient world and the Aryans divided up into the Iranians and into another group, the Indians. The ones that became India. The Iranians and the Indians divided out of this common Aryan nation.

And when you look at the gods that they worshipped, the gods that the Iranians worshipped became the devils for the Indians. And the Indian gods became the devils for the Iranians. So over in the Iranian area, they're worshipping this one god and the Indians are saying that's what we call the devil.

And they're worshipping a god and the Iranians are saying that's our devil. And so it splits up. And this happened in Israel.

Israel looked at the gods of the Philistines and they identified them with evil. And they identified them with the enemy. And so they began to refer to Satan or to Satan's minions by the names of these foreign gods.

Because God never calls Satan Beelzebul. In fact, Jesus Christ, if you look at all of the references to this, Jesus Christ never calls Satan Beelzebul. And it's a witness here to the fact that there had been such a tradition that had grown up here in the Jewish world.

They're talking about Beelzebul who was the prince of the demons. He may or may not be associated in their mind with Satan. Because Jesus will use both names and make a distinction.

As he says, they're saying he has Beelzebul and by the ruler of demons he casts out demons. They're not necessarily thinking that he's possessed by Satan himself, but by Satan's head general, the general over all the demons. Beelzebul was the lord of the flies.

In Assyrian, that name means the lord of dung, the lord of fertilizer. The king of manure, however you want to look at it. And so, he calls them to himself and he says in parables, how can Satan cast out Satan? In other words, does this mean that there has been a rebellion in Satan's camp and his general Beelzebul is suddenly rebelling against Satan's own kingdom and Satan's own force? If it's divided, he'll never stand.

He's defeated. We can rejoice. He's had a civil war in his own camp.

How can Satan cast out Satan? If a kingdom is divided against itself, that kingdom cannot stand. And notice verses 24 and 25, because these are universal principles. These don't just apply to Satan, do they? Verse 24, If a kingdom is divided against itself, that kingdom cannot stand.

Abraham Lincoln quoted this verse during the American Civil War. And if a house is divided against itself, that house cannot stand. This is a true principle of any kingdom, of any house.

And it's important here, and that's the reason that Mark has recorded it in such detail. This is more than just an objection to Jesus' work. It's more than just an answer to the criticism, well, he's just casting demons out by the prince of demons.

And Jesus quotes a universal principle and then applies it to this specific situation. In verse 26, If Satan has risen up against himself and is divided, he cannot stand, but has an end. No one can enter a strong man's house and plunder his goods unless he first binds the strong man.

Now, Jesus Christ has his own kingdom. He has his own house. He has his own spiritual family.

And that's what's in view here. In the same way that Satan's house cannot stand if it's divided, the house and the kingdom of Jesus Christ cannot stand if it is divided. There's only one kind of person that can be in that kingdom.

If there are two different kinds of people with two different purposes and two different goals and two different views of life, the kingdom of Jesus Christ will never stand. Just as Satan's house cannot stand if it is divided. And as we see these people that are gathered by the seashore, and we see the scribes and the Pharisees attacking Jesus Christ, we discover that they are not a part of Jesus' kingdom.

They're not a part of the house of Jesus Christ. If they are opposed to him, if they don't understand the power by which he operates, if they don't understand the Word of God, for Jesus Christ to reach out and include these people that have no faith and have no belief in him, would be to create a house divided. A house divided against itself cannot stand.

So these people are faced with a challenge. Are they going to be in that kingdom and in that house or not? The house of Jesus Christ is not divided. There's only one kind of person that can be in it.

And that's the person of faith. That's the person that is seeking first the kingdom of God and his righteousness. No other person is going to be included in that kingdom.

These people are at a decision point. No one can enter a strong man's house and plunder his goods unless he first binds the strong man. Do you remember what John the Baptist said about Jesus Christ? There comes one after me mightier than I. The mightier one is coming.

One mightier than I. He doesn't just use human teaching tools. He doesn't just baptize with water. He's not just out preaching as a normal prophet.

He is the Son of God. I'm not even worthy to touch his sandals. The mightier one is coming.

Jesus refers to himself here as the mightier one. He is the one that is strong enough to run Satan out of his kingdom and to plunder his goods, to free people from the bondage that Satan places them in through his schemes and his deception, through the bondage that demon influence and demon possession has put on them. Jesus Christ is that mightier one.

The works that Jesus does, the miracles, the healings are designed to identify him as that mightier one, as the Son of God. This is the witness of God the Holy Spirit. This is the message from God the Holy Spirit.

The power that the Spirit exercises in Jesus' ministry identifies him as the Son of God, the Messiah of Israel. And these people are at a decision point. What do you think about this man, Jesus? What do you think about this preacher, this teacher, this healer, this one that exercises this incredible power, this mightier one that has come? What do you think about him? And the answer to that question determines whether they're going to be in the house of Satan or in the house of the Lord.

These houses are not divided. There aren't believers in Satan's house and there are not unbelievers in Jesus' house. No house divided against itself can stand.

And these people stand at a crossroads. The bulk of the crowd, the vast majority of the people in the crowd have made their decision. They made it long ago.

They made it when they were faced with the issue of the law and the prophets. When they were faced with the God of Israel, they didn't respond in faith. They didn't recognize the value of the words of Moses, the words of Jeremiah and Isaiah and Ezekiel, the teaching that was available to them.

They didn't consider it important. They didn't pursue it. They didn't spend the time and the energy necessary to go through the learning that would acquaint them with their own God.

So now when Jesus Christ comes, they are not prepared to identify Him. They don't know the Word. They don't know the signs.

They don't realize that this power and these incredible things that they see are sending them a message. It's not the miracles themselves. It's not just the healings, just the demon exorcisms.

These things communicate a message. This is the Son of God. What are you going to decide about Him? They missed the message.

They missed the decision point because their decision was made long ago. That's where we stand. We have the entire complete Word of God at our disposal.

We have the Gospel of Jesus Christ. As Americans living in a free society, the Gospel is easy to obtain. It's easily heard.

It's easily understood. And people in our society today are faced with that same choice. Some of us respond and some of us do not.

Those that do not respond are in the house of Satan and they will share Satan's fate, which is eternity in the lake of fire. We as believers in Jesus Christ have become part of His household. We are of the household of faith.

We share His destiny, which is an eternal future with God the Father. What a wonderful security that is that we have. Now that we are in that household, we need to live like members of that royal family.

You remember the Broadway musical that has the girl sing the rain in Spain. She's a commoner. She's lived in the gutter and has a horrible Cockney accent.

And a professor takes her and turns her from a sow's ear into a silk purse. He teaches her to speak and teaches her to dress and teaches her refined manners and so forth. That's what God is in the process of doing with us.

We have been taken out of the world, out of the kingdom of Satan. And as members of God's royal family, it is incumbent on us to live like members of the royal family, to think and act in a way that is in keeping with God's family, with God's standards. And it's a constant battle because we have ingrained in us the old way of life, the old system.

We live like members of that other house. We don't want to divide the house of Jesus Christ. We don't want to cause a division by being two different kinds of people in that house.

We have the right to be there. We have the right to be called the children of God, John tells us. But do we live in the light of that? Does our thought life reflect being members of God's family? Have we been rehabilitated in our thinking, in our priorities, in our use of God's power to accomplish God's purposes and not to seek to accomplish our own? If Jesus Christ had taken His power and used it for His own ends, He would have divided God's house because the house of God exists to fulfill God's purpose.

In Acts, you have the story of Simon, the sorcerer, who becomes a believer and he follows Peter around. And he sees Peter use the power of God to authenticate his ministry and to bring people to Christ. And he says, let me have this power so that I can do these things also.

He has his own purposes at heart. And he's given a very severe rebuke by Peter for that request. Peter says, go back and learn what you're supposed to know about the will of God.

Don't be asking for this power. It can't be purchased with money. It's not here to serve you.

It's here to accomplish God's purposes. So now, this is summed up in Jesus' words about the so-called unforgivable sin. In verse 28, Assuredly, I say to you, all sins will be forgiven the sons of

men in whatever blasphemies they may utter.

But he who blasphemes against the Holy Spirit never has forgiveness, but is subject to eternal condemnation. And he said this because they were saying that he was using the power of Satan. They're saying that these authenticating works that the Holy Spirit gave to Jesus Christ were done in Satan's power.

We noted last time that this is Jesus' purpose. His purpose is to come and fulfill God's will, to be identified. Think about it this way.

Let's assume for the moment that we can localize God the Father. The throne of God the Father is here in the corner of this room. What is the way for human beings to come to the Father? What does Jesus say in John 14, 6? No man comes to the Father, but by Me.

I am the way. I am the truth. I am the door, Jesus called Himself.

He is the gate through which we have access to the Father. He is that doorway where the veil has been torn so that we can enter into the Holy of Holies. He is the means of access to God the Father.

So imagine here, this doorway, Jesus Christ, that gives us access to God the Father. And that is our destination. That's our purpose for being, is to be with God the Father.

Now, the mission of God the Holy Spirit. You think back in John 14 and 15 where Jesus describes the ministry of the Spirit. He says, He will reveal Me to you after I'm gone.

When Jesus leaves, He says the Holy Spirit will teach everything that Jesus taught. He will recall His words to their minds. He will make Jesus Christ real to us after Jesus Christ has left.

For unbelievers, it's God the Holy Spirit that convicts the world of sin and righteousness and judgment. Brings them to the point of recognizing their need for a Savior. So you might consider a second doorway here that leads to Jesus Christ.

And Jesus Christ in turn leads to God the Father. God the Holy Spirit's ministry is to bring us to Jesus Christ. The ministry of Jesus Christ is to bring us to God the Father.

Now, that is a process. That is a sequence of ministries that bring us to God. And it starts with the ministry of God the Holy Spirit.

We could never understand the Gospel because we're carnal. We are not spiritual and we don't understand spiritual things. God the Holy Spirit does that ministry to every unbeliever that reaches a point of understanding of the Gospel.

He makes it real and clear, just as He does all of the other Scriptures for us after salvation. Now, He speaks a word of truth to us. He says, Jesus Christ is the way to the Father.

Jesus Christ is the Son of God. He is the fullness of deity. Come to Jesus Christ.

If we look at the testimony of God the Holy Spirit, whether it's works in people's lives, whether it's the presence of God among believers of like mind, whether it's the word of truth, the Gospel of Jesus Christ, if we look at that word of the Holy Spirit and we say, no, this is evil. This is wrong. This is satanic.

This is false. This isn't something to be believed. You're wrong.

I don't accept what you're saying. What have you done? You've spoken against the Holy Spirit. You have blasphemed the Holy Spirit.

You've said you're a liar. You're not testifying to the truth. This testimony doesn't mean anything to me.

I refuse to accept it. And by blaspheming the Holy Spirit, we have shut the door that leads to Jesus Christ. We can never reach that point of forgiveness and cleansing and imputation of righteousness and all of the other things that salvation does for us that bring us to God the Father.

We lose out at the very beginning of God's program of salvation. The testimony of the Spirit is where it all begins. The Spirit makes Jesus Christ real.

That's what He's doing here in empowering these miracles and casting out demons and empowering the humanity of Jesus Christ and identifying Him as the Messiah. When these people say, your works don't mean a thing. They're evil.

They're from the prince of demons. They have spoken against the testimony of God the Holy Spirit. And by definition, it's unforgivable.

How can we reach the point of forgiveness if we refuse to accept the message that brings us to the Savior, the One that brings forgiveness? Blasphemy of the Holy Spirit is rejection of His testimony because He exists to reveal Jesus Christ. To blaspheme the Spirit is to reject the truth of Jesus Christ, the message of Jesus Christ, and the salvation that Jesus Christ brings. And if we don't accept the testimony of the Holy Spirit, we never come to the point of understanding and accepting Jesus Christ and we never reach the point of coming to the Father.

And that is Jesus' identity. I am the way, the truth, and the life. No man comes to the Father but by Me.

And no one comes to Jesus Christ apart from the Holy Spirit. So to reject the Holy Spirit, blasphemy of the Holy Spirit is an unforgivable sin. There is no other recourse.

There is no other name under Heaven given among men whereby we must be saved. The Holy Spirit testifies to that name. When we reject His testimony, we never reach that place of forgiveness.

We are under eternal condemnation. And that's not something that's just restricted to the lifetime of Jesus Christ. That has been true from Adam to the last believer in the Millennial Kingdom.

Every human being comes to God, the Father, the same way through Jesus Christ, faith in Him, from beginning to end, from first to last, in every dispensation, salvation is always the same. The Holy Spirit is always the witness because none of us as human beings can understand spiritual truth without His ministry. So, he who blasphemes against the Holy Spirit in verse 29, never has forgiveness but is subject to eternal condemnation.

And that makes perfect sense. Without Him and without accepting His ministry, we can't come to Christ. Of course we're eternally condemned.

That's the way we're born. And that's the way we'll stay apart from Jesus Christ. So now in verse 31, we see His family reemerge.

This is like the closing parenthesis. They were introduced back in verse 21 and now we see them come up again. His brothers and His mother come and they stand outside and they send to Him, calling Him.

It's very interesting in verse 31, these words are the same words that were used earlier when Jesus sent and called His disciples. Jesus went to the top of the mountain. Jesus, in verse 13, called to Him those that He Himself wanted.

And in verse 14, He sent them forth to preach. Apostello, the word that we come to use as apostle. Send out.

Send forth. Now here's Jesus' family standing outside the house and outside the limits of the crowd calling Jesus Christ. Sending for Jesus Christ.

Very same words. Kaleo. Apostello.

The very same words are being used here. But who's doing the calling? Who's doing the sending? It's the family. They are sympathetic to Jesus Christ.

They love Him. They're not His enemies. And yet, they are saying, you need to come out.

You need to come see us. You need to come. We want to take hold of you and help you.

We want you to conform yourself to our purpose, which is to get you out of this place. They call and they send. In verse 32, a multitude is sitting around Him and they say to Him, Look, your

mother and your brothers are outside seeking You.

But He answers and says, Who is My mother or My brothers? Now here's another case where the crowd's going to be wagging their heads saying this guy is crazy. He doesn't even remember who his family is now. And when Jesus looks around in a circle at those who sit about Him and says, Here are My mother and My brothers, that's just confirming in their mind He's nuts.

He's beside Himself. He's out of His mind. What does He mean? How many brothers and sisters does He think He has? What family does He think He came from? Mary and James and Judas and His other brothers are standing outside here calling for Him and He's looking around saying, Who are My mother and brothers? These people here are My mother and brothers and it's just completely over their head.

This is why this word went out. He's nuts. He says things that don't make any sense.

But what is his point here? He makes it clear in verse 35. Whoever does the will of God is My brother and My sister and My mother. Two times here He refers to the people who are sitting about Him.

Early on, we saw Jesus in the house with people sitting at His feet. This is the classic posture in the ancient world of a disciple. Disciples were said both literally and symbolically, figuratively, to sit at the feet of their master.

That was the place of submission. That was the place of instruction. That was where people heard teaching and gained knowledge was sitting at the feet of their teacher.

Of all of this crowd and this huge assembly, there is an inner circle. There is a circle around Jesus Christ of 11 of His 12 disciples and a few others. Mary, Martha, Lazarus, some of the others who were genuine believers, sitting in a circle, sitting in the innermost part of the house around Him to hear Him teach.

He looks at those people sitting about Him at His feet, sitting as disciples, meditating on what He teaches. He says, These are My mother and My brothers and My sister. What does that really mean? Is He claiming a blood relationship with them? Of course not.

What is the assumption of the crowd when they deliver this message? They say, Well, His mother and brothers are outside. He will stop what He is doing and go out to see them because that takes priority. That blood relationship, that family kinship, that is a top priority.

When they come, He will naturally stop what He is doing and go to them. Jesus is still functioning on the basis of His purpose. What is His purpose? His purpose is the same as our purpose.

He has handed off His purpose to us and that is to be a true servant of God and to make disciples the same way. Jesus is in the process of making disciples. He looks around Him at this

circle of people who are sitting at His feet, who are learning the Word of God, listening to His instruction and He said, These are the people that I prioritize.

This is My mission. This is the purpose for which I am here. I am not here for any human reason.

I am not, in this instance, respecting human kinships, human priorities. I am here to do the will of My Father and the will of My Father is to make disciples. This is My priority.

These are those who share a kinship with Me, who share a personal relationship with Me. So, whoever does the will of God falls into that circle. And so our final question this morning is, How do we do the will of God? What does it mean to do the will of God? We can start thinking of verses that we've memorized that end in things like, In everything give thanks for this is the will of God concerning you.

It is not the will of God that any should perish but that all should come to repentance. There's a good evangelism verse. It's the will of God that none perish, that all come to repentance.

What does Jesus say? We have that classic section of John, John chapter 14 and 15 and 16 where Jesus talks about abide in Me. Let My words abide in you. This is My Father's will that you bear much fruit and that your fruit remain.

It was pointed out to me earlier this week that there's a wonderful correspondence there because as people abide and remain in Jesus Christ, their fruit abides and remains for all eternity to reflect the glory of Jesus Christ. It's a permanent thing. It goes beyond human relationships, human transitional circumstances.

It goes to the eternal. It goes to relationship with God. As disciples, it's our goal even after salvation to continue to be responsive to the ministry of God, the Holy Spirit, who reveals the truth.

Jesus said when the Spirit comes, He's going to do two things. He will teach you everything that I have taught you and He'll help you remember it. That's what Jesus says in John chapter 15.

When the Spirit comes, He will lead you into all truth. He will take of the things that belong to Me and give them to you. He will teach you everything that I've been teaching you.

He's the comforter just as I am. He's another comforter and He will help you remember. That's our goal.

And in so doing, we fulfill our potential given to us at the point of salvation to be enabled by the Spirit, to know Jesus Christ and to come to God the Father and to be disciples. And that is the point at which we can then fulfill our purpose which is to make disciples. And that is certainly an ongoing process.

There's not a graduation ceremony. The Holy Spirit does not descend like a dove at a certain point and say, you are now a graduate, fully fledged, licensed, ordained disciple. Does He? It's an ongoing process and it always works the same way.

It's the ministry of the Spirit working with the Word of God in our souls to change us and transform us. What a wonderful occupation that is for each one of us to be a work of God, to be an ongoing place where He can prune and trim and improve. None of us reach the point where we don't need that work, do we? And so every day, every week, every month, every year that God gives us in this life, we seek the ministry of God, the Holy Spirit.

We learn His Word and try to remember it and put it into practice in the daily, mundane chores of life. And that's what brings us into the very presence of God. Let's close now in a word of prayer.

Father, we thank You this morning for the wonderful encouragement of Your Word. You have done so much for us in sending Your Son, Jesus Christ, to die on the cross, to pay for our sins, to cleanse us, to renew us, to give us eternal life, to credit righteousness to our account, and to give us the opportunity after our salvation to learn to be members of Your household, to be members of Your family, to think and to conduct ourselves in a way that corresponds to Your will and Your purpose. We pray that the things that we have looked at today will become a part of the resources in our soul, that they will be things the Holy Spirit can call to our mind and can bring to the point of application so that as we face each day, as we deal with one another, we will be characterized by that faith, that hope, and that love that are marks of the disciples of Jesus Christ.

We ask these things in His name. Amen.