

What Jesus Does With Ordinary People

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[0 : 0 0] Mark chapter 3. Because of the crowd, lest they crush him.

For he had healed many, so that all who had diseases pressed around him to touch him. And whenever the unclean spirits saw him, they fell down before him and cried out, You are the Son of God.

And he strictly ordered them not to make him known. And he went up on the mountain and called to him those whom he desired. And they came to him.

And he appointed twelve whom he also named apostles, so that they might be with him. And he might send them out to preach and have authority to cast out demons.

He appointed the twelve. Simon, to whom he gave the name Peter. James, the son of Zebedee. And John, the brother of James, to whom he gave the name Boanerges.

[1 : 2 7] That is, sons of thunder. Andrew. And Philip. And Bartholomew. And Matthew. And Thomas. And James, the son of Alphaeus.

And Thaddaeus. And Simon, the zealot. Judas Iscariot. Who betrayed him. This is God's word and we pray blesses the reading of it.

Well, I want to ask you for a moment to use your imagination, if you will. I want you to think about an interest that you have. A particular interest. Something that you're interested in enough.

That if there was a TV show or a book about this interest. That you would engage with it. So, something. Some kind of interest. That if there was a club.

Or a group of people with that similar interest. You could see yourself getting around that. What is that thing for you? Just have a little think about that thing for you.

[2 : 2 7] We all have our own interests. I want you to picture that in your mind. Now, I want you to imagine. That you were tasked with setting up a group. For that interest.

Okay? And you wanted to get together with others who enjoyed that same thing. Perhaps share ideas. Learn about up and coming events.

Or just simply enjoy the thing together. Now, if you were going to set up a group for this particular interest. What would be the requirements to join that group?

Just have a think about. You're setting up the rules of the group. And the requirements to join. Who would you want to be in that group with you? Imagine most people.

Like when you're thinking about this. Imagine most of us. We probably wouldn't really care that much about. Someone's age. Or race. Or social status. As much as.

[3 : 2 6] Whether the person was. Actually interested in that or not. I mean, surely that would be the top of the list. Are you actually interested in this thing? You're not coming just because you're Scottish. Or Nigerian.

Or whatever it is. Or English. You know. Or American. Anyone else. From anywhere else. Are you actually interested in this thing?

Because if you're not. There's no point you've been here. And so who would you want to be in that group with you? You would probably want people who actually know about the thing. And genuinely have a passion for it.

So for instance. You wouldn't want a movie buff. In a book club. They're mortal enemies. You wouldn't want a football fan in a tennis club.

You wouldn't want to invite a jazz enthusiast. Along with your country friends. To see Nashville. You probably wouldn't. Want those kind of people. You would.

[4 : 24] Think about the kind of people. That you would want in that group. Now. I'm going to take a U-turn here. Right? I want you to use this. Powerful imagination. That you've now discovered.

That you have. Use this powerful imagination. Because you're going to need. A powerful imagination for this. I want you to imagine. The perfect church.

Right? It's really stretching your imagination here. Right? We know it doesn't exist. Okay? However. Try to imagine. And we can all do this.

I know. I can do this. I've done it before. I want you to imagine a church. Where everyone. And everything. Is exactly as you prefer. Okay?

And I. I don't want you to feel uncomfortable about this. Let me say up front. That I'm only talking about something. Completely unrealistic. Something hypothetical. Just an exercise of imagination.

[5 : 24] Imagine what church would be like. If everything. And everyone. Was exactly as you prefer. Okay? So. It's like an all-star team. If you've ever seen an all-star team.

Where every player. Is the best at their position. No real group is like that. But if you could have the best. Of every part. Of church. From the greeting.

To the seating. From the serving. To the speaking. From the singing. To the eating. From the building. To the heating. What would. Your preferential. Ideal church.

Be like. Only songs. That you know. And love. You always sat. Where you like. Well. I mean. We kind of do that. Anyway. Your favorite preacher.

I know it's not me. I'm not my favorite preacher. There's plenty of people. Who would be. I would sit and listen to all day. Right? So. Favorite seat. Favorite music.

[6 : 20] Favorite preacher. Someone who always. Only ever prays. The things that you care about. Your favorite refreshments. Whether it's coffee. Or hot chocolate.

Or a wee glass of wine. I mean. The church in Corinth. Liked a wee glass of wine. And only the kind of people. That you get on best with. Imagine that.

Just. We're in the room. And we know that everyone. In the room. We got on with. So. What would your ideal church. Be like? And I think.

For most of us. And let me just say. Again. This is. A hypothetical exercise. I think. For most of us. The answer to that question. Is. Not this church.

Church. And that's okay. That's the point. Okay. We all recognize that. But the thing is. In this country. Right. In the west. Not just this country.

[7 : 15] But in the west. We have this very odd scenario. Where people can pick and choose. What church to be a part of. To suit them. It wasn't true. In the days of the covenanters.

When you had to go out to a field. It wasn't true. Throughout church history. You couldn't just rock up to any church. And want to be a part of it. But we have this odd scenario. In the 21st century west. Where you can pick and choose.

I mean. Think about it. If you didn't have a car. Some of you don't have a car. You just need to go to the church. That you can walk to. It's a very odd scenario. This is not the case.

In many places in the world. You're not getting that scenario. In Iran. Or China. Or some of the other harsh places. And it's certainly not. The norm. Throughout church history.

That any Christian. Could be. Their own identity. Their own entity. Walking about. And choosing. Whatever church they want to go to. And so it's quite strange. That we can do that.

[8 : 12] And in many ways. It's actually very unhelpful. Both to the church. And to the individual. Because it gives us a very odd. And unbiblical idea. About what it is to be a Christian.

And what it is to be a church. Church. But this is what we're living with. This is what we've been used to. For decades. The kind of sign. That you see on churches.

You know. You've seen it in many churches. All welcome. There would have been. A thousand and more churches. Throughout church history. Who would not have that sign. And they wouldn't thank you. For that sign.

So we recognize that. Not. Not everyone would actually want that. Some would. At one point. In my Christian walk. I wanted. The ideal church.

Where it was only everything. That I preferred. And I could pick and choose. And Jen could tell you. That I would go and search. For different churches. And Jen would tell me up front. No don't go there.

[9 : 08] They're weird there. And I'd be like. Well. It's fine. They're not. And I'd go. And I'd come back. And I'd say. You're right. They were weird. And now. I have become. A weirdo as well. Okay.

But at one point. In my Christian life. If I did that as well. I was looking for the perfect church. And I remember. A thought crossed my mind. What would church be like. If there was a hundred me.

And it terrified me. Let me tell you. Thank God. There's only one of each one of us. It would not be good. And Paul. Actually speaks about this. In one Corinthians.

Twelve. He said. If the whole body were an eye. Where would be the sense of hearing? If the whole body were an ear. Where would be the sense of smell? If all were a single member.

Where would the body be? And as it is. God arranged the members in the body. Each one of them. As he chose. And that is a good link. To something. That we're going to.

[10 : 06] Focus on. That's pertinent. In this passage. Is that he chose. Not us. He chose. And so. You see this. In our passage.

Which. He called to him. Those. Whom he desired. And they came to him. And he appointed. He chose. He did the choosing. Later on. He says to the disciples.

You didn't choose me. I chose you. And that's a good thing. If not for Jesus. Who would have chosen these men. To be ambassadors.

For the kingdom of God. Who would have chosen these men? If you were going. If you were a scout. For the kingdom of God. You would not have chosen these 12 men. You would not.

If not for Jesus. They are an odd choice. But so are you. And so am I. If not for Jesus. Who would have chosen me.

[10 : 59] Or you. And so for the Jews. The Jews were waiting. Hundreds of years. For the Messiah to come. Would any of them expect. This group.

To be the leaders. That the Messiah would choose. Maybe Simon the Zealot. I think we give him a shout. He's zealous. We're going to get the Romans. Maybe Simon the Zealot.

But Jesus didn't choose Simon. For his sword. And that would have been a shock to Simon. He called those whom he desired. So what is it Jesus wants from them?

Have you ever asked that of yourself? What is it Jesus wants from me? Why did he choose me? What does he want from you? Does he want your money? Does he want your talents?

Does he want your abilities? Is there something particularly special. About your personality. That Jesus wants. Or maybe your experience and background. Is really valuable to Jesus.

[12 : 00] Or maybe it's your connections. He knows the connections you've got. And that's super important to him. And I want to tell you. Just among other things.

Here's the thing that Jesus wants from you. He wants your heart. Jesus wants your heart. And he doesn't need your talents. He doesn't need our money.

He doesn't need our connections. In fact he doesn't need anything from us. And we mustn't think. That he would choose anyone. Based on anything. That he can gain from them.

He didn't choose us. Because of anything he can gain from us. And we need to. Not get annoyed.

Or frustrated. Or depressed at that fact. It's actually very liberating. You do not need. To impress Jesus. And even if you tried.

[12 : 55] You wouldn't be able to. He wants your heart. And so these disciples. Twelve men. Absolutely nothing extraordinary. About these disciples. Nothing that stands out.

As the kind of people. That would get on well together. Let alone convince other people. To want to join them. Is there anything about us. That's like. Screaming to the world.

You want to join us. That's these twelve men. These twelve men. Put together. They couldn't get on well together. And they couldn't convince others. To join their club.

Why does Jesus choose them? That's what church is like. Why should any of us be together. Or any of us get on together. And why would anyone want to join us?

It's not because of our talents. It's not because of our money. It's not because of our loveliness. It's not because of our connections. With different people. Or groups. Or ministries.

[13 : 52] It's like. It's like Moses said. To Israel. God said. Don't think that it's because of anything to do with you. That I chose you. It's not because of your righteousness.

It's because of their wickedness. Don't think. That it's about us. And so. We mustn't think. That it's about us. The twelve disciples mustn't think.

It's anything to do with them. Could have been anyone. There was an absolutely. Massive crowd. Following Jesus. From all over the place. He could have chosen anyone. And so.

What is it. That would make anyone want to join. A group like. These twelve disciples. What is it that makes anyone want to join. A group like us. There's only one thing. And it's the Sunday school answer.

It's Jesus. It's Jesus. Churches are not a good witness. When Jesus is no longer at the center. Is that not true. Have you ever. Seen a church like that.

[14 : 47] And when it becomes about anything else. In our lives. We are not a good witness. When Jesus is not at the center. When it becomes about anything else. Even good things.

Things begin to break apart. When a church focuses on. Something else. Other than Jesus. Even good things. All these relationships. Begin to break apart.

They begin to break apart. And so. The thing in the middle. That binds these twelve men together. Is Jesus. And he is the only thing.

That can hold. Men like this together. He's the only thing. So look at the crowd. In the passage just before. Jesus healed a man. In a synagogue. On the Sabbath. And the religious leaders.

Were furious. And they sought to destroy him. So Jesus withdraws from. From there. With his followers. Not because he's afraid. Not because he's afraid. But because it's not yet time.

[15 : 45] And so. He doesn't back down. He. Commissions other people. To preach and do. The same kind of things. That have been getting him into trouble. He's not backing down. He's inviting others.

To join in in this work. That's getting him into trouble. We don't know. How aware the disciples. Would have been. About. Their ministry.

And what it would bring. But it's as if Mark. Gives his readers. A little insight. Into what being a disciple. Is all about. Being a disciple. Is going to cause trouble. With the world.

Because the world. Is in darkness. And so. At this point. The Pharisees. Are furious. But the crowds. Are following.

The Pharisees. Are furious. But the crowds. Are following. A great crowd. From Galilee. And Judea. And Jerusalem. And Edomia. Beyond the Jordan. From around Tyre. And Sidon. That is quite a following.

[16 : 39] And he was releasing people. From diseases. And demons. And the people. Were pressing in. And the unclean spirits. Were falling down. And crying out. Yet Jesus. Is not going to be defined.

By the crowds. Or by the cries of demons. Jesus is not going to be defined. By these things. And so he tells them. To be silent. He heals people. And he says. Don't tell anyone about this.

He silences the demons. And says. I don't want you telling people. That I am the son of God. He is not going to be defined. By the crowds. Or the cries of demons. He is going to choose.

A certain group of people. That he is going to. Have them speak for him. And so. As we explored before. Why would Jesus. Silence the unclean spirits.

We looked at this. A while ago. In Mark chapter 1. Why would Jesus. Silence the unclean spirits. If they are saying. That he is the son of God. Doesn't Jesus want people. To know that.

[17 : 35] Well it is not Jesus mission. To get people. To simply realize. Who he is. He doesn't want people. Just to know. Who he is. Rather.

He came to confront. Darkness and sin. And to confront people. With a decision. That they have to make. It is not just about. Realizing the truth about him. You need to make a decision. About him.

And so. Will they. Not just recognize the king. But will they receive the king. Will they repent. From their sin. Will they follow the king.

And walk in light. Are they actually kingdom people. Are they not. Anyone can say. You are the son of God. But are they kingdom people. Or are they not. Are they the kind of people. That he wants.

In his kingdom. Or are they not. And so Jesus came. To confront people. To make a decision. Simply saying. That Jesus is the son of God.

[18 : 29] Does not make you. A kingdom person. And how many people. Have we all probably known. That could say something like that. At one point in their life. And now. They are far from Christ.

So. Are they kingdom people. Or not. You can say that Jesus. Is your savior. All day long. You can go to church. All your life. Yet always be.

About building. Your own kingdom. Jesus. Jesus didn't come. To entertain the crowd. Or bask. In the cries. Of demons. He is about. His father's business.

And he chooses. Twelve men. To be with him. And who will learn. To be about. His business. And so far. What we need to understand. Is the leaders of Israel.

The Pharisees. The leaders of Israel. Have shown. That they are not. About the business. Of God. They are not. Kingdom people. And they have shown that. They are building.

[19 : 28] The kingdom of darkness. And they. Are about their father. The devil's business. And it is like. When Samuel. Confronted. King Saul. Saying. Because you have rejected. The word of the Lord.

God has rejected you. As king. And so now. Israel's leaders. Have rejected. The incarnate. Son of God. The word of God. And they have been rejected. As Israel's leaders.

They are not fit. The leaders of Israel. Have been examined. They have been found. Wanting. They are not fit. To lead the nation. And this is evident. Not only in their lack of grace.

And compassion. Or their misapplication. Of the law. But it is also. Evident. In their complete refusal. To recognize. And receive. Their own Messiah. They are not fit.

To lead the nation. And so God. Will choose leaders. Of his own. And we. We explored this. In chapter two. New wine skins. For new wine. Because the old wine.

[20 : 24] Skins cannot take it. Twelve men. Who will rule over. The twelve tribes of Israel. Not leaders. Simply by birth. But by faith. And by the choice of God.

Appointed by the Messiah. As witnesses. Of the gospel. Leaders of the new covenant. And foundations. Of the kingdom people. And this is what it says. In Ephesians two. That the household.

Of God. Is built. On the foundations. Of the apostles. And the prophets. Christ himself. Being the cornerstone. Jesus said this. To the disciples. In Matthew 19. In the new world.

When the son of man. Will sit on his glorious throne. You will sit on twelve thrones. Judging the twelve tribes. Of Israel. And this is written. In Revelation 21. That the wall.

The wall. Of the city. Had twelve foundations. And on them. Were the twelve names. Of the twelve apostles. Of the lamb. They were not chosen. Because of their birth. Or because of their worth.

[21 : 20] They were every bit. As common. As the next person. In the vast crowd. They were not trained. In theology. They were not students. Of the Torah. They had no speaking skills. Or scholarship.

They were not holy. Or righteous. They were not acceptable. Or highly respected. They were outsiders. Commoners. From Galilee. In the north. Who dressed strange.

And have strange accents. If we were living back then. We would call them. Conductors. Commoners from the north. Uneducated. Delinquents. They were.

They weren't particularly. Naturally patient. Or loving. Or compassionate. Or welcoming. They were argumentative. They were proud. They were hot tempered. And doubting.

They were prone to misunderstanding. And mistakes. They were slow to learn. And they were often lacking in faith. In one word. But. They were. Ordinary.

[22 : 17] They were ordinary. Some of them were fishermen. One was a zealot. One was a tax collector. All of them were from Galilee. In the north. Except for one. Can you guess? Judas Iscariot.

Judas was. From the south. Iscariot. Means man from Cariath. Which was a town south of Jerusalem. Unlike Galilee. In the north. These men.

They were ordinary men. From unremarkable places. With unremarkable backgrounds. Yet their ministry. Is still going on today. 2,000 years later. Isn't that something?

12 men. Ordinary. Minus one. Replaced by another. And their ministry is still going on today. In this building. Right now. And in a thousand other places across the world.

For the past 2,000 years. Their ministry has been going from strength to strength. How could such an ordinary group of men. Have such an extraordinary effect on the world. Again.

[23 : 15] Sunday school answer. Jesus. He is the thing. That makes the difference. So verse 14. It points it out in verse 14.

He called those who he desired. And they came to him. And he appointed 12. So that they might be. With him. And that is the difference maker.

In Acts chapter 4 verse 13. The leaders are baffled at these men. Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John. And perceived that they were uneducated.

Doesn't take you long to perceive they're uneducated. It's a bit like me. When they perceived that they were uneducated. Common men. They were astonished. And they recognized.

That they had been with Jesus. Jesus didn't come. Just so that people would find out. About his identity. The question is. Do you want to be with Jesus? This is the great hope.

[24 : 15] Of discipleship. That those who have not seen him. Yet love him. He's preparing a place. And he is coming back. For his own. So that they can be. With him.

Where he is. And how could any of us. Have any hope. Of being with him. If we don't know. About him. And this is what Paul says.

In Romans 10. Everyone who calls upon the name of the Lord. Will be saved. However. How will they call on him. Who have they have not believed. And how are they to believe in him. Who they have not heard.

And how are they to hear. Without someone preaching. And how are they to preach. Unless someone is sent. And if it was not for Jesus. These 12 men.

Would not have been sent. To preach. So that we might hear. And that we might believe. That we might know. And that we might be saved. And this was the purpose.

[25 : 10] That he chose. Them to be with him. That he might send them. Verse 14. Send them out to preach. And as it were.

To preach. To the ends of the earth. After his resurrection. He said. In John chapter 20. As the father has sent me. Even so. I am sending you. And that's what the word.

Apostle means. Apostle means. A sent one. A delegate. An ambassador. That he might send them out. To preach. 12 representatives.

Of Israel. The son of God. Sent to the world. Beginning in Jerusalem. To Judea and Samaria. To the ends of the earth. Fulfilling what God. Always intended for Israel.

For Israel. To be sent out to the world. To be a witness of God. To the whole world. And that is what God. Is fulfilling. Through the 12 apostles. And throughout the book of Mark.

[26 : 06] You will see Jesus. Allowing very very few people. To proclaim. If you read through Mark. It hardly allows anyone. To proclaim. Yet he chooses these 12.

To proclaim. They are the chosen preachers. He authenticates them. By giving them authority. Over demons. And we all know their names. Why does he lay out their names.

Like this. Because Jesus places a stamp. On these men. With the exception of Judas. And Mark tells us this. Because he says. The one who betrayed.

Jesus. And so. These are the ones. That the world should listen to. Jesus speaks for God.

And they speak for him. And this is what. Jesus said. In John chapter 13. Didn't he? He said. Whoever receives the one. That I send. Receives me. And whoever receives me.

[27 : 01] Receives the one who sent me. And so. If you're not receiving Jesus. You're not receiving God. Who sent him. And if you're not receiving. The apostles teaching. And the gospel. Then you're not receiving Jesus.

And you're not receiving God. There are many groups out there. There are many false prophets. False doctrines. False gospels. We've been talking about one.

Haven't we? The recent false prophet. Making the rounds. Everyone's going on about him. Who makes very bold claims. There's a chap out there.

You might hear him. You might not. Making very bold claims. To be. The successor of Christ. Today. In our day and age. Someone's claiming to be.

The successor of Muhammad. The successor of Christ. The successor of Moses. False prophets will come. And that's why. John says in 1 John.

[27 : 56] That's. That which we've seen. And that we've heard. We proclaim to you. So that you may have fellowship with us. Because our fellowship. Is with the father. And with his son.

Jesus Christ. And what John is saying. Is not saying. Because our fellowship. He's saying. Because. The fellowship of the 12. Is with the father. So. If you're not having fellowship.

With the apostles. Then you're not having fellowship. With God. And what a thing it is. That the father and son. Should have fellowship. With men like these.

And indeed. That he would have fellowship. With people like us. And so from this passage. We see from Mark. How these ordinary men. They were so ordinary.

Yet Jesus used them. In an extraordinary way. And Mark is careful enough. To show us. That even Judas. Forfeited his place. Among these men. As John MacArthur says.

[28 : 53] He's got to be the saddest human being. Who ever lived. Ever. Think about the privilege. And place that he had. Among the 12. Yet Jesus knew. All along.

Jesus knew. And so these apostles. Who were faithful. To Christ. Are the ones that we must listen to. Because they are the ones that communicate. The truth of Christ.

To the whole world. And they've given their lives. To preach the gospel. To the end of the earth. Last week. We spoke about Thomas. Who refused to believe in the resurrection. Until he saw Jesus. And yet Thomas went on.

To India. To be martyred for Christ. They endured. To the end. Indeed. Most of the apostles. Endured faithfully. To the end. Only to be killed.

For Christ's sake. Preaching to the end. Ordinary men. Chosen. By an extraordinary Messiah. To be with him. To preach to the world.

[29 : 48] So that. So that people like us. Might be with Jesus. As odd. And as ordinary. As we are. Mark is pointing out. The ones that Jesus chose. So that we can listen to Jesus.

By listening to them. And so that we can know. That we can trust their message. Is the good news of Jesus. And this is what most of the arguments. Against Christianity.

Come down to. Most of the arguments. Against Christianity. Come down to. This very simple. Question. Do you trust. The testimony. Of these men. Do you? That's what it comes down to.

And think about. How little they would have accomplished. If they just continue to argue. And fight about their own gains. And interests. Indeed. If it were not for Jesus.

They would have continued to do that. All their own agendas. Now because of Jesus. All their own agendas. Fade. In the grace and goal.

[30 : 46] Of their Lord and God. Only by being with Jesus. And by being empowered. By his spirit. Could they put aside. Their petty differences. And personal agendas.

And turn the world upside down. When they finally. Realised. That they are not defined. By these things. They are defined by Christ. And he became their treasure.

And so for us. May we trust. Their message. They are the king's chosen ambassadors. They are the ones. That if. If you listen to them.

You show. That you are kingdom people. And may we see. Our own differences. And agendas. Fade away. As we become defined. By Christ.

What defines you? We had this little exercise. About your interests. And setting up a club for that. But what is it that defines you? Is it your differences?

[31 : 40] Is it your personal interests? Is it your talents? These twelve men. Were not defined. By their past jobs. They were not defined.

By their political leanings. They weren't even defined. By their Jewishness. Jewishness. They were defined. By being with Jesus. They weren't defined.

By their earthly family. Because every list. Separates Peter and Andrew. Because it's not about. Being physical brothers. It's about being family. And Christ. What defines you?

Is it the music you like? Is it the connections you have? Is it your personal interests? I am not defined. By being Scottish. Who cares.

About being Scottish. Who cares about. The things that this mad government. Are doing. We have a king. We have a kingdom. We have a family.

[32 : 38] You are defined by Christ. Brought into his family. Part of his body. Living for his glory. That we might see him. And be with him. That we might rejoice.

With our glorious king. Forevermore. Amen. Let me pray. Amen. Lord. I thank you.

That you have given us. More than enough. To know the difference. Between what is false. And what is true. I thank you. Because of these men. That you turned around. Completely ordinary men.

That we can have confidence. That you can choose us. If you chose them. But we thank you. That you did choose them. And you changed them. And that they were faithful. To the end. So that we might know.

The difference between truth and falsehood. So that we might know the way. Because Thomas asked. What is the way? And you said. I am the way. Lord. I thank you for their testimony.

[33 : 31] Help us to trust their testimony. To know their testimony. And through that. To know you. And trust you. And be with you. And may you be the thing.

That binds us together. The difference maker. In all of our lives. We pray in Jesus name. Amen. Well we're going to sing two more songs.