

Jesus Calls Us to Share His Up-In-Out Life

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Date: 21 January 2024

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Please consider donating to this work in the San Francisco Bay Area online at ChristChurchEastBay.org. Today's scripture is from Mark 3, 6-35, as printed in your liturgy.

Then the Pharisees went out and began to plot with the Herodians how they might kill Jesus. Jesus withdrew with his disciples to the lake, and a large crowd from Galilee followed.

When they heard about all he was doing, many people came to him from Judea, Jerusalem, Idumea, and the regions across the Jordan and around Tyre and Sidon.

Because of the crowd, he told his disciples to have a small boat ready for him to keep the people from crowding him. For he had healed many, so that those with diseases were pushing forward to touch him.

[1 : 2 2] Whenever the impure spirits saw him, they fell down before him and cried out, You are the Son of God. But he gave them strict orders not to tell others about him.

Jesus went up on a mountainside and called to him those he wanted, and they came to him. He appointed twelve that might be with him, and that he might send them out to preach, and to have authority to drive out demons.

These are the twelve he appointed. Simon, to whom he gave the name Peter. James, son of Zebedee and his brother John. To them he gave the name Boanerges, which means sons of thunder.

Andrew, Philip, Bartholomew, Matthew, Thomas, James, son of Alphaeus, Thaddeus, Simon the Zealot, and Judas Iscariot, who betrayed him.

Then Jesus entered a house, and again a crowd gathered, so that he and his disciples were not even able to eat. When his family heard about this, they went to take charge of him, for they said, he's out of his mind.

[2 : 4 6] And the teachers of the law, who came down from Jerusalem, said, he is possessed by Beelzebub, by the prince of demons. He is driving out demons.

So Jesus called them over to him, and began to speak to them in parables. How can Satan drive out Satan? If a kingdom is divided against itself, that kingdom cannot stand.

If a house is divided against itself, that house cannot stand. And if Satan opposes himself and is divided, he cannot stand.

His end has come. In fact, no one can enter a strong man's house without first tying him up. Then he can plunder the strong man's house.

Truly, I tell you, people can be forgiven all their sins, and every slander they utter. But whoever blasphemes against the Holy Spirit will never be forgiven.

[3 : 54] They are guilty of an eternal sin. He said this because they were saying, he has an impure spirit. Then Jesus' mother and brothers arrived.

Standing outside, they sent someone in to call him. A crowd was sitting around him, and they told him, your mother and brothers are outside looking for you. Who are my mother and brothers, he asked.

Then he looked at all those seated in a circle around him and said, here are my mother and my brothers. Whoever does God's will is my mother, my brother and sister and mother.

This is the gospel of the Lord. Praise to you, O Christ. Good morning, Christ Church. We are continuing today in the gospel of Mark, and there are four gospels.

This is the earliest of the four that was written in about 65 A.D., and you can read it. It's the shortest of the gospels. It can be read in about 65 minutes or so over a cup of coffee.

[5 : 05] And I want to encourage you just to grab a Bible that's close at hand and to open it. I know we just had some of it printed for you, but if you could open to page 812, that's the first page of this gospel.

And I want to just bring you up to speed if you're just tuning in today. What we've seen in this gospel so far is that Jesus has incredible power and authority.

He has power and authority to teach, so that in Mark 1, 22, it says, the people were amazed because he taught with authority, as if he's teaching directly from God.

Jesus also has power and authority over evil and illness, so that you see there in Mark 1, 27, the people are saying he gives orders to evil spirits and to impure spirits, and they obey him.

And Jesus goes out from that place, and he heals the mother-in-law of Peter, and he heals the people in the whole town there of Capernaum. If you turn over to Mark 4, you can see that Jesus has power and authority over nature.

[6 : 13] There's this incredible storm, and Jesus brings that storm down to total stillness. And in Mark 4, 41, the disciples say, who is this?

Even the wind and the waves obey him. And then you can see Jesus in Mark 5, he has power and authority over death. This man, Jairus, he's the ruler of the synagogue.

His daughter has died, and Jesus has the audacity to go in Mark 5, verse 41, and say to this dead girl, he says to her, little girl, get up.

And that's what she did. She got up, and it says the people were completely astonished. And most outrageous of all, Jesus has power and authority to forgive sins.

And we saw this last week with this paralytic man who's brought to Jesus, and Jesus says to him, son, your sins are forgiven. And the people, in Mark 2, verse 5, they say, who can forgive sins but God alone?

[7 : 16] Jesus is a person of incredible power and authority, and the news about him is beginning to spread everywhere, even without TikTok. News is spreading like wildfire, in Mark chapter 3, Jesus' popularity and his fame is basically at a fever pitch, right?

Word about his powerful teachings, his supernatural healings, is spread far beyond the Jewish towns of Galilee, so that he's drawing crowds of people who are traveling to see him, people from the Gentile regions east of the Jordan River, people to the west, all the way to the Mediterranean Sea in the north of Israel.

And basically in this moment, Jesus being overwhelmed by the crush of the crowd. All the people are trying to get near him, and yet, as we notice in our reading, not everybody's on board with Jesus.

Not everybody's on board with his mission. His family, his biological family, it says in Mark 3, 21, they go to take control of him, to seize him. Why?

Because he's out of his mind. The religious types, the religious leaders, they go one step further than that. In the next verse, in Mark 3, 22, they say he's possessed by Satan.

[8 : 35] So, popular opinion right now is that, you know, some people are saying, well, Jesus is a lunatic, Jesus is a liar. Today, many people will say Jesus is a legend, right?

We, the first Christians created these stories about his power and authority, and we can't really trust the Gospels to be historically credible and reliable, and so Jesus is dismissed as a lunatic, a liar, a legend, but Jesus' disciples, they call him Lord, Lord.

And, when you look at Mark 1, 17, Jesus issues this invitation and this challenge to Peter, Andrew, James, and John, and he says to them, come follow me, and I'll send you out to fish for people.

And how do they respond to this invitation and this challenge? It says that they left their old life behind, and they started a new life with Jesus. Now, what does that mean?

I want to kind of outline what that means today in this sermon, and over the next few weeks begin to unfold and unpack and explore it together. But Jesus had a three-dimensional life.

[9 : 48] I appreciate one of you pointing out the amazing triangle that I drew up here to demonstrate, and some of you roll your eyes at these triangles. You know, Martin Luther King Jr.'s first sermon and a sermon that he preached throughout his career was called The Three-Dimensional Life is the Complete Life.

Right? So, I think I'm on pretty good grounds here for this three-dimensional life. And Jesus, we're going to talk today about how he had an up, he had an in, and he had an out.

This Jesus-shaped life is up with the Father, it's in with his disciples, and it's out with the crowds. These are his three great loves, his three great priorities, and it's simple enough for a child to understand.

Right? But it's very difficult to actually do, as we'll see. But being a disciple of Jesus, following him as your Lord, means that he's inviting you and he's challenging you to share in the pattern of his life and to be conformed to the shape of his loves.

And that's what I want to explore with you now. Jesus calls us to share in this up, in and out. He calls us to share this up, in and out. And the first dimension of his life is this up with his Father.

[11 : 14] And if you look at Mark 1, verse 10, this is at Jesus' baptism, and it says, just as Jesus was coming up out of the water, he saw heaven being torn open and the Spirit descending on him like a dove, and a voice came from heaven, you are my Son whom I love, with you I am well pleased.

The most important thing about any of us here in this room is who God the Father says that we are. Doesn't matter where you came from, where you went to school, what you've accomplished, the most important thing about you is who God the Father says that you are.

And what does the Father say about Jesus? God the Father affirms his basic covenant identity and says, you are my beloved, well-pleasing Son.

And ever since Jesus was a child, he lived into that identity, and he developed this up relationship with his Father. And his great task now, from his baptism onwards, in his life, and in his service to others, will be to continue in his true identity, and to operate first and foremost out of his relationship with his Father.

And as you probably know, immediately after Jesus' baptism, he goes out into the wilderness and he's tempted by the voice of this accuser who's saying to him over and over, are you really the Son of God?

[12 : 45] Are you really who the Father says you are? And he'll continue to be attacked over and over, not just in the wilderness, but throughout his life, he's attacked by this voice that's trying to pull him away and question his identity at every turn.

And to get him to move out of that relationship with his Father and to in some way live apart from and live without God and God's purposes for him.

And that same voice is the voice in my life and in your life as well, trying to do the very same things to get us busy, to get us distracted, to get us stressed out and hurried so that we begin to put other priorities before our greatest priority, which is our creator God, so that we are lured into other identities and other relationships as if those are more important than God.

God. But Jesus holds fast to his identity as the Son and his relationship with the Father. He says, his great message, if you look at Mark chapter 1 verse 15, the thing he said in town after town, place after place, was that the kingdom of God has come near.

The kingdom of God has come near. And when he says that, Jesus is saying, the kingdom of God is my priority. That's what I'm about. The rule and the reign of my Father who's the King, that is why I've come.

[14 : 19] And we're told in Mark chapter 1 verse 35 that it says, very early in the morning, while it was still dark, Jesus got up and he left the house and he went off to a solitary place where he prayed.

And Pastor Andrew said two weeks ago, this is just Jesus keeping first things first. He's nurturing his union and communion with his Father, just enjoying and delighting in the loving presence of his Father.

And when you think about Jesus and his power and his authority, where do you think that came from? Like how was Jesus empowered to teach the truth and to cast out evil and to heal illness and to calm the storm and to raise the dead and to forgive sins?

What power source, what power outlet was Jesus plugged into? Well, he tells us in the Gospel of Mark, he says this in, sorry, the Gospel of John chapter 5 verse 19, Jesus says, the Son is not able to do anything on his own but only what he sees his Father doing and whatever the Father does, the Son does likewise.

He goes on in that same Gospel in John chapter 12 verse 50, he says, the things that I speak, I speak just as the Father has told me. Jesus is saying, everything I do, everything I say is flowing out of my up relationship with my Father.

[15 : 50] And notice at the end of our passage that we just read, what matters most to Jesus in verse 35? If you look at it with me, Jesus says to them, he says, whoever does God's will is my brother and sister and mother.

The Father's will. Where do we learn about God, the Father's will? Well, we study what's written in the Father's word. And how do we get the power to live out the Father's will which is revealed in the Father's word?

Well, Jesus would spend time in the Father's presence and he would pray and he would say, Father, fill me with your word. Fill me with your love. Fill me with your power.

And for Jesus, that was like spiritual breathing. He would just inhale the Father's word so that he could exhale the Father's will.

He was like this sponge that would go and just soak in the Father's love so that when he went out with the people, he could just be squeezed and the Father's love would come out of him. And friends, this is how Jesus wants his disciples to live as well.

[17 : 03] And this is really just a preview of coming attractions. Next Sunday, we're going to talk about how we can adopt Jesus' predictable patterns and his healthy habits and his life-giving rhythms of how he stayed connected to and in union with his Father in heaven.

But this is the most important thing for him. Up with the Father. We tracking? Okay. Jesus calls us to share in his up. But he also calls us to share in his in.

This Jesus-shaped life is three-dimensional. The first dimension is up with his Father. The second dimension is his in with his disciples. And what did this look like? Well, again, you go back to his calling of Peter, Andrew, James, and John in Mark 1, 17.

He says to them, follow me and I will send you out to fish for people. When a rabbi in the first century would call disciples to follow him, discipleship in the first century was this committed covenantal relationship in which the rabbi would invite his disciples to share in every aspect of his life so that they would become like the rabbi.

And so Jesus is, from these crowds, he's gathering a smaller group of disciples who will live in the kind of relationship with him that they'll not only be taught to know what Jesus knew, but they'll also be trained to do what Jesus did and ultimately to become like Jesus.

[18 : 39] And that's what you see in Mark chapter 1, chapter 2, chapter 3. Jesus is there in this little town on the north shore of the Sea of Galilee called Capernaum. It's his adopted home base.

After he got basically kicked out of his own hometown. And he's there gathering men and women in both the synagogue and in the home of Peter and Andrew.

And what they're doing there in that home is that they're sharing life together in this large house full of disciples not unlike this group here today. And in that place, in that house, they would listen to Jesus teach.

They would observe his way of life. They would eat meals with him. They would experience his power and his authority. They would welcome outsiders. If you remember last week, the friends who came and unroofed the roof to get their buddy down to Jesus.

And as broken people were being brought to Jesus, they were being healed. They were being liberated. They were being forgiven. And Jesus was using this extended family as the base of his mission.

[19 : 43] And now in Mark chapter 3, it's come time for him to choose a team who can lead this larger band of disciples. And I want you to look with me at verse 13. It says, Jesus went up on a mountainside and he called to them those he wanted and they came to him and he appointed 12 that they might be with him and that he might send them out to preach and to have authority to drive out demons.

These are the 12 he appointed, Simon to whom he gave the name Peter, James son of Zebedee and his brother John to whom he gave the name Boanerges which means the sons of thunder.

All the rest of the disciples, you all need to keep your day jobs. But these 12 are going to travel with me now full time. And the first three of those 12 are Jesus' inner circle to whom he gives nicknames.

Simon he names Petros or Peter which means Rocky or Rockman or just The Rock. James and John he gives them the name sons of thunder or thunder boys.

Mary Magdalene he had female disciples. Mary Magdalene Magdala is probably where she's from but Magdalene means tower. I like to think of Mary as this towering woman of faith. She's the lead female disciple.

[21 : 03] There are other female disciples Salome, Joanna, Susanna, Mary, we learn in Luke 8 they were Jesus' financial supporters and all four gospels tell us that these women were the eyewitnesses to Jesus' crucifixion and resurrection because all the guys abandoned Jesus in the end so thanks ladies for saving the movement.

Two weeks from now in Mark chapter 6 we're going to see how Jesus trained and then he sent out these 12 on mission to go and do what he did to serve people in word and deed to teach them, to touch them, to bring the truth of God and the power of God to people's lives and then Jesus later on after he sent the 12 he'll send this whole house full of 72 followers to do the same to go out and operate in his power and his authority to do the things that he did and Jesus invested three years of his life trying to help this circle of people learn what it means to have this up in and out life and I want you to notice that he's not gathering his disciples just to hang out as a social club because they have nothing better to do right?

In verse 20 and 21 they're back at the house of Peter and Andrew and Jesus' biological family comes to seize him because they say he's out of his mind he's gone off the deep end he's lost his grip with reality and if you choose to follow Jesus as your Lord your family and your friends might say the same thing about you you flipped you're insane well in verse 32 a crowd was sitting around him and they told him your mother and brothers are outside looking for you and Jesus asks this provocative question he says well who are my mother and my brothers and then he looked at those who were seated around him in a circle and he said here are my mother and my brothers whoever does God's will is my brother and sister and mother Jesus is radically redefining family in this moment and he says to them my true extended spiritual family are the people that I've chosen to be right here inside with me people that I've circled around me and have come to center their lives on me people who've come to me to learn

God's word and God's will from me and they're not just here to learn God's word and God's will but they're here to do it they want to put it into practice they want to obey it they want to put it into action and Jesus is saying if that's you then you're my little sister if that's you then you're my little brother and I'm your big brother and we're here in the family of God together and here's what I want for my disciples all of my disciples I want you to love one another just as I love you this is what he says throughout the gospel he says the way that I'm giving you my time the way that I'm serving you encouraging you teaching you praying for you forgiving you washing your feet and the way that I'll lay down my life for you that's exactly what I want for you to do with this family circled around me and at the resurrection Jesus will take that up just even another notch because he'll say

I not only want you to love my family of disciples I want you to go out and make more disciples and bring them into this family in Matthew 28 he says I want all of you not just the leaders not just Peter James and John not just the 12 I want all of you to go out and make your own disciples after the model that I've given to you and friends I think this is how the obscure marginal Jesus movement turned the Roman Empire upside down within the course of about three centuries they somehow became the dominant force in the Roman Empire because over the course of 300 years disciples followed Jesus' example by training smaller groups of people and here's some of the elements of what that involved they would enter into personal relationships and they would take spiritual responsibility for others they would invest time and energy into them through life-on-life mentoring they would invite and challenge people to come and be with Jesus as we see in verse 13 to come and center their lives around him to learn from him and listen to him as we see in verse 34 they would invite them to say let's practice the word and will of the Father together in our lives verse 35 and they were basically teaching people to obey everything that Jesus commanded and helping them to practice this up in and out

[25 : 57] Jesus-shaped life and in so doing they were fostering and facilitating the replication of Jesus' DNA in other people who were then empowered to tap into the spiritual authority of Jesus so that they could thereby go out from their gatherings together and they could do what Jesus did and say what Jesus said in the power of the Holy Spirit discipleship was about developing a life worth imitating and then turning around and saying to other people come follow me as I follow Christ come imitate me as I imitate Christ and as they made new disciples with the DNA of Jesus they could then turn around and multiply more disciples to replicate even more of the DNA of Jesus in others and this is what I think explains the spiritual potency and the exponential growth of the early church that converted half the Roman Empire in a matter of 300 years now I know what I'm saying sounds crazy right because everything

I'm saying right now cuts against the grain of our western do-it-yourself individualism right or I'll just kind of google this discipleship thing and figure it out and it also flies in the face of our Bay Area culture of professionalism and expertise which says unless I have a PhD in disciple making I can't do what Jesus did but here's my question to some of you is is there a more experienced or mature person in your life who knows how to build this Jesus shaped life that God has designed for us who could show you how to do it and might you somehow get connected up with them and if you happen to be that more experienced and more mature person my question for you is who are you taking spiritual responsibility for here at Christ Church who are you personally investing in how are you replicating the DNA of Jesus into the lives of others to make disciples Jesus calls us when he calls us to follow him as Lord to share in his up with the Father but also to share in his in with disciples and finally he calls us to share in his out with the crowds

I'll do this quickly Jesus came to do the will of the Father and the will of the Father is that the kingdom of God would come on the earth as it is in heaven that the kingdom of God would break through in the lives of every person that is made in God's image which is everybody and Jesus has this fascinating conversation in verse 23 it says so Jesus called them over to him and began to speak to them in parables how can Satan drive out Satan remember Jesus is healing broken people the very first act of his ministry in the gospel of Mark is to cast out a demon and this doesn't set well with the leaders of the synagogue they're deeply threatened by Jesus' wisdom and his authority and his power and they say he's not just mad they say Jesus is downright dangerous he's possessed by Satan he's in the grip of demonic forces and he's actually being used as an agent of dark powers and how does

Jesus respond to this accusation well he says well you know to attribute to demons the very power I use to cast out demons is a contradiction in terms he says that's like a king waging war against himself it's civil war it's suicide it's crazy and what Jesus says next is going to be the most uncomfortable thing you've heard yet today but it's also the most exciting thing and here's what he says in verse 27 no one can enter a strong man's house without first tying him up then he can plunder the strong man's house Jesus likens the world to this kingdom that's dominated by a strong man this dark war lord this evil prince with his unholy spirits and this evil prince has a castle Jesus says and in that castle he has a prison with a dungeon where he puts people like us in bondage so that we're oppressed and so that we're dominated by the will of another who's seeking to steal from us and to kill us and destroy us

Jesus believes that Jesus says Satan is real and he says Satan is in fact very strong how else can you explain our world that's in bondage to sin and evil forces and disease and injustice and poverty and hunger and brokenness and alienation and fear and anger and violence and death how do you explain it?

[30 : 53] this is how Jesus explains it he says Satan is real and he is strong but then he has the audacity to say but I am stronger Jesus says make no mistake there are two rival kingdoms in conflict and Satan's kingdom is in fact under attack but it's not from the inside no Satan has an external enemy and Satan's downfall is going to be his conquest by this stronger power who has in fact already entered his dark realm and who is in this very moment storming the castle and confronting his forces and declaring war and mounting a full scale spiritual assault on his kingdom that's what Jesus out is all about he says I've come to begin my campaign of binding up the strong man and you can see that in verse 11 it says whenever the evil spirits saw

Jesus they fell down before him and they cried out you are the son of God they instinctively pay homage to Jesus as this superior authority they know that they're in the presence of a power that's greater than they are and Jesus continually is putting the strong man in bondage he's subduing him so that he can come in and plunder his kingdom and his castle and his goods so that he can steal back people from his prison and he can release people from his power and he can set captives free Jesus is saying in this moment I am a person of irresistible strength and power and I've come to confront and to dethrone Satan I've come to conquer him I've come to be victorious but it's not until the end of the gospel where Jesus fully binds the strong man not by raw power and domination but how does he bind the strong man through his humiliation through his weakness through his sacrificial self giving on the cross the key verse in the gospel of Mark

Jesus says the son of man has not come to be served but to serve and to give his life as a ransom for many and it was on that cross where Jesus gives his life to ransom the many from their bondage to Satan and from that moment on from Good Friday on Satan is real and he's strong but he's bound and his possessions as a result of what Jesus did on the cross his possessions are left vulnerable to this stronger one who's come to confront him and to plunder him now we're going to say more about this in two weeks so you've got to come back but the amazing thing is that Jesus wants you and me to share in his out with the crowds he wants you and me to take part in his overthrow and the complete collapse of the kingdom of Satan the plundering of his house and his kingdom so that the kingdom of God can erupt and the rule and reign of our father can break through into the lives of people around us and that's very very good news because the father's rule is a gracious rule and his reign is a liberating reign and Jesus' basic call to us is come follow me and I'm going to send you out to fish for people

I'm going to send you out to be part of my plundering of the strong man's house if that's something you want we're going to be learning about that and if it's not well don't come back for a little bit okay come back at Easter Jesus calls us to share in his up and his in and his out and may he give us the power and authority to do that in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit Amen Amen Amen Amen Amen Amen Amen Amen Amen