

The Crowds & the Twelve

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[0 : 00] The following message is given by Walt Alexander, lead pastor of Trinity Grace Church in Athens, Tennessee. For more information about Trinity Grace, please visit us at TrinityGraceAthens.com.

Turn with me to the Gospel of Mark chapter 3. I'm going to begin reading in verse 7. So if you can look there with me, Mark chapter 3, verses 7 through 19.

Jesus withdrew with his disciples to the sea. And a great crowd followed from Galilee and Judea and Jerusalem and Edomia and from beyond the Jordan and from Tyre and Sidon.

When the great crowd heard all that he was doing, they came to him. And he told his disciples to have a boat ready for him because of the crowd lest they crush him.

For he healed many, so that all who had diseases pressed around him to touch him. Verse 11.

[1 : 14] 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.

Verse 13. 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 to have authority to cast out demons.

Verse 16. And James, the son of Alpheus and Thaddeus and Simon, the Canaanite.

And Judas Iscariot, who betrayed him. Grass withers, flower fades, but the word of God remains forever.

You know, one of the most unliked words in our vocabulary is ordinary. Who wants to be ordinary? What a bore.

[2 : 45] I want action, adventure, and excitement. When I was a young kid, there was nothing I wanted less than an ordinary life. I was filled with passion to see and know and learn.

I resonated with Jack Kerouac. I don't know if you ever read *On the Road* when you were in school. He writes, The only people for me are the mad ones. The ones who are mad to live, mad to talk, desirous of everything at the same time.

The ones who never yawn, but burn, burn, burn. I actually had that on a poster on my wall in my room as a high school student.

Perhaps you can resonate with Kerouac. You don't want an ordinary life. Do ya? Don't you want to be one of those people who never stopped running, chasing your dream, and capturing it all on social media so that it can be managed, measured, and maintained for all the world to see how great you are.

And when I became a Christian, actually, a lot of these desires didn't change. I began listening to Rich Mullins. Probably some old folks in here that remember that. I wanted to sell all my possessions like St. Francis of Assisi.

[3 : 56] I loved reading about missionaries who avoided the drudgery of an ordinary life and gave it all away, and I wanted to be just like him, like them. And now, nearly 20 years later, after becoming a Christian, my life often seems to be nothing but ordinary.

I'm married with three kids and a house and a yard and a full-time job. But over time, I began to wonder.

Perhaps that's the way it was meant to be. G.K. Chesterton, who was famous for kind of being a funny guy, he said, the most extraordinary thing in the world is an ordinary man and an ordinary woman and their ordinary children.

So, happy Mother's Day. That's the most extraordinary thing in the world. And I think he gets at it right. I don't think Jesus wants us to be extraordinary, but ordinary and faithful.

This morning, when Jesus gathers the leaders for his mission, he doesn't turn to the well-educated religious leaders or the mesmerized crowd that were gathered around him.

[5 : 03] He turns to 12 ordinary men. You know, we're jumping back into the Gospel of Mark after a five-week break, and I missed it so much. I'm excited to be back. And if you remember, we spent the month of March tracing chapter 2, tracing through chapter 2 and beginning of chapter 3, and all the opposition that Jesus was facing from the religious leaders.

What began with a few questions led into a full-blown showdown about what was lawful to do on the Sabbath. And the religious leaders, if you remember in verse 6, right there in verse 3, they immediately went out and they planned to destroy Jesus Christ.

But that's okay, because he was done with them. Our verses begin the next section in the Gospel of Mark, and in so many ways, it becomes more and more clear who Jesus came for.

After confronting the religious leaders, Jesus decisively turns to an unlikely group to complete and lead his mission. He leaves the synagogue, and the people have been training from birth, memorizing the law, and he goes out looking for a different sort of men.

He turns to a roughneck, everyday, ordinary men, and gives them the keys to the kingdom. But these verses are not just for them. In God's kindness, the Lord wants us to hear him in this passage.

[6 : 29] The mission of God is not to find the powerful, popular, and successful and prop them up. The mission of God is to find the folks far too often that are far off the beaten path.

The folks who'd never think God could use them and call them to follow Jesus and throw their lives into the mission. In a word, where we're going is more than anything else, Jesus wants ordinary disciples who leave everything to follow him.

Now, that sounds so vanilla because that's what we've been hitting, but more than anything else, Jesus wants ordinary disciples who leave everything to follow him. I think that's the heart of this passage in so many ways, and we're going to dive in and see if that's accurate.

The first, we're going to break this out with just a couple headings. The first is the crowds. The crowds. The first scene focuses, it's by the sea, and it focuses on the impressive crowds surrounding Jesus Christ.

First, three times, Mark references the crowds specifically. Twice, Mark says, it's a great crowd. It's an impressive crowd, obviously because of the number of people, but he takes labors to say it's an impressive crowd because of how far the people have come to see him.

[7 : 40] You see that they came from Galilee and Judea and Jerusalem, which are close by, but they came from Idumea, which is 120 miles away before Uber and before cars or anything like that.

They came from beyond the Jordan, across the Jordan. They came from Tyre and Sidon in the north. This great crowd, what Jesus was doing was drawing people from all over the place to see him, and when they got to the Sea of Galilee, when they saw the Lord, it was quite the spectacle. He was healing people left and right. He was casting out demons. His ministry was so impressive, and this is one of those summary moments. His ministry was so impressive that people burdened with diseases were just pressing onto him, pushing him.

And whenever the unclean spirits would see him, they'd just fall down and worship him. Look at verse 11. I love this. Whenever the unclean spirits saw him, they fell down before him, cried out, you are the son of God. Once again, Mark wants us to marvel and stand amazed at the power of Jesus Christ.

But laced throughout this passage is a provoking picture of the crowd. Notice the way Mark describes him. Look in verse 8, the second half. He says, The idea is they heard about these amazing things, and they came for the action.

[9 : 07] They wanted to see something. They wanted to witness a miracle. They wanted to get their ticket punched and perhaps get an autograph of the Lord so that everybody knew they were there. And they didn't just come.

They got up in his business. Now, I kind of enjoyed this whole COVID thing so we can stay back from people. Don't let people open that grill. And so the Lord, they got right in our Lord's business. All the people who had disease pressed around him to touch him. They weren't waiting any longer on him to come to them. They were going to him, reaching out their hands to touch him.

There were so many, and they were getting so close that Jesus had to have an exit strategy. I love this. Look at verse 9. He told the disciples, Have a boat ready because of the crowd lest they crush

him.

He's literally afraid for his life. I mean, mobs go crazy. All you got to do is read the headline this past year. But mobs have been going crazy since the beginning of time.

[10:08] And that's what's going on here. Jesus says, I might need to get out of there quick. But all this should be great news, right? More healings.

More numbers to tally up, right? I mean, this is great news. This is exportable. Wrong.

It's clear from this portrait throughout the rest of Mark, the crowds are mainly a hindrance to Jesus Christ. The crowds are not people who want to follow Jesus.

They're not people who want to give their lives over him. They're just people who want to see Jesus perform. They're people who want to get something from Jesus Christ. You know, have you ever thought someone liked you?

Thought they loved you for you. They loved hanging out with you. They liked you for you, who you were. And then you later find out that they were really just using you. Because they thought you could open a door for them.

[11:12] Maybe connect them to somebody. Maybe help them out in some way. We've all had the experience, right? It's a horrible feeling, isn't it? I thought you liked me for me.

But you really liked me for what I could do for you. And that's what the crowd's trying to do with our Lord. They're not here for Jesus. They're here for what they can get from him.

And so Jesus rejects them. That's the main takeaway here. Jesus rejects them. Take note, the crowds do not reject Jesus. Jesus rejects the crowd. He slips away.

But you know, the crowds still flock to Jesus Christ. In fact, it's hard to know whether you're part of the crowd or a disciple until Jesus stops giving you what you want.

It's hard to know whether we're really following Jesus for Jesus. Or following Jesus because the times are good.

[12:24] Tim Keller says it like this, when times are good. How do you know that if you love God or just love the things he's giving you or doing for you? You don't, really. In times of health and prosperity, it's easy to think you have a loving relationship to God.

You pray and do your religious duties since it is comforting and seems to be paying off. The crowds just love Jesus when things are going well. The crowds are the people that read and pray and go to church when everything seems to be paying off.

But what happens when it's not paying off anymore? What happens when health and wealth aren't coming your way anymore? I mean, I think this passage would press us.

Are we a part of the crowd? Are we a part of the disciples of Jesus Christ? What about you? Are you still serving with the same zeal? Are you still giving with the same generosity? Are you still jumping in with the same commitment?

Or have you begun to resemble the crowd? This passage is trying to zero in on the heart of discipleship. Do you remember what happens in John 6?

[13:31] It's one of my favorite passages. Jesus feeds the 5,000. He's a total hit. Everybody in town is rejoicing. And then in several different ways, several pretty blunt ways, he says, it's not enough for you to enjoy the miracles.

You must give your life to me. In fact, he says, you must feed on my flesh and drink of my blood, which is a little intense. We'll just say that. But essentially, it's just like, you've got to give me everything.

And John tells us that many of the disciples turn back and no longer walk with them. And Jesus turns to the 12, do you want to go too? And you remember what Peter said. Lord, to whom should we go? You have the words of eternal life.

I just love that. Jesus did not come to gather crowds. He didn't come to perform or to impress or to give us good things so that we wouldn't need him. He came to gather disciples.

A wonderful little book I just read by Elizabeth Elliott. She said, Jesus said, if you want to be my disciples, there are three conditions. And this lady ain't no joke. First, you must give up your right to yourself.

[14:31] Second, you must take up your cross. Third, you must follow. My understanding of giving up your right to yourself is saying no to yourself. Taking up your cross is saying yes to God.

Lord, whatever it is you want to give me, I'll take it. Yes. Yes. Yes. It's a difference between a disciple and the crowd.

Point two, the 12. The 12. So, whereas the previous scene focuses on the crowd, this scene focuses on Jesus and on the 12 disciples he calls to himself.

These are put right next to each other. We've seen this already. Mark is a very careful writer. And he sandwiches these. Or not sandwiches. He buttresses these right next to each other so that we would see a powerful contrast between the crowd and between the 12.

Between the crowd and between the true followers of Jesus Christ. And whereas the crowd came to see about Jesus, the 12 come to Jesus. Look at verse 13.

[15:37] It says, he went up on the mountain. The scene shifts from the Sea of Galilee. Jesus walking along the Sea of Galilee to the mountain. And mountains, as you know, are places where people encounter God in the Old Testament.

The Lord summons Abraham up on the mountain and says, offer a sacrifice there. The Lord summons Moses up on the mountain to encounter God and give him the Ten Commandments. But here, Jesus is not going up the mountain because he's been summoned by God.

No. Jesus goes up the mountain and summons people to God. And I just love that. Take note of the decisive actions Jesus takes in these verses. The verbs tell the story of what's going on.

Look down there with me. Jesus withdrew. And a great crowd followed. Actually, go down to 13. He went up on the mountain. He called to whom those he desired. He came.

They came to him. He appointed. He also named apostles. They might be with him. He might send them to preach, have authority. He appointed the 12.

[16:37] He gave the name Peter. He gave the name the sons of thunder. He went up.

He called. He appointed. He might send. He appointed. He gave the name. He appointed. All the initiative and all the action in this passage is in the hands of Jesus. Whereas the crowds are pressing in on the other passage and Jesus slips away.

Jesus does what he came to do here. He takes over all the initiative here. The 12 do not come to him. It's not a one come, one all invitation.

Jesus calls those whom he desired. Did you see that? That's incredible. And he summons those to him and they came to him. Now, interestingly, the word came here, they came to him is different than the word they came, meaning the crowd up in verse 8, the end.

So it's a different word. One means just they just came. That's what the crowd did. They just came.

They just come to him. They just, you know, somebody calls them and you just come.

[17:43] But when he's talking about the disciples or about the 12, he says they came out of something. The idea is, this word came, carefully chosen, to capture the powerful transformation that takes place in these disciples.

Whereas the crowd came to see what is going on, the disciples turn away from everything else to Jesus. In C.S. Lewis' little book, *The Silver Chair*, which is one of the *Chronicles of Narnia*, the queen of Underland, this witch, holds Jill and Eustace and Puddlegrom captive in her cave-like lair.

I don't know how you say that. Liar. She tries to convince him that no other world exists. You're in the liar. Nothing else. She sets the perfect conditions, like soft music and dim lights and rich smells.

And she lies to him. There's no place like Narnia. You know, kind of hypnotic type thing. There's no land called Narnia. There never was any world but mine. There never was any world but mine.

And so they're just kind of wooed into sleep. And they're wooed into this world that this witch has created. And suddenly Puddlegrom does something that should make all of us proud.

[19:04] He stamps his feet on her fire, which awakens him and clears his head. And you realize what is really real is not what she's saying.

There's a dramatic thing also that takes place in these disciples. In these 12, they're suddenly awakened in a way.

Once they were part of the crowd and immediately at the calling of Jesus Christ, they're awake and they follow him. If you'll notice, each of these words also underline Jesus' divine authority.

Jesus is doing something here that only God can do. Jesus is bringing about something very significant. He goes up on the mountain. He stands in the place of God. I've already pointed that out.

He called the 12 not to God but to himself. I mean, it reminds us of the way the Old Testament peppered along with the calling of God, Abraham, Moses, and Saul. And he appointed the 12 much like God did with Abraham, Moses, Samuel, and others.

[20 : 01] Then he named them. If you know anything about names in Scripture, you remember Adam gave names to all the animals. And Bob Dylan sang about it, if you know that song. But he named them. And it's just a position of authority over them.

And so Jesus is acting in an authoritative way. And then he gathers 12 of them. And at that point, just buzzers should be going off in our heads because Judah had 12 sons.

And now Jesus gathers 12 disciples. The kingdom of Israel was gathered with 12 sons of Judah. And now the disciples of Jesus Christ are gathered with 12 men, 12 sons to establish the kingdom of God on earth.

And so Jesus appoints them apostles. They might build the church of Jesus Christ. There's a couple things we need to say about this list. I mean, you know, it is kind of funny. We're kind of walking around in Mark and then we suddenly drop into Chronicles or something.

And we get this list. We get this careful list. There's a couple things we need to say. First, Matthew, Mark, Luke, and Acts include a list of the apostles. Matthew, Mark, Luke, and Acts, not John, include a list of the apostles.

[21 : 07] Why? Because it's really important. Now, we read the gospel of Mark. It's just kind of being written about Jesus, which it quite obviously is.

But it was written to a specific group of people. We talked about this at the beginning of the year in like 64 A.D. And so it was written to these people because the apostles right then were living and active in the church.

They were the eyewitnesses of all that Jesus said and did. And so he's listed them out in a very pretty way. It's widely documented that the apostle John lived in Ephesus until he was in his 90s, almost over 100 A.D.

He lived there. You know, old men got great stories. But wouldn't that be great to sit with the apostle John and hear his stories, the one whom the Lord loved? The only reason the gospels were written down were because these guys were starting to die out.

And so what Mark is doing is he's telling the original audience, these are the ones. You understand? So he's writing from Rome and he's writing a letter that's going to be circulated. He's saying, these are the ones.

[22 : 13] So if you hear their stories, these are the ones. These are the guarantee. These are the stamp of approval. These are the real stories about Jesus Christ. You know, in so many ways, the same thing has to happen in our culture.

In 200 years or 300 years, if we're going to know anything about Auschwitz, we have to capture all the stories right now. If we want eyewitness testimonies and not just facts of how many people died, we have to capture these stories.

That's what Mark is saying. These are the ones that are the holders of the tradition. They're the holders of the stories. Does that make sense? And so that's some of what's going on. That's why they're very carefully worded.

And that's my second point. They're carefully recorded for future generations. I just love, there's little details in these names. We could, actually I read most of a book that was like this thick all on the names in the New Testament and why they're eyewitnesses.

It's incredible. He studied all the names in Judaism from about like 100 B.C. to like 200 A.D. just studying the names and verifying the accuracy of the Gospels.

[23 : 17] It's a totally faith-building book. So we can't go there. But there are just fun things in here. You know, some are identified by their birth name and a nickname. So we get Simon Peter. I mean, Simon, also called Peter, which means rock.

Now, I don't know. I mean, is that because he's hard-headed? He's certainly like a little bit impulsive, if we can be honest. You know, he's kind of a stick your foot in your mouth sort of guy. And I just think that's great. So there's like humor in that.

James and John are called the sons of thunder. Now, they're the ones who tried to call down fire, if you remember that in the Garden of Gethsemane. So these guys are ready to brawl.

Everybody needs a good friend that's ready to brawl. It's a window into Jesus' life. I just love that little window. He's not a bore. So one of the things I like about the chosen is you see him laugh.

That's the way our Lord was. Some are identified by their birth name and a father's name. James, the son of Zebedee. James, the son of Alphaeus. So right there in that list, there's two guys named James, which is very common because it's a very common name.

[24 : 19] And so in that list, he includes their father to differentiate them from one another. When one of my aunts married into our family, there were three genie revels in the same family, same immediate family.

Three genie revels, my grandmother, my mother, and my aunt when she got married. So we called her JT, genie Tanner, which is her maiden name. I still call her JT. She probably doesn't like it. It's like an old nickname. But that's the way you do it, right? You got to differentiate one from another. That's what's going on here. One is identified only by his father's name. Bartholomew is not a name.

It actually literally means son of Tolmei. So it means just like son of Zebedee, Bartholomew, son of Tolmei. So perhaps he had a common name like Simon or Joseph or Lazarus, and he took on his father's name.

Isn't that interesting? Maybe it's just me. Yeah, but and then Judas is named for where he is from and for what he did to our Lord.

[25 : 26] Iscariot is not a last name. It just means Judas from Cariot. Each of the 12, though, maybe what's most interesting, are thoroughly ordinary men.

When we're going through the gospel, we saw how Jesus just confronted the religious leaders. He didn't want anything to do with them.

And then he rejects the crowds right here. He doesn't want to be a part of people who just want him for them. Then he assembles leaders for the church.

He assembles men that are totally unqualified. Men like Peter and Andrew and James and John, they're just roughneck fishermen. They didn't train in the synagogue. He chooses men that are disqualified like Levi or Matthew, who's a tax collector.

One not even welcome in the synagogue, an outsider. And those are the only five we know.

Interestingly, the other seven, we don't hear another word of them for the rest of the gospel of Mark.

[26 : 32] We don't know their stories. We know they weren't chosen for their greatness. But here they are. These are the 12 disciples. Men of whom the world's not worthy.

They're going to turn the world upside down. And yet if you passed them, streets of Galilee, you wouldn't turn your head. Isn't that incredible? Isn't that incredible? It says so much about our Lord. Point three, the mission. The mission. So the crowds, the 12, and then the mission. After Jesus went up on the mountain, Jesus calls them up the mountain so that he might do two things.

He calls them so that he might call them to be with him. And he calls them so that he might send them. Look at verse 14. He appointed the 12 so that, that's one of those purpose clauses, so that they might be with him.

They might be with him. He obviously called them up to the mountain to be with him in that moment. But Jesus is calling them to be with him in a much more profound sense. He's calling them to be his disciples.

[27 : 49] He's calling them to walk with him. He's awakening them to what's really real and what's worth giving your life to and is being with him. You know, it's very common in those days for a teacher to have disciples.

And so Jesus is saying, you are my disciples. You are to walk with me. You're to follow me. You're to learn from me. You are to do what I do. And there may be no greater summary of the Christian life than to be with our Lord, Jesus Christ.

There's something very important about the Christian life just unpacked, right, or at least alluded to or pushed to in these verses. Christianity is not a creed.

It's not simply a belief. It's not simply a truth you should recite. That's not what we're praying for when we're praying for these children. You know, remember the demon. He said, you are the son of God.

And Jesus told him to shut his mouth. Christianity is not a code of ethics. It's not a list of do's and don'ts. You cannot be a Christian by doing certain right things and avoiding certain wrong things.

[28 : 51] That's not what it means to be a Christian. Christianity is not even a religion. It's not about certain religious practices. It's not about offering certain prayers or offering certain sacrifices or doing certain things on certain days of the week.

You know, coming to church doesn't make you a Christian. That's what drove the Pharisees nuts. Christianity is a person. Christianity is Jesus Christ.

Christianity is being with Jesus, knowing Jesus, walking with Jesus, following. Anyone can say they believe. Anyone can live in a certain way. Anyone can offer sacrifice and attend church. But only someone who's taken up their cross to be with Jesus and to follow him can be a Christian. Man, when I was a young kid, all that stuff used to just bother me. Am I a Christian? Do I believe? Yeah, I believe. Yeah. You know, just wrestling with those things. I don't know how. I mean, I went to, every time there was an altar call, I went down, you know, just to be sure.

[29 : 57] Just to double check. I wasn't even, we didn't do altar calls at the church I was at, but I still went down anytime I had one, you know. Or anytime there was one at the YMCA camp or something like that. I remember one time, though.

You know, Christianity is having an encounter with Jesus Christ and being transformed. And I remember in the fall of 2001, just six months after, you know, for me, when I became a Christian, it was a little bit, in the moment, I didn't know what was happening.

You know, hindsight's 20-20. I remember being in an altar call. Down in a little town called Due West, South Carolina.

With some youth. I was actually a youth dude or something. And there was an altar call. I said, Lord, do I need to go down?

Felt the Lord say, no, you're already, I'm already with you. Yeah, spirit bears witness with my spirit that I am a child of God.

[31 : 02] And my heart just exploded. If you don't know that, then you don't know if you're a Christian. Listen, this is the essence of Christianity.

Being with our Lord Jesus Christ. Christianity's not a creator or any of these things. It's a person who came to gather people to follow him.

You know, mothers, mothers, you guys are totally great. Serious. I mean, serious. There's no greater gift you can give your children than to give them real Christianity.

There is no one who will have a greater influence on your children than you. There's no one who will affect them more than you and your longings for them.

If you long for them to just get in line, just say the prayer. If you long for them just to color inside the lines, you'll miss it.

[32 : 12] And they'll miss it. But if you long for something you can't perform, and they can't either, it'll drive them to Jesus Christ. One of the great moms in the history of the church is Augustine of Hippo, the great African theologian's mother named Monica.

The Catholics even prayed to Saint Monica. Listen to what he said about her after she died in his book, The Confessions. He said she attended to her sons suffering birth pangs.

We should all just thank our moms. They suffered birth pangs for us. Praise the Lord. So to speak. So she suffered them at the beginning, but she continued suffering, so to speak.

Again, every time she saw them leave the true path and move away from you. So he's praying to God. That's what he remembered about his mom. Her pangs were not, oh my goodness, why'd you leave a good job?

You know, her pangs were not, why'd you leave that girl? You know, whatever. Her pangs weren't any of these things. Why'd you go to that school? Her pangs were anytime they veered off the true path and moved away from you.

[33 : 18] That's a great honor. Let's do that. Second, he called them so that he might send them to preach. Look at verse 14. He appointed the 12 so they might be with him, and he might send them out to preach and have authority to cast out demons.

Authority is a big word in the Gospel of Mark, and we've seen it repeatedly with Jesus, and he sent them out with authority to cast out demons, as Mark loves to talk about, and to preach. He sent them out to preach, to proclaim and declare the good news about what God has done in Christ. We've already seen this word repeatedly. It began in Mark 1, 14. We've seen it repeatedly. It's just a word that means to herald. So to preach is to herald like a man sent on horseback to race throughout the Roman Empire.

There was a new emperor in Rome. The Gospel is a message to be heralded, to be proclaimed from the horse all throughout the world. It's just another insight into the Gospel, into what Jesus came to do.

The Gospel is not advice to be followed. It's not counsel to be weighed. It's not rules to be obeyed. The Gospel is life rearranging news to be heard. That by hearing, you may have life because of what God has done for us through Jesus Christ.

[34 : 33] So it's a message to be heard. You know, if you need to hear the words of the Gospel, Jesus says, come to me all you weary and heavy laden. I will give you rest. What does he mean, rest? Like rest from our load or something like that? What he means in a most important way, to rest from bearing the burden of your sins alone.

Jesus came, the righteous for the unrighteous, that he might bring us to God, that he might take our burden, just like he took it from Christian. He might take our burden because he knows what to do with it because he was hung there on a cross between two criminals that he might give us everlasting life.

So the Gospel should be proclaimed. It's the only news to rescue the world. And it's striking to me that when Jesus sends the Gospel out to the end of the world, he doesn't send the powerful, the popular, the successful.

He sends roughneck, everyday fishermen, men who smelled like work and scraped together a day's work to get by. He sends former tax collectors hated by everybody.

He sends broken sinners. He sends people like you and me. Why? So that all the world would know that the Gospel is not for the good and the great and the well to do.

[35 : 48] And so that all the world would know that it's God's Gospel and it's the power of God for salvation to anyone who believes. Whether it's shared in the biggest stadium in the world or whether it's shared by a mother doing bedtime reading.

It's the power of God. I'm reading this book about Scottish theology. A couple weeks ago, I told a story about Robert Bruce.

Well, here's another one. He was preaching and the King James VI of Scotland was in his service and King James VI was famously or maybe infamously known for being rude when attending church services.

So he was, one Sunday he was in the gallery while Robert Bruce was preaching in his usual form. James began to talk to those around him during the sermon. Then, Mr. Bruce paused and the King fell silent.

Mr. Bruce resumed speaking and preaching about the Gospel of Jesus Christ and so did James. As he talks, so does the King.

[37 : 07] And so Mr. Bruce stopped a second time and got the same result. When the King began talking again, though, Mr. Bruce turned and addressed him directly and said, It is said to have been expressed of the wisest of kings when the lion roars, all the beasts will be silent.

And he said, The lion of the tribe of Judah is now roaring in the voice of the Gospel and it becomes all the petty kings to be silent. Isn't that great?

That's a takedown. Well, God has decided that the lion roars through this news.

Whether you've got a booming voice or you can barely share the words, the lion roars. You've been entrusted with the greatest treasure in the world.

It's the only message that tells us about a mediator who reconciles us to God. It's the only way by which we must be saved. So more than anything else, Jesus wants ordinary disciples who leave everything to follow him.

[38 : 20] Jesus wants people to be with him. So we must ask, Are you part of the crowd? Are you along for the ride?

Are you along for the benefits of Jesus? You know, it's a stat that 30 to 32, when you start having kids, you start going back into church because of the benefits.

You know, we want well-rounded, well-educated kids. Are you in for the benefits of Jesus Christ?

Or are you a disciple who's left everything to follow him? That's what this text wants to press to you and me.

Oh, Lord, we pray that you would help us to linger in your eternal estate.

We praise you. We quiet our hearts. We thank you for your word. And we worship you, Lord. We want to follow you. We want to be with you. Lord, we know that knowing Jesus Christ is the greatest thing.

[39 : 49] All gain, I count as loss compared to the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus, my Lord. And so we worship you and praise you in Jesus' name. Amen.

Amen. You've been listening to a message given by Walt Alexander, lead pastor of Trinity Grace Church in Athens, Tennessee. For more information about Trinity Grace, please visit us at trinitygraceathens.com.
Thank you, Lord, Thank you.