

**Pastor Paul Bawden**  
**Grace Evangelical Church**  
**Sunday, January 24, 2010**  
**"Jesus' Extended Hands"**  
**Mark 3:7-21**

There are a lot of things that can get our attention today from our families, our work, to our individual interests and hobbies. We can invest our time and energy in many different venues.

But where does the biblical God invest His time and energy today?

The biblical God told us where He invests His time and energy when He created man in His image and gave him the authority to rule over the creation He had brought into existence. Yes, God created male and female and told them to be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth and subdue it.

God, then, invested His time and energy, His activity in people at the very beginning of creation. Since that time God has been using people who respond to Him to carry out His purposes on planet earth. In fact, this is what the history of Old Testament is all about. God invests in people. Yes, God uses people to fulfill His plan for the world.

When Christ came on the scene and began His ministry of teaching and ministering to those with physical and spiritual challenges, He was overwhelmed by those who kept coming to Him. What did Christ do in order to get His task done while on earth? He followed the biblical God's pattern of choosing people in order to accomplish His tasks in a greater way. Our text today in Mark 3:7-19 tells how this all came about.

### **I. The Need – The Overwhelming Task, Too Much To Do (Mark 3:7-11).**

#### **1. Many people came to see Jesus from all over that area (Most probably didn't know what Jesus' mission was) – Mark 3:7-**

As Jesus ministered His popularity grew.

Look at Mark 3:7-8 – People came from Galilee, Judea, Jerusalem, Idumea, and beyond the Jordan, and the vicinity of Tyre and Sidon, a great number of people heard of all that He was doing and came to Him, Some people, then, were coming to Jesus in Galilee from 100 miles away – and they didn't come by car, bus, or train.

#### **2. Jesus healed those who came to him with afflictions (Mark 3:8b, 9-10).**

Notice why they came, "They heard of all that He was doing." They came for healing. Due to the crowd pressing around Jesus, He got into a boat by the Sea of Galilee.

#### **3. Jesus cast out the demons that possessed people (Mark 3:11).**

The demons recognized who Jesus was, the Son of God. Jesus cast the demons out of those possessed by the demons. The demons, though, did not believe in Him for who Jesus really was.

#### **4. Jesus' task was overwhelming, and He needed help in his ministry (Mark 3:19-20)**

This is shown so clearly in Mark 3:19-20. So many people were coming to Jesus to be healed that He didn't even have time to eat at his home in Capernaum. Evidently, word came to his family in Nazareth of Jesus' ceaseless activity. Hearing this, his family in Nazareth went to encourage Jesus so to take a break.

They thought that He was beside Himself because He was so involved in helping those in need. That was there interpretation, but Jesus was about His Father's business to bring His compassion to those in desperate need. – What a picture here of Christ's love for people and desire to minister to their needs!!

### **II. The Solution – The Selection Of A Team To Get The Job Done (Mark 3:13-19).**

#### **1. The basis of Christ selecting His team (Mark 3:13a; Luke 6:12).**

Mark tells us that Jesus went up to a mountain and summoned those who He wanted and they came to Him. Luke, though, gives us additional information here.

**"It was at this time that he went off to the mountain to pray, and He spent the whole night in prayer to God."**

Then he chose from his disciples the 12 whom He also named the apostles.

Jesus, then, did not select His 12 disciples on the spare of the moment. He first prayed to His heavenly Father regarding the selection of those who would represent Him while He was on earth, and after His ascension into

heaven. Before making this major decision, Jesus took time to ask His heavenly Father for wisdom. He prayed first before making up His mind, depending on His heavenly Father for guidance.

Also in Mark 1:35 in the midst of a busy schedule of ministering to people, Jesus in the early morning, while still dark, went to a secluded place and was praying. No doubt Jesus believed conclusively that prayer was the ministry, and what followed was the fruit of His praying to His heavenly Father.

**Question for all of us. Is that what we do in our lives before we make decisions in our lives. We take time to pray, asking God for His wisdom. Do we take time to pray to our Heavenly Father in the midst of our busy schedules, or are we too busy to pray?**

## **2. The reason Christ selected a team (Mark 3:13b-15).**

**Note what the text says.**

- (1) To be with Him – That is Christ would train by His personal example and teaching.
- (2) He would send them out to preach – They would bring the message of the kingdom of God – That Messiah had come and they needed to believe in Him.
- (3) They would have authority over the demonic world – Christ would use them to minister for Him demonstrating God's power over the evil one.

**I would add 4 & 5.**

- (4) To lighten His load of ministry, which we have already referred to – to spread the base.
- (5) To multiply His ministry. Certainly Jesus was God and could heal at anytime, anywhere as He did with the centurion's servant. But now in a physical body, Jesus chose to be physically present when He healed people. To multiply His ministry He selected the 12 to multiply His ministry, which ministry would be carried on after He ascended to heaven. Later Jesus would send out the 70 (Luke 10:1-24), but that was more of temporary ministry rather than a life-long call to ministry as the 12 would be.

## **3. The ones Jesus selected to be on His team (Mark 3;16-19).**

There are three other lists of the men chosen by Christ (Matthew 21:2-4; Luke 6:14-16; Acts 1:13).

Luke calls them apostles, which means one who is sent to accomplish a mission.

Matthew calls them disciples – meaning they were to be learners, learners of Jesus and to do His will.

Actually the 12 disciples or apostles were replacing the 12 tribes of Israel. or the nation of Israel, looking forward to the establishing of the church at Pentecost and following as the Book of Acts indicates.

Some of these men would be used by the Spirit of God to spread the gospel of Jesus Christ after Pentecost to the then known world. Some like Peter, John, and Matthew would write New Testament books that continue to reach us here and others around the world.

God was in the process of starting something new with the 12 disciples. Of course sadly, Judas would deny the Lord and take his own life. He would be replaced by Matthias (Acts 1:26). It appears that the names given in our text were given in pairs.

Let's look briefly at each of the 12 disciples or apostles.

- (1) **Peter – Andrew's brother** - was the leader of the 12. He was the impetuous one – always speaking before his mind was really in gear. He, of course, denied our Lord, but was restored by our Lord after His bodily resurrection, and was used mightily by the Lord in Acts, preaching that sermon on the Day of Pentecost after which 3000 came to know Christ as Savior. Later Peter wrote two letters in the New Testament.
- (2) **James, the son of Zebedee** – Called son of thunder – full of zeal and energy - has been called the silent one, don't know much about him, but was loyal and committed. He had purpose too, as he along with His brother John asked if they could sit with Jesus, one on His right hand, and one on His left hand, in Jesus' glory or in His kingdom (Mark 10:35-39).

- (3) **John, the brother of James** – Son of thunder, hot tempered one (cf. Mark 9:38-40). A whirlwind of enthusiasm. He was a close disciple of Jesus – disciple whom Jesus loved - wrote the Gospel of John, the three letters of John and the Book of Revelation.
- (4) **Andrew – Simon’s brother**- the practical, decisive man – Andrew brought Simon to Jesus.
- (5) **Philip** – The matter of fact man – He said to Jesus, “Show us the Father, and it is enough for us.” Jesus told Philip, “Have I been with you so long, and yet you have not come to know me, Philip? He who has seen me has seen the Father; how can you say, ‘show us the Father.’” (John 14:8-9).
- (6) **Bartholomew** – obscure but faithful (Also called Nathanael).
- (7) **Matthew** – the redeemed agent of enemy power (formerly a tax collector before following Jesus).
- (8) **Thomas** – the investigative man – doubted Jesus bodily resurrection until Jesus came into the midst where Thomas was with the other disciples. When Jesus told Thomas to reach forth his finger and see His hands, and to put his hand into His side, Thomas cried out, “My Lord and my God.” He became a believer in the risen Christ.
- (9) **James, the son of Alphaeus** – to whom the least things were infinitely important. (Not know much about him).
- (10) **Thaddaeus (Labbaeus) or Judas**, the son or brother of James – obscure yet faithful.
- (11) **Simon the Zealot** – the enthusiast. (Zealots wanted to overthrow Rome).
- (12) **Judas** – betrayed the Lord – the man who lost his chance.

**What a motley team these 12 disciples were.**

Someone has written this. It’s entitled:

**From The Personal File Memo**

**To: Jesus, Son of Joseph  
Woodcrafter Carpenter Shop  
Nazareth 268222**

**From Jordan Mangement  
Consultants  
Jerusalem 26544**

**Thank you for submitting the resumes of the twelve men you have picked for management positions in your new organization.**

**All of them have now taken our battery of tests; we have not only run the results of these tests through our computer, but also arranged personal interviews for each of them with our psychologist and vocational aptitude consultant. The profiles of all tests are included, and you will want to study each of them carefully.**

**As part of our service and for your guidance, we make some general comments, much as an auditor will include some general statements. This is given as a result of staff consultation and comes without any additional fees.**

**It is the staff opinion that most of your nominees are lacking in background, education and vocational aptitude for the type of enterprise you are undertaking. They do not have the team**

concept. We would recommend that you continue your search for persons of experience in managerial ability and proven capability.

Simon Peter is emotionally unstable and given to fits of temper. Andrew has absolutely no qualities of leadership. The two brothers, James and John, the sons of Zebedee, place personal interest above company loyalty. Thomas demonstrates a questioning attitude that would tend to undermine morale. We feel it is our duty to tell you that Matthew has been blacklisted by the Greater Jerusalem Better Business Bureau. James, son of Alphaeus, and Thaddaeus definitely have radical learnings, and both registered a high score on the manic-depressive scale.

One of the candidates, however, shows great potential. He is a man of ability and resourcefulness. He meets people well, has a keen business mind and contacts in high places. He is highly motivated, ambitious and responsible. We recommend Judas Iscariot as your controller and right-hand man. All of the other profiles are self-explanatory. We wish you every success in your new venture.

Sincerely yours,  
 Jordan Management Consultants  
 Reprinted from "Crosscurrents"  
 Diocese of East Carolina

In spite of their personality type, shortcomings, and idiosyncrasies, God used these men, and women, along with others like the Apostle Paul, to turn the then known world upside for Jesus Christ. It is said that the religious leaders in Acts took note that Peter and John had been with Jesus (Acts 4:13). They served their Lord faithfully and all of them died a martyrs death – except John the apostle, who died a natural death.

- Peter was crucified head down in Rome, 66 A.D.
- James , son of Zebedee, was beheaded in Jerusalem by the sword. (Acts 12:1-9) – 44-45 AD.
- John was banished to the Isle of Patmos, 96 A.D. (Rev. 1- 9). Died of natural causes.
- Andrew was bound to death. He preached until his death in 74 A.D.
- Phillip was crucified at Heirapole, Phryga, 52 A.D.
- Bartholomew was beaten, crucified, then beheaded by the command of a king, 52 A.D.
- Matthew was slain by the sword in the city of Ethiopia about 60 A.D.
- Thomas was run through by a lance at Corehandal, East Indies, 52 A.D.
- James son of Alphaeus, (Less or younger) was thrown from a pinnacle, then beaten to death, 60 A.D.
- Thaddeus was shot to death by arrows, 72 A.D.
- Simon was crucified in Persia, 74 A.D.
- Matthias – Evangelized in Armenia - Date of Martyrdom: 70 A.D.

The apostles' testimonies are written in blood. The blood of the martyrs is the life blood of the church of Jesus Christ.

C. Michael Patton on his Parchment and Pen website makes this comment that the deaths of the Apostles increase the certainty level of the historicity of the resurrection to a level that is beyond excuse for disbelief. People do not die for lies, half-truths, fabrications, or hear-say information. If the Apostles truly died proclaiming to have seen Christ dead then alive and ascend into heaven, Christ is who He said He was, God incarnate who came to take away the sins of the world.

The 12 disciples/apostles left an incredible example to follow.  
 They were certainly without doubt, God's extended hands.

They served their Lord faithfully and enthusiastically, willing to die a martyr's death for Jesus Christ. We know that many today in some parts of the world have followed in their footsteps.

### **III. Our Part – To Be Jesus’ Extended Hands.**

#### **1. Jesus gives us the invitation to be His disciples (Mark 3:13).**

Jesus summoned those who He wanted to be His disciples.

The word, summoned, means to call, to invite – It is in the present tense – So He gave the invitation to those He wanted to be His disciples. Christ gave the call for discipleship telling them that it was an on-going invitation, an ongoing experience with Him.

I would liken this today to what the Apostle Paul told the young pastor Timothy in his 30’s:

“Who has saved us and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace which was granted us in Christ Jesus from all eternity” (II Timothy 1:9).

To be a disciple of Jesus Christ, to become a learner of Him, one must make that decision to accept Jesus as personal Savior. As many as received Him to them He gave the right to become children of God, even to those that believe in His name (John 1:12).

**That’s why the invitation is to everyone to be Christ’s disciples. That’s why Jesus said to go and make disciples of all nations.**

**There is what is called the common call – Whosoever will may come – Christ is the Savior of all men. He died and conquered the grave for all. God so loved the world, that He gave His only Son, whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life.**

**But then there is the efficacious call – when the person accepts Christ as personal Savior, and the believer in Christ is indwelt by Christ and now is the Lord’s forever. God’s spirit bears witness with His Spirit that nothing can separate him from the love of God in Christ Jesus.**

Of course as what happened in Jesus day can still happen today. Some liked all the miracles that Jesus did and his message of love, but when it came to being committed to Him, they back off and went their own way. They had heard the common call to be Jesus’ disciple, but rejected the efficacious call of Jesus Christ to discipleship on their lives. May that not happen to us.

**But once a person becomes a genuine disciple, learner of Jesus Christ,**

#### **2 Jesus gives specific ministries to different people.**

Note the word, appointed – Jesus appointed (selected) 12 out of the others who were there – called disciples and eventually apostles.

The 12 Jesus selected would have a different relationship with Him than the others who were his on-going disciples. These 12 would be in training with Him to be His extended hands in specific ways to further His ministry on planet earth. They in turn would eventually train and develop others. Jesus Christ would become the foundation, yes the cornerstone, for the church of Jesus Christ and these men would be part of that foundation (Ephesians 2:19–22).

**Jesus first had His on-going relationship with His heavenly Father. Then He had an ongoing relationship with His 12 disciples developing their lives spiritually and teaching them how to minister, be His extended hands. Then there were the 70 He eventually sent out, being His extended hands. Then there were those He ministered to on a one to one basis. Then there were the multitudes He ministered to.**

I look at this today in the way God that God has directed for the local church to have elders and deacons, and deaconesses.

It also includes that Christ has given different spiritual gifts, God-given abilities to believers in Jesus.

That’s why God gives the support gifts of pastoring, teaching, and evangelism Why He gives the service gifts, such as serving, administration, faith, exhortation, mercy, giving, discernment, wisdom, knowledge, and hospitality to different individuals.

God gives different gifts to different people in the body of Christ to accomplish His purpose on earth of building His church for His glory.

**In using the different gifts God has given us as followers of Christ, we fulfill God desire to be His disciples, His EXTENDED HANDS.**

### **3. Jesus uses each of us with our different personalities.**

Think of the different personalities of the 12 disciples. Peter was impetuous. James and John were like sons of thunder with their enthusiasm and quick anger. Thomas was a doubter. Philip was the practical man. Others were evidently more quiet and reserved. Simon came from the background of being a rebel.

**But who smoothed off the rough edges? Jesus as He worked with them.** He kept their personalities in place, but He smoothed off the edges that caused friction in their relationships with the Lord and one another. That is the work of the Holy Spirit to develop our strengths and lessen our weaknesses so the life of Christ can come through us in a greater way as we become more like HIM.

It's as we give and take in our individual lives, in our family lives, in our church life, even at work, that we learn to accept one another, forgive one another, and keep united around the Lord Jesus Christ in the power of the Holy Spirit.

**4. Jesus, in our diversity of His spiritual gifts to us, the God-given talents He has given us, and our diverse personalities, produces unity in our relationships, whether individually, in our individual families, and in our church family.**

This to me is the amazing reality of the local church. God uses our different spiritual gifts, talents, energy, and personalities to blend together in unity to be part of building His church.

How does God do that?

#### **(1) God give us in the local church the position of unity in Him (Ephesians 4:3).**

That's why God tells us through the Apostle Paul to preserve the unity we have in the church in Jesus Christ. God sees us, then as a local church, as united as one body around Him as the Head of this church, and the church of Jesus Christ universal.

#### **(2) God tells us that we are to preserve the unity in the body in the bond of peace (Ephesians 4:3). The Scripture says, "being diligent to preserve the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace."**

**"Being diligent, or being quick, to endeavor, strive – put some effort into it" and it's in the present tense, meaning that the disciple of Jesus should first of all be seeking to keep unity in the local church, as well as in one's family, or individual relationships.**

This is the practical side of the unity God has given our local church in position. This is where the rubber meets the road, for keeping unity in the local church is the challenge as well as in the family and in our lives individually with other individuals.

But God knows the challenge before us, and He also knows that Satan's desire is to produce disunity. He is the one who disguises himself as an angel of light to somehow through his subtle deception cause the unity God has given to turn into disunity.

God wants to use our diversity to produce unity in the local church. Satan wants to take our diversity and turn it into division and the breakup of God's local church.

**But note the practical instructions God gives us for keeping us united around HIM in our diversity in the local church.**

#### **\*\*Remember who we are in Christ (Ephesians 4:1).**

"I implore you to walk (live) in a manner worthy of the calling with which you have been called.

Paul is telling the Ephesians and us to remember you have been called as a disciple of Christ with an effective call. You belong to the Lord forever. You are accepted in the beloved. You are a saint, set apart to Him as His possession. Remember it's only by God's grace you are what you are.

Look around and see all the others in the local church, yes, those in your family. Each one of you who has responded to the efficacious call of Christ to be His disciple is accepted by ME.

Since you are accepted by me you should be accepting each other – You are brothers and sisters in Christ.

**\*\*Keep Christ's attitude in our relationships with others (Ephesians 4:2).**

"with all humility, recognizing who you are in the sight of the Lord, you are depending on Him, not pushing your own wares for your own sake and glory."

"with gentleness – Be kind, and considerate of others – have a forgiving spirit."

"with patience – forbearing, long suffering – hanging in there in spite of the odds."

"with tolerance – to bear with and accept."

**\*\*Have a sensitive spirit to the Holy Spirit who lives within us (Ephesians 4:3).**

The unity of the Spirit is maintained as each one in the body of Christ is willing to listen to the Holy Spirit as He reveals the Word of God to us, and willing to get on board with His direction and guidance.

The Holy Spirit brings conviction of sin in our lives as believers. He causes us to search our hearts and to ask ourselves together is this what the Lord wants us to do as church family.

It's not what I want or what you want, or any of us want in the church family, it is what the Holy Spirit wants to do in and through us to further His church through us to His glory.

Letting the Holy Spirit work in ones' life in the local church, and in the family unit is key for keep unity in diversity.

**\*\*Follow Christ's pattern for leadership.**

Without following His pattern of leadership we have some in places of leadership today thinking that they are CEO's of the church and are the final answer to church growth and everyone should follow them.

What happens is that they become drivers in the local church and what happens many times is that they drive wonderful people who love the Lord right out of the local church.

But there is another kind of leadership that Christ demonstrated which is biblical leadership.

It is called servant leadership which Christ displayed while on earth – as He said in Mark 10:45 – I have not come to be served, but to serve, and to give my life a ransom for many." That's why He told His disciples whoever wants to be first among you shall be slave, doulos of all. Jesus showed servant leadership without flaw as He touched peoples' lives with His message of forgiveness, His healing ministry, and His exposure of the hypocrisy of the religious leaders of His day.

**So how does a servant leader lead?**

**Not by driving the sheep – that scatters the sheep. I have been around sheep, and you don't drive them.**

**Rather by leading the sheep.**

**Jesus said that MY sheep hear MY voice and they follow ME.**

**He said to those in His call to them for discipleship, "Follow Me."**

**That's why the Psalmist understood what kind of Leader the Good, Great, and Chief Shepherd was.**

**What did the Psalmist say in Psalm 23:3?**

**He leads me in the paths of righteousness for His name sake."**

Leading the local church takes time, but it gives people an opportunity to consider various needs and what should be done for outreach. But it provides people time to think things through, and to get on the same page so that in the diversity the unity of the body is kept and God is glorified.

As a result the local body grows spiritually and is able to minister to the community with the gospel of Jesus Christ.

**How exciting to realize afresh that each of us is God's extended hand as an individual. God uses each of us to further His kingdom.**

**The family unit, each member working together and ministering to others, is God's extended hand. This local church is God's extended hand as we seek individually and as a body to minister to one another and reach out with Christ's love.**

**The story is told of a man who had a dream.** In that dream there was a large table, around which sat a number of people. On that table was a scrumptious meal, like unto what he had never seen before. However, there was a lot of sadness around the table as they sat there observing this wonderful meal. Each of the people had their arms tied to a board so that they could not bring the food back to their mouths for eating. As they sat there in their frustration and sadness, one of the people sitting at the table began to think about how he could get to eat the food on the table. He reached down with his hand tied to the board, took hold of his fork, and started feeding the person across from him. Others saw what he had done and they started doing the same, and before long everyone at that large table had experienced a wonderful meal.

**To be God's extended hands is to reach out to others! It's being a servant – a disciple Jesus Christ. It's being a blessing to others. For it's more blessed to give than receive.**

**May we look around us this week, and touch someone in a new way individually, in our families, and in our church family, at work, at school, or in our neighborhoods for the glory of God. Let's invest our lives in people!**

**Let's be Jesus' extended hands this week and always to the glory of God!**