

The Master and the Mob, the Missionaries, the Miserable, and the Matriarch  
Mark 3:7-35

## INTRODUCTION: TYPES, PURPOSE, CRITERIA

Does it seem to you that people, generally, are getting more difficult to understand? It does to me. Assumptions we used to make about how people would act, based on their general statements about themselves, seem a whole lot less certain. I used to think people fell into one of two categories, in regards to how they interacted with the world around them. Most people, it seemed to me, acted either out of fear or out of anger, generally speaking.

According to author, Amy Morin, in an article she penned for website, inc.com, psychologists generally agree today that there are five types of people in the world.

1. Conscientious
2. Extrovert
3. Agreeable
4. Open
5. Neurotic

Ed Rush, on the other hand, believes there are only four types of people. Ed is a five time #1 best-selling author and motivational speaker. He says we all fall into one or another of these four categories:

1. Couch potatoes - No information, no implementation
2. All talk, no action - All information, no implementation
3. Chicken with head cut off - All implementation, no information
4. Successful - All information, all implementation

In our passage this morning we are encounter four (4) groups of people with whom Jesus engages. Now, as we take a closer look at these people, there are two things we need to keep in mind. We need to acknowledge some criteria that will guide us, and we need to identify a reason, a purpose for studying these folks at all. The reason we are focusing on these four groups of people is not simply because they occur in the text, but because **the ways they encounter Jesus speaks to the way any of us may encounter Jesus in our lives at any given time. Looking at the ways people engaged with Jesus in the past informs the steps we may take in the Spirit to be faithful to Jesus' expectations for each of us.** The author of the book of Hebrews reminds us that the record of ancient Israel's relationship with God serves as a lesson for those of us who walk with Him today. We learn from them and are the better for it.

I recently received a communication from someone whom I have never met who is unhappy with me. This person opened their note with their profession that they are a born again Christian and strive to do God's will every day. This person, who has never met me personally nor was present for any of the events upon which they comment, goes on to excoriate me in the rest of their note. I came away thinking it was a good thing they announced their spiritual status at the beginning because I would not have picked it up from what followed.

Now, to be fair, their displeasure was based entirely on prejudiced, one-sided half-truths and some outright lies that had been used by an enemy to manipulate them. They were being used as a weapon in someone else's agenda. But, the lesson still holds. Christian, if we make the profession before the world that we have been born again by the grace of God through faith in Jesus Christ and the power of the Holy Spirit, then we declare that we have willingly accepted God's own personal holiness as the standard by which our hearts and conduct must be evaluated. God says to His people (and He has not rescinded His command):

*Be ye holy, for I the Lord your God, am Holy.*

Christians, **we do well to examine our hearts and lives from to time to discern just how well we are meeting the standard of holiness grace calls us to!** And this is our purpose as we consider these four groups of people and how they engage with Jesus. **We want to learn from their experience how we might better know and love and serve Jesus in our own lives.**

So, in order to learn from these four groups of people, we need to keep this purpose in mind, and we also need to pay attention to the criteria we use for looking into their experience with Jesus.

1. There is nothing inherently, morally wrong with being in any of these groups. We are not talking in terms of good and bad, but in terms of better and best.
2. There are times in our lives, just as in theirs, when individuals will move back and forth between groups. We may find ourselves coming to Jesus one day in one way and being sent by Jesus another day.
3. Jesus provides the same basic ministry to both groups: compassion, mercy, his death on the cross, and the promise of both eternal life and a future resurrection.
  - a. Every one in every group are sinners facing God's judgment.
  - b. Every one is in need of a Savior appointed and anointed by God to rescue them from the peril of death presented by sin.
  - c. The very best thing anyone in any group can do with their lives is put their genuine faith and trust in Jesus.
4. The primary difference between the groups is what motivates their encounter with Jesus: mercy or mission.

With learning life lessons for ourselves and these four criteria in mind, let me introduce you to the mob, the missionaries, the miserable, and the matriarch.

## **THE FOUR GROUPS: THE MOB, THE MISSIONARIES, THE MISERABLE, THE MATRIARCH**

### **The Mob (Mark 3:7-12)**

Great crowd

People from everywhere, every location and walk of life

Great need and great desire

The problem is not their need, but their blindness to their true need and the point of Jesus' entire life and ministry: redemption!

They come to Jesus for healing of body; Jesus came to heal the soul

They come for what they can get in this life; Jesus came to give them eternal life.

Great disappointment

Jesus viewed as the means to an end, not the end in himself

Spiritual Consumerism:

Do you remember how it felt in March when you went to the grocery store to buy toilet paper? Or even now when you're looking for hand-sanitizer and cleaning supplies? You go to the store to get what you want and you don't find it, so you go looking somewhere else and finally give up? Many people approach Jesus just like that! They come to Him for what they want and find that is not His agenda at all. They go away disappointed.

Disappointed when Jesus doesn't meet their expectation

Rich, young ruler

What must I do to inherit eternal life?

Practice the 10 commandments

I do, since my youth

Give all you have to the poor and follow me!

He walks away disappointed!

He wanted to be affirmed in his own efforts, but the only effort that gains eternal life is the effort of Christ on the cross!

"Prayer didn't work" - a common complaint

Disappointed when Jesus demands sacrifice and devotion

John 6: bread - they departed

**John 6:66 *After this many of his disciples turned back and no longer walked with him.***

They wanted bread in this world.

These have come to get and not give

They have come to have and not help

They have come in lust and not love

Disappointed when Jesus establishes a spiritual rather than political kingdom

Pilate: kingdom not of this world

"Crucify Him!"

The mob, driven by self-interest comes to Jesus for temporary satisfaction in this world, and in their disappointment, they crucify Him and wait for another Savior that will never come.

### The Missionaries (Mark 3:13-19)

Called out from the crowd those whom He desired

Their position with Jesus is not a result of personal ambition but divine desire

They are where they are because of Jesus.

Two-fold mission

Send them out to preach

**Mark 1:14-15 *Now after John was arrested, Jesus came into Galilee, proclaiming the gospel of God, and saying, "The time is fulfilled, and the***

***kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe in the gospel.”***

Have authority to cast out demons - evidence of the truth of the message

Successful ministry has a single prerequisite: to be with Him (v.14)

Three ways in which Christ's chosen disciples of any time are “with Him”

Study the Word

Pray and relationship

Faithful obedience -

we learn a great deal about Jesus, who He is and what He does, in the context of faithful obedience

The missionaries, called by Christ Himself into fellowship and service, focus their lives on one prerequisite, they devote their lives to being with Him. Everything else they are and do flows from this one devotion.

### **The Miserable (Mark 3:22-30)**

Context

Scribes are intensely trained legal experts whose task is to interpret the word of God to and for the people of God so that, through understanding the Law the people might rightly obey the Law.

These come to Jesus with their minds and hearts set on opposing him. Despite clear evidence to the contrary, and despite simple common sense, out of their hardness of heart and in their unappeasable determination to discredit and reject Jesus, they commit the unpardonable sin.

This is not incidental.

The unpardonable sin is a persistent, intentional, informed rejection of and declaration against what the Spirit of God is doing and through Jesus. Such actions reveal a hardened heart that calls evil good and that will not celebrate the works of God in Christ.

“If someone speaks against the Holy Spirit verbally and continually with willful and malicious intent that reveals a hardened heart beyond the possibility of repentance, there is no forgiveness, and they are ‘guilty of an eternal sin.’”

Seven characteristics of the unpardonable sin

1. It is a sin of full knowledge
2. It is an ongoing disposition of the heart that resists the conviction of the Holy Spirit
3. It is a verbal act that attributes the works of the Holy Spirit to Satan
4. It is a willful rejection of God's grace in Jesus
5. It is rooted in unbelief
6. It is a sin a Christian cannot commit
7. It is a sin not committed by one who is concerned that he may have committed it.

Despite what is clearly evident about Jesus and His moral character and intent, the miserables have made up their mind contrary to Him and nothing will change their thinking, not a miracle, not a witness, not a cross, not even a resurrection! These people have intentionally hardened their hearts against God, against mercy, against good sense, preferring to be as God unto themselves, demonstrating not that Satan is influencing Jesus, but that Satan is their own primary influence, even though they may not know it.

### **The Matriarch** (Mark 3:20-21, 31-35)

Loved Jesus but did not understand him

Attempted to rescue Jesus from Himself

Concerned about the family honor?

Concerned about his death?

The point is the comparison

Some who claim to love Jesus don't really know Him and remain outside

Some, devoted to love and the will of God, remain with Jesus on the inside

There are people who think they know Jesus, but do not. They think Jesus needs protecting from the world, so they downplay the radical claims he makes about Himself and the radical commands to faithfulness and holiness he extends to His followers. Rather than join Jesus in His mission to fill the earth with the knowledge of the Lord, they prefer to hide Him in a corner and keep Him safe so He doesn't hurt Himself or them.

Jesus came into this world to fulfill the Father's plan to rescue humanity from the threat of death as a result of sin. Jesus was sent by God to be the Savior, the Deliverer, to take upon Himself our sin and the judgment our sin deserves. Jesus came, God in the flesh, to die on the cross in our place and on our behalf the death our sin and our sinfulness rightly deserves, that through faith in Him we might find forgiveness of sin and eternal life from God.

Jesus came to destroy the works of the world, the flesh, and the devil in us, that through us God might fill the earth with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord as the waters cover the sea. Jesus came, the perfect man and the perfect sacrifice to restore what was lost, to reconcile what is separated, to replace what is broken, to renew what is expired, to revive what is dead.

To each and every one of us today is extended an invitation from God the Father Himself to encounter and engage with Jesus Christ, the Son of God. And each and every one of us will engage with Jesus in some way. Some will come as shoppers in the market, seeking from Jesus only what they want, and only satisfied with Him when they receive what they desire. These are headed for disappointment.

Others will engage with Jesus on their terms, loving Him, but not buying in to all that is revealed about Him. They will keep Him tame and acceptable to the world, making excuses rather than embracing the radical nature of His claims and calls to faith. They are headed for an inescapable sorrow when Jesus demonstrates that He is in fact all that He claims and more, that He is not

bound by their terms or misconceptions.

Some will simply oppose Jesus out of hand. They will put on a show but their hypocrisy will soon be revealed. If they do not repent, their destruction is sure.

But there will be some . . . there will be those who hear the call of Jesus to be with Him, to share in His heart and in His ministry, and they will gladly devote themselves to Him as the Spirit of God fills them and perfects them and moves in them both faith and the works of faith that please God. Beloved, in these days, trust Christ alone. Follow Christ alone. Devote yourself to being with Him, to following Him, to speak of Him and to act in His power for His glory. Don't waste these days! A time is coming when living by faith will cost us more than it does today. Don't waste this moment, this opportunity to be with Jesus.

Jesus says, "Take my yoke upon you and learn of me." Read and study and learn Jesus. Pray and plead and petition to know Jesus as He is, and love Jesus as He deserves, and serve Jesus as He requires.

"Multitudes," the Bible says, "stand in the valley of decision." A great crowd faced with a choice, faced today with a decision God Himself has set before us. Choose Jesus. Not as the mob that merely used him, nor the miserable that abused him, nor as the matriarch that misunderstood Him, but as missionaries content to be with Him, love Him, and serve Him. Choose Jesus.