When Jesus Moves

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[0:00] I want to give you a history lesson this morning to the young people in the room.! People used to get their news from the newspaper. They really did.

Even more than TV, you still got it from the paper. Papers were thrown in the driveway in the wee hours of the morning. And if my paper came after 6 a.m., just don't even bother bringing it.
It's old news by that point. Too late to read. The day it already began. And some people didn't get it daily. We don't look down on those type folks.
They got the Sunday paper, though. And, man, the Sunday paper was exploding with additional sections of meaningless articles and all kinds of sales ads and, drumroll please, the Sunday comics.
One of my favorite was Family Circus. Bill Keene drew about the escapades of his children. And as a child, I enjoyed it.
[1:06] Especially when he showed little Billy searching for something. He would show these maps and all the places he'd go. And I'd trace little Billy everywhere.

He went, man, that was a cool spot. That was neat and all that stuff. I thought about that map when I looked at something else that I enjoy for different reasons.
And that is, as we work through the gospel of Mark to follow the travels of Jesus. It's fascinating to see Jesus where he has traveled to this point.
He is all over the place. And those travels of Jesus seem long and strange and look possibly misguided.
However, in reality, when you look close, all of those travels are strategic. Jesus moved the way he did to interact with the lives that he needed to see.
[2:12] And it was in the Father's will. And it was in the Father's time. Let me tell you something. He moved then in the Father's will and in the Father's time.

And that's how he still moves today. Mark chapter 7, beginning in verse 31. And it says this. When he returned from the region of Tyre and went through Sidon to the Sea of Galilee in the region of the Decapolis.
And they brought to him a man who was deaf and had a speech impediment. And they begged him to lay his hand on him. And taking him aside from the crowd privately, he put his fingers in his ears and after spitting, touched his tongue.
And looking up to heaven, he sighed and said to him, Ephthafta. That is, be opened. And his ears were opened, his tongue was released, and he spoke plainly.
And Jesus charged them to tell no one. But the more he charged them, the more zealously they proclaimed it. And they were astonished beyond measure, saying, He has done all things well.
[3:33] He even makes the deaf hear and the mute speak. When you follow the travels of Jesus, you will see people bringing other people to Jesus.

In Mark chapter 1, it tells us that the sick and the demon-possessed were brought to Jesus by their friends. When you look at Mark chapter 2, the four men carry the paralytic into Jesus.
When you look at Mark chapter 6, he's in Gennesaret. And people brought friends there that needed a touch from Jesus. Later in Mark chapter 8, he's in Bethesda.
And there they bring a blind man to him. In Mark chapter 10, they bring their children to him just so he can touch them. People are always bringing people to Jesus.
Why? Because they knew that Jesus would make a difference in their lives. Can I ask you something? Do you believe that Jesus still makes a difference in people's lives?
[4:42] And if you really believe that, then bring them to Jesus. In today's passage, they bring a deaf man to Jesus. He cannot hear, and as usual with such a person, he is impeded with a speech

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impediment.

Jesus heals him. And he does it in such a compassionate way. First, he takes him aside. Notice that it says that in verse 33.
That he takes him aside. Jesus didn't want to do anything to embarrass him. And men, we can learn something from that.
When a man ministers to another man, you better not embarrass him. If you embarrass him, you'll have no chance of reaching him.
I try to make a point to deal with a man, man to man. One to one. Men don't want to be embarrassed.
[5:51] Men don't want to be called out. I'm not talking about the men in this room. I'm talking about every other man. They're prideful. They don't want that to happen. They'll run from it.

And if they feel like they're going to be called out, they feel like they're going to be embarrassed, they won't involve themselves in the conversation at all. But God laid a man on my heart years ago. The rest of his family went to church.
He didn't go to church. He's a good man. He just needed Jesus. He just didn't go to church. And he worked in his yard a lot. And I drove by his yard a lot.
And I saw him in the yard. And I'd stop and talk to him. And I'd try my best to get him to give his life to Christ. And inevitably, I had been there just a short time when his dear wife, who was faithful in the church, would come to the door and say, y'all come in.
Please come in. And I wanted to say in my heart, I don't want to come in. I want to stay right here and talk to him. Go back in the house. But I didn't say that. I went inside.
[6:52] Maybe got something to drink. Sat there for a few minutes. Had meaningless conversation. Prayed for him and left. He's out in the yard again another day.

I went back by. Spoke to him again. I did this for years. There were two men that stayed on the prayer list of that church that were lost.
Two men that had a burden for. And one day, there was something significant happened in that man's life. And I went by to see him. He was in the garage. And I was hiding from his wife.
I didn't want to go in. I pulled up and I quickly got out there and started a conversation with him. And I said, man, when in the world are you ever going to give your life to Christ?
He'd tell me, don't give up on me. He'd tell me I will one day. I said, time's going to run out on you one day. When are you ever going to give your life to Christ?
[7:56] He said, I think I will today. I said, what? I said, man, pray to receive Christ that Sunday.

We were baptized. As a matter of fact, I told him. I said, we're baptized on Sunday. Wouldn't be a better time for you to give your life to Christ than to baptize you Sunday. Didn't tell the church about it.
He's up in the baptism pool. They didn't know it. Been praying for this man for years. He walked in that pool. You could hear the gasp across the congregation. He gave his heart and life to Christ. I will tell you this.
The second man on that list had a child that was about to be baptized. And I went to their home and visited with them.
And before I left, I got that man alone and I said, if you've been waiting to publicly acknowledge Christ and give your heart to him, until one of your children makes a decision, your last child just made their decision.
[8:58] When in the world are you going to join your family and give your life to Christ? And he said, right now.

And I had the joy of baptizing him with his daughter. I don't think I ever could have done that if I hadn't pulled those men alone, got them alone.
If I'd have called out about that man's salvation with his wife serving me coffee in his living room, he would want nothing to do with me. I'm just telling you. He called this man out alone.
Men, listen. Reach your friends for Christ. And do it one-on-one. Your impact is greater than you think it is.
And if you call them out in front of everybody, it ain't going to work. One-on-one. Bring your friends to Christ.
[10:00] Jesus took him alone. And then he shows him what he's to do. He put his fingers in his ears. He's communicating with a man that can't hear him.

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He touches his tongue. He's communicating with a man. He looks up to heaven and says, in his language, be open.
And the man could hear. The man could speak plainly. It was miraculous.
People got excited. He then does something that may throw you off. He tells them, don't tell anyone. Scripture says he charges them, don't tell anyone.
He made no bones about it. He did not want it talked about. Now let me ask you something. What do you do when something marvelous happens and somebody tells you, now don't tell it?
[11:15] Man, you're walking around going, man, I'm telling you something good happened. I can't tell you what it is, but it sure is good. I'll tell you what happened to these folks. They went and told everybody.

They told everybody with zeal because they'd never seen anything like that before. Now I want to be clear that the reason Jesus told them not to tell was about timing. I've talked about this some as we went through the Gospel of Mark, but I want you to understand this.
He needed time to train his disciples. He needed time for them to be more founded in their faith for a day when he would no longer physically be present with them.
He needed time to teach people. He came to live as an example. He came to start the church through the apostles. And he needed to train them in that way.
And he came to die for our sins. And it was not time for him to die. It was time for him to live. It was time for him to lay the foundation. So he wanted them quiet to give him more time.
[12:21] You know, I think it's ironic that he told them to be quiet and they told everybody. And he gave us the great commission and we too often fail to say anything. That is until Jesus moves.

And when Jesus moves, people can't help him. I always say they get a bad case of the can't help us. I mean, when something good is going on, you just can't help it.
You just want people to know about it. And folks, I'm going to tell you, we need a case of the can't help us. We need a case of the can't help us. Has God done anything good for you?
He did for one. Has God done anything good for you? If he's done, I'll help you. If he's done anything good for you, say amen.
Look at that. Look at that. Let's not only tell each other. Let's tell the world that we need Jesus.
[13:38] May it bubble up in us so much that we keep standing. We can't hold it in. Like a fire in our bones.

May it come out. Tell somebody. Listen, he has commissioned us. He has empowered us. He has enabled us to tell somebody.
So tell somebody. Tell anybody. Tell everybody what Christ has done in your life. Because when Jesus moves, people can't help us. I mean, when something real has happened in your life, you can't help but share.
Now let me ask you. Have you shared lately? If not, why not?
Because if Jesus moves, you can't help it. Maybe there's a hindrance in your life. That's kept Jesus from moving. He'll remove that too.
[14:48] If you'll give it over to him. When Jesus moves, people get to King Helps. Listen. When Jesus moves, hungry people will come. I want you to look at this. It's in Mark chapter 8, beginning of verse 1.

It says this. In those days when again a great crowd had gathered, and they had nothing to eat, he called his disciples to him and said to them, I have compassion on the crowd because they have been with me now three days and have nothing to eat.
And if I send them away hungry to their homes, they will faint on the way. And some of them have come from far away. And his disciples answered, How can one feed these people with bread here in this desolate place?
And he asked them, How many loaves do you have? And they said, Seven. And he directed the crowd to sit down on the ground, and he took the seven loaves, and having given thanks, he broke them and gave them to his disciples to set before the people, and they set them before the crowd. And they had a few small fish. And having blessed them, he said that these also should be set before them. And they ate and were satisfied. And they took up the broken pieces left over, seven baskets full, and there were about 4,000 people.
[16:06] And he sent them away. And immediately he got into the boat with his disciples and went to the district of Dalmanutha. Now, it's interesting when you look at this passage that how people

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sometimes get this mixed up with the feeding of the 5,000.

And I don't want you to misunderstand that. He did two different miracles of feeding the masses in Scripture. One is of the 5,000. One is of the 4,000. It is not the same with some kind of different count.
That is not the case at all. There are several differences between the two. One is he fed 5,000 people who had been with him for one day. Here he feeds 4,000 people who had been with him for three days.
When he fed the 5,000, he fed them five loaves and two fish. When he feeds the 4,000, he feeds them seven loaves and a few fish. What he had left over for the 5,000 were 12 baskets.
And a few weeks ago, I described to you that the original language tells us those were small baskets, almost individual baskets. We can think of them as lunch baskets. And I don't think it's ironic that 12 were left and he had 12 apostles.
[17:22] But this one, instead, is not that type of basket. It's a different word. These are seven hamper-style baskets, large baskets.

The feeding of the 5,000 was to the Jews. Because of where he's located, this is almost surely to the Gentiles. Even in Mark 8, verse 1, it says, Again, he was with the crowd to remind us of the first feeding.
With the 5,000, Jesus had compassion on them because they were like a sheep without a shepherd. Here, he has compassion on them because they had followed him for days and had little to nothing to eat.
Jesus was thinking about the length of their journey. What would happen to them after they left? Because some of them had come from far away.
Some of them would take a long, lonely journey ahead. And Jesus knew that they would get hungry. And that if they left hungry, they would faint along the way.
[18:32] You see, that's how the Lord works. Verse 4 says they were in a desolate place. That means, that reminds me of when God's people were in the wilderness, in the exodus.

They were in the process of moving to the promised land, but they were in the wilderness, which is the desert. And they were scared, and they were worried, and they were ready to go back to slavery, even, to have what they thought they needed.
However, in the wilderness, in the desolate place, God gave them everything they needed every morning. I want you to hear me. He gave them everything they needed every morning.
He never gave them too much. He always gave them just enough. He taught them to trust him day by day.
He provided, but he wanted them to trust him. Day by day, he still does. That's the way he works.
[19:41] We tend to think about the event. We think about a good experience with God. We go out of our way to hear what he has to say.

We prioritize Sunday morning for that. And I appreciate you being here this morning. You could have done other things. You could have done not much of anything.
I just hung out at the house. You could have done that. You could have found something else. All kinds of options. You prioritize, for some reason this morning, to be in worship this morning. We think of it as an event.
I want to go there, be in the presence of God, worship the Lord together through music, hear a word from God, leave there encouraged in my faith.
We think of the moment. We think of the moment, our hour together. He meets us in the moment of worship. But I want you to know God's thinking ahead.
[20:42] God's not only thinking about our hour together here. God's thinking ahead. God's thinking ahead. And he's giving us what we need for the journey. He knows what's waiting on Monday morning.

We don't. Sometimes we think we do. The reality is we don't. He knows our struggles.
He knows our fears. He knows our worries. He knows what is ahead. And he gives us what we need so that we don't grow faint along the way.
And I like that term there. By the way, later in the New Testament, the way becomes a description of the Christian life.
Later, the church would even be known as the way. And Jesus gives us what we need as we walk in the way. Now, I want to warn you something.

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[21:47] The evil one wants to pull you away when times are tough. And the reality is when times are tough, those are the moments when we need the Lord the most.

It's interesting to me that I've ran into people in ministry that have told me along the way. They've told me, they said, listen, we're going through a crunch right now. And it's difficult.
We'll be back at church. But we're going through a hard time right now. We need to work these things out. Now, I'll tell you what I wanted to say.
But I didn't say. And that is, that's a trap of the evil one. I think I did say, he wants his best to isolate you in the midst of your trouble.
That's what he wants you to do. The reality is, God knew your trouble before you got in it. God knows your difficulty before you walked through it.
[22:53] He's already preparing the way along the way. And he provides that in one way by being together with God's people and hearing what he'd have for us.

Let me tell you something. The reality is when times are tough, those are the moments when you need a word from God. Those are the moments when you need the encouragement for his people. Those are the moments when you need a clear direction by his spirit.
Just as he did for the 4,000 in the desolate place. Just as he did to the Hebrews in the wilderness. God will provide what you need each and every time.
So I want you to watch how this process works. Because Christ doesn't work among us. And when Christ doesn't work among us, we get a case that can't help us.
And when we get a case that can't help us and we tell others what God's doing, if they're hungry, they'll come. Now the question is, who's hungry? Well, I want you to hear me this morning.
[23:57] I'm firmly convinced that anyone without the Lord cannot be filled by the things of the world and be satisfied. There is a God-shaped void in each and every one of us.

We are made to be in relationship with him. Therefore, anyone who is without him is hungry. They may be searching in the wrong places. They may be trying to fill it with the wrong stuff.
They may be, but I'm telling you, they're hungry. And you can make a point to invite them and you may be surprised. I don't care how much money they have. I don't care how many resources they have.
I don't care how happy they look. I don't care how shiny their Facebook page looks. I don't care what they're doing, where they're going, who they're involved in. If they don't know Jesus, they have a need in their life that only Christ can fill.
And if you'll make a point to invite them, even when you think they're not interested, you may be surprised. People that need the Lord are hungry.
[25:06] Another hungry group is this. Christians who are not in a right relationship with God. We can try the world and all its empty promises for a while, but it will never satisfy.

And wayward Christians are a hungry bunch. Sometimes they're too prideful to acknowledge that, but they're a hungry bunch. But you get on fire for God and you let your light shine before Christ and like moss to a light, watch the hungry come to Christ.
And when they do, they will be filled. Christ will give them everything they need to take home and sustain their lives through his word.
When Jesus moves, God's people get to can't help us. They got to tell somebody. When Jesus moves, hungry people will come.
But I want to warn you about something that Scripture is very clear about again and again. When Jesus moves, some still won't get it. They won't get it.
[26:15] I want you to look at Mark chapter 8, verses 11 through 13. It says, The Pharisees came and began to argue with him, seeking for him a sign from heaven to test him.

And he sighed deeply in his spirit and said, Why does this generation seek a sign? Truly I say to you, no sign will be given to this generation. And he left them, got in the boat again, and went to the other side.
As soon as Jesus gets back to the Jewish side of the water, where the established church of the day is, he is confronted. All their hope stood in front of them, in the man and in the Lord Jesus Christ.
But they didn't recognize it. They didn't acknowledge it. All that that religious system prophesied about was standing right in front of them in the Lord Jesus Christ.

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But they missed it. They were seeking a sign, when in reality the Savior was standing right there. Again, this takes me to the wilderness. The Hebrews were led by Moses.
[27:21] They had received the manna from heaven in the morning. They had received the quail that came at night. And in the very next chapter, after it tells us about that, it says that they had a lack of faith.

And they're saying that Moses had led them this far to die. They refused to be satisfied. And listen, because they didn't get in on what God was doing.
They spent a generation wandering around, lost instead of receiving the promise from that that they could have had from him.
So it is with the Pharisees in Mark chapter 8. They're looking for something else. When what they're looking for is standing right in front of them.
And they don't even acknowledge it. What a shame. So I want you to understand something. When God moves, and he will, it can be among us.
[28:33] But if we're not receptive, if we're not responsive, if we're not appreciative, he'll move on to a people that are appreciated.

I can show you the great movements in history, the evangelistic movements throughout history of how God moved for a time in a particular area.
And when they lost their zeal, when their evangelistic fervor was chilled, God moved on to another people.
Did a mighty work again. Roland Q. Level wrote a book years ago called Evangelism. And in his preface, he writes about historical movements of God and how God moved from one people to another when they were not receptive to what he had with them.
When God moves, God's people need to get a case that can't help us. When God moves, he'll bring hungry people.
[29:50] He'll draw. It's him. It's not them. He gives them the hunger. He draws them. And when they come, but I want you to understand something. There'll be people who miss out on the whole thing.

They won't get it. When God moves and people get it, they get a bad case that can't help us. As they share, hungry folks start coming. But be ready.
Some are still not going to get it. So my question is this. Do you sense Christ moving? Are you telling anybody about it?
Are you sharing with the hungry? Are you one who's continuing to still refuse to believe? Because the question really is not, is Christ moving?
He is. The question is, are we responding? And if not, why not?
[31:01] If you've never given your heart and life to the Lord Jesus Christ, and you're here this morning, and God's speaking to your heart, I want you to know, you don't need to go home and clean up your life so you can come to Christ.

He'll meet you where you are today. He'll do the work. You just surrender your life to follow Him. If there's any itching within you at all to come to Him, you didn't come up with that.
Scripture says you're dead in your transgressions and sins. You couldn't come up with that. God's drawing you to Himself. You come to Christ today. We'd love to guide you in what that means.
Maybe you're here this morning and you are a Christian, but the reality is, you don't sense the move of God in your life. You may admittedly say, I'm quenching what the Spirit is trying to do in my life because there's habits, there's problems in my life that I've not given over to the Lord.
And I need to start afresh today. I need to forgive me and to cleanse me and renew me. And I'm thankful today He'll meet you where you are.
[32:16] You can do that to be where you stand in just a moment. You can do it at this altar. You can do it with me praying for you. Whatever. Maybe God's drawing you to Pickens First Baptist Church. God is doing a wonderful work in our church. I'm thankful for that.

He continues to. It's wonderful to see the different ways that God works and moves. And if God's leading you to be a part of that, then you come. I'd love to guide you in what that means. I'm going to be very clear with you, and I'm always going to be very honest with you.
I don't have a clue what God's telling you or what He's doing in your life. That's not my responsibility. My responsibility is to share with you what God told me to share with you.

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What He shows me. What He shows me. And as we just work through the Gospel of Mark, I am firmly convinced that everywhere we land is exactly when we need to land there.
I think it was prescribed before I was even more. And He knew everything that was going on in your life this very day, exactly what you needed, what I needed.
[33:18] I think He's that big a God. And I think He'll meet you where you are and change your life from this day forward. It ain't about us.

It's about Him. Give Him all you got today. Lord Jesus, lead us, oh God I pray, to hunger for the movement of Christ.
To get in on it. To be obedient in the midst of it. And to watch you work and move as only you can.
In Jesus' precious name.
Amen.

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