

# Notes for the Ekklesia Meeting

Sundays @ 10:00 a.m. Info: (651) 283-0568 Discipleship Training Ministries, Inc www.dtminc.org Today's Date: August 23, 2009

## A Break In The Action: Time Away With Jesus and Co-workers

by Dan Trygg

**“And the apostles jointly-gather-together to Jesus; and they reported to Him all things whatsoever they did and taught. <sup>31</sup> And He says to them, ‘You yourselves come-here yourselves privately to a secluded place and remain-still-for-yourselves a little-while.’ (For they were being, ...the ones coming and the ones going..., many, and they were not even having opportunity to eat.) <sup>32</sup> And they departed in the boat to a secluded place by-themselves.”**

Mark 6:30-32

The reasons for Jesus' departure from His central Galilean mission were two-fold: Matthew seems to indicate that Jesus left after hearing about the execution of John the Baptist by Herod Antipas (Matt. 14:13). Mark seems to suggest it was the return of the twelve from their mission trip that prompted His departure. From Luke, we learn that Herod not only had killed John, but that *he was actively seeking to see Jesus* (Lk. 9:9). Obviously, this was somewhat dangerous, because Herod was unstable and unpredictable, and he was driven by his guilty conscience to believe that Jesus was John the Baptist having risen from the dead (Mk. 6:16). Nevertheless, Jesus did not leave until after His men returned from their mission. **Jesus was wise about avoiding unnecessary trouble, but He was also confident that, as long as He was following the leading of His Father, He could safely continue His ministry in the presence of His enemies** (Jn. 11:7-10). There was a fine balance between taking steps to avoid unnecessary attention and unprofitable conflicts, „while at the same time being willing to boldly speak the truth, or expose the hypocrisy of His enemies, when the situation called for it. We have seen that **Jesus often boldly, openly and directly addressed objections, responded to questions, and negative things that He observed or overheard His opponents say or do** (e.g., 2:6-11,16-17,18-20,24-28; 3:1-5; 22-30; 6:2-4). Nevertheless, **Jesus also repeatedly withdrew from potentially dangerous or unhealthy situations**. On more than twenty occasions recorded by Mark alone, Jesus left to get away from conflict or overly-intense ministry situations (1:37,38; 2:1-13; 3:7,13; 4:1,35,36; 5:21; 6:1,3-6,30-32,46; 7:17,24,31; 8:10,13; 9:2,30; 10:1; 11:19; 14:12-17,34). While recognizing the danger of having Herod prowling around in the background, Jesus did not waver. He had agreed to meet His twelve apostle-disciples at a predetermined time and place. He kept active in His ministry, and He remained steadfast, until He and His men could be reunited. **Once all His apostle-disciples safely returned, however, it was wise to move away from easy access by Herod.**

We, too, must learn to discern profitable conversation and proclamation, and avoid needless and unfruitful conflict. We are admonished to be ready to give a reasoned defense for our faith, when asked (I Pet. 3:15), and we are to declare the message in all kinds of circumstances, convenient or inconvenient (II Tim. 4:2). Nevertheless, when discussion turns to speculations, foolish arguments and quarrels, we are *not* to continue (I Tim. 1:3-8; 4:7; 6:3-5,20,21; II Tim. 2:14-16,23-26; Tit. 1:9-16; 3:9-11; Mk. 6:11). If rejected or rebuffed, we are not to get embroiled in controversy. **We are to declare the message, reason with and instruct those who are sincere inquirers, admonish others that they are accountable to God for what they have heard, and move on if rejected.**

The second reason for Jesus' departure from central Galilee, and the more immediate need, was the fact that the apostles needed to get time away from the heavy activity of ministering to the crowds. They needed time to process their experiences of their first missionary journey without their Master. They needed to just stop for a while, ...not only to rest, but also to get re-centered in their relationship with God. Let's take a closer look at the language:

**“And the apostles jointly-gather-together to Jesus...”** As mentioned before, Mark is writing primarily to a Roman audience. The Romans were people of action, so Mark uses a variety of techniques to keep the action moving, and to make the flow of events as vivid as possible. Here, he uses the word, “and”, to tie this scenario to that of the preceding story, though the two are not related. Instead of ending one story, and starting a whole new story or line of thought, the frequent use of “and” ties things together, and gives the impression of immediacy. “This happened, *and* then this happened, *and* then this happened...”. The verb in the clause, “jointly-gather-together”, is in the present tense in the Greek, though most English translations render it as a simple past tense, “they gathered together with Jesus”. This technique is called the “historical present”, and also tends to keep the action more vivid, by drawing the reader into the action as if it is occurring “right now”. Note, too, that the phrase describes the apostles coming together at the same time, a word choice that describes simultaneous action, ...again, a very vivid image. The *focus* of their simultaneous gathering? *Jesus*. They are coming together *to Him*.

**“...and they reported to Him all things whatsoever they did and taught...”** Note the use of “and” here again? Mark does not end the sentence, but goes right on to the next concept. The verbs change to past tense, however.

They reported or announced everything that had happened on their missionary excursions. They gave Jesus a play-by-play accounting of their experiences, actions and teachings.

**“And He says to them...”** Again, another “and” followed by a historical present verb. He *says*, not He *said*, as in most translations. Again, this is just to make the account seem more vivid and immediate for the reader.

**“You yourselves come-here...”** It is hard to convey in English the unusual, emphatic nature of the Greek here. The main verbal idea is “y’all come-here”. It is actually an adverb that has some verbal characteristics. It is the same word Jesus used when He called Peter, Andrew, James and John in Matt. 4:19 and Mk. 1:17, “*Come-here* after Me and I will make you fishers of men.” It is also the verb used in Matt. 11:28, His invitation to the weary, “*Come-here* to Me, all the ones laboring-to-exhaustion and having-been-heavily-laden, and I will give you rest.” The word itself is in a form where the subject, “y’all”, would be understood. Every other time the word is used in the NT (11 times), that is sufficient. There is no additional subject mentioned. Here, however, Jesus chose to use the personal pronoun, “y’all”, to add emphasis. When that structure occurs, the emphatic nature is sometimes communicated by stating, “y’all yourselves”. In this case, Jesus actually adds the word, “selves” here, too! I guess if you were to try to get the impact of how unusual and strong this is, it would be like saying, “Y’all yourselves come-near yourselves”.

**“...privately ...”** Again, the emphatic, repeated nature of the structure is quite unusual. Jesus is really being specific and clear. The word translated as “privately” is actually a prepositional phrase in Greek, “according to oneself”. When you add this to what we had in the last phrase, it is almost getting to sound ridiculous in English, “Y’all yourselves come-near yourselves according-to-yourselves”. The meaning of this phrase is kind of like “keeping-to-your-own-things” or “by yourselves”. It refers to keeping things private, instead of allowing others to come along. Do you think the disciples would be catching Jesus’ drift by this time? He wants them, *only* them, to come along with Him. He doesn’t want them bringing outsiders along, or even to be dealing with outside things.

**“...unto a secluded place...”** The word translated “secluded” means “abandoned, empty, desolate, deserted, or wilderness”. Jesus does not want any interruptions. No distractions. No noise. No other people, besides *our group*.

**“and remain-still-for-yourselves...”** The word that I have translated as “remain-still-for-yourselves” occurs 12 times in the NT, and over 60 times in the Septuagint Greek translation of the OT. It is usually translated as “rest” or “refresh”. It literally means to “ongoingly cease activity”. In other words, it does not just mean to “stop”, but to “*stay stopped*”. While that happens, you can rest, recover, refocus and be refreshed. The “for yourselves” part of the translation is an attempt to translate the idea that the subject here is doing the action, and is intensely involved or limited by the action. In other words, “rest” does not just happen. You have to *choose* to stop and stay stopped. You can’t do this and keep carrying on your regular schedule in life. If you are going to stop and stay-stopped, it is going to mean that it will limit the other activities you could be doing. That may seem obvious, but how many of us busy ourselves on our vacations, days off, or even retreats, and never come to a place of actual stopping, ...ceasing activity?

**“...for a little-while...”** This was not to be a permanent, nor even a long-term arrangement, just a temporary, short-term break in the action. To cease activity for a long-term would be unhealthy and counter-productive, both for the individual as well as the Kingdom of God. Being active, being creative, being productive are the natural outworkings of healthy living. Studies have shown that a balanced, healthy life includes elements of work, play, love and worship. God made us to work. If we don’t express outwardly some investment of ourselves, some stretching of our abilities and skills, not only do we begin to atrophy and diminish in some way, but we begin to feel unproductive and lose purpose. Furthermore, the Body of Christ loses the strength of our resources and abilities. *Rest is meant to be only temporary*, for recovery from work or stress, not a permanent state of existence.

**“...for the ones coming and going were many...”** If you look at the translation above, you will see it is a bit more complicated than this simple statement. Mark was describing an ongoing state of activity, one where many people were continually coming and going. This is the explanation for why it was necessary to leave. **“...and they were not even having opportunity to eat...”** We have seen this before in Mark (3:20). The pressure and demands were unending and stifling, with no relief in sight. Jesus determined that it was time to take a break.

**“...and they went away in the boat unto a deserted place by-themselves.”** They responded to Jesus’ counsel. They took the only way that was available to them to get away by themselves. If they had tried to walk away, the crowds would have followed them. Only the physical limitations of the boat, and the expanse of the water, offered them a chance to get away, and leave the hub-bub behind.

**How about you? Do you need to take some time out to get alone with Jesus and/or a few of your Christian co-workers?** Do you need to *secure* some time to be still, ...to rest, ...to process, ...or to listen? Are you willing to *do what it takes* to get that time? This is an obedience issue, as well. Trust Him. The result will be blessing.