

**Mark: The Gospel for every Man**

Theme: Command to Silence

Title: To Lepers, Demons and the Chief Apostle: “Be Quiet!”

Texts: Various

---

**Introduction:**

Q: What do a leper, a demon and the chief Apostle, Peter, all have in common?

A: Jesus told each of them to be quiet!

This morning we take up a fifth theme that seems to govern the Gospel of Mark: the command to be silent.

One commentator writes: “It has long puzzled readers why Jesus, who came to make himself known, works at cross purposes with himself by remaining hidden.”<sup>1</sup>

Have you noticed this with Jesus? Many times he goes out of his way to stay hidden. With the exception of the last few weeks of his life, Jesus does not want anyone knowing who he is.

In fact, the most forceful commands to silence come to those who have just declared that he is the Son of God, the Messiah. It all has to do with the revelation of Jesus as the Son of God.

1:25

1:34

Have you ever wanted to surprise someone and in order to do so you had to shut someone up lest they blow it and reveal your presence? That is what Jesus had to do with the demons. They knew who he was!

3:12 – “You are the Son of God.” And he strictly ordered them not to make him known.

8:30 – Peter’s confession

But when we examine these passages that have the command to silence, we notice a second, overlapping, element to each of them. They each have to do with the fame of Jesus – his popularity.

Go back to the beginning again

1:25, esp. v.28

1:44, esp. v.45

5:43, in light of v.24 and the great throng; v.37 he allowed on Peter and John

Is Jesus trying to keep things secretive?

7:36, again, in light of v.33

---

<sup>1</sup> James R. Edwards, *The Gospel According to Mark* (Pillar New Testament Commentary Series), Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002. p.18

8:26 – As things progressed, Jesus says finally, “don’t even enter the village”

So, on the one hand, we have Jesus wanting to keep his power and identity on the down low, while those who encounter him clearly, cannot keep silent (7:36b, “But the more he charged them, the more zealously they proclaimed it.”)

1.45 – the leper “went out and began to talk freely about it, and to spread the news...”

THE NEWS? What news? This is good news, is it not? This man heals lepers! This man has power! Come see!

This may be the very starting point for a theology of evangelism:

Jesus has come into the world to reveal God.

But seeing Jesus for who he really is requires personal interaction with the person of Jesus, not simply the reputation of Jesus.

When you have encountered the personal Jesus, you cannot keep silent, even when commanded. You must shout it from the roof-tops. Second-handers make horrible pitchmen. Jesus does not want anyone coming to him because he is popular and safe.

Beware of coming to Jesus when to do so is popular!

Beware of coming to Jesus when to do so is impersonal!

How many of you are following Jesus right now because you could not help being born into the family you were born to? You are simply caught up in a Christian sub-culture that you had no choice in. You were born and brought up “Christian.” But you have no personal interaction or encounter with the person of Jesus Christ?

How many of you are following Jesus right now simply because he is popular and safe? Some of you would not follow Jesus if you uprooted from Evangelical America and plopped in the middle of Istanbul, Turkey, or Cambodia, or even Manhattan. But Jesus is safe in the upper Midwest.

Jesus did not want people following him like groupies follow a celebrity. He wants real, personal, intimate interaction that is powerful and life-changing.

And when you encounter the real, personal, intimate life-changing power of Jesus you have a story to tell and you cannot keep silent.

Jesus knows that the real point of this whole command to silence boils down to this – You cannot truly understand and know Jesus apart from the cross!

The masses saw the glory of God in the power of Jesus as he performed miracle after miracle. But the power and identity were still veiled and subject to misunderstanding and wrong interpretations. The religious leaders were convinced that he did it all by the power of Satan, not God (cf. 3:22).

The most astounding revelation of deity came to but three individuals – Peter, James and John – on the “Mount of Transfiguration.” There they saw, as it were, Jesus peeling back the humanity so just a tiny glimmer of full deity shown forth. He could have blown them off the mountain with a full blast of light and radiance but he didn’t. It was ever so slight, but unmistakable. They heard the very voice of the Father thundering from heaven and they were terrified.

9:9 – “UNTIL...”

Why?

You can't even begin to understand Jesus without the cross!

15:39 – The centurion – with no command to silence.

16:8 – when you are under the grip of grace you cannot stay silent (7:36); but when you are under the grip of fear you can't say a thing!

The theology of evangelism starts here!

At the cross, there is a turning point. Jesus is no longer safe. Jesus is no longer popular. To be one of his followers is dangerous and insane.

Beware of the middle class, Midwest, safe evangelical Jesus. He may not be the real one.