

Hearing the Voice of Jesus: What it Means to Follow Him Today

December 9—“Crowd Me”

November-January

Wednesday Evening Lessons



Hearing the Voice of Jesus

- **November 11—“Follow Me”**
- **November 18—“Listen to Me”**
- **November 25—[Free Community Thanksgiving Dinner]**



Hearing the Voice of Jesus

- **December 2—“Understand Me”**
- **December 9—“Crowd Me”**
- **December 16—“Touch Me”**
- **December 23—“Interrupt Me”**
- **December 30—“Fear Me”**



Hearing the Voice of Jesus

- **January 6—“Believe Me”**
- **January 13—“Pray with Me”**
- **January 20—“Suffer with Me”**
- **January 27—“Preach Me”**



December 09—“Crowd Me”

Introduction

- Interesting how we say that it is not good to follow the crowd.
- No crowd could compromise Jesus’ values.
- But what size crowd defeats yours?
- What kind of crowd upsets your faith?
- Have you found yourself doing things in a crowd that you would never do alone?



Introduction



- **Charles Dickens' *Pickwick Papers* pictures the power of a crowd: "It's always best on these occasions to do what the mob does." "But suppose there are two mobs?" suggested Mr. Snodgrass. "Shout with the largest," replied Mr. Pickwick.**

Introduction



- Sociologist Gustave Le Bon, in his classic, *The Crowd* describes how a crowd can manipulate an individual: “Isolated, he may be a cultivated individual; on a crowd, he is a barbarian...An individual in a crowd is a grain of sand amid other grains of sand, which the wind stirs up at will.”

CROWD IN THE GOSPELS

- **Almost exclusively used in the gospels, and in Acts.**
- **154 times referred to. Cannot look at all of them tonight.**
- **At first his ministry seems to focus more individuals.**
- **But more and more, crowds began to gather.**
- **Jesus often spoke to the crowds, but cared about the individual.**

CROWDS STOOD IN AWE OF JESUS



- **Early in the story the crowds stood in awe of Jesus.**
- **They had never seen nor heard anyone like Jesus.**
- **They gathered around him; amazed at his teaching, his compassion and astounded at his forthrightness and honesty.**

CROWDS SOUGHT JESUS SELFISHLY



- After awhile, the crowds grew accustomed to Jesus. His service was expected. The amazing edge had worn off. Now people were expecting things from him.
- Woman touched his cloak (Mark 5:27-28)
- 10 cleansed (Luke 17:15, 17).

CROWDS SOUGHT JESUS SELFISHLY

- You are looking for me, for a meal!
- (John 6:26).
- Some saw Jesus as a source of nationalistic power and revolution. A crowd of 5,000 wanted to use Him to lead their political uprising (John 6:15).
- There were others who just want to see another magical trick to hold them spellbound (Mark 8:11, 12).



CROWDS SOUGHT JESUS SELFISHLY

- There were many crowds, and each was a conglomeration of shifting, selfish interests.**
- To be used by the crowds must have been frustrating, even for Jesus!**
- But manipulation of Him soon gave way to irritation with Him. This disillusionment lead to a crowd shift again...toward hostility.**

CROWDS SHIFTED TOWARD JESUS

- Notice again the progression...amazement, pragmatic, now hostility.
- The religious leaders began to plan the seed early.
- Mark 3:6.
- This conspiracy to do away with Him was no surprise to Jesus.



CROWDS SHIFTED TOWARD JESUS

- The religious leaders had manipulated the crowds for years now.
- Mark 15:11-13).
- Judas brought a crowd with him. He was more influenced by their thinking than by Jesus' thinking! (Mark 14:43).



LESSONS WE CAN LEARN FROM THE CROWDS

- Jesus' encounters with crowds in the gospels presents some instructive and important lessons for Christians today.
- In personal faith, do not compromise your values.
- In ministry, seek the individual.



LESSONS WE CAN LEARN FROM THE CROWDS

- In relationships, refuse a conglomeration.
- Church is never called a crowd!
- Rather, it is a body (1 Corinthians 12:12, 13.)
- Body of Christ may indeed be called out a crowd.



Conclusion



- **Do we truly understand Jesus? Jesus responded to crowds, but tended to spend more time and closer attention to individuals.**
- **Crowd mentality today in religion is readily available.**

Conclusion



- **Awe, selfishness, and hostility...the three-fold crowd movement relating to Jesus.**
- **Has our own faith and life been tested by our own peer group?**