

The Character of Jesus 17
Healing the Multitudes beside the Sea
Matthew 12:15 – 21, Mark 3:7 – 12
And Choosing the Twelve
Matthew 10:2 – 4, Mark 3:13 – 19, Luke 6:12 – 16

- Characteristic: Proactive
 - (Matthew 12:15) Knowing that the Pharisees were teaming with the Herodians (Mark 3:6) to kill Him, He withdrew to a safer area. Although He could have defeated any threat, He found a course that allowed Him to remain non-violent (see Matthew 12:18 – 21) while continuing His mission.
 - (Mark 3:7 – 8) Jesus' fame drew people even from considerable distance, from other political subdivisions. Jesus' stated goal was to reach the lost sheep of Israel (Matthew 10:5 – 6, 15:24). Many of these certainly were Jews from neighboring regions, but some may have been Gentiles.
 - (Mark 3:9) Jesus ordered that a small boat be kept ready so He could escape the crush of the crowds if necessary. He did not rely on power but planning.
 - (Matthew 12:16) Jesus asked the crowds not to reveal His whereabouts to the political parties. He did not see this as an admission of weakness, but reality.
 - (Mark 3:11) Jesus would not accept advertising from the other side.
 - (Matthew 12:18 – 21, Isaiah 42:1 – 4) Fulfilling a well-known passage
 - The poem extends from chapter 40 to the end of Isaiah. It includes many familiar parts, like “the voice of one crying in the wilderness” (John the Baptist) and “all flesh is like grass” (1 Peter 1:24).
 - Jesus proactively matched His activities to this poetic description of the Messiah. The details in Isaiah are very general, allowing a multitude of ways to satisfy them. But, Matthew specifies (12:17) that Jesus patterned His behavior after the well-known but figurative prophecy.
 - (Matthew 10:2 – 4, Mark 3:13 – 19, Luke 6:12 – 16) Jesus chose just twelve for the purpose of advance advertising. Other numbers were historically significant: 40, 70, 120, 144. He had many followers. The small number became an exclusive group. Further, the smallness of the group made their accomplishments all the more miraculous.
- Applications: In what ways can the body of Christ be proactive?
 - In what ways could the church be non-confrontational yet still accomplish the objective?
 - Prayer (Christianity in general) in public schools: work within the actual rules, not fearing the supposed rules.
 - Missions to Islamic, Hindu, or atheist nations: enter legally, just not as missionaries.
 - Does the church attract (as opposed to “go to”) people from considerable distance? Do “Gentiles” investigate?
 - Syed's friends were researching all religions. Their responses from churches were not welcoming.
 - Are we known for the evidence and the benefits?
 - In what ways might the church plan for possible problems?

- Security at gatherings
 - Assume the best, not the worst.
- When might the church ask people to keep quiet to avoid conflict? Is the church enough of a threat to expect conflict?
 - Not just keeping down the benevolence requests.
 - No need to advertise in an offensive way, which implies that we know what is offensive to others. But, it is not possible to avoid those who desire to be outraged.
- In what ways does the church plan to resemble Old Testament general descriptions about the nature of the earthly kingdom? (Note: pre-millennialism often is “proven” by claiming that the descriptions have not happened, so must be future.)
 - All nations
 - Peace within
 - Jesus as king (with no bureaucracy) and High Priest
 - Indwelling Holy Spirit
- Although apostles have passed (Ephesians 4:11 – 16), how might the church learn from or emulate the idea that Jesus had just twelve main spokesmen?
 - Not that we should limit the number of leaders or insist on seminary qualifications, but it is reasonable to keep the number small in a way that emphasizes the help of the Spirit, not control of the teaching.
 - 1 Corinthians 14:23 – 33 Let all participate, but be orderly and practical.