

# God With Us 3 — ...For Proximity, Proclamation, & Power

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Passages	Mark 3:13-15
Sermon Series	Mountain View
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## Introduction (Connection):

[Invite to Mark 3]

It is hard to believe we are three days away from Christmas.

## Tension:

In years past, I always have a few books on my Christmas list because, for some reason, I think I appear more intelligent the more I surround myself with books, but once you spend any time with me you realize it's all a hoax.

My Good Reads account states I have 11 books I'm currently reading.

Of the 11 is one book I strongly recommend you add to your Christmas list this year and your reading list for 2020.

It is called *Gay Girl, Good God* by Jackie Hill Perry.

I am about halfway through it and it is so good and helpful.

It is an autobiography about how a fatherless young girl victimized and exploited, indulging homosexual desires with no fear encounters a good God.

It details how at 19 years old God met with her one night, called out her sin and its true nature and called her into faith in Jesus.

In her first years of being saved, she moved out to LA and joined a strong church there, where a lady named Santoria served as the women's ministry director.

Jackie first knew of Santoria from some youtube videos of her evangelizing educated unbelievers with power and grace, truth and love; it convicted Jackie and challenged her.

Santoria began to disciple Jackie which meant Jackie got to see first hand what this woman's life was like.

Jackie says in her book, "I came to see that [Santoria's] life was full of power in ways that I never knew possible. How when unbelief came near, she faithfully turned Scripture loose to capture and strangle it into submission to a higher will than her own. A gifted woman she was but ungodly she was not."<sup>1</sup>

Jackie is saying this woman's life was marked by proclamation of the gospel and an impossible power.

But what made Santoria such a gospel-proclaiming, Holy Spirit power-wielding woman?

Don't you want to know? I do! I want to be that... minus the woman part.

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<sup>1</sup> Jackie Hill Perry, *Gay Girl, Good God* (Nashville, TN: B&H Publishing Group, 2018), 98.

What is it? The answer directly ties to our theme for this advent season, "God With Us."

I'm excited for what we're going to be looking at this morning; it has been a theme on my mind and heart for a few months now, and we're going to find it in Mark 3:13-15.

## Exposition:

Let me set the scene before we get to our three verses.

In vs. 1-6 Jesus just healed a man with a withered hand, and his enemies don't like it and they start plotting to kill him.

In vs. 7-12 Jesus where tons of friends seek Jesus out because he has healed a bunch more people so he requests a boat so it isn't like Black Friday where people get crushed by the mob breaking into the store to get the best deals for themselves.

Then, in v. 13-19, Jesus calls just a few up the mountain and appoints his followers. Check it out:

***Mark 3:13-15 — "And he went up on the mountain and called to him those whom he desired, and they came to him. <sup>14</sup> And he appointed twelve (whom he also named apostles) so that they might be with him and he might send them out to preach <sup>15</sup> and have authority to cast out demons."***<sup>2</sup>

Of the masses of people seeking Jesus for healing, he only called a smaller portion up the mountain of whom he wanted.

And then it says he **appointed** twelve.

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<sup>2</sup> [The Holy Bible: English Standard Version](#) (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles, 2016), Mk 3:13-15.

Appoint is too weak a word for the original Greek.

The greek word is ἐποίησεν which comes from the root word ποιῶ which means *to make*; the same word Jesus used when he issued the invitation “follow me and I will *make* you fishers of men.”<sup>3</sup>

Jesus isn't just assigning roles; Jesus is creating or making his disciples, implying He is making new creations.<sup>4</sup>

Circle the words “so that” in your bible; that implies intention or purpose, and they are some of the most precious words you'll ever find in the bible.

Did you see what he made them for? What he appointed them to?

One big one is...

## PROCLAMATION

“so that... he might send them out to preach...”

In 2 Corinthians 5 you'll find one of my personal favorite passages: you and I, being in Christ, have been made new creatures, new creations... the old as gone, the new has come. All this is from God who through Christ reconciled us to himself and gave us the ministry of reconciliation.

Friends, we are reconciled to reconcile.

We are saved by Christ and kept here to be a part of God's great mission:

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<sup>3</sup> Matthew 4:19

<sup>4</sup> “A new creation is suggested by the use of a verb that usually means *to make* but that is translated “appointed”... quote from James A. Brooks, [Mark](#), vol. 23, The New American Commentary (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1991), 71.

to proclaim the message of reconciliation, to preach the good news of the Gospel to those far from God.

Do you know a person who is an extreme extrovert to the point where they could be classified as a social networker?

These social butterflies can walk around, connect with anyone, and want to make sure you connect with the people they've already connected with, and if you're an introvert, you despise every minute of it.

"Hey, my name is Scott, what's yours? Oh cool, well I just met this guy James..."

We're to be the same way with the world and Jesus.

"Hey, i've got this really close friend named Jesus; here's what he's like, here's what it's like knowing him. I'd love to introduce you to him."

Jesus makes us his disciples for the purpose of proclamation.

And did you see what else he makes us for?

## POWER

Did you see that in v. 15?

v. 14-15 — "so that... they might have authority to cast out demons."

I grew up in the kind of Christian environment that acted like there is no demonic activity in God's great nation of the United States of America, so we didn't talk about it, we didn't study about it, we would have skipped over this part because it made us too uncomfortable.

You know the first best thing our enemy can do to win this cosmic war for our souls? Convince us there isn't a war in the first place.

I mean, why fight if there isn't a war to be waged?

But if there isn't a war to be waged, why would Jesus grant us power and authority over the demonic?

You know the second best thing Satan can do? Convince us we have no power to fight.

It'd be like convincing Superman he has no powers, so he never fights, always runs in cowardice and hides away in fear and makes excuses for his lack of participation every time the justice league calls on him...

Totally just geeked out there.

Don't you realize Immanuel being born in a manger is God establishing the beachhead for his war on Satan, sin, and death?

And he didn't leave us defenseless and unarmed in this war; as part of our being made new creatures we are ambassadors sharing his authority and power to war against the principalities and powers of darkness.

2 Cor. 10:3-4 — "For though we walk in the flesh, we are not waging war according to the flesh. For the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh but have divine power to destroy strongholds."

We have bunker busting power living within us.

Greater is he who is in us than he who is in the world.

Look at everything we get to be a part of!

We get to proclaim a message that brings dead people to life while wielding a divine power that can demolish strongholds and undo every brokenness our sinful rebellion allowed in to the created order, all because Jesus made us new creations.

And don't just think proclamation and power are limited to these twelve because they also carried the title apostle.

There are tons of examples in the bible where ordinary Christians who aren't even named are seen boldly preaching the gospel and casting out demons.<sup>5</sup>

It is incredible everything we get when Jesus calls us to faith in Him: Proclamation and Power.

But is that all that Jesus made these disciples for? No... we probably got so caught up in the proclamation and the power that we skipped over one.

What was primary? Was it power? Was it proclamation? No.

It is...

## PROXIMITY

Say that word with me.

This is the most important element of being a disciple.

It isn't our proclamation of the gospel, it isn't our power over demons... it is the fact that we get to be in close proximity to Immanuel, God with us!

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<sup>5</sup> Proclamation: Mark 5:19-20. Power: Mark 9:38-39.

Remember that awkward, seemingly fake but very real word we looked at two weeks ago?

**Withness** — the state or fact of being close to or connected with someone or something: close association or proximity.<sup>6</sup>

Jesus is God putting himself in the position of and making himself available for withness... for proximity, for closeness.

Kim Huat Tan in his commentary on Mark writes that being with Jesus, in close proximity to Him “defines succinctly what discipleship means. By being with Jesus they can know Him intimately and understand his teaching.”<sup>7</sup>

This is why God With Us is the greatest gift we could receive.

This is literally God with Us recreating us to be with Him.

This is why God is With us! This is why God sent Immanuel.

**God is with us for Proximity, Proclamation, and Power.**

That we can be near God

So we can proclaim the God news

and so we can fight in the war he’s already won!

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<sup>6</sup> *Merriam-Webster*, s.v. “Withness,” accessed December 6, 2019, <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/withness>

<sup>7</sup> Kim Huat Tan in *Mark: A New Covenant Commentary*, quoted by Trevin Wax, “Proximity Precedes Power: ‘Life With God’ Before ‘Work for God’,” *Kingdom People* (blog), The Gospel Coalition, entry posted October 31, 2019, accessed December 15, 2019, <https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/blogs/trevin-wax/proximity-precedes-power-life-god-work-god/>.

If we had no God with Us, there would be no invitation to be with Him, there would be no message with the power to reconcile, there would be no power to wield over those who seek to destroy us.

There is an intentionality to the order of these verses; proximity is primary.

Jesus makes us disciples for three purposes according to this passage and the first one the ultimate disciple maker states as preeminent and primary is the privilege of proximity... witness.

This is the main principle I need us all to understand.

**Proximity precedes proclamation and power.**

Did Jesus say, "Bear much fruit and then you will abide in me?"

No, he said, "He who abides in me will bear much fruit."

He who stays in close proximity to me, who does life with me, will proclaim the gospel and walk in power.

Proximity is primary!

In fact, Francis Schaeffer pictured the three as three concentric circles.

**Power is the outermost** with its defensive and apologetic nature.

Inside that is **proclamation**, with right doctrine and its declaration.

Then inside that, at the core of all of this, is **proximity**.<sup>8</sup>

Don't get this order wrong. Proximity precedes power. The Person precedes proclamation.

Circling back to Jackie Hill Perry's mentor that I mentioned to start all this out...

She found out why Santoria possessed such an unmatched passion to proclaim the gospel and a power that made her relentless in the war against the already defeated Satan, sin, and death.

This is what she said, "This woman showed me that knowing God was more than knowing about him and doing things for Him but knowing HIM."<sup>9</sup>

It was this woman's living in close proximity to God that overflowed into a life of proclamation and power.

## **Application/Challenge:**

Based on the principle that proximity precedes proclamation and power, here's how that works itself out in our lives, and this is something we must remember.

**We cannot do life FOR Jesus without doing life WITH Jesus.**

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<sup>8</sup> Francis A. Schaeffer's three consecutive circles quoted by Trevin Wax, "Proximity Precedes Power: 'Life With God' Before 'Work for God'," *Kingdom People* (blog), The Gospel Coalition, entry posted October 31, 2019, accessed December 15, 2019, <https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/blogs/trevin-wax/proximity-precedes-power-life-god-work-god/>.

<sup>9</sup> Jackie Hill Perry, *Gay Girl, Good God* (Nashville, TN: B&H Publishing Group, 2018), 98.

If you find yourself hardly proclaiming the gospel or see so little power over sin and temptation and the enemy in your life, it is because you are spending so little time in proximity to Immanuel.

Satan isn't going to get you to shut your mouth about the gospel by sending a tornado of suffering into your life to tear everything apart, he'll accomplish that by whispering, "What is five minutes of prayer and meditation on God's word gonna do for you? You don't really need it anyways. You don't need to read God's word, you already read it, right? You know enough of it."

Satan always starts the war to destroy us by starting with our own relationship and proximity to God.

Another one of his strategies is to confuse you and I into thinking that living a life for Jesus filled with good works and morality is what doing life with Jesus really means, but it isn't.

What I mean is, more often than not, Christians understand the narrative of scripture through the lens of morality, meaning, "God expects this kind of behavior and the summation of the Christian life is endeavoring to line up my behavior with his expectations of do's and don'ts."

So we focus on good works, doing good things, serving people, being kind and generous and helping the least of these.

Yet we don't even realize that it is impossible to live life FOR Jesus without living life WITH Jesus.

It is so much easier to do things FOR Jesus; it is so much harder to do things WITH Jesus, because that's personal, that is intimate and it exposes us.

This is why it is so much easier for us to get a bunch of volunteers to pack out the house to serve at a halloween event or to send them to another region to serve people suffering tragedy, but we can't even get a routine weekly prayer meeting going.

We have a whole lot of people ready to live life FOR Jesus and so little who actually want to live life WITH Jesus.

God With Us isn't with us for our behavior modification, he isn't with us for morality, he is with us for relationship, for witness, for proximity!

Sure, God cares about our morals and our behaviors, but we can't get anywhere close to that without proximity and abiding in Jesus!

And even worse, when all we do is talk about living life FOR Jesus and never living life WITH Jesus, we damage the witness of the gospel.

When the lens through which we see the gospel is a moral one and that is what we preach, it prevents people far from God from ever coming near because they know they can't measure up to that!

The Gospel is for relationship; the manger was for relationship!

God is with us for relationship!

And when we look at the gospel through a relational lens, all are invited no matter the past!

Brothers and sisters, this is why the mission of the gospel and the expansion of God's kingdom won't come through heroic acts of outrageous generosity or martyrdom; it'll come when you're on your knees before our Holy King convicted of your own sin and depravity and in awe of his grandeur and majesty as revealed in God's word.

The faithful follower of Jesus cultivates life with God before life for God.

One author said, "Get those backwards, and you'll run dry. You may be someone who knows and spreads the gospel, but you will slowly see your spiritual vitality fade if your relationship to Christ is not [the] priority. Proximity to Jesus is key. Your relationship with him is the most important part of your ministry. What happens in your prayer closet matters more than anything you do on a public platform."<sup>10</sup>

Don't care about your abilities or your opportunities, care about your proximity... prioritize your witness with the God who is with us.

## **Conclusion (Cast Vision):**

Isn't it ironic, that the season we celebrate God With Us most is the season we spend the least amount of time with Him because we're too busy running to this play or his side of the family's celebrations, keeping this tradition or baking enough sweets to give a sugar coma to a large elephant?

I want to challenge you... you've got some vacation time coming up in the next two weeks... use one of those days to take your bible, your journal, and just get away to a quiet, uninterruptible place for a day.

Come here, sit in this room, use my office...

Work it out with your spouse to where you each get a day, and spend at least four hours reading and praying and listening.

Leave the phone behind.

Go live life WITH Jesus and you'll be better suited to do life FOR Jesus.

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<sup>10</sup> Trevin Wax, "Proximity Precedes Power."

[Pray]