

GracePoint: A Weekly Sermon Discussion

34 – He Ordered Them Not To Make Him Known

Announcements:

7/27 @7:00 -

Corporate

Prayer

7/28 @6:30 -

Grace Group

7/31 @8:30 -

Sunday School

7/31 @5:00 -

Joint Service with
La Luz Bible Church

ICE BREAKER: Are you good at following directions or more of a rebel?

READ: Matthew 12:15-21

There is a theme through the Gospels of what is known as the “secret Gospel”. Basically there are times when Jesus commands that the healing, or message, or whatever it is that he has just done should be kept quiet. We have a very bold way that it is stated in this passage we just read. We read that he “*ordered* them not to make him known.” This seems the opposite of the commands of Scripture that we know wherein we “preach the Gospel in season and out of season” or that we should “always be ready to give an account for the hope that is within you.” While the easy answer to “what’s going on here?” is to say that this was a command for a specific time and place (which it was!), a more careful look at this passage will give us better insight.

The first is to ask: What in particular about this time and place made this “secrecy” necessary. The answer lies in verse 15. “Jesus, aware of this...” So aware of what? If we let context be king we go back one verse to 14 - “the Pharisees went out and conspired against him, how to destroy him.” Whereas often we say that Jesus wanted to keep these things a secret because he didn’t want his fame to spread too quickly, or he didn’t want people to get the wrong idea about what sort of Messiah he would be, it seems here that the reason is, at least on some level, self preservation. Having claimed to be Lord of the Sabbath, then calling out the Pharisees to their faces and healing the man with the withered hand, Jesus was public enemy number one. And while *eventually* Jesus would willingly offer his life, this was not the time nor the place for that. Part of why Jesus would make this order is because he knew they would kill him, and he wasn’t ready for that yet.

DISCUSS: What, if any, lesson is there for us to learn from this example?

But in this passage there is another, and for us a more important, reason for this message to be kept secret. Matthew claims that both the healings, and the command to not make him known were to “fulfill what was spoken by the prophet Isaiah” (In Isaiah 42:1-4). So why would Jesus make this order? Put simply, his message needed to go to a different group of people, the gentiles. We could think of it this way, the people there, so the people following Jesus, knew the secret, so it was, in some sense, for them. Really only the Pharisees are kept out of the loop on this one. Partially it was because they just would not believe. The Pharisees are the embodiment of the woes to the cities Jesus gave back in chapter 11. They saw miracle after miracle after miracle and yet they would not believe. In fact it was a miracle that sent them into a murderous rage. But more importantly it is because God had a global vision for the Messiah. He would bring good news, he would bring “justice to victory” and give not just the Jewish people hope but the “Gentiles.” Interestingly Matthew is quoting not for the Hebrew Bible here but the Septuagint, so if you were to flip back to Isaiah 42 it would read a little differently. Specifically the last line. While Matthew says “in his name the gentiles will hope.” Isaiah says “the coastlands wait for his law!” Why the difference? Isaiah gives us the poetic version of the same thought. To speak of the coastlands is a lot like us saying “from sea to shining sea”. In other words, all over the world. Matthew makes *explicit* what was *implicit* in Isaiah, that the messiah is for all people. So why was the secret so important? Because like all secrets it would eventually get out, but it needed to go broader than just the walls of Jerusalem, or the land of Judah, for the plan of God!

DISCUSS: What is the meaning of the phrase “brings justice to victory?” Why is this a source of hope?