

## **BRAVO! WELL DONE!**

"Jesus' name had become well known" (Mark 6:14)

It was an impressive, exciting time in Jesus' ministry. His name had become well known; people everywhere were talking about His miracles. His name was on everyone's lips! At this very productive time of ministry, Jesus and His disciples were satisfied with the results. Truly, the kingdom of God had come near to the Jewish nation.

How did this happen so quickly? What brought about this astounding achievement? Four basic ingredients blended to form the leaven that raised up a successful ministry and generated Mark's affirmation: "Jesus' name had become well known."

### **TEACHING**

"The people were amazed at his teaching, because he taught them as one who had authority" (Mark 1:22). **Jesus taught directly from the Scriptures** and had a firm grasp of the Word of God. He was confident and bold in presenting the truth as He understood it, rather than relying on the thoughts of other scholars. The Heavenly Father was His authority.

Jesus often led the people to a new truth that amazed them and caused them to exclaim, "A new teaching—and with authority!" (Mark 1:27). His teaching enlightened them concerning the issues of the day: forgiveness of sins (Mark 2:5), fasting (Mark 2:18-20), the Sabbath (Mark 2:25-28), the source of power (Mark 3:23-30), and the kingdom of God (Mark 4:11).

Authoritative teaching prompted by a personal understanding of the Scriptures is an essential ingredient in making Jesus' name known.

### **MIRACLES**

Jesus' name was made known through **authoritative teaching authenticated by miracles**.

Miracles resulting from teaching highlights the fact that God has authorized His messengers to represent Him. This is clearly demonstrated with Jesus' instruction concerning the forgiveness of sin and the healing of the paralytic (Mark 2:5-12) and His teaching regarding the Sabbath and the healing of the man with the shriveled hand (Mark 3:1-6).

Miracles draw crowds, making it possible to dispense truth rapidly and hasten the spread of the gospel. Notice how Mark carefully records the results: "Everyone is looking for you" (1:37); "So many gathered that there was no room left" (2:2); "A large crowd came to him" (2:13); "A large crowd from Galilee followed" (3:7); "A crowd gathered, so that he and his disciples were not even able to eat" (3:20); "The crowd that gathered around him was so large that he got into a boat" (4:1); and "A large crowd gathered around him" (5:21).

Miracles accompanying Jesus' ministry captured people's attention and validated His authority to teach the Scriptures.

## PREACHING EVERYWHERE

The crowds following Jesus spontaneously carried a report to their friends at home and wherever they traveled. Jesus' teaching and miracles became a topic of conversation at all levels of society. Also, **Jesus and His disciples were intentional about going everywhere** to preach the good news.

When the disciples shared with Jesus how everyone was looking for Him, He replied, "Let us go somewhere else—to the nearby villages—so I can preach there also. That is why I have come" (Mark 1:38).

Jesus appointed twelve men to be with Him in full-time ministry, "that they might be with him and that he might send them out to preach" (Mark 3:14). He also set the example for them. "Then Jesus went around teaching from village to village...he sent them out two by two...they went out and preached" (Mark 6:6, 7, 12).

The disciples enhanced Jesus' itinerant ministry by going out in His authority to teach and work miracles. This definitely added breadth to the proclamation of Jesus' name.

## MYSTERIOUS WORK OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

Jesus taught in Mark 4:26-28: "This is what the kingdom of God is like. A man scatters seed on the ground. Night and day, whether he sleeps or gets up, the seed sprouts and grows, **though he does not know how**. All by itself the soil produces grain."

Sometimes in gospel-resistant communities, a believer may teach with authority, see the Word confirmed with signs following and travel everywhere preaching the message of salvation. Still, no immediate response takes place. At that time, the messenger must trust fully in the mysterious, invisible work of the Holy Spirit. **The seed of truth sown with clarity, power and throughout the community will sprout and grow**. All by itself, hidden from view, it will grow and produce a harvest.

The proclamation model and the subsequent harvest are outlined in Mark 16:20: "Then the disciples went out and preached everywhere, and the Lord worked with them and confirmed his word by the signs that accompanied it."

May the Lord grant us revelation of truth in our study of the Scriptures, empowerment during our personal times with Him, wisdom in raising up workers to move out with us through an entire community, and determination to keep in step with the Holy Spirit. Then the affirmation will come. Bravo! A job well done!