

A HARMONY OF THE GOSPELS
XLIII. Christ's Uniquely Edifying Oversight
(Matthew 12:15-21; Mark 3:7-12)

I. Introduction

- A. Secular rulers typically “lord it over” their subjects, exercising “authority over them” (Mark 10:42), the type of leadership Jesus strongly opposed in His disciples, Mark 10:43-45.
- B. Matthew 12:15-21 and Mark 3:7-12 records the positive example of proper oversight in Christ Himself, and we view these passages for our insight, application and edification (as follows):

II. Christ's Uniquely Edifying Oversight, Matthew 12:15-21; Mark 3:7-12.

- A. Though He was the Messiah and Son of God, Jesus graciously ministered to meet the needs of other people:
 - 1. After Christ's conflict with the Pharisees in the Jerusalem synagogue over His healing the man with the withered hand, a conflict that had led the Pharisees to leave the synagogue to take counsel on how to destroy Jesus, He withdrew from the area, Matthew 12:13-15a (J. Dwight Pentecost, The Words and Works of Jesus Christ, 1991, p. 168). In fact, Mark 3:7a reported that Christ withdrew to the “sea,” which in the context would be the Sea of Galilee near His home base of Capernaum, Ibid.
 - 2. Travel from Jerusalem to the Sea of Galilee by the roads Jesus would have used was a distance of about 80 miles (Ryrie Study Bible, KJV, 1978, Map 12: The Ministry of Jesus), so Christ was clearly seeking time for rest and relaxation from His recent conflict with Israel's leaders back in Jerusalem.
 - 3. Nevertheless, huge crowds of people from the region of Galilee around the lake, from Jerusalem, from Idumaea, which in Christ's time included the region around Hebron 20 miles south of Jerusalem (Ibid., fn. to Mark 3:8), from east of the Jordan River, from Tyre and Sidon 30 miles north of the Sea of Galilee (Ibid., Map 12), flocked to Jesus, having heard of His healing miracles, Mark 3:7b-8. Essentially, people from all around the Sea of Galilee and for many miles in every direction came out to see Him!
 - 4. The sheer number of people created a crisis for Jesus: He directed His disciples have a small boat ready for Him to make an escape if necessary were the people ever dangerously to throng in upon Him, Mark 3:9.
 - 5. Mark 3:10 explained why the crowd might dangerously press against Jesus: He had healed so many people that those with diseases were pushing forward to touch Him, what could easily lead to a lethal stampede!
 - 6. When people who were possessed with demons saw Jesus, they would fall down before Him and cry out, “You are the Son of God,” to which Jesus would give strict orders that they were not to tell others about Him, Mark 3:11-12. Christ did not want demons to be the messengers of His true identity, for the will of God was that Jesus' own words and miraculous works that fulfilled prophecy about His arrival would cause men to believe in Him as the Son of God and Messiah!
- B. Regardless of Christ's great and extensive ministry to others as Messiah and Son of God, instead of lording it over them, Jesus conducted a “compassionate, gentle, merciful ministry,” Ibid., Pentecost, p. 169:
 - 1. Matthew 12:16 NIV records Christ's warning to His hearers that they not tell others about Him!
 - 2. The explanation for this warning is given in Matthew 12:17-21 where Matthew quoted from Isaiah 42:1-4 that predicted the uniquely edifying ministry of the Messiah (Ibid.; as follows):
 - a. God the Father was presenting His Son and Israel's Messiah as His Chosen, Beloved Son in Whom He greatly delighted, upon Whom He had put His Holy Spirit, One Who would proclaim justice to the nations, Matthew 12:17-18. The Gentiles from Tyre and Sidon and Gentile Edomites from around Hebron along with the people of Israel from every direction and for many miles around were recipients of the edifying ministry of God's Son, Who was ministering the way God Himself would minister were He on earth, Ibid.!
 - b. This Messiah and Son of God would not quarrel or cry out, no one would hear His voice in the streets, and He was so modest that a bruised reed He would not break and a smoldering wick He would not snuff out until He had brought justice through to victory in His Millennial Kingdom, Matthew 12:19-20.
 - c. Even the Gentile nations, as typified in the Gentiles who then thronged about Jesus at the Sea of Galilee, would put their hope in Him in His coming Kingdom, Matthew 12:21.

Lesson: In vast contrast to the self-serving, oppressive, dominating rulers of this world, God the Father's Messiah and Son of God in Jesus Christ selflessly, compassionately, gently, modestly, and graciously ministered to Hebrews and Gentiles in great need by the Sea of Galilee, a foretaste of His wonderfully gracious reign in His Kingdom.

Application: May we hope in Christ's future Kingdom blessings and heed His example in edifying ministries today.