

Presentation 4

Mk 1.16-3.35

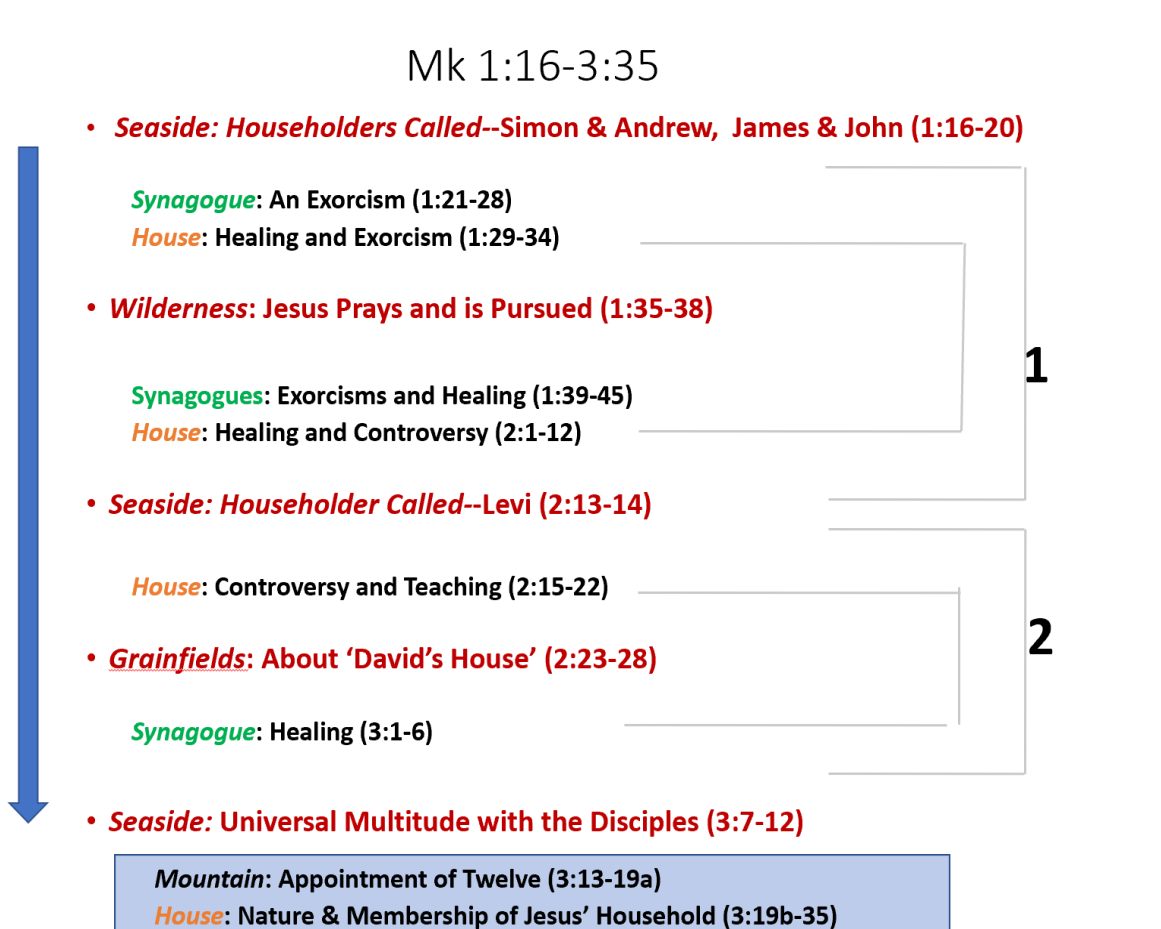
The Formation of Jesus' Household around the Sea of Galilee



Fishers on the Sea of Galilee

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1. *Literary Structure of Mk 1:16-3:35*



- The geographical placements in the above outline: juxtaposition between seaside-wilderness and synagogue—house
- Two blocks of literary/narrative development (1 & 2 above): seaside-wilderness → a move from the synagogue to the 'house', reflective of Mark's Greco-Roman household.
- The household is the 'mirror' and 'window' of how the Markan household is to be in the Roman context.

2. *Mark's theological development in Mk 1.16-3.35*

Mk 1.16-20: The disciples called out of the predetermined household relationship, to a new fictive kinship. Called to mission to fish for human beings. Movement from the local, cultural and everyday experience with a redefinition of the 'household head'. The call has future missionary orientation, from Jesus' initiative.

Mk 1.21-28: In a synagogue, an exorcism of one (a 'human being') in a synagogue, the place of sanctity. Jesus' authority recognized, and spreads.

Mk 1.29-31: House scene: Emphasis on Peter, the household owner, whose house becomes the symbol of Mark's household. It is a place (a) where Simon's mother-in-law lives because she is widowed or divorced—a place of welcome for her and whom she would represent: the rejected; (b) where the sick are looked after; (c) where requests are made of Jesus; (d) where Jesus responds immediately and acts in communion through touch and creates welcome of the one disenfranchised; (e) where 'resurrection' is clearly observed; (f) and she 'serves' (Gk diakonein) and becomes a minister in the household, publicly authorized by Jesus. Simon's mother-in-law becomes an agent of ministerial service.



14th Century CE mosaic of the healing of Simon Peter's Mother-in-Law, Chora Museum-Church, Istanbul, Turkey. Photo: © Michael Trainor, used with permission.

Mk 1.32-45: More healings in the house. Jesus prays and continues to preach the Gospel, casting out demons. Synagogue healing of a leper.

Mk 2.1-12: Simon's house gathers with his disciples. Jesus is in 'a house'. Mark explores the domestic setting in Rome to see the Markan householders in this scene. The paralytic is brought before Jesus let down through the roof. Jesus forgives: the inability to know one's freedom ('sin') needs to be released and become an agent of the Gospel, hence a deeper level of meaning implied: transformation towards agency. Critics exist in the household.

Mk 2.13-14: Jesus at the seaside. Calls Levi, tax collector, a representative symbol of those regarded as social pariah, sinner and agent of the government and Rome.

Mk 2.15-17: Jesus sits at 'his house' now gather in the house. The house might belong to Levi or, conceivably, now Jesus. This could be Jesus' house. Jesus eats with sinners and the disciples get accused with Jesus. Jesus reminds his audience that he calls 'sinners'. People discover wholeness and welcome in this house.

Mk 2.18-22: This house is a place of newness, while respecting the tradition of past wisdom.

Mk 2.23: Jesus criticized for being free on the Sabbath: "The Sabbath was made for human beings, not human beings for the Sabbath." Mounting opposition towards Jesus, reflective of what is present in Mark's household.

Mk 3.1-12 Jesus heals a person with a withered hand in a Synagogue on the Sabbath. "Hardness of heart" growing in Jesus' opponents. All of the 'world' come to Jesus, a universal attraction.

Mk 3.13-30: Jesus calls the Twelve from the mountain. These Twelve, Jesus 'desires', relationship of communion, representative of the twelve tribes of Israel and the renewal of the Torah. The two primary characteristics: to be 'with him' and to 'preach'. Companionship with Jesus is at the heart of it discipleship. Jesus calls a very diverse (dysfunctional?) group of disciples. Finally, Jesus is criticized for being like Beelzebul

Mk 3.31-35: Jesus natural family vs Jesus family of disciples: those who 'do the will of God'. This is the kinship quality of the new household.

3. *Summary*

- The important quality of communion with Jesus emerge in these chapters Mk 1-3. This is central to authentic disciples and characterises the Twelve, the symbolic renewal group of Israel.
- The household becomes the space of Jesus' disciples, as qualities emerge and growing opposition also reveals itself.



On the Sea of Galilee. Photo © Michael Trainor, used with permission.

FOR FURTHER REFLECTION & CONVERSATION

- The 'household' where the disciples gather reflects the spirit and nature of the authentic household of disciples. What is your experience of the contemporary household of Jesus, the church or the parish?
- How can the local Jesus 'household' mirror more closely the kind of household that Mark intends the house should become? What does the church need to do?

IN PREPARATION FOR THE NEXT PRESENTATION

- For the next presentation, reflect on your own understanding on miracles and healings.

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