



"Why Did Crowds Come To Hear Jesus?"

"Immediately many gathered together, so that there was no longer room to receive them, not even near the door. And He preached the word to them" (Mk. 2:2).

WE often find snapshots of large crowds gathering around Jesus. In Mark 2:2 the house in which Jesus was preaching had no room even near the door. In Mark 3:9 a boat had to be made ready lest the crowd crush Jesus. In Mark 5:24 a great multitude followed and thronged Him. His own mother and brothers could not come near Him because of the great multitude in Luke 8:19. We read of numbers on some occasions. There were about five thousand in Mark 6:44 and four thousand in Mark 8:9. Let us ask, "What was it that prompted so many to find and hear Jesus?"

Some sought Jesus to be cured of infirmities. "Then His fame went throughout all Syria; and they brought to Him all sick people who were afflicted with various diseases and torments, and those who were demon-possessed, epileptics, and paralytics; and He healed them. Great multitudes followed Him—from Galilee, and from Decapolis, Jerusalem, Judea, and beyond the Jordan" (Matt. 4:24, 25). These miracles were for a greater purpose of confirming the identity of Jesus as the Messiah and validating His word as the truth (Jn. 10:25, 38, etc.).

Some sought Jesus to get a free lunch. The day after Jesus fed five thousand, they sought Him again to receive more food (Jn. 6:26, 27). It was not what the signs had spoken which captured their mind, but rather what they could *physically benefit* from Jesus that day. Some people seek Jesus today only for a personal and physical quest. They do not care about the truth or their soul's standing with God but seek a church to receive a handout of some sort (Rom. 8:6, 7).

Some sought Jesus to be entertained. "Now when Herod saw Jesus, he was exceedingly glad; for he had desired for a long time to see Him, because he had heard many things about Him, and he hoped to see some miracle done by Him" (Lk. 23:8). Herod was able to experience what very few in human history have. He was able to have Jesus, the Creator of heaven and earth, stand before him. But all he wanted from this interaction was an entertaining performance. Some people only come to a church today to feed their curiosity or to see or hear something novel and exciting to the senses.

Some sought Jesus to condemn Him. "Then they sent to Him some of the Pharisees and the Herodians, to catch Him in His words" (Mk. 12:13). It is true that some merely sought Him out to find fault. There was no interest in the discovering of truth, but merely to find inconsistency.

Some sought Jesus to learn from Him. "Now as He was going out on the road, one came running, knelt before Him, and asked Him, 'Good Teacher, what shall I do that I may inherit eternal life?'" (Mk. 10:17). Peter understood this when others walked away; he said, "Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life" (Jn. 6:68). What is your reason for coming to hear the word of Jesus?

—Steven J. Wallace

