

Grace to You :: *Unleashing God's Truth, One Verse at a Time*

Ordinary Men, Extraordinary Calling, Part 2

Scripture: Mark 6:10-13; 30-32

Code: 41-28

Open your Bible, if you will, to the sixth chapter of Mark's gospel. In the wonderful providence of God, we're working our way through Mark and we just happened to arrive at this particular portion of Scripture in Mark chapter 6, verses 7 and following, which our Lord sends out the Twelve on their first short-term mission trip. It fit so well, the intent of the conference, so much is here seminal for the area of understanding how we do ministry that I decided to split it into two parts, do half at the front end and the last half at the back end. For some of you, you will only receive the back half cause you weren't here last Sunday. We did have a contingent of folks from the Philippines who were disappointed that I only gave them half last week, so they changed their flight and they're here this morning. We're glad you stuck around. I hope you find it worth your while.

In the sixth chapter of Mark's gospel, we come to a very, very important turning point, transition point, mega shift in the ministry of our Lord's Kingdom gospel preaching. This is that text in which He delegates His message and His power for the first time to the Twelve Apostles and sends them out essentially to preach exactly what He preached and to do exactly what He did. The text can really begin for us at the back half of verse 6. "And He was going around the villages teaching and He summoned the Twelve and began to send them out in pairs and gave them authority over the unclean spirits and He instructed them that they should take nothing for their journey, except a mere staff, no bag, no money in their belt, but to wear sandals and He added, 'Do not put on two tunics.' And He said to them, 'Wherever you enter a house, stay there until you leave town. And any place that does not receive you or listen to you as you go out from there, shake the dust off the soles of your feet for a testimony against them.' They went out and preached that men should repent. And they were casting out many demons and were anointing with oil many sick people and healing them."

At this point, there's an account of the death of John the Baptist. After this account, Mark returns to the sending of the twelve in verse 30 and records their return after their short-term mission. Notice verse 30, "The Apostles gathered together with Jesus." They are now constituted as the Apostles, after this first mission they become an official group. "They reported to Him all that they had done and taught and He said to them, 'Come away by yourselves to a secluded place and rest a while,' for there were many people coming and going and they didn't even have time to eat. They went away in the boat to a secluded place by themselves."

Here we discover, as I said, a major shift in the ministry of our Lord. Now I ask a question all the time, sometimes consciously but certainly all the time unconsciously, and that question has become familiarized to us in some rather pop ways, "What would Jesus do?" But that is a compelling question that resides in my mind at all times. What would be the Lord's reaction to this situation? What attitude would the Lord bring to bear to this kind of conflict? What strategy would the Lord use here? If the Lord were here, what would He do? If the Lord were here, what would He say? If we were to design a model for ministry and we were to ask the Lord how to design it, what would He tell us to do? He is the one that we want to turn to. Everything He did was perfect. Everything He did was absolutely the best possible strategy. Incorporated the absolute pure purposes of God and we learn the most, of course, from Him and those who followed Him. Now we get a lot from Paul who said, "Follow me because I follow Christ."

It's a compelling passage then to read in the sense that here is Jesus giving us the features and the elements and the formulas for effective ministry. We also are delegates of Christ. While we have some limitations the Apostles didn't have, namely the ability to do signs and wonders and miracles, we have the same message and the same responsibility. And so our lord gives us here a model for delegating spiritual ministry. In a very real sense, this passage here is kind of the foundation for ministry in the church, the foundation for leadership in the church, how we are to view ourselves as representatives of the Lord Jesus Christ.

And as I said, this is a singularly, crucial, transition point in His ministry, marking a brand-new strategy. Up to now, He has been the only preacher...the only preacher. It was Him and His followers.

John the Baptist was another preacher. He was a preacher certainly of righteousness. He was a preacher of repentance. He was a preacher of the Kingdom of God. It was he who pointed to Jesus and said, "Behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world." But mark it, right here Mark sandwiches in this account, the execution, the beheading of John the Baptist to mark it out that at this point Jesus is THE only preacher. Even John is finished. It's critical at this particular point then, in this last final third sweep over Galilee, only a few months left before He leaves and only less than a year of ministry in Judea and He will be crucified, it's critical at this point that Jesus spread the responsibility and the opportunity to make a maximum impact all across Galilee in this final time.

By the time you come to chapter 10 verse 1, they have left Galilee. So this is near the end of His Galilean mission. Little time, pressing crowds made this necessary. When I say pressing crowds, I mean tens of thousands of people crushing Jesus so that He couldn't get from here to there, He couldn't barely eat a meal, let alone go from town to town and town to town with that kind of crowd

crushing Him. So the solution is to defuse the crowd. And how do you defuse the crowd? By multiplying the number of preachers and the number of miracle workers. And so for this last third and final sweep through Galilee, that's exactly what He does.

And by the way, a footnote here, if you ever are asked, "What is the definition of leadership?" The definition of leadership is getting things done effectively through other people. That's leadership...getting things done effectively through other people. And that's exactly what He does here. Up to now, verse 6 says He was going around the villages teaching. Then in verse 7, here in this moment He summoned the Twelve and began to send them out in pairs. This is brand new, The Twelve. They're now designated as The Twelve by Mark..

Later on in verse 30 they will be designated by him for the first time as The Apostles, The Twelve Apostles. They have already followed Jesus. They had been elevated to permanent believing disciples. They had then been elevated again to Apostles. A disciple is a student and an Apostle is a sent one. A disciple is a learner, an Apostle is a preacher. A disciple is one gathered in for instruction, an apostle is one sent out for proclamation. It's time now for them to go. They've had up to eighteen months, maybe even more, maybe closer to twenty months of day-to-day, hour-by-hour instruction in what the Lord does and what He says. They've heard His preaching day after day after day, hour after hour, after hour and the message was now clear to them. Time for them to go out on their first short-term mission. This is good strategy. This is necessary. This is a model the Lord has established. We understand the value of it. When you've trained men and you are readying them for a life of ministry, you send them out on short-term opportunities so that they can come back and tell the things that were successful, the things that were challenges so there can be further instruction, further preparation in anticipation of a full and final sending.

The full and final sending of the Twelve didn't come until after the Resurrection, after the death of Christ, the Resurrection of Christ, then you have the Lord gathering them just before His Ascension and saying, "Go into all the world, preach the gospel to everybody, go everywhere baptizing them, teaching them to observe whatever I command them. I'm going to be with you to empower you." He reminds them in Acts 1:8 just before ascending, "The Holy Spirit will come upon them. They are to go to Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria and the world."

So the final sending is yet ahead. This is their first short-term mission...not far and not long. And as for this mission as in the final mission, He gives them both the message to preach and He gives them the power to do these miraculous wonders that validate the message.

Now remember, they're preaching the Kingdom and it is a message that is new. And there is a

validation that is necessary. There were Roman teachers all over everywhere. How do you know who's from God?

Well whoever can heal the sick, cast out demons and raise the dead is from God. Those are the validating signs. Sermons and signs, they were given sermons that Jesus had preached and they were able to do the signs that Jesus had done. In fact, they could heal the sick. Luke 9 says they were able to heal the sick in addition to casting out demons and here in verse 12 and 13 it tells us they did that. Matthew 10:8 says they were told to raise the dead. So they were delegated the same power over disease, over demons, and over death that Jesus had exhibited. This way the crowd would be spread and this way they would have much more freedom to move, and this way they would be an exact duplication of what our Lord did. This is, as I said, the start of delegated responsibility in the Kingdom which comes all the way down to church leadership. And to those of us who are in ministry today, we stand in their progeny, in their continuity, in their chain.

Now to remind you that when He chose these Twelve men, He was making a statement about the apostasy of Judaism. None of them came from the religious establishment. None of them was a Pharisee, a scribe, a rabbi, a priest. None of them was a temple attendant in any way. None of them had any Levitical responsibility there. No one was a ruler of a synagogue. They were completely outside the religious establishment. None of them was a teacher. None of them is known as a religious leader in any sense whatsoever. They were an interesting assortment of very, very plain, unimportant men as far as religious activities were concerned. But now Jesus choosing these men is an open judgment and condemnation on the religious establishment. There wasn't anybody in the religious establishment that was worthy of this. The whole system was absolutely apostate, we know that. It is the religious establishment that led the operation that ended up in the execution of the Messiah. The Lord is rendering a judgment on the system of Judaism.

Furthermore, there are Twelve of them. And that is not by chance, that is not merely happenstance. There are Twelve because there are Twelve tribes in Israel and they are the symbols of the New Israel, the true Israel, the Israel of God, the new people that the Lord is forming. In fact, they will rule over in the Millennial Kingdom, each of the Twelve Tribes of Israel, each of them will have a tribe to rule and their names are already emblazoned upon the holy city, the New Jerusalem in the heaven of heavens. So they are permanently put in this position of spiritual responsibility and leadership.

According to Ephesians 2:20 they become the foundation stones of the church. Here is a massive indictment on Judaism at the time of Jesus. Mark it in your minds, folks, Jesus rejected totally the Judaism of His day. It was not sufficient to bring salvation to anyone and neither is the Judaism of this day, or any other day that rejects the Lord Jesus Christ. There is no way to heaven except through Him. And so He chooses the Twelve and renders a judgment on the nation Israel.

Now as we look at what's in this text, we find some of the elements in the profile of a faithful messenger, true ambassador and representative of the Lord Jesus. We covered three of them last time, I have a few more for this morning.

Number one, I'm just reviewing here, they proclaim salvation...they proclaim salvation. I just want you to lock down on the fact that the message is salvation. Luke 9:2, parallel passage, Matthew 10, parallel passage, we'll borrow from both of them. In Luke 9:2 it says, "And He sent them out to proclaim the Kingdom of God....He sent them out to proclaim the Kingdom of God." That can be assumed because if they were sent to represent Him, that's what He proclaimed.

If you were to go back to the first chapter, verse 14, 15, 17, 34, 39 and etc., etc., you would see that He came preaching the Kingdom, preaching the Kingdom. And there was one other element to it, He preached repentance. And if you look at verse 12, they went out and preached that men should repent. So the message was "repent of sin...repent of the sin of your self-righteous religion and come into the Kingdom of God through faith in Christ." Matthew 10 says, "He sent them to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.

Mark it, friends. Apart from Christ, the people of Israel are lost, the Jewish people are lost. They were lost then. They're still lost. We still go to them to proclaim the only hope, the Lord Jesus Christ.

Now the message was not obviously complete, but they preached repentance and they preached the Kingdom, and they preached that Jesus is the Messiah and the only Savior and you must put your faith in Him. Later on when they were sent finally and permanently, they preached the great glory of the cross and the resurrection. They preached Christ and they preached Him crucified. That becomes our message.

I love how this starts in the book of Acts. Peter stands up on the Day of Pentecost in Acts 2:22 and what's his message? Does he preach about the abuses of the Roman occupation? Does he preach about the abuses of slavery? Does he preach about the abuses of over taxation? No.

He stands up and says this, "Men of Israel, listen to these words, Jesus the Nazarene, a man attested to you by God with miracles, wonders, and signs which God performed through Him in your midst." Just as you yourselves know, they never denied His miracles. "This man delivered over by the predetermined plan and foreknowledge of God, you nailed to a cross by the hands of Godless men and put Him to death. God raised Him up again, putting an end to the agony of death, since it was impossible for Him to be held in its power" He preached

Christ crucified, and Christ risen.

Same sermon, verse 36, comes to an end, “Let all the house of Israel know for certain that God has made Him both Lord and Christ, this Jesus whom you crucified.” Peter repeatedly, as did all the Apostles, indicts the Jews for crucifying Christ. That’s not debatable.

“When they heard this, they were pierced to the heart,” verse 37, “and said to Peter and the rest of the Apostles, ‘Brethren, what shall we do?’ Peter said to them, ‘Repent and each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins and you’ll receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. For the promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off, namely Gentiles...as many as the Lord our God will call to Himself.” This is what they preached. They preached Christ. They preached Christ crucified.

In chapter 3 Peter stands up again and replies in verse 12, “Men of Israel, why are you amazed at this? Why do you gaze at us as if by our own power or piety we have made him walk?” They healed a crippled man in the temple.

And then He goes on, “The God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, the God of our fathers has glorified His servant Jesus, the one whom you delivered and disowned in the presence of Pilate when he had decided to release Him. But you disowned the holy and righteous one and asked for a murderer to be granted to you, but put to death the prince of life, the one whom God raised from the dead, a fact to which we are witnesses. And on the basis of faith in His name, it is the name of Jesus which has strengthened this man whom you see and know and the faith which comes through him has given him this perfect health in the presence of you all.” They preached nothing but Jesus.

Chapter 4, “Peter...verse 8...filled with the Holy Spirit said to them, ‘Rulers and elders of the people, if we are on trial today for a benefit done to a sick man as to how this man has been made well, let it be known to all of you and to all the people of Israel that by the name of Jesus Christ the Nazarene, whom you crucified, whom God raised from the dead, by this name this man stands here before you in good health. And He was the stone which was rejected by you, the builders and which became the chief cornerstone and there is salvation in no other name. There is no other name under heaven that has been given among men by which we must be saved.” That’s apostolic preaching and he kept going like that chapter after chapter after chapter, and it was always the cross and the resurrection. That’s why Paul says in 1 Corinthians 2:2, “We preach Christ and Him...what?...crucified.”

Nothing, by the way, has come down from heaven to change the mandate. So we stand in the great line of the Apostles and if we want to be faithful messengers and representatives of Christ, we have only one message, we preach the message of salvation.

Secondly, they manifested compassion...they manifested compassion. The Lord delegated them miracle power. Verse 7 says, “They had authority over the unclean spirits.” Luke 9:1 says, “And to

heal diseases.” And Matthew 10:8 says, “And to raise the dead.” They were able to have power over demons, death and disease, just as Jesus did. And as I told the men this week, there were many ways that the Lord could have demonstrated divine power, proven that they were true preachers, done miracles in the sky, which is what the Pharisees always wanted, “Show us a sign in the sky.” But instead he had the miracles which touched people at the point of their great suffering...disease, demons and death. This is to show that God is a God of mercy and of compassion. And while we don't have the miracle power, part of our message is the Lord one day will take you to the glory of His heaven where there is no sickness, no sadness, no death, right? One day, as He says in Matthew 8, “He will heal all your infirmities.” And in the meantime, He is a God of compassion.

The third thing that we learned last time, they lived dependently. Those who are representatives of Jesus Christ live dependently. He instructed them, “They should take nothing for their journey,” go with the clothes on your back, that's it, the shoes on your feet, and off you go. Take your mere staff...you need a stick, a walking stick for difficult terrain, and maybe to fight off any kind of a threat. Don't take any extra bread. Don't take a bag to put anything in, no money in your belt. They carried money in their belts and He says, “Don't put any money in your belt, just put your sandals on, don't take an extra tunic. That's the way you go.” This is teaching on trust, right?

Now you understand that for all the months they've been with Him, for all this period of time approaching two years, they never were really very far from His presence. All their needs were met. When they needed food, He created it if it wasn't available. They knew that while they were around Him they were going to be fine. They had learned that. But what they needed to learn was they were also going to be fine when He was gone. They needed to know that when He ascended back into heaven they had nothing to fear and that's why He said in that Upper Room discourse, “What's going to happen when I go away is simply this. You ask anything in My name and My Father will give it to you.” We're going to take care of you. They need to learn the lessons of trust. They needed to learn what the Sermon on the Mount said that if you clothe the grass of the field and the lily of the field, He'll clothe you. And if He feeds the birds of the air, He'll feed you. This is lessons on trust.

This...this is not permanent. It doesn't mean that all of us who are in the ministry need to take a vow of poverty, we don't need to live our whole lives like this. In fact, Jesus makes that very explicitly clear in the twenty-second chapter of Luke and verse 35 when He looks back at this event and says this, “When I sent you out without any money belt or bag or sandals, you did not lack anything, did you?” And they said, “No, nothing.”

For however long they were gone, be it weeks or months, they didn't lack anything. They didn't take any food, they didn't take any extra garments. They didn't know where they were going to stay, but the Lord met every need for a place to rest, a place to stay, food to eat, safety, all of that protection, they said, “We had nothing lacking whatsoever.” He said to them, “But now whoever has a money

belt, take it along, a bag, take that. Whoever has no sword, sell one of your coats and get a sword, you're going to need it."

I mean, there comes a time when you must be prepared. When you take what all the Lord provides as part of His gifts to you to make you prepared, providence can work before the event as well as during the event. And so this was merely a training session when they needed to learn to live dependently. And they did. And they came back and said they didn't lack anything. Oh, if you're going to be a representative of our Lord, you proclaim salvation, you manifest compassion and you live dependently. You take whatever the Lord provides.

Now fourthly, they demonstrate contentment...they demonstrate contentment. People who can't do miracles but tell you they can get filthy rich, have you noticed? People who pretend to be healers have multiple jets. Why? Because people who are sick and dying are desperate enough to give them money under the illusion that somehow they can buy a healing. And they're blatant..."Send me your money and you'll get healthy....Send me your money and you'll get rich." Liars all. And we know who the father of lies is. It is a prostituted use of the name Jesus.

These men could heal. These men could raise the dead. These men could deliver people from demonic possession. When you arrive in town and they begin to see this, everybody is going to want to be your host. Now false teachers would travel and they would stay with one family and exhaust the resource of that family and go to the next house.

Paul talks about this when he talks about the fact that false teachers go from house to house, leading silly women captive, getting whatever favors they want out of this house and go into the next house, the next house, the next house padding their pockets. You don't even take a belt to put the money in and you go to one house and you stay there.

Verse 10, when you go, wherever you enter a house, stay there until you leave town. You're not going to be able to be bought. Remember I told you last time, you tell them, "Don't take gold from people, don't take silver from people, don't even take copper from people. Don't take anything."

The potential here for you to be corrupted is massive. Now one of them would have a hard swallow at this point, do you know which one? Judas. He had manipulated himself into the position where he held the moneybag. He couldn't do much with it at the time when they were all around Him, but he figured if all things go bad, at least he's got the moneybag when he splits.

The idea here is to be content. Never put a price on your ministry except whatever the Lord provides. Don't sell yourself to the highest bidder.

There's a fifth principle here. The messenger of the gospel has another necessary feature, could you say this is a basic skill? They exercised discernment. They exercised discernment. Verse 11, "Any place that doesn't receive you or listen to you, as you go out from there, shake the dust off the soles of your feet for a testimony against them." The assumption is, you're going to get rejected, right? Is that a fair assumption? The assumption is the message is too hard, the assumption is that calling these highly religious people who have spent their whole life patting themselves on the back because they must be favored by God because they are the chosen people and they must be favored by God because they follow all the ceremonies and all the rituals and all the external acts. The hard sell for them is to recognize themselves as sinners on the way to hell. In fact, when Jesus preached that the first time He went to Nazareth, they tried to throw Him off the cliff and stone Him to death and they were the people who knew Him best.

It's not a happy message and it's not going to be received well as a general rule. So you're going to have to exercise some discernment. When you go to some town, or some home, or some region, you need to give your message. If they don't receive it, if they don't listen to it, leave. Pretty strong instruction here...leave, and then shake the dust off the soles of your feet for a testimony against them. That is the traditional Jewish way of expressing scorn toward Gentile countries.

The Gentiles were considered to be unclean. It had reached racist proportions. And when you went outside Israel and you came back in, you stopped on the edge and you took your sandals off and you shook all the Gentile dirt into the Gentile land before you stepped into Israel, and then you shook your robe because you've been kicking up Gentile dirt and it would be all over you from your head to your foot. You shook out your hair and you shook out your robe, you shook out your feet, this was showing disdain for the Gentiles. You didn't want to bring Gentile dirt and contaminate the land of Israel.

When you've been to a place and you've been healing and you've been validating the message that you preach and you've been casting out demons and perhaps you raised a dead person, and they reject you...you give a testimony, a martyrdom, you give...became martyr when used in the Christian sense..you give a testimony to them. Your testimony they will understand because you're going to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. You say to them, "You're no better than a Gentile town, country. You're unclean and you're under judgment."

In Matthew 10 which is the parallel which is much, much more extensive instruction, and we'll refer to that in a minute, says here, this is Matthew recording this, in whatever city or village you enter and inquire who's worthy in it, stay at his house until you leave the city. Check where you go first, go to a worthy place, not an unworthy place, not an outrageously openly sinful place such as many inns and places like that were. Stay in a house that is worthy and stay at that house until you leave. As you enter the house, give your greeting. If the house is worthy, give it the blessing of peace. If it's not worthy, take back your blessing and get out. Stay where you can give the blessing. Whoever doesn't

receive you or heed your words, as you go out of the house or the city, shake the dust off your feet.

And then this in verse 15, "I say it will be more tolerable for the land of Sodom and Gomorrah in the day of judgment than that city." Wow. Not only are you going to say you're as a Gentile city, you're as a Gentile city of the ilk of Sodom and Gomorrah. That takes a little bit of boldness and courage and a lot of discernment. If it refuses the gospel, to be devoutly Jewish and reject Christ is to be utterly pagan and to be worse than Sodom and Gomorrah. Why? Because they didn't reject Christ. If the miracles had been done in Capernaum, Jesus said, in Chorazin, Bethsaida had been done in Sodom and Gomorrah, they would have repented.

The reason for this judgment is because of a rejection of the message. You've got to act in a discerning way. Look at Matthew 7 for just a moment. This is part of gospel ministry, folks, the warning part, right?..the warning part, the boldness, the discernment. Here's every non-Christian's favorite verse, Matthew 7:1, "Do not judge so that you will not be judged." That's the life verse of every unbeliever. "For in the way you judge, you'll be judged, and by your standard of measure, it will be measured to you."

What you are saying here is, "Don't form a sinful posture," He's talking to these Jews, "make yourself the judge." You're looking at a speck in your brother's eye and you've got a log in your own eye. How can you say to your brother, "Let me take a speck out of your eye," verse 4, "when you've got a log in your own eye? You hypocrite. Take the log out of your own eye." He is indicting them. "You cannot sit in judgment of others, some kind of religious judgment, some kind of divine authoritative judgment, because you're a hypocrite."

And then in verse 6 He shifts gears immediately and He calls for a judgment. He says, "Do not give what is holy to dogs. Do not throw your pearls before swine or they will trample them under their feet and turn and tear you to pieces." He turns from talking to the hypocrites to talking to those who are willing to follow Him. That's why the next verse says, "Ask and it shall be given, seek and you'll find, knock and it will be opened." He turns from the indictment of false judges to those who are interested in following Him and He says, "Look, you've got to make judgments. Once you know you're dealing with dogs and pigs, don't waste the truth on them." That's pretty strong language.

I know you think, of dog as a nice little furry pet and curls up in your lap and all that kind of thing, but that's not how dogs were, they were not household pets in biblical times. There were wild dogs that inbred in all kinds of ways, they became half-wild mongrels, scavengers roaming the street, dirty, greedy, snarling, diseased, dangerous, hated because of their nuisance and their danger, they would roam the streets eating garbage. You don't...can you imagine, He is saying to them, can you imagine taking the part of the Passover meal where you've given part to the priest and this is the result of the sacrifice offered for sin to God and taking some of the Passover, the meat that was offered to God as

a sacrifice that your family is supposed to consume, walking out in the street and throwing it to a bunch of dirty mongrels? You wouldn't do anything like that because it's far too sacred. It's been consecrated as a sacrifice at the temple. You don't do that.

Nor should you throw a pearl to a pig. Do you think a pig will appreciate a pearl? No. They are the epitome of uncleanness. Jews did not raise pigs. They were wild, wild scavengers. They weren't the little pink things that you see for all kinds of strange reasons around Easter, along with rabbits. They weren't those little things. They were...they were really frightening pigs. They were vicious and they were sometimes dangerous animals. They'll turn and rip you to shreds once they think you're a source of food if you don't give them more. They don't care about your pearls.

So when you come across dogs and swine, that's the people who have no appreciation for something good, they're content with the garbage they're eating. Don't waste your time...don't waste your time. A filthy wild animal cannot appreciate the glories of the truth. These people are blinded by false teachers.

Second Peter 2 even talks about dogs and swine. It talks about them like dogs going to lick up their vomit. They represent those who are perverse and ungodly and reject the truth. Well this was the message.

You can go back now to Mark. The message was be discerning and when you see rejection, call it what it is...identify it, pronounce it visual judgment on them, the testimony against them and leave. Acts 18:5, Silas and Timothy came down from Macedonia and Paul began devoting himself completely to the Word, solemnly testifying to the Jews that Jesus was the Christ. This is in Corinth, by the way, in the Jewish synagogue. And when they resisted and blasphemed, he shook out his garments and said to them, "Your blood be on your heads."

You know, we are all preachers of judgment, aren't we?, to the rejecters of the gospel. To be a messenger of Christ, a true representative, one must preach the message of salvation, demonstrate compassion, must live under trust, dependence, must be content with whatever provisions the Lord gives us, however little, however much, where He puts us and with what He provides, we stay, we remain faithful and we must be discerning.

Number six, another mark that we see, back to Mark 6, they were all these things and number six, they were obedient, they obey orders...they obey orders. I love this, verses 12 and 13, "They went out and preached that men should repent and they were casting out many demons and were anointing with oil many sick people and healing them." They did exactly what they were told to do...they preached and they healed and delivered. What they were supposed to do, they did.

Humanly they were frankly a ridiculous bunch. They had absolutely no authority from the religious establishment at all, they had no connection, they had no training. And they struggle within, with doubts and misunderstandings and frustration. So they really didn't trust their own innovation, which is okay, they just did what they were told. It's really the right thing to do.

You say, "Well yeah, man, that's exciting stuff. Who wouldn't do that? You're going to go out, raise the dead, heal the sick and deliver people from demons and preach the gospel."

Well yes, that's true, but I want you to turn to Matthew 10 for a moment because there was more to the speech that you don't hear in Mark. Their obedience is understandable but at the same time, it is remarkable because if you get the whole picture this is a record of what He said to them that day. And not all of it would be fulfilled in that little short-term mission, a lot of it would be fulfilled when they were sent on their final mission throughout their entire life until they ended up martyred. But here's what He told them. Start in verse 16 of Matthew 10, same event, same day, same time.

"Behold, I send you out as sheep in the midst of wolves, so be shrewd as serpents and innocent as doves, but beware of men." Huh, that's not helpful. We're going to men. "Beware of men, they'll hand you over to those courts, they'll scourge you in their synagogues. You'll even be brought before governors and kings for My sake as a testimony to them and to the Gentiles. But when they hand you over, don't worry about how or what you are to say, it will be given you in that hour what you are to say." Just like you don't need to worry about your food, you don't need to worry about your protection, you don't need to worry about what you're going to say, I'll take care of all of it. Wow! "For it's not you who speak, it's the Spirit of your Father who speaks in you."

This is indication that, listen, folks, even before Pentecost they had the power of the Holy Spirit on their lives, just not in the fullness of measure such as came at Pentecost. And here's how bad it will get. "You're going to go back to your own area. Some of you are going to go back to your own towns." These are all virtually Galileans, eleven of the twelve of them. "And they're going to go back into places that are familiar and brother will betray brother to death and his father, his child, and children will rise up against parents and cause them to be put to death. You'll be hated by all because of My name. But it's the one who endures to the end who will be saved. Wherever they persecute you in one city, flee to the next. I truly say to you, you'll not finish going through the cities of Israel till the Son of Man comes."

This stretches out on to their long-term mission, their life mission. This stretches out to the future, even until the Son of Man comes, we're all going to have this same kind of exigencies that we face, rejection, resentment.

Why should it be any different? Verse 24, "A disciple is not above his teacher, a slave is not above his

master. If they call Me Beelzebul...verse 25...what are they going to call you?" And so it goes. "Don't fear...verse 28...those who can kill the body. Don't worry. Are two sparrows not sold for a cent, yet not one of them will fall to the ground apart from your Father. The hairs of your head are numbered. So don't fear, you're more valuable than many sparrows."

All of this...all this is in the same moment, He gives them all of this. Well this would kind of pull a little restraint on your zeal, wouldn't it? So their obedience is remarkable in the face of what they were told to expect. "They went out, however, and obeyed. They preached, they preached repent.." I think Mark emphasizes repent because that's confrontive preaching. If it said, like Luke, "They preached the Kingdom of God," they could have a positive message. But as soon as it says they preach repentance, then it's a confrontive message, isn't it? It's a bold message.

They were empowered to cast out demons, heal sick people. And they did something that doesn't appear before or after, they anointed some of the sick people with oil. Jesus never did that. That's something that they did that He never did. And we never see Him do it after this and we don't hear anything of it after this. There is one incident of this by the elders of the church in the fifth chapter of James, someone who sins and is struggling, come and the elders of the church anoint the person with oil.

As you think about this, oil...olive oil was used medicinally. Luke 10:34, that's what the Good Samaritan used, didn't he? Pour oil on the suffering man. But in the Old Testament, olive oil was used symbolically by the Jews. Whenever there was anointing it was a symbol of God's presence when a king was anointed, when a priest was anointed. It was symbolic of divine presence. So I think maybe a good way to understand this would be that Jesus didn't need to do this because He didn't need a symbolic divine presence, He was divine presence. But since they were just men, they were deferring to the perceivable reality that this was an indication that their power came from God and they used the symbol that people were used to that was a symbol of the presence of God, the anointing of God.

They knew that they weren't the source of the power, they were just the channel of it. And by that simple symbol they, in a familiar way, passed the glory back to the Lord Himself. They obeyed. I say this so...we talk about this so much, we just had a shepherds' conference and talked about it, just do what the Lord told you to do. Just go out and preach the gospel of salvation, the cross, and the resurrection and demonstrate the compassion that Christ did in His ministry to sinners and to all and that's what you are to do, nothing less, nothing more.

One final feature that needs to be added in the last couple of minutes before I finish. They embrace accountability...they embrace accountability. Anybody who is in the service of the Lord needs to understand that there's a report to be given. So go over to verse 30 and let's see what happened here. They come back some weeks or months later. Verse 30 says, "The Apostles gathered together

with Jesus and they reported to Him all that they had done and taught.” They were told to do two things...preach and demonstrate power. So they came back and said, “This is what we preach, and this is what happened through the power that was delegated to us.”

They are the Twelve now. They are the Apostles now. This is their formal induction into that elite group of Twelve. They came back two by two. They were all over the place and they didn't all arrive at the same moment. They didn't have, in case you didn't know, watches or clocks or calendars, or whatever. They came when they came, but there must have been a rendezvous time, a rendezvous period and they came and they gave an account to the Lord. You know, Hebrews 13:17, “We are those as elders of the church, right?, who have to give an account.” That's why Paul said in 1 Corinthians 4, “It's a small thing what men say of me. It's a small thing what I say about myself. I'm biased in my own favor and blind to some of my own sins. So I'll wait for the day when the Lord makes the final judgment and then will every man have praise from God.” This is stewardship. Paul said, “Of all things he desired, he desired as his ambition to be pleasing to Him.”

The bar had been set very high and I don't think any of those pairs wanted to come back under the bar. So they came back with their victories and defeats. They came back with their rejections and their acceptances. They came back and told the whole story. They were mutually accountable to each other, like 2 Corinthians 8:4, it was a fellowship of ministering. They were fellow workers. Here's the preview of the church where they work together and they're accountable to one another, but collectively they're accountable to the Lord who sent them. Their accountability to the Lord is far greater than their accountability to each other, but they did feel an accountability to each other. That's how it works when you have a team of people and they hold you to the standard.

No doubt when they came back He said, “While you were gone I have something to tell you. John the Baptist is dead.” He had his head chopped off. Well they still had their heads. “I protected you this time and I'll continue to protect you until your time is done, but that might be the price of your discipleship.”

And in this accountability, there's something so beautiful, so tender, so sweet. Verse 31, “He said to them, ‘Come away by yourselves to a secluded place and rest awhile.’”

Listen, our Lord is not on such a brutal schedule that He doesn't understand we need rest. No extreme taskmaster is He. Gracious, tender, sensitive, understands human weakness, “He was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin, but He knows our weaknesses, the feelings of our infirmities.” We need rest. We need quiet. We need refreshment. We need to have our strength replenished. We need time away from the masses. We need time alone with Him and we need time with others who minister.

It was physically demanding. It was physically exhausting. And everywhere they went was unfamiliar to them. So He says, "That's enough for now. You need to rest for there were many people coming and going and they didn't even have time to eat." Can you imagine? They've been gone I don't know how long they'd been gone, they had to fight for a meal. Why? Well they were in the process of eliminating disease and demons. They would get no rest. It was exhausting.

Some of us know a little bit about that. Sometimes we go on a missionary trip somewhere in the world. I can remember one time I went...I slept from Moscow to Los Angeles and changed planes. I don't remember that part. We all know what it is to be absolutely spent. Our Lord understands that. We're important and we're useful but we're not necessary, can I say that? The Kingdom will move on if we take a rest. Preach the gospel. Demonstrate the compassionate love of God. Be content with whatever circumstance you're in. Stay there happily. Be discerning. Know when it's time to stop preaching the message of grace and start to proclaim judgment. Be obedient. Do what you've been called. And embrace your accountability.

These men, by the way, turned the world upside-down. So, verse 32 says, "They went away in the boat." It's always "the" boat. It's not any boat, it's THE boat. Apparently one of the boats that belonged to Peter, James, John, or Andrew was always available to them, so they got into THE boat and they went to a secluded place by themselves.

I'd love to have been there, huh? We all need that secluded place, don't we?, if we are going to be replenished and recharged. It didn't last long. Thirty-three, "The people saw them going and many recognized them and ran together on foot from all the cities and there they were again. So, that's why it's good to go on a boat some times, huh? They can't find you on the boat.

What a privilege it is to be called to this ministry, to be an extension of the Apostles even though we don't do the signs and wonders and miracles of an Apostle, our ministries can all be validated, all you have to do is compare what we say with what's here. On the pages of Holy Scripture. What a high calling, what a privilege. And we are the not many noble, the not many mighty, the lowly and the nobodies that the Lord has chosen to do this, and He's still using the same kind of people that He used when He called the Twelve. And Paul is a good model, right? Whose strength was perfected in his own weakness. He even says, "I am a nobody." What a marvelous calling.

Father, thank You for our time this morning. Thank You for the joys of worship and fellowship and the blessing of Your truth penetrating our hearts. Thank You for the wonderful, wonderful thrill of being with the Savior again this morning, just knowing His heart, and seeing His methods, His strategies, the passion, the fire of giving your life on the edge of sacrificial death, going out to preach among the wolves and the enemies and then coming back and finding Him wanting to pull you away for some rest and some quiet. We thank You that You are so sensitive to us, You demand the highest of us

and You give us the most grace. We pray, Lord, that You will fill our hearts with joy in believing, as the Apostle Paul said. May we rejoice even more because we've been together in this hour, we pray in Christ's name. Amen.

Available online at: <http://www.gty.org>

COPYRIGHT (C) 2015 Grace to You

You may reproduce this Grace to You content for non-commercial purposes in accordance with Grace to You's Copyright Policy (<http://www.gty.org/connect/copyright>).