

The Gospel According to Mark

The Sending of the Twelve

Mark 6:7-13

Sunday, August 30, 2020

Introduction

In the opening verses of Mark 6 Jesus returns to His hometown of Nazareth heralding the same message that He had shared throughout Galilee. But the reception in Nazareth was anything but welcoming. The city was marked by unbelief; an unbelief that Mark says made Jesus marvel.

While Jesus was affected by the unbelief in Nazareth, He wasn't surprised. And their unbelief didn't deter Him from His mission. He left Nazareth and continued teaching and also did something that He had never done up to this point: He sent out witnesses to speak on His behalf.

The First Mission's Trip

Over the course of His ministry up to this point Jesus has been teaching and revealing Himself to the disciples. After the trip to Nazareth Jesus takes their training to a new level as He sends them out to teach and minister on His behalf. But He sends them out with very specific instructions – instructions that will serve to further prepare them for their future ministries.

The Twelve are sent out as representatives of Jesus (6:7)

- **Those who are sent** – Early in His ministry Jesus called men to follow Him, telling them that He would make them fishers of men (1:17). After gathering the twelve (who would be named apostles) Jesus appointed them as those who would be with Him and who would later be sent out (3:13-14).
- **Sent as representatives** – When Mark uses the word *sent* he is using a form of the word for *apostle*. What we learn here, as well as throughout the Gospel, is that the ministry of the Twelve is unique not because of who they are, but because of who sent them and the authority with which they were sent. They are commissioned for a special and specific mission.
- **Abiding principle** – While this passage is about a particular mission and a particular people who are sent, we know that all Christians have been given a commission from God. We are commissioned to go and proclaim the Gospel and to call people to repent and trust in Jesus.

The Twelve are sent out with the power and authority of Jesus (6:7)

- **Validated representatives** – Throughout His ministry Jesus has performed signs and wonders that serve to show who He is and to authenticate His authority. As Jesus sends out the Twelve He confers on them the power to perform these same signs. They are sent representing Him and accompanied with signs to authenticate them as His messengers.

- **Abiding principle** - While our ministry is different in many ways from that of the Apostles, we too are sent as His representatives and any power we have is power that He works through us (1 Corinthians 1:26-31).

The Twelve are sent out fully dependent on the provision of God (6:8-10)

- **Unique instructions** – As Jesus sends out the Twelve He sends them with instructions that are unique to this particular mission. They are sent with minimal supplies and without any means for acquiring supplies apart from the generosity and hospitality of others. In this Jesus is teaching the Twelve to live in whole and complete dependency on God (Luke 22:35).
- **James Edwards** - *True service of Jesus is characterized by dependence on Jesus, and dependence on Jesus is signified by going where Jesus sends despite material shortfalls and unanswered questions.*
- **Abiding principle** – The Bible has a lot to say about wise planning and we aren't all called to live with only the bare essentials. But we should trust fully in the ability of God to provide. God can be trusted and when God calls us to serve Him He always provides what we need.

The Twelve are sent out knowing they may be rejected (6:11)

- **Anticipating rejection** – Just like Jesus had been rejected in Nazareth, Jesus is preparing His disciples for the reality that there will be those who don't believe. Beyond that there will be some who are hostile toward both the message and the messengers (Matthew 10:14-33).
- **Shaking off dust** – This Jewish tradition of shaking off dust when leaving a pagan nation and returning to Israel is now employed as a symbol against those who refused to believe. Because of their unbelief they are marked as those who are outside of the true Israel.
- **Abiding principle** - As followers of Jesus we have been called to faithfully share the message of the Gospel, but we must know that it won't always be well received. At times people will not accept us or the message of Jesus that we proclaim and we must be prepared for this rejection.

The Response of the Twelve (6:12-13)

- **Obedient proclamation** – While there are times in the Gospels when the disciples waiver, this is not one of them. They respond to the sending of Jesus with obedience – proclaiming the message of the Gospel and performing signs that validate them as commissioned by Jesus.
- **Abiding principle** – As we consider the call to faithfully share the message of Jesus we must be obedient. We go, not in our own power, but in His; knowing that God will provide. While not all will believe we can trust that God is accomplishing His plan in the world. We should be thankful for the faithfulness of the Apostles and likewise strive to be faithful in our generation.