

## **Mark 6:7-13**

### **Sending the Twelve**

1

## **Introduction**

In this passage we see a shift in Jesus' ministry. Until now, He has been the one doing the preaching and ministering to the needs of the people. The disciples had watched Jesus, listened to His messages, and instructed by Jesus in private. Now it is time for them to take on the ministry to which they were called. Jesus' time is growing short so sending out the disciples will maximize the impact of Jesus' ministry. It also gives the disciples experience under the Master's tutelage for their role after His resurrection. In this passage we will see six aspects of ministry.

2

## Mark 6:7-13

And He called the twelve to *Himself*, and began to send them out two by two, and gave them power over unclean spirits. <sup>8</sup> He commanded them to take nothing for the journey except a staff—no bag, no bread, no copper in *their* money belts—<sup>9</sup> but to wear sandals, and not to put on two tunics. <sup>10</sup> Also He said to them, “In whatever place you enter a house, stay there till you depart from that place. <sup>11</sup> And whoever will not receive you nor hear you, when you depart from there, shake off the dust under your feet as a testimony against them. Assuredly, I say to you, it will be more tolerable for Sodom and Gomorrah in the day of judgment than for that city!” <sup>12</sup> So they went out and preached that *people* should repent. <sup>13</sup> And they cast out many demons, and anointed with oil many who were sick, and healed *them*.

3

## Proclaim Salvation

Mark 6:7a

And He called the twelve to *Himself*, and began to send them out two by two.

To maximize the ministry in the region, as well as to train His disciples for their future responsibilities, Jesus summoned the twelve and began to send them out in pairs. He sent them, as His delegates, to take the message of the gospel to other places throughout the region of Galilee. That He “**began to send them out**” suggests that Jesus did not send them all at once but staggered their send-off over a brief period of time. The Lord sent them out in pairs: to provide mutual support and protection, to strengthen the impact of their individual capabilities, and to ensure that their message was confirmed by two witnesses.

4

## Proclaim Salvation

Mark 6:7a

And He called the twelve to *Himself*, and began to send them out two *by* two.

Luke 9:2 states, “**He sent them to preach the kingdom of God and to heal the sick.**”

The word “**preach**” refers to the authoritative, public pronouncement of vital information by a herald or forerunner. Luke states that they were to “**preach the kingdom of God.**” Mark adds in verse 12 that they “**preached that people should repent.**”

Faith and repentance go together. Jesus did not die so we can remain in our sin. He died to pay the penalty of sin and to set us free.

5

## Show Compassion

Mark 6:7b

and gave them power over unclean spirits.

As the apostles went out to preach, the Lord Jesus “**gave them power over unclean spirits.**” This delegated supernatural authority authenticated them as true messengers who were empowered by God. Not only did they have power “**over all demons**” (Luke 9:1), but they were also given **authority to heal the sick and raise the dead** (Matthew 10:8). That they could perform the same type of miracles that Jesus did proved that He had sent them.

6

## Show Compassion

Mark 6:7b

and gave them power over unclean spirits.

In contrast to the calloused legalism of the Jewish religious leaders (cf. Matt. 23:4), Jesus was continually sympathetic, tender, and compassionate (cf. Matt. 11:28–30). Every time He healed a person, or cast out an unclean spirit, Jesus showed God's compassion to those living broken in a broken world. The Twelve were to follow His example.

7

## Live Dependently

Mark 6:8-9

He commanded them to take nothing for the journey except a staff—no bag, no bread, no copper in *their* money belts—<sup>9</sup>but to wear sandals, and not to put on two tunics.

The heart of Jesus' command to His disciples was that they were not to prepare for their journey. Though this seems strange, it forced these disciples to be entirely dependent on the Lord to provide. These restrictions were a **temporary** event to teach the Twelve the importance of trusting in God's faithfulness and seeing Him provide. As they preached the message of the kingdom, both in this situation and in the future as the Gospel was taken to the world, they could confidently depend on God to supply their needs.

8

## Be Content

Mark 6:10

Also He said to them, "In whatever place you enter a house, stay there till you depart from that place."

Because inns were often dangerous, travelers generally stayed in people's homes as they journeyed from one town to the next. But Jesus added an important command in that regard: wherever they went, once they decided to enter a house for the purpose of lodging, they were to stay there until they left town. Given their power to heal diseases and cast out demons, they likely received invitations to upgrade their comfort by changing homes. But they were not to move from house to house. After they accepted one initial invitation, they were to decline all others.

9

## Be Content

Mark 6:10

Also He said to them, "In whatever place you enter a house, stay there till you depart from that place."

The lesson for the Twelve was that they were to possess contentment. Once they settled in someone's house, they were not to seek nicer accommodations. In contrast to the false teachers, the disciples were not to put a price on their ministry. They had been given extraordinary power, but they were not to exploit it for personal gain.

10

## Exercise Discernment

Mark 6:11

“And whoever will not receive you nor hear you, when you depart from there, shake off the dust under your feet as a testimony against them. Assuredly, I say to you, it will be more tolerable for Sodom and Gomorrah in the day of judgment than for that city!”

Jesus explained how they should respond to those who would reject them. If any town would not receive or listen to their message, they were to **“depart from there, shake off the dust under your feet as a testimony against them.”** Shaking the dust off one’s feet was a traditional Jewish way of expressing distain toward Gentiles. When people traveled outside of Israel, upon returning to Jewish soil they would shake the dust off their sandals as an act symbolizing that they were leaving the uncleanness and contamination of Gentile lands behind them. What the Jews understood as a symbolic protest against gentiles, Jesus applied to Jews who rejected the gospel. If the people to whom they ministered refused to receive their message, even after it was authenticated by miraculous signs, the apostles were to treat them as they did Gentiles.

11

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The Disciples would have to exercise discernment on their journey. They would face the same reactions from the people as Jesus experienced. As they came into a city preaching and performing miracles, some would respond favorably. The longer they stayed, the greater the opposition. They would need discernment to balance between reaching those who were willing to hear the Gospel against the growing resentment by those who rejected. Jesus warns that rejecting God’s message that was verified by miracles would result in severe judgment. Sodom and Gomorrah were wicked cities destroyed by God in Abraham’s day. In the day of judgment, the punishment for those who heard and rejected the message of the Gospel authenticated by God would be worse than these cities.

12

## Obedience

Mark 6:12-13

So they went out and preached that *people* should repent. <sup>13</sup> And they cast out many demons, and anointed with oil many who were sick, and healed *them*.

The Disciples responded in obedience, having been sent out by Jesus. They proclaimed the message they had been commanded to proclaim, “**they went out and preached that people should repent.**” And they performed the deeds they were instructed to perform, “**they cast out many demons, and anointed with oil many who were sick, and healed them.**” In both their words and their actions, they did exactly what Jesus told them to do. In Matthew’s account (Matthew 10:16-25), Jesus warned them that they would face persecution. Yet these disciples did not hesitate in their obedience.

I think it is interesting to note that Judas who would later betray Jesus was part of this group preaching and performing miracles.

13

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Mark states that the apostles were anointing people with oil and healing them. Olive oil was used for medicinal purposes but that was not needed here. In the Old Testament, olive oil was used to symbolize God’s presence and authority. The apostles may have anointed the sick with oil to symbolize that their authority came from God and not from themselves.

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## So What ...

Like these disciples, we also are sent out into the world. Though we do not have the ability to miraculously heal, we are to share the Gospel, and we can certainly pray for and encourage those who are sick. We must learn to be content with what God has provided, but also to have the ability to show compassion to those in need. We must be dependent upon God's provision and His work in our lives and the lives of others. Most importantly we must endeavor to be obedient to His Word.

Will you choose a person in your list of friends and pray that God will work in their lives and for the opportunity to share the Gospel with them.