

**Message #18****Mark 6:7-13**

This is a key moment in the public life and ministry of Jesus Christ. It is the moment that He expands His outreach ministry through His disciples. We may recall that earlier Jesus had specifically called these twelve and appointed these twelve to be with Him so they could go out to preach (Mark 3:13-19). These twelve were His choices. They certainly were not the intellectuals of the world, but they were His choices and at this point He sends them out to “replicate” His Galilean ministry.

**Now we cannot help but notice that this event of sending out His apostles (6:7) and them reporting back to Jesus (6:30) is sandwiched in between by the murder of John the Baptist (6:14-29).** So in between the sending out of these Apostles (6:7) and the return of these apostles back to Jesus (6:30), there is an intercalation of the story concerning John the Baptist.

What is the point of this? There are three possibilities for this. 1) It would show that these were dangerous times to be a disciple of Jesus Christ; 2) It would show that God’s work goes on with handpicked, chosen men of God, even when other key men die; 3) It would show that if one does God’s will, it will not always end in a happy way in this world.

But God has His servants at all times who will always accomplish His purposes. **The primary purpose of Jesus Christ was to preach God’s Word.** That is exactly what He wanted these Apostles to do (6:12).

**THE TWELVE APOSTLES ARE SENT OUT ON THEIR OWN BY JESUS CHRIST TO PROCLAIM THAT HE IS THE GOD/KING/MESSIAH/SAVIOR, AND TO PROCLAIM THAT PEOPLE NEED TO REPENT AND BELIEVE IN HIM AND IN ORDER TO VALIDATE THEIR MESSAGE, JESUS CHRIST GAVE THE APOSTLES SPECIFIC MIRACULOUS POWER.**

Now Jesus had been traveling around the villages of Galilee preaching and teaching. These handpicked twelve had been with him for many months. They had been listening and learning and watching and now they would get their first opportunity to go out and preach themselves. They had seen a lot, they had experienced a lot. They had seen huge crowds gather to listen to Him teach. They had seen Jesus do spectacular miracles. They had seen Him rejected. They were with Him when people asked Him to leave and they had just come from His own hometown, Nazareth, where He was not wanted. Now it would be their turn. It would be their turn to go out on the front lines for Jesus Christ.

Now there are six narrative realities revealed here:

**NARRATIVE REALITY #1 – Jesus summoned the twelve. 6:7a**

Now the verb “summon” means He called these twelve men to Himself. This is His doing, this is His calling. The object of the calling is “the twelve.” The twelve refers to the twelve apostles that Mark named in Mark 3:16-29. The number is twelve—no more and no less.

This is a specific calling and assignment to them, not to us. We will make some applications of this, but this is an assignment given to the twelve.

These twelve men were to be Christ’s official ambassadors, chosen and sent by Him when He was physically here on earth. It is pure ignorance and arrogance to assume this is about us.

When He called these men to go out they were not polished ministerial professionals. In fact, from what we have seen about them to this point, they could not have thought they were ready for this. This must have been a somewhat scary moment for these twelve:

- 1) Their training is minimal—only been with Christ about a year
- 2) Their faith is unstable—they still struggled with their own faith about who Christ was.
- 3) Their knowledge is limited—at times they had no idea what Jesus is doing or even talking about.

But what this teaches us all is that you do not have to be perfect and have it all together to minister for Jesus Christ. You do not have to have it all figured out to tell others of their need to believe in Christ and study God’s Word.

**NARRATIVE REALITY #2 – Jesus began to send them out in pairs. 6:7b**

Two points are worth noting here: **First**, the verb “began” is aorist middle, which means in and of Himself this was the beginning point of Him allowing the twelve to go out. This is their inaugural and preliminary assignment. **Second**, to start the process, He sent them two-by-two.

Now the two-by-two method would be for encouragement, fellowship, help, support, protection, and for validation. Two typically are used for validation purposes, things may be verified through the mouth of two or three witnesses. **These disciples would face opposition and trials and in difficult times two are better than one.**

Now this pattern of traveling in pairs shows up often with the apostles in the book of Acts. There is Peter and John; Paul and Barnabas; Paul and Silas and Mark and Barnabas (Acts 15:39). However, they did not always travel in pairs.

There were times when an apostle would be alone in his work. Paul ministered a while in Athens alone (Acts 17:14-16) and John obviously spent much time alone while on the island of Patmos, writing Revelation.

But generally speaking, two are better than one.

**NARRATIVE REALITY #3 – Jesus gave the twelve authority over unclean spirits. 6:7c**

The miracles that Jesus did were designed to show the world that He was the God/Savior/Messiah/King (John 15:24). When Jesus was here on earth, He did miracles and also permitted the Apostles to do miracles to establish this fact.

Now when He sent these disciples out, He specifically gave the twelve authority over the unclean spirits. Jesus Christ gave these twelve authority over the demonic world. They do not have authority over God's holy angels, but He did give them authority over all demons, who are all unclean spirits.

Now the word "authority" is one that means he gave them ruling power, authoritative power over demons (G. Abbott-Smith, *Greek Lexicon*, pp. 161-162). **This clearly shows that Jesus is God and that demons are subject to His sovereignty. Demons can only do what God permits them to do.**

By Christ giving His disciples this power, they would be able to spot those who were demon-possessed and they would be able to cast out demons and those demons would be forced to obey them, thus validating their message about Jesus Christ. **He only gave this power and authority to these twelve here. He did not give it to us.**

As I have said many times, the truth is we cannot actually spot those who are demon-possessed today. We may guess that they are or assume they are, but we don't know for sure. Secondly, we are not apostles and we do not have authority to cast out demons.

What we have the authority to do is preach the Word. When Paul was about to die, he told Timothy just that. His charge to him was to preach the Word (II Tim. 4:1-2). As we preach the Word of God, God will use His Word to save people and when people are saved, the demon leaves.

Our job is to communicate the need to believe on Jesus Christ and receive Him and once they do that Satan's forces will get out of the property.

**NARRATIVE REALITY #4 – Jesus instructed the twelve what they could and could not physically take. 6:8-9**

That verb "instructed" is most interesting. It is a strong Greek word that means to give an order or command (*Ibid.*, pp. 337-338). The list of things here is not some suggested travel guide list, Jesus is commanding these things. This is what you will take and will not take.

Now when you are getting ready to travel and go on some trip, you need to form a plan as to what clothing and gear you will take. Collectively, these apostles would travel quite a few miles and be gone for a while so Jesus gives them a list of things to take and not to take.

**Now what seems odd about this list is that of the seven items that are mentioned, five of them have to do with what not to take.** In other words, the list is more about what not to take on the trip rather than what to take on the trip. One obvious question is why is this? **The answer is because at the outset of their ministry, Jesus wants His disciples to understand that ministry is not about self-sufficiency; it is about God-dependency. He wants His disciples to learn that when you are doing a work of God, you can always depend on God to meet your needs.**

**List Item #1 - Take nothing for your journey. 6:8a**

The word “nothing” is strong in Greek and it emphasizes that you go out and minister and don’t take anything with you. Christ demands these disciples travel very light.

They were not going to travel with a bunch of suitcases filled with all kinds of personal items. What Jesus wanted them to do was to go out, trusting God to supply needs and depend on the hospitality of people. He did not want them bogged down by all the worldly trappings. He did not want them bogged down by stuff and He did not want them begging for stuff.

This is still good advice for ministers. When you go someplace and the people want you and care for you, hunker down and minister there. If not, shake the dust off your feet and move on.

**List Item #2 - You may take a staff. 6:8b**

The word “staff” (rabdon) refers to a walking stick or staff that was used for a variety of things, including protection (*Ibid.*, p. 396). Now this statement to take a staff has caused a problem with interpreters because both Matthew and Luke say don’t take a staff (Matt. 10:10; Luke 9:3). The solution is found in the grammar of Matthew.

In Matthew’s list of things he specifically starts off the discussion by saying, “do not acquire” (Matt. 10:9) and the list that follows is a list of things they are not to acquire. In other words, they were not to go out and buy a bunch of new things for this trip. Apparently they could take the staff they had with them but could not go out and acquire a new extra staff.

**Jesus Christ is giving His own disciples the right to bear arms.** Actually, just before He ascends to heaven, He will tell them to also buy a sword (Luke 22:36). The founding Fathers of this country followed His pattern.

George Washington said, “A free people ought not only to be armed, but disciplined...” (*Address to Congress*, January 8, 1790).

Thomas Jefferson said, “No free man shall ever be debarred the use of arms” (*Virginia Constitution*, Draft 1, 1776).

Thomas Jefferson also said, “The laws that forbid the carrying of arms...disarm only those who are neither inclined nor determined to commit crimes...Such laws make things worse for the assaulted and better for the assailants; they serve rather to encourage than to prevent homicides, for an unarmed man may be attacked with greater confidence than an armed man” (*Commonplace Book*, 1774-1776).

Jesus Christ would not let His disciples take certain things with them as they went out, but one thing He did let them take was a staff for protection.

**List Item #3** - You may not take bread. **6:8c**

They were not to carry their own food supply. They would learn that God would meet their daily needs.

**List Item #4** - You may not take a bag. **6:8d**

They were not to take a traveler’s bag with things they might need. This was a bag you would typically sling over your shoulder.

**List Item #5** - You may not take money in a belt. **6:8e**

The word for money refers to various metals that were used for money—copper, brass or bronze. People who would travel would wear a belt with a pocket and they would carry their money in it. Jesus is telling His disciples not to do that. They would not need to take stock piles of money with them because they would again learn that God would care for them through various people in various places.

Now what I find interesting among those who do not understand dispensationalism is that many will use Mark 16:15—“go into all the world and preach the gospel” as a basis for doing deputation work so that they could go to some mission field.

Well, if a missionary is going to use the book of Mark as their spring board, then they should go without any support or any deputation designed to generate support because the context of Mark 16:15 is “the eleven” (Mark 16:14) and Jesus told them to not take a money belt with them.

**List Item #6** - You may wear sandals. **6:9a**

Again critics point out Matthew says no sandals (Matt. 10:10), but Mark says one may wear sandals. Again the grammar of Matthew shows the point, they were not to go out and purchase another pair of sandals for the trip. They were to wear what they had. This was not going to be some long extended road trip that would wear out their sandals, so they only needed one pair.

**List Item #7 - You may not wear two tunics. 6:9b**

When most people are getting ready to travel, they go out shopping for new clothes. Jesus said you don't need new clothes, what you have now is just fine. Think about this for a moment. If your clothes and your shoes are good enough to wear in the presence of Jesus Christ, then they certainly are good enough to wear in the presence of other sinful humans.

A tunic was a long garment, like a shirt, that was worn next to the skin. They could wear one but they did not need a surplus of two. They did not need to take a bunch of extra clothes.

**NARRATIVE REALITY #5 – Jesus instructed them as to where to stay and where not to stay.  
6:10-11**

In the Middle East, hospitality was critical. Now when Jesus sent His twelve out, He anticipated that there would be two different responses to their ministry. Some would welcome them and some would not.

What He wanted His disciples to do was to go to a place in His behalf and when someone invited them into their home to stay, they were to stay there until they decided it was time to leave. Now suppose you went into a village and someone loved you and invited you in and then later someone came with a better offer and bigger house. Jesus did not want His men leaving the first house because that would shame the original host.

**The key to staying in a place was whether or not the people would be willing to listen to them (6:11).** So if they went into some village and someone wanted to hear them and listen to them talk about Jesus Christ and invited the two to stay in their home, they were to stay there until they determined it was time to move on. They were not to move to another home if they got a better offer or better accommodations.

Matthew added that a worker was worthy of his hire and therefore those who saw the value of the Word of God and took good care of the apostles were worthy of their ministry (Matt. 10:10-13).

If they went someplace and no one wanted to listen to them or take them in, they were to shake the dust off their feet and go someplace else.

Any place that does not see the value of Jesus Christ, the Word of God and the Gospel of grace is not a place worthy of having a minister or ministry.

**NARRATIVE REALITY #6 – The twelve went out and ministered exactly as Christ instructed.  
6:12-13**

Their ministry involved three main apostolic actions. This was their ministry, not our ministry. Do not miss this point. This is the ministry of the twelve, not the ministry of the church or a pastor:

**Apostolic Action #1** - They went out and preached repentance. **6:12**

The repentance message they preached was that people needed to change their thinking about their sin, the Kingdom and Jesus Christ because the Kingdom was at hand. They needed to change their minds and believe that Jesus Christ was the God/Savior/Messiah/King who could establish the Kingdom on earth.

We do not go out and preach this message. What we preach today is believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and you will be saved. They went out and preached repent for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand. They proclaimed the truth that the King was on earth and He could give them the Kingdom if they would admit they did not have the righteousness necessary to get into the Kingdom.

Now we do preach a repentance message. All people need to change their thinking about what they think will take them to heaven. It is faith alone in Christ alone and any who believe otherwise need to change their minds about relying on themselves, their works, or their religion to save them.

**Apostolic Action #2** - They went out and cast out many demons from many people. **6:13a**

These Apostles had the supernatural ability to spot those who were demon-possessed and cast them out.

**Apostolic Action #3** - They went out and healed many sick people. **6:13b**

Now it has been rightly observed that oil in the Bible is often used in a medicinal context (Luke 10:34; James 5:14). In other words, it is important to pray that people be healed but it is also important that people see doctors and heed their medical advice and treatment.

However, the anointing with oil here was in direct connection to the miraculous healing. Oil was used for sacred things in the O.T. economy and one of those things was it was a sign of royalty. When a king was present, that king was anointed with oil (I Sam. 10:1; 16:13).

What this anointing shows is that these disciples are healing the sick with the power of the King, Jesus Christ. This anointing showed this healing was coming directly from the King of Kings who had sent these disciples out to them.

Now here is what these apostles preached about Jesus Christ—Jesus Christ is the God/Savior/Messiah/King. Do you believe that? Do you believe that Jesus Christ is the only One who can save you from your sins?