

The main concern of the previous passages carries over into our passage for tonight. Do we see Jesus for who he really is?

Previously, we looked at the mistake of viewing Jesus incorrectly, done by one of the religious rulers named Jairus, compared to the correct way to view Jesus, done by an unnamed woman with a medical problem of bleeding. Jesus healed the woman.

While Jesus was doing that, the daughter of Jairus died.

Jesus raised to life again the daughter of Jairus.

Mark ended chapter five with the people being overcome with amazement at the power of Jesus to raise the dead.

Mark pushes us to advance beyond amazement.

We must place our faith in Jesus.

Not just a conversion. Placing our faith in Jesus every day for everything.

Since we are on a mission for Jesus, we share in what He is doing.

1. We represent Jesus to opponents and to supporters. (v.6b-7)

Verse 6b, “*And [Jesus] went about among the villages teaching.*”

Notice that Jesus was not distracted. He would not allow Himself to be distracted. Jesus was on a mission, and He calls others to join Him in His mission.

Verse 7, “*And [Jesus] called the twelve and began to send them out two by two, and gave them authority over the unclean spirits.*”

When did Jesus appoint the 12 apostles? It was right after a tour of teaching among the villages in Galilee. As soon as Jesus appointed the 12 apostles, Jesus sent the 12 apostles on a mission for Jesus.

These 12 men were to be Christ’s official ambassadors. They were to be clothed with authority to represent Christ, who sent them.

The number 12 shows that these men are the central nucleus of the new Israel. You remember that the Old Testament Israel was represented by 12 patriarchs. The ongoing imprint of the twelve tribes is confirmed when we go to the last book of the Bible, and we read vision of the new heavens and the new earth from Revelation 21:12, “[*The New Jerusalem*] had a great, high wall, with twelve

gates, and at the gates twelve angels, and on the gates the names of the twelve tribes of the sons of Israel were inscribed..." If you need further confirmation that the mind of God has the 12 tribes linked to the 12 apostles, let me read Revelation 21:14, "*And the wall of the city had twelve foundations, and on them were the twelve names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb.*"

There is another pattern we can notice. Two by two. Jesus "*sent them out two by two.*" Later, the two Peter and John give united testimony. The two Barnabas and Saul went out on their missionary journey. The two Paul and Silas were working together. Later, the two were Barnabas and Mark.

What about the opposition of the unclean spirits? Remember from our study of the first five chapters of Mark, that Jesus continued to have opposition. So, it is not a surprise to us to find that the men sent out by Jesus have opposition. How would Jesus handle that? The answer is given here in verse 7. Jesus imparted to the Twelve Apostles the right and power to expel demons from the hearts and lives of people. Support for this is seen down in verse 13, "*...they cast out many demons...*"

Why would the demons leave people? Because the Apostles told them to. But that is not the full reason. It was because the power of Jesus stood behind the command of the Apostles. The Apostles represented Jesus to the demons. The Apostles represented Jesus to the opponents.

2. We rely on Jesus as we do His work unhindered. (v.8-11)

Verses 8-9, "*[Jesus] charged them to take nothing for their journey except a staff – no bread, no bag, no money in their belts – but to wear sandals and not put on two tunics.*"

Only what is absolutely necessary must be taken on the trip. Why? To live out the truth that God will provide. To train them daily to rely on Jesus, and we do His work. We cannot rely on Jesus plus our own supply line. It is not Jesus plus my tools. Not Jesus plus my people. Not Jesus plus my own money.

Listen to what Jesus will say in just two more chapters, as Mark presents it. Let me set the scene. Previously Jesus had fed 5,000 people. Just recently, Jesus had just fed 4,000 people. Then Jesus got into a boat and the disciples with him.

But the disciples had forgotten to bring bread; the disciples began to discuss the fact that they had no bread. Listen to the statement of Jesus from Mark 8:19-21, where Jesus asked the breadless apostles to not be distracted and to rely on Him.

“When I broke the five loaves for the five thousand, how many baskets full of broken pieces did you take up?” They said to Him, ‘Twelve.’ And the seven (loaves) for the four thousand, how many baskets full of broken pieces did you take up?” And they said to Him, “Seven” And He said to them, “Do you not yet understand?”

What should they understand? That they can rely on Jesus to provide for them, when they do the work of the Lord. That the absence of some supplies is not a reason to be distracted or hindered in the work of the Lord. The needed supplies will be furnished.

No bag. A traveler's bag. It would be a backpack for us. Some have tried to travel across Europe with just a backpack. But how important that backpack becomes! But when on a mission for Jesus, we don't even have the bag.

No money in their belts were literally money belts or wallets. No money. Don't we always carry a credit card and even some cash, just in case?

Wear sandals. Flat soled footwear, sometimes made of leather, with straps to keep it from falling off your foot. The idea is not to have an extra pair of sandals. Wear the sandals that you bring and that is it. Put them on your feet, and get moving.

Not put on two tunics. The first tunic was a sort of one-piece, whole-body long underwear worn closest to your skin. Think of the old TV show Grizzly Adams, and how the characters sometimes have whole body suits of cloth under their clothes. That was like the first tunic. The second tunic was the regular clothes. So, when the Apostles were told not to take two tunics, we assume it was only to wear their regular exterior clothing, and not to have the undershirt type of tunic. It was a way of saying that they were not supposed to get comfortable. Not to be stopping to do laundry on their clothing, not to work at pleasantries and creature comforts. Stay focused on the mission.

What about the staff? No to the bread, no to a bag, no to any money, but Yes to bringing along a staff. What is that all about? It is a traveler's staff. It is a walking stick that supports you in your traveling. It is a relief to put some of your

weight on the stick as you go, and to keep you from falling. You are focused on continuous movement. You are either on the road or in the office, not both. So, you could go to work Monday, and the boss could say, you are not needing a copy machine this week, but you do need your car keys. It means you are on the road this week! In the ancient world, to have the staff in your hand means you are on the move. Keep on moving. When you are on a mission for Jesus, you don't settle down anywhere. You focus on traveling, and focus on your mission. No second walking stick. Just one staff, and let's keep moving.

Verse 10, “*And [Jesus] said to them, ‘Whenever you enter a house, stay there until you depart from there.’*”

Those who heard the Apostles preach and teach were supposed to offer hospitality and lodging to the Apostles. The first home to offer is the home that the Apostles are to gladly receive. The Apostles must not hold out for a better offer. And what is specifically taught in verse 10, is that the Apostles must not switch to a better offer, part-way through a stay in that area. Why? That would be offensive. The fact that the Apostles have come into town for one reason and only one reason, has to remain as the top decisive factor – that the Apostles are offering the gospel to the town.

When the Apostles have been sent by Jesus to become itinerant missionaries, they were expected to behave exactly as Jesus instructed. Even down to the lodging at night, and whether or not to switch lodging within the multiple night stay in one town, is something that Jesus instructed them what to do. Jesus was instructing based on what is best for the gospel, not on what is best for the missionary. I love the phrase the way the OPC Committee on Foreign Missions summarizes the principle here - we don't do missions for the missionary. In other words, the primary thing is not the comfort and care of the missionary, but the success of the mission. Every missionary who is truly called by Jesus would say amen to that.

Verse 11, “*And if any place will not receive you and they will not listen to you, when you leave, shake off the dust that is on your feet as a testimony against them.’*”

The Jews had a custom that whenever they would travel through heathen lands, and then finally return home, they would shake the dust off of their sandals, before re-entering the Holy Land.

Jesus took that same principle and expanded it. Anyplace anywhere that refuses to accept the holy gospel, is a place that is to be considered a heathen area, whether it be a house, a village or a city. Unbelief in those places was to be treated in the same way – to shake the dust off of their feet. It was a symbolic action, in obedience to Christ, that served as a public declaration of God’s displeasure to any place that refused the gospel of Christ, and the message of grace and salvation.

The gesture addressed to them is a testimony against them with a clear invitation to repent. The Apostles who spread the good news were God’s ambassadors. They bring God’s Word. By rejecting the Apostles of Christ, the wicked are rejecting Christ Himself.

3. We focus on Jesus’ message to repent and live for Him. (v.12-13)

Verse 12, “*So [the Apostles] went out and proclaimed that people should repent. And [the Apostles] cast out many demons and anointed with oil many who were sick and healed them.*”

The Twelve Apostles, sent out by Jesus, went out and preached. They preached what Jesus told them to preach. This is to be on a mission for Jesus.

We go back to Mark 1:14-15 to find the first words of Jesus when Jesus Himself went out as a traveling missionary, “*...Jesus came into Galilee, proclaiming the gospel of God, and saying, ‘The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe the gospel.’*”

Jesus preached for the crowds to repent. We are not surprised that the messengers sent by Jesus would be instructed to preach the same thing – that the crowds need to repent.

In the same way, Paul said to Timothy to stay focused on the message of Jesus. Listen to 2 Timothy 4:2, “*Preach the Word; be ready in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, and exhort...*” Basically, Timothy was to do the same

thing that the Twelve Apostles were called to do – to call on people to repent, to turn from their sins to Jesus, and to live for Jesus.

This is what all missionaries do. Preach repentance!

This is what all Biblical churches do. Preach repentance.

Verse 13 shows that not just a few but many demons were cast out. The apostles were very active in casting out demons. In addition to demons, many sick people were anointed with oil and healed. The apostles were very productive in the ministry of healing.

The oil was simply a symbol of the power of God. The apostles were communicating that the people need to look to God for healing, not to the Apostles. Similarly, the people need to look to God for salvation, not to the Apostles. The healing was not by the oil, but rather by God's power.

Concluding Application:

What are we doing as a church to support the mission of Jesus in the best possible way with the resources we have. We need to regain our sense of urgency and being on a mission. Now is the time that our country needs strong churches that are focused on the kingdom mission.

What are you personally doing to support the mission of Jesus?

Not all aspects of the Apostles work in this passage applies to us, and not all aspects of the work of ministers, missionaries, elders, and deacons applies to all of us. However, we all share in what Jesus is doing. What is Jesus doing? How are you involved?

Matthew 25:39-40, the people ask, “*...when did we see You sick or in prison and visit you? And the King will answer them, ‘Truly, I say to you, as you did it to one of the least of these My brothers, you did it to Me.’*” How people react to us is how they react to Jesus. We truly represent King Jesus to the watching world! That begs us to be involved in the advance of the cause!

Let's not be distracted with the details. We would rather have ministers who focus on the gospel and forget some details, than ministers who focus on details and forget the central message of the gospel.

The gospel is that Jesus died and rose again to bring us into His Kingdom. He is our King, and we are all His followers. What is true about the Apostles is true about the Church as a whole. We the church are built on the foundation of the Apostles. We are all followers of Christ. We are all, in a sense, on a mission for Jesus. We are all sending missionaries, and some of us are the missionaries who go. But we all have the same task of testifying for Jesus.

No amount of hearing teaching is enough. We must put ourselves in a place of dependence on Christ, and personally contribute to the advance of His Kingdom. The real test comes when I myself am able to speak a word of witness, when I am dependent on there being a power to sustain me.

How are we equipping ourselves to deal with personal rejection for Jesus? As we identify with Christ, we become his representatives. We represent the King!

The mission of the 12 Apostles brackets the story of the beheading of John the Baptist, in Mark 6:14-29. After that, in verse 30, the apostles return to Jesus to rest, before ministering together with Jesus again. What do we learn from the beheading of John being an extreme form of rejection? We all work to advance the kingdom in the midst of rejection and even the death of God's servants? WE are a team. We go as a team. We send as a team. But being part of the mission of Jesus may result in our death.

I am not just being dramatic or morbid. This was the end for John the Baptist. It was the end for Jesus. It was the end for these Twelve Apostles. Many missionaries around the world are being martyred. It may be what God is calling us to. Jesus said that the world hates Him, and that if the world hates us, it is because the world hates our Jesus.

Jesus Himself was rejected in Nazareth. But that did not stop Him. The heart of Jesus was set on obeying His Father, wherever that led Him.

Paul wrote in 2 Corinthians 5:20, that "*we are ambassadors for Christ, God making His appeal through us...*"

SI - During the reign of Oliver Cromwell in England in the 1600s, there was a shortage of currency in the British Empire. Representatives carefully searched the nation in hopes of finding silver to meet the emergency. After one month, the committee returned with its report. "We have searched the Empire in vain seeking to find silver. To our dismay, we found none anywhere except in the cathedrals where the statues of the saints are made of choice silver." To this, Oliver Cromwell eloquently answered, "Let's melt down the saints and put them into circulation." That is a perfect concept for what Christians need to do. Be put into more contact with unbelievers out in the world, to have an influence on them.

Some practical applications:

- 1) Develop some non-Christian friends. Cultivate those friendships. Pray for them, and plan to present the gospel to them. Keep at it. Work toward it. You don't need more training. The disciples did not understand the teaching of Jesus very well, they did not trust His power to protect them very well, and they were not sensitive to the perceptions of Jesus. But Jesus sent them out. You are ready. Start making movements in the direction of the non-Christians that God has placed around you.
- 2) Always be involved in sending people out and in going yourself. Look for it. Who is going? Who is sending? Find ways to support those being sent out. Consider being sent.
- 3) Put yourself into an uncomfortable position where you need to depend on Jesus to get through it. True service to King Jesus is characterized by depending on Jesus. Trust the one who sends you to go. This means sharing life with the people of God. We become transparent and show our needs. We also offer to fill the needs of others. It is a two-way street. We give and receive. Both are expected by our Lord. True world-changing followership of Jesus is not comfortable.