

Mark 6: 7-13; “The Twelve Sent Out”, Sermon # 32 in the series – “Astonished at His Teaching”, Delivered by Pastor Paul Rendall on August 23rd, 2015, in the Morning Worship Service.

This sending out of the 12 Apostles by our Lord is developed much more extensively in Matthew’s gospel than it is here. It is my belief that Mark’s gospel is the original source document and Matthew and Luke built upon it by additional insights so that the truth would be confirmed by two witnesses. I cannot conclusively prove this, and so it is only an opinion. It is also possible that Matthew’s gospel was the source gospel and Mark’s an abridgement of it. The writing of the Scripture by each of these men took place under the leading and guiding and superintendence of the Holy Spirit. With revelation supplied directly by the Holy Spirit in an infallible way, it appears to me that one of them built upon and made additions to the material of the other. They wrote down the things that they knew God would want written down; things which would be valuable and necessary, for all those reading, to have a better understanding of what took place in the ministry of Jesus, so that people would believe in Him. How thankful we all ought to be to realize that God knew just how to bring the inspired and infallible truth of the New Testament together so that each of the gospels has a distinct and individual place in the canon of Scripture. They do not contradict each other. They simply add to each other and complement one another.

But just because Mark’s gospel is the shortest, is no reason to think that he does not have unique insights all his own as he writes. We have seen this in some of the passages that we have studied already. Sometimes Mark’s description of the events is even more detailed than Luke’s and Matthew’s; sometimes it is not. In this particular passage, Matthew has amplified upon Mark considerably. So this morning I will attempt to supplement what is said here in Mark, with the descriptions and words of Matthew. Luke’s gospel is even shorter than Mark’s on the sending out of the twelve. I think that it probably happened this way. When Luke looked at what Matthew had added to Mark’s account, he, according to the Holy Spirit’s direction, did not think that anything further was needed to be said on this incident of the sending out of the twelve. To me, this is an indication that Matthew’s was the second gospel written, and then Luke’s the third, and then finally John’s gospel last.

As we begin our study it is interesting to note that at the time when Jesus faced the rejection of His ministry in His own home town, it did not discourage Him from continuing to do what His Father had sent Him into the world to do. He was the ultimate messenger sent from God. He would not let rejection in His home town deter Him from His mission. We find it said in verse 7 that “He went about the villages in a circuit teaching”. The city of Nazareth’s loss was the surrounding village’s gain. If the home town would not receive Him, then the surrounding villages might, Jesus reasoned. And so we find a valuable lesson given to us right away at the outset of our study. The Christian minister and those in his congregation who are zealous to spread the truth of the gospel and the word of God should never conclude that their mission and ministry is at an end simply because they are rejected in one particular locality, or even by some of the people of that community. The object of preaching and sharing the good news, is for us to be faithful; to continue to spread the Word, and then leave the results with God. It was God, who in regard to the early Church, was “adding to the church in Jerusalem daily, those who were being saved”. However, we see in this passage that there is also a time for the sent messenger to move on. It is when the gospel is not being received, and believed, and acted upon by those to whom it comes.

The gospel message and the preaching of the Word should not be allowed to stagnate in the minds of the people that it comes to. The minds of unbelieving people ought always to wonder

about themselves in relation to this great Savior of ours: “Can I be saved?” And, “Am I really a Christian?” They ought to see those who are Christians as people on a mission. Our mission is to reach people with the gospel of Christ, and even at times to bring it to people’s homes, as we shall see today. So this morning I want to attempt to show you the 3 ways that Jesus wanted the Apostles to represent Him to the nation of Israel, and in each one, make application to show how you and I should represent the Lord Jesus to the people around us. We shall see that in some ways we are sent in the very same way that they were; and in some ways we are not sent in the same way; and I hope that as we look at this together, it will become clear to your mind. The 3 ways that Jesus wanted the Apostles to represent Him to the nation of Israel were; that they were to represent Him in regard to His power, His purpose, and His preaching. I want you to consider how these represented Him to Israel and then we will make suitable applications to ourselves.

The 1st Way that the Apostles represented their Lord Jesus to the nation of Israel was with regard to His power. (Verse 7)

Verse 7 says, “And He called the twelve to Himself, and began to send them out two by two, and gave them power over unclean spirits.” And over in Matthew 10: 5 it reads this way: “These twelve Jesus sent out and commanded them, saying: ‘Do not go into the way of the Gentiles, and do not enter a city of the Samaritans.’ “But go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.” This particular outreach was the Lord Jesus reaching out through His Apostles to the lost. I would think that there were many in the nation of Israel, even though they had received the Oracles of God and attended the temple worship, and went to synagogue regularly; they did not understand that they were lost. A person can be religious and still be a very lost person. A person can be irreligious and it is more obvious that they are lost. A person is lost when he or she does not know where they are spiritually in relation to God. They have been created for God and they should be living for His glory, but they cannot seem to find their way back to Him. All of their life, really, they have been wandering into the many paths of worldliness. And they go farther and farther away from God in their selfish and sinful pursuits, and they are in danger of perishing eternally. Many of the people of Israel were like this. We are all like this before we believe in Christ. “All we like sheep have gone astray, we have turn every one to his own way.” (Isaiah 53: 6) Those who are spiritually lost will perish eternally if they do not find the way back. Jesus is the good shepherd who says, “I have come to seek and to save that which is lost.” (Luke 19: 10)

Jesus was not sent by His Father to preach to the world; that is, to the Gentiles, during the time of His earthly ministry. He was rather sent to minister first to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. In chapter 7, verse 26 of Mark we read that Jesus was asked by the Syro-Phoenician woman to come and cast the demon out of her daughter. But Jesus’ response to her was, “Let the children be filled first, for it is not good to take the children’s bread and throw it to the little dogs.” And in Matthew 15: 24, before He said this to her, it says that He said to His disciples, “I was not sent except to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.” So the Lord Jesus knew that it was His Father’s will, in His earthly ministry, to go only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel; that is, all those who were lost among them. His preaching would be effectual to all those among the Jews who would receive Him. There would be exceptions to that rule of preaching only to the Jews, during the time of Christ’s earthly ministry; like this Syro-Phoenician woman. And every exception would be as a result of the exercise of faith by a Gentile coming to Him directly for help or for salvation from sin. But the gospel, in the mind of God and Christ had an order in the way that it should go forth. First to the Jew, and then to the Gentile.

This is explained for us in the book of Romans chapter 15 verse 8, if you will turn with me there. “Now I say that Jesus Christ has become a servant to the circumcision for the truth of God, to confirm the promises made to the fathers...” The promises were made to Abraham,

Isaac, and Jacob, and later David as well; that One would come who would bring redemption to Israel. These promises were all fulfilled in our Lord Jesus Christ; in His coming to live the only perfectly righteous and holy life that had ever been lived, and to so serve God that He would lay down His life for the lost sheep of Israel who would believe in Him. By Christ's becoming a servant in this way, all the promises of salvation were perfectly fulfilled in Him, in accordance with God's eternal plans and purposes in Election. First, Christ must come through the Jewish nation and fulfill every purpose related to that nation, confirming the promises made specifically to them. Then the gospel of salvation would be preached by those converted among the nation of Israel, to the Gentiles. After the cross and Christ's resurrection, the keys of the kingdom would be given to the Apostles to open the door of faith to the Gentiles. Jesus was on a mission, sent by His Father. But now, as a part of God's eternal plans and purposes, our Lord also sent the Apostles on this mission. This was the first and preliminary mission, to His own people the Jews. Later, He would give them the Great Commission to go to all the nations. The lesson of all this is clear. Those who preach the gospel should pray and seek to know where Christ would send them. They must be willing to go when Christ sends them. And they should seek to know what kind of a mission it will be. Not all missions are alike. Not all ministries are alike. And not only should those called to preach seek to know these things, but all Christians should pray to represent Him fairly and righteously to our own family and relatives; and also to the community that we live in. If we are able to do that; then He may consider us faithful enough to represent Him in other places in the wider world. Let each person seek to know what they have been called to.

Since these men were sent to represent our Lord Jesus Christ; He knew that they had to be able to represent Him, in His power to heal. The only power that is mentioned to have been given to these Apostles, in Mark's gospel, was the power to cast out demons. But Matthew's gospel says in Chapter 10, verse 8, "Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out demons." "Freely you have received, freely give." So it is evident that they had a wider range of spiritual powers given to them than only the power over unclean spirits. The greatness of these miracles were intended to convey to the minds of the persons healed that there was no disease, mentally or physically, that was too difficult for the power of the Lord Jesus to heal. Indeed, He had the power over death itself. But they were also meant to convey the idea that there was no power at all greater than His, spiritually, either. No demons could remain in possession of the soul of any man when Jesus told them to leave. No leprosy could cling to the leper's skin once he was touched by the compassionate power of Christ. Even bringing a person back from the dead was not beyond the power and ability of Jesus. If these, the worst of diseases of men's minds and bodies were not too much for Jesus' disciples to heal; then could He not also be seen as the Son of God and the Savior of all sinners who came to Him by faith?

But what must have been just as amazing to those who saw these apostles do these mighty works, was the idea that the Lord Jesus could convey this kind of power over these diseases, to men who were just ordinary men. It was an actual transference and bestowal of power to others who did not inherently have that power in themselves. This kind of a transfer of power which the apostles had received required an explanation. And the explanation of that transfer of power, as well as the use of it in the healing of the sickness was this: "The kingdom of heaven was at hand." In other words, the Apostles were fit representatives of Christ to be sent to proclaim Christ's kingdom, because in the very things that they were doing to help others, they were a living sermon of what grace could do spiritually for anyone who believed and followed the Lord Jesus Christ. "The kingdom of heaven was at hand." The Apostles "had this treasure in earthen vessels" that the surpassing greatness (the excellence) of the power would be seen to be of Christ, and not of them. This also pertains to the way that Jesus said that the Apostles should go forth. He commanded them to take nothing for the journey except a staff – no bag, no bread,

no copper in their money belts – but to wear sandals, and not to put on two tunics. He wanted to convey the idea, through His apostles, to those whom they came to, that they would be coming in simplicity and sincerity to declare the kingdom of heaven was at hand. The power of Jesus was being set before them; the authority of Jesus as a king having a spiritual kingdom which all men must enter in order to know God and have eternal life was set before them. All the evidence of Jesus' power to heal, to save, and to rule over men spiritually would be seen in a nutshell form in His sending these twelve men out, two by two to the various cities of Israel.

The 2nd Way that the apostles were to represent the Lord Jesus was in conveying peace. (Verses 10 and 11)

“Also He said to them, ‘In whatever place you enter a house, stay there till you depart from that place.’ “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!” But these verses are given some further explanation in Matthew chapter 10, verse 11. It says there: “Now whatever city or town you enter, inquire who in it is worthy, and stay there till you go out.” “And when you go into a household, greet it.” “If the household is worthy, let your peace come upon it.” “But if it is not worthy, let your peace return to you.” The Lord Jesus is saying to us through this text here, that it was a great thing in that day for a representative of Christ to enter a house, bringing the message of salvation to them. It was a great indication of the blessing which would come to that house if they would open it up to become a base of operations for this short-term mission. The household was worthy of the blessing of the Lord's peace being bestowed upon that house if they received the messengers. If the messengers of the gospel were received, that household was worthy of this blessing, and indeed would receive many more. The lesson for ourselves is this: Not everyone is called to preach the gospel. A person who is called and sent by the Master, our Lord Jesus Christ, should be received and helped in relation to his work. They are messengers of peace. God is the God of peace, as it says in 1 Thessalonians 5: 22. And He draws near to the souls of men, seeking to bestow His peace upon those who are worthy.

Turn with me over to Romans chapter 10, and we will look at verses 1-10. “Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is that they may be saved.” “For I bear them witness that they have a zeal for God, but not according to knowledge.” “For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and seeking to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted to the righteousness of God.” “For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes.” “For Moses writes about the righteousness which is of the law, ‘The man who does those things shall live by them.’ “But the righteousness of faith speaks in this way, ‘Do not say in your heart, ‘Who will ascend into heaven?’ (that is, to bring Christ down from above) or, ‘Who will descend into the abyss?’ (that is, to bring Christ up from the dead) “But what does it say?” “The word is near you, in your mouth and in your heart” (that is, the word of faith which we preach): that if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved.” “For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.” “For the Scripture says, ‘Whoever believes on Him will not be put to shame.’ “For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek, for the same Lord over all is rich to all who call upon Him.” “For whoever calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved.”

Here Paul is speaking about his great desire for the conversion of his own countrymen, the Jews. He tells us that he prays for them that they might be saved. And in verses 2-4 he explains that they are ignorant of the righteousness of God. Instead of submitting to the righteousness of God, they were seeking to establish their own righteousness. But Christ is the end of the law for righteousness for everyone who believes. In verses 5-8 Paul contrasts the righteousness of the law with the righteousness of faith and declares that all a person needs to do to receive the

righteousness of God is to believe in the gospel of Christ. Verse 9 – “That if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus, and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved.” “For with the heart man believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.” “For the Scripture says, ‘Whoever believes on Him will not be put to shame.’ “For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek, for the same Lord over all is rich to all who call upon Him.” “For whoever calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved.”

Let me ask you this morning if this is something that each one of you has understood and done? What do you need to be saved from? You need to be saved from the guilt of sin and the penalty due to sin in the sight of your holy God. The penalty is death and the punishment is hell; eternal and everlasting punishment. Have you understood the reason that you must be forgiven of your sins? You may have opposed the idea that you were created by God and that you should live to love and serve and worship Him. But you may not have not done this in accordance with His Word the Bible. If this is the case you have no doubt done many things to offend the holy God. There are no other gods besides Him, and He is a righteous judge toward all who do not believe in Him. There are many persons in our generation who do not believe in the gospel of God’s Son, and they refuse to walk in His ways. They do not know the ways of peace. The person who knows the ways of peace believes that Christ had to die for their sins to be forgiven. They have believed with their heart that the Lord Jesus was raised by God from the dead. They have believed in Christ’s resurrection from the dead; and they now know that He overcame the guilt and the power of their sins at the cross. They believe that Jesus bore their sins in His body on the tree, so that they could die to sin and live to righteousness. They believe that Christ left the riches of the halls of heaven, and become poor for their sakes, that they through His poverty might become rich in spiritual things. They have come to understand that God was in Christ reconciling them to Himself, and that He has brought peace to them when they placed their faith in Him.

If these things are true, and this is the greatness of the reality of what Christ has suffered, so that you might have eternal life, then how necessary it is that you believe; yes, even each one here today. For verse 13 says, “For whoever calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.” But, “How then shall they call on Him in whom they have not believed?” In other words; if you do not believe, you will not pray to Him for the gift of salvation. “And how shall they believe in Him whom they have not heard?” You will not believe unless you hear the gospel, because faith comes by hearing it. “And how shall they hear without a preacher?” How important preachers and preaching are, is seen by this. People may not hear at all without a preacher. “And how shall they preach unless they be sent?” This is the subject that we are looking at this morning; being sent. Unless they are sent, men will not preach. And the rest of verse 15 says, “How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the gospel of peace, who bring glad tidings of good things!” The gospel is the good news of the glad tidings of the good things which will come spiritually to your heart and life by the grace of Christ. When the gospel comes in the power of the Holy Spirit, it comes to you bearing peace in it. There is peace between God and man, and peace which brings contentment to your soul in every situation. A person knows that they can be at peace in their soul, having Christ and His grace at work in their heart.

And then finally - The 3rd way that the Apostles represented the Lord Jesus to the people of Israel in this outreach was by their preaching. (verse 12)

“They went out and preached that people should repent.” When the kingdom of heaven draws near to you, it draws near in the preaching of the word of Christ asking whether you will submit to God and to Christ, or whether you will refuse and rebel against His lawful authority over you. The way that you show God that you want to submit to His call in the gospel is to repent. The word repent means to change your mind, and to turn away from your sins. You turn away from your sins, and you turn to God to seek to find the mercy that He is freely offering

to you in Christ. This is what I plead with you to do today. Do not think that simply going to church on a semi-regular basis will land you in heaven when you die. You have to have more than the religious things that you think, say, and do, to bring you to that blessed place in the end. “Unless you repent” Jesus says in Luke 13: 5, “you shall all perish”. There is no salvation without repentance. There is no salvation by thinking that your repenting brings the blessings of salvation. It is Christ who brings you that. But when he visits you He bring to you the strength and the wisdom to turn from your sin to God; the grace of repentance which pulls you out of the mire.

The word “repent” here in verse 12 is *metanoosin* (μετανοοσιν) which literally means, “they should be repenting”. This should tell us that repentance is not only the changing of your mind once, as you are coming to Christ for salvation. It means that repentance is a grace which leads to many daily acts of repentance in your mind, and in regard to the thoughts and actions of your heart and your life. Ask yourself, as we close this sermon, if you are praying daily about your thoughts and actions in the sight of the holy God whom you serve? Ask Him to grant you a thorough repentance of all of your sins, and ask Him for the grace to so live that you will be His messenger in the days to come; whether you are called to be a pastor, or whether you are not well known to many people. God takes notice of all such prayers and He evaluates your life to see whether you are walking worthy of the gospel and whether you are willing to turn away from every known sin. When He sees this, He will bless you mightily with the greatest blessings of His presence and power to glorify Him.