

Introduction

1. In the late 1980s I went on Partnership Mission trips into central Mexico.
 - a. The first year that I went on one of these trips, I went mostly as an observer with a team led by Bro. Grayson Glass, DOM of our Galveston Baptist Association.
 - b. I gave my testimony and learned much about mission ministry in a foreign country on that trip.
 - c. The next year, I recruited a team from my church to go with the Association group.
 - d. By year three, we were sending our own team into Mexico including folks from our Spanish-speaking congregation, and I was mentoring other in ministry.
 - e. The last year, I was not able to go on the trip, but we recruited such a large team that we had to send two vans.
 - f. I was mentored. I was allowed to minister with supervision. I ministered and helped mentor others.
 - g. This is the process of discipleship, of making disciples.
 - h. It is a process similar to the one Jesus used to call, mentor, and send out His disciples in ministry.
2. **Read Mk 6:6-13.**

A. Jesus Commissions the Twelve (6b-7)

1. In today's passage, we lay down the bottom slice of bread in another Markan sandwich.
2. James Brooks writes, "Mark 6:6b-30 provides another example of the author's frequent practice of sandwiching accounts. The account of Herod's reaction to John and Jesus (6:14-29) is inserted into the account of the mission of the Twelve (6:6b-13,30). The mission of the Twelve may have been one way in which Herod came to know about Jesus. Herod's execution of John suggests the extent to which opposition to the Christian mission may extend. The martyrdom of John anticipated that of Jesus. Disciples of Jesus must be prepared for the supreme sacrifice. Furthermore, the two accounts contrast the indulgence and cruelty of a secular ruler with the dedication and sacrifice of the disciples" (James A. Brooks, *Mark*, 100).
3. Jesus continued to travel around Galilee ". . . teaching from village to village" (6b).
 - a. Remember how he had been rejected by those in His hometown of Nazareth (Mk 6:1-6a).
 - b. Jesus had been ". . . amazed by their lack of faith (Gk., *apistian*).
 - c. He may have taught in the synagogues in these other villages, but perhaps He had abandoned teaching in synagogues where He had been questioned and rejected by the Pharisees and scribes (cf., Mk 3:22) in favor of teaching in the villages as well as out in the countryside (cf., Mk 6:35).
3. Jesus continued to model ministry to His disciples. I see three stages in Jesus' discipleship model.
 - a. Stage 1: You watch while I do (cf., Mk 1:17).
 - b. Stage 2: You do while I watch (cf., Mk 6:7,30).
 - c. Stage 3: You do (cf., Mt 28:18-20).
4. Jesus sent the disciples out "two by two" (Gk., *apostellein duo duo*)
 - a. We need others to help us with ministry and encourage us when the times get hard.
 - b. We need to learn from those with whom we serve.
 - c. We need others to hold us accountable to our ministry.
 - d. In Hebrew law, testimony was established by two witnesses (cf., Deut 17:6, 19:15; 2 Cor 13:1).
 - e. The twelve disciples (*tous dodeka*), with Judas' replacement by Matthias (cf., Acts 1:26), will become the twelve apostles (*apostellos*).
 - f. Wiersbe writes, "The word translated 'send' in Mark 6:7 is *apostello* in the Greek and gives us our English word *apostle*. It means 'to send someone with a special commission to represent another and to accomplish his work.' Jesus gave these twelve men both the apostolic authority and the divine ability to do the job He sent them to do" (Warren Wiersbe, *Be Diligent*, 76-77).
5. Jesus fully prepared His disciples for ministry.
 - a. They heard the good news which he had been teaching consistently "from village to village" (6b).
 - b. He endowed them with His authority (Gk., *eksousian*) over impure spirits (Gk. *pneumatōn ton arkathartōn*).

B. Ministry Instructions (8-11) - Jesus gave four specific instructions to the Twelve as He sent them out.

1. First, “Take nothing for the journey except a staff—no bread, no bag, no money in your belts” (8).
2. Second, “Wear sandals but not an extra shirt” (9).
 - a. They needed sandals to protect their feet for the rough journey.
 - b. They needed a shirt but no extra clothing. The outer garment also served as a blanket when sleeping.
3. Brooks points out, “A problem arises when the conditions of Mark 6:8-9 are compared with those of Matt 10:9-10 and Luke 9:3. Both Matthew and Luke forbid taking a staff, and Matthew forbids taking sandals. Obviously the three accounts relate the same event. The more rigorous conditions of Matthew and Luke more likely reflect what Jesus actually said. Apparently Mark made some minor adaptations to make the conditions understandable to his Roman readers/hearers or perhaps to recall the Exodus (cf., Exod 12:11)” (Brooks, 101).
 - a. I believe that Mark may be drawing a comparison between the sending of the Twelve and the Exodus.
 - b. Daniel Akin elucidates, “The four items required of the Twelve are identical to what God told the Hebrews to take on their flight from Egypt (Exod 12:11). Is a new exodus under a greater Moses Deut 19:15-18) in view? Is the emphasis on faith in God to provide what we need the point of the passage? . . . Little provisions require big faith in God to meet your needs (cf. Phil 4:19)!” (Daniel L. Akin, *Exalting Jesus in Mark*, 124-25)
4. Third, “Whenever you enter a house, stay there until you leave that town” (10).
 - a. Receive the hospitality offered to you.
 - b. Don’t overstay your welcome or move from house to house wearing out your welcome.
 - c. Wiersbe notes that Jesus “. . . cautioned them to stay at one house in each community and not to ‘pick and choose’ when it came to their food and accommodations. After all, they were there to be profitable servants, not pampered guests . . . They were not ‘on their own’; they represented Him in all that they did and said” (Wiersbe, 76-77).
5. Fourth and finally, Jesus instructed, “And if any place will not welcome you or listen to you, leave that place and shake the dust off your feet as a testimony against them” (11).
 - a. Jesus had modeled this action as He left Nazareth where he was not welcome and therefore not able to be effective fully in ministry.
 - b. Shaking off the dust was symbolic of not taking anything from the village or villagers who were unwilling to take God’s word and ministry which was offered to them.
 - c. It also symbolized not wanting to have any part in the judgment that would befall those living in that land.
 - d. Akin writes, “This was something pious Jews did when they had traveled outside Israel to signify their disassociation from their paganism and the divine judgment that awaited them” (Akin, 125).
 - e. This act was a “testimony” (Gk., *marturion*) that those in that place had been offered the good news and a place in the kingdom of God but had rejected it. Their impending judgment by God was on them and not the ones who had shared the good news of the kingdom of God.

C. The Disciples’ First Ministry (12-13)

1. The disciples obeyed God as “They went out” (Gk., *ekselthontes*) (12).
2. They did exactly what Jesus had been doing in His power and with the same effect.
 - a. “They . . . preached that people should repent (Gk., *metanoosin*) . . .” (12)
 - b. “They drove out (Gk., *ekseballon*) demons and anointed many sick people with oil and healed (Gk., *etherapeuon*) them.” (12)
 - c. Like the first disciples, Paul said that “We are therefore Christ’s ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us. We implore you on Christ’s behalf: Be reconciled to God” (2 Cor 5:20).
 - 1) Note the primary place of preaching repentance and reconciliation with God.
 - 2) Remember that working miracles, like casting out demons and healing the sick, are supporting actions for the primary ministry of proclamation of the good news.

D. Reflections

1. Jesus prepares us for and sends us out as His disciples in ministry.
2. We teach only what we have heard Jesus teach. We have the Bible as the record of God's instructions for living and sharing the good news of Jesus.
3. Whatever we accomplish in ministry is done best only with the authority and power given to us by God. We are not sufficient in ourselves. We need the authority and power of God in kingdom work.
4. We can't do it all alone. We need others to help us, teach us, encourage us, bear witness to our words and actions, and hold us accountable in ministry.
5. Like Jesus, we must be about the business of making disciples of Jesus. That is part of our commission from the Lord (cf., Mt 28:19).
6. We must not trust in our sufficiency for everything in ministry. We need to move forward as God sends us and trust Him to provide what is needed along the way.
7. We know that God is at work when we see how He blesses and multiplies the small offerings of money, time, and talent that we give to Him.
8. We can only share the good news. We cannot force anyone to accept Jesus by faith. We may do more damage by continuing to press them with the gospel. When you encounter resistance: Speak the truth clearly then back off, pray, and wait for the right time to share God's love and good news again.
9. We are individually responsible for receiving, responding to, and sharing the good news of Jesus. We will be held accountable for how we respond not how others respond.
10. We know that Jesus is at work in us when we see Him doing through us the same things that Jesus did—teaching and meeting needs of the sick and hurting.
11. We are truly effective in ministry only as we follow God's instructions and calling by going out to minister in His name and power.
12. Miracles always support the sharing of the good news. They are given as signs of confirmation. Miracles are never the main point. They are secondary to the proclamation of the good news.