

Sending the Twelve **Mark 6:7-13**

Jesus has called the disciples to him (3:13-19), and now he sends them out as apostles (v7). The kingdom is come and go, both gather and scatter (Matt. 11:28; 28:19). We always come to Jesus for refreshment and reestablishment, but then he equips us to go out into the world, to be in it but not of it (Jn. 15:19). We move from being invested to investing in others and the disciples are ready to catch fish (1:17). This Sunday is Reformation Sunday when we remember the recovery of the gospel in the Protestant Reformation, the priesthood of all believers, and the forward progress of the church. November 1st is All Saints' Day when the church celebrates the same thing more broadly. We've seen how dense and doubtful the disciples are (4:13; 40). Still, they're going out to do the job Jesus gave them. And they will not labor in vain.

With Authority

Jesus is the first apostle, the first sent one, speaking with the Father's authority (Jn. 12:49). He sends *them* out likewise, two by two. This fulfills the law's requirement for at least two witnesses (Dt. 17:6; 19:15; Matt. 18:16; 1 Tim. 5:19; cf. Jn. 14:37). He puts them in authority, but first they are under authority. There is leadership among the apostles but also true accountability (e.g. Gal. 2:11ff.). This is why a plurality of qualified elders is necessary and not a board of yes-men. Two are better than one for encouragement, synergy, and effectiveness (Eccles. 4:9-12). Jesus sees the love and commitment of the disciples, with all their flaws, and he invests in them his own authority over unclean spirits (*exousia* v7; cf. 1:22, 27). They've watched him preach, love, heal, correct and comfort. Now they're to do likewise. The Church is God's ministry of mercy. We're empowered by Christ and so we empower others.

With Responsibility for the Task, Not the Outcome

The apostles are given very specific instructions. Don't take bread, bags, money or two tunics. Take a staff, tunic, and one pair of sandals (v9). This is a missionary manifesto that still plays if applied with wisdom. They would have to depend on the Father for everything in the mission, and not just spiritual things. The point is to travel light and undistracted which unlike legalism requires wisdom and faithfulness. You don't serve your stuff; your stuff serves you as you serve God. Does anything keep you from worship, service and generosity (Heb. 10:25)? The apostles were not to become local celebrities, moving from house to house as they preached, but to find a home-base and hunker there until it was time to go (v10). They were to shake the dust off their feet from places that would not receive them (v11). We see the responsibility given to the church not just to preach, but to how to preach (1 Thess. 5:22). We need to prioritize as a church, as families and individuals. Having done this, we leave the results to the Lord (2 Cor. 2:16), confident of great things.

With Victory

The apostles proclaimed that people should repent, and it worked (vv12-13)! People are so fed up with the church these days. "I'm into Jesus, not the church." No, you're not because Jesus is into the church. It has always been like this (Mk. 8:33; 9:34)! We need to have more confidence in the gospel and less in our techniques and the power of sin. The church thinks about the band, the brand, the coffee, etc., more than it thinks about the Word. Focus on the periphery and you'll lose the center. But find the center and everything else will be added. The apostles were faithful to make little of themselves and much of Christ. Mark's Gospel hinges on Peter's glorious confession of Jesus' identity, including the following verses when Jesus rebukes him as Satan (8:27-33)! Jesus didn't look out at the world and think "Man, this is impossible." The field was ripe. He prayed for laborers (Matt. 9:38). The gospel is the power of God unto salvation (Rom. 1:16).

NOTES FOR LITTLE SAINTS

Today's Passage: Mark 6:7-13

7 And he called the twelve and began to send them out two by two, and gave them authority over the unclean spirits. 8 He charged them to take nothing for their journey except a staff—no bread, no bag, no money in their belts— 9 but to wear sandals and not put on two tunics. 10 And he said to them, “Whenever you enter a house, stay there until you depart from there. 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.” 12 So they went out and proclaimed that people should repent. 13 And they cast out many demons and anointed with oil many who were sick and healed them.

1. How many apostles did Jesus send out together (verse 7)? Why do you think he sent them this way?
2. Scripture teaches that two are better than one because one friend helps, encourages, and strengthens the other. Name of couple of your friends. What do you like to do with them?
3. What could they not take on the journey (verses 8-9)?
4. Draw a picture of two apostles walking into a village with staffs in their hands.

Memory Verse to Recite Next Week:

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Draw 2 apostles going out to spread the gospel: