

The Mission Field Trip

Mark 6:7-13

Have you ever been on a field trip? Remember back in school, those wonderful, glorious days when the teacher planned a day when you actually got to get out of the classroom and into the real world? Usually there was an educational objective for the field trip, where you could see how what you had been learning really worked out in the field. But it was also usually exciting, and hands-on learning where you got to see it work for yourself.

Jesus sends the twelve out on a field trip. They are going out to practice what He has been teaching them. He sends them out on a mission. You might say that Mark 6 records for us the first Christian short term missionary trip. Listen to God's word as I read Mark 6:7-13:

7 And He called the twelve to Himself, and began to send them out two by two, and gave them power over unclean spirits.

8 He commanded them to take nothing for the journey except a staff--no bag, no bread, no copper in their money belts--

9 but to wear sandals, and not to put on two tunics.

10 Also He said to them, "In whatever place you enter a house, stay there till you depart from that place.

11 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!"

12 So they went out and preached that people should repent.

13 And they cast out many demons, and anointed with oil many who were sick, and healed them.

Here Jesus was leading His disciples one step forward in their journey with Him. He was taking them out of the classroom and calling them out into the field to put their faith into practice. From this, their first mission trip, we can learn some practical principles as we are on mission with Jesus.

1. Jesus Called Them to Himself.

Let me remind you of something that we've already studied, turn with me to Mark 3:14-15, "**Then He appointed twelve, that they might be with Him and that He might send them out to preach, and to have power to heal sicknesses and to cast out demons.**" In chapter 3 Jesus chose them first "**that they might be with Him.**" And secondly, "**that He might send them out to preach.**"

Their first purpose was to be with Him, and that was primary. You see it again here in chapter 6, "**And He called the twelve to Himself.**" Our relationship with the Lord is always of first importance. We are called first to be with Jesus, and if

we are with Jesus, then we will naturally be on-mission with Him as well. Our mission stems from our relationship.

Before they went out and became dynamic servants of Jesus, the twelve needed time alone with Jesus. Jesus had modeled this before them. He had modeled a life of personal fellowship with the Father before them. For Jesus, ministry to others wasn't His first priority. What was His first priority? It was fellowship with His Father!

For example in Mark 1, we read about an amazing day in the life of Jesus. Jesus healed Peter's mother in law; all day and late into the night He healed people who were sick and demon possessed. You would think after such a busy day, Jesus would sleep in. However, in Mark 1.35 we find, **"Now in the morning, having risen a long while before daylight, He went out and departed to a solitary place; and there He prayed."**

In chapter 3 He was calling them to be under His teaching and His example. He called them to be with Him with a view that He would eventually send them out to propagate the message in His place. Now in chapter 6 they are going forth as His glorious heralds of His message.

So the time has come, having been at the Master's feet, when they must be launched out in service for Him. He is sending them, Mark says, if you look at it in verse 7. He sends them forth. Now the Greek word there is '*apostello*' the word we get '*apostle*' from. '*Apostle*' means 'sent one', '*apostello*', 'to send them'. Literally here's a definition of it: "To send forth as an ambassador on a commission to represent another, and to perform some task."

Now let me pause here for a moment, and think about where we fit into this mission. We know that the twelve apostles had a unique ministry. In one sense, there cannot be any more twelve apostles. They were the ones whom Jesus used to lay the foundation of the church. But in another sense we are also sent by the Lord Jesus Christ. 2 Corinthians 5:20, Paul said: **"Now then, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were pleading through us: we implore you on Christ's behalf, be reconciled to God."** So there is an application for us today in a similar, though not an exact position; we too are representatives of our Lord Jesus Christ in this day and generation.

Now here's the lesson for us right away: we ought, like the early disciples, the twelve apostles, to be with Him - that is our primary responsibility, that ought to be our priority. It's no good serving the Lord Jesus if we're not spending any time at His feet. He called them first to be with Him, then there had to come a time when they were no longer only with Him but with others. Here we see this realized in chapter 6: He is launching them out in service. Now let me ask you, child of God: have you got that balance, and indeed that order intact in your Christian experience? Priority: be with Him, then launched out into service.

2. Jesus Sent Them Together.

"... **and began to send them out two by two.**" Jesus was teaching that to be a dynamic servant of God, you aren't going to be able to do it all alone. They were going to need each other.

There are a couple of reasons why Jesus sent them out this way.

- It fulfilled the requirements of the Law for every testimony to be established by the words of at least two witnesses – Deut. 17:6; 19:15; Num. 35:30.
- It provided the men with companionship, encouragement and for someone to pray for them.
- This was the method used by John the Baptist when he sent out his followers, Luke 7:18-19.
- This has been the method followed by Christians since the days of Jesus. The early church employed this method, Acts 13:2-3; 15:39-41; 19:22.
- It is still the best method today. When two people go out to share the Gospel together, they can encourage one another, pray for one another and help one another stand in this evil day. When you go out to tell this world about Jesus take a fellow believer with you, it will make the job easier.

May I remind you today that God has not called us to be "Lone Ranger" Christians? Christians who think they can live the Christian life without other Christians are only fooling themselves. Just as a coal in the fire will lose its fire if it gets out of the group, so will believers who distance themselves from others in the Body of Christ. Church is a place to find some partners – partners with people who are going to help encourage, comfort you, lift you up, spur you on in the Lord.

3. Jesus Gave Them Authority.

"...**He gave them power over unclean spirits.**" Jesus gave them "power". This particular word refers to "inherent power". It has the idea of someone "possessing the right to do a thing and having the power to carry it out." Jesus gave them His power when He sent them out. In a literal sense, they were an extension of Him as they ministered around the country. Jesus literally multiplied Himself when He sent His disciples out with His power.

In John 14:12 Jesus made a startling statement. He said, "**Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believes on me, the works that I do he shall do also; and greater works than these shall he do; because I go unto my Father.**" The only reason we are able to see Him do this is because He gives us His power to serve Him in the world today.

When Jesus saves a soul, He gives them the power to carry His message to the world, Acts 1:8. We may feel inadequate for the task, but His power rests in us and on us. We may be weak in our words and we may feel that our testimony lacks power, but Jesus has promised to give us His power. And His power is more than enough to get the job done! Therefore, we can go into this world and

share the Gospel, knowing that He has called us and empowered us to do just that!

When Jesus gave His great commission in Matthew 28, He began by saying, "**All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth.**" Then He commissioned them, "**Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations..**"

4. Jesus Commanded Them to Depend on God.

As part of His commissioning, Jesus gave His men some very specific commands. Looking at what He told them has something to say to us about our own service to the Lord.

In verses 8-9, Jesus commanded them to take nothing with them for their journey. They could take a walking stick, the shoes on their feet and the clothes on their backs. They were not to take a scrip, which was a travelers bag. Nor were they to take any money or food.

There are a couple of thoughts here that need to be considered.

- There is the idea here is that they were to go as they were, without making any special preparations for their travels. They were to undertake this assignment with their full faith in the Lord and in His ability to take care of them.

That is still God's plan for His people. We are saved by faith and the Lord expects us to live by faith! He wants us to walk in complete dependence on Him and on His power to supply our needs, Matt. 6:25-34; Phil. 4:19. If the Lord sends us out in His service, we can trust Him to take care of us. I have seen Him do that countless times in my own life and ministry!

- There is also the idea here of urgency. Jesus wants them to go now! The fields were white unto the harvest and it was time to go.

There is still an urgency that comes with the Gospel message. The time to tell the world is today. The time to go is right now. If the Lord has it on your heart to tell an individual about Him, the time to do that is today, John 9:4)

- They were told to take only one coat. In that day it was usually just the rich who could afford two coats. Jesus was sending them out as common men among common men. They were not to put on airs and come across as though they were better than the people they encountered.

In verse 10 Jesus told them to accept the hospitality of the local people and they were to abide in whatever house they were invited into. They were not to seek out better accommodations. They were not to look for more comfortable lodging. They were to take what they were given and they were to be happy with it.

The Christian life is not about being comfortable. There are time when serving the Lord is anything but comfortable. Our duty is to take whatever He gives us with a heart of gratitude and learn to be content with the things He provides, Heb. 13:5; 1 Tim. 6:6-12.

In verse 11 Jesus instructed them what to do if they entered a village and they and their message were rejected. They were to leave that village and shake the

dust off their sandals. The Jews often did this when they were returning from a journey to a pagan land. Before they crossed back into Israel, they would shake the dust off their clothes and off their shoes. It represented a total disassociation from the pagans and the pollution of their land.

In this case, Jesus told His man to do this as a sign that those who rejected the Gospel would face a harsh judgment someday. In fact, their punishment would exceed the judgment that fell on ancient Sodom and Gomorrah. Why? All Sodom and Gomorrah had was the testimony of a wayward believer named Lot. These villages had the testimony of the Lord Jesus Christ! They would face a harsh judgment for rejecting His offer of salvation.

The primary message of the disciples was a message of hope and salvation. However, those who rejected the offer of salvation were given a message of judgment and damnation.

5. They Accomplished the Mission.

A. The Message of the Mission: Repent.

They preached that men should “repent”. That word means “to change one's mind for better, heartily to amend with abhorrence of one's past sins”. It refers to “a change of mind that leads to a change of action.” It can literally mean “be converted”. When genuine repentance takes place the change in a person's life is radical and powerful!

Most of the time repentance is only preached in its negative sense. People are told that they need to stop doing certain things, and that is true. Repentance is far more than that!

Repentance has both a negative aspect and a positive aspect. Repentance looks backward, but it also looks forward. Repentance says, “I will stop doing the things I should not do and I will begin to do the things I should do. I will stop living a life of sin and I will start to live a life of holiness.”

Repentance arises out of a heart that is sorry for the wrongs it is guilty of committing, 2 Cor. 7:10. That sorrow produces a desire to change the way the repenting sinner is living. That is genuine biblical repentance and it is something that we do not see a lot of in these days!

B. The Ministry of the Mission.

The disciples went out in the power of the Savior and they saw Him move and work in power and glory. Their experience has something to say to us today.)

God will confirm His work in us and through in powerful ways. He will manifest His power as He confirms His message.

We will probably not see the same things these men saw. What the Lord did through them is what is known as sign gifts. That is, they were manifestations of His power designed to give validity to His message. In that day people did not have the complete Word of God. They needed proof of the message. God proved His message by working powerful clear miracles among the people.

In our day we will see the Lord confirm His Word by changing lives. When the Gospel is preached and shared in His power, He will use the Gospel message to draw people to Himself.

The greatest miracle the Lord can achieve is the salvation of a human soul. It so far outweighs healings and the casting out of demons that they are not even in the same category!

When Jesus saves a soul it eclipses even His power in creation. I thrill when I think of the Lord making everything out of nothing. But, to think that He could take a lost, hell bound sinner and make them into a child of God is marvelous beyond words! To consider that He would love the lost and reach out to them in grace is amazing. To think that He would die on the cross to redeem them from their sins is wonderful beyond belief! (Ill. Isa. 53:4-6) To think that He would save people who are trapped in their sins is a miracle the mind can hardly comprehend!

Conc: Our Savior is in the life-changing, soul-saving business! One of the most amazing truths I ever learned is that He desires us to have a part in His ministry. When we hear His call, accept His commission, walk in faith and share His message with a lost and dying world, we can expect Him to honor His Word, Isa. 55:11, and save the lost.

Here is the invitation today.

- If you are saved and sense the Lord calling you to share your faith, you need to come. If He is calling you to serve Him as a preacher of the Gospel or a missionary, you need to heed that call and go where He sends you. Surrender to Him today.
- If you are saved and you have been holding back out of fear of failure or that your needs would might not be met, let go of those fears today. Come before the Lord and commit to doing what He has called you to do.
- If you have never repented of your sins and trusted Jesus, and He is drawing you to Himself, you need to come today and be saved.
- If you have made a profession the past, but your life has never changed and you are still controlled by your sins, you need to come to Him today and get it settled once and for all. Follow Him in genuine repentance.
- If the Lord has spoken to you at any point on any level of your life, you need to obey Him right now!