

The Real Jesus, Mark 6:7-13, “A Model for Missions”, 4/3/22

There is a significant difference between learning and doing. In fact we don't truly learn something until we put it into practice. In my 20s I did some alpine mountaineering, and on one expedition we were trained for [Picture] vertical glacier climbing. For a couple hours he was training us, talking about the dangers, what ropes we will use, what equipment, the technique using our crampons called front pointing to punch our toes into the ice wall, how to properly use our ice axes, and how to use a buddy system for our safety. He demonstrated the techniques as he climbed the wall to the top. “OK, I got this...” Besides I had watched countless YouTube clips prior to this trip. About 10 ft up, I realized, “Shoot, I don't got this.” As you can see my technique is way off. And after some mild panic and some more coaching I finally got the hang of it. It wasn't pretty but I made it up and live to tell the story.

I would imagine the disciples may have had a range of similar thoughts and feelings in our story today. **Mark 6:6b-7a Then Jesus went around teaching from village to village. ⁷ Calling the Twelve to him, he began to send them out.** The disciples were about to go from the seminary to the mission field. They may have recalled many months ago when Jesus said to them, **“Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men.” (Mark 1:17)** But up until this point, Jesus did all the ministry work. They watched and listened and marveled as he taught, healed, freed those in bondage, dealt with conflict from the religious leaders. **Title Slide** But the day finally came for the disciples to get out of the classroom. Some may have been overconfident like me...Peter. Some may have been panicking...also like me...saying “Why did I answer his call again?” But this was the day the disciples became apostles (sent ones). A life of knowing Jesus and growing in Jesus always leads to going with Jesus. There is no classroom only option for Christ followers. There is no Sunday only option for churches, although many churches think that's all they need to do. I call those sit and soak churches. Like a sponge. And churches that have sit and soak cultures inevitably turn into sit and croak churches...those churches tend to die. Jesus intends for us to ring out every last drop of that into others. Over the next several years we have the goal of increasingly becoming a sent church (all of missions month). Today we will see four ways that Jesus sends the disciples and how he is sending us in our community.

#1 Sent with Partners. v.7 Two by two into the surrounding villages. Why? Couldn't they have been more efficient going as individuals? 2x the number of villages and impact right? Commentaries mention that this may be a reference to Deuteronomy that says with 2 or 3 witnesses a testimony is considered credible. Solomon in Ecclesiastes- two is better than one, better return for their work, when one falls the other can pick him up. In going together you have a partner for mutual encouragement, to share the experience together. Also for accountability- If I was at that ice wall and I said, “Hey guys, I'm going to climb just around the corner” and go off by myself...there's a good chance I might not do it. Can I just say, it's hard out there by yourself to be a witness for Christ. It's not a solo sport. One of the top reasons pastors and missionaries leave the ministry is because of loneliness. Do you know another Christian on the soccer field? Partner up. Find a Christian to go deeper with and challenge you. How about in your neighborhood, partner to do a community Bible study or invite them to

church. Do you know another Christian at work? Partner up to pray for co-workers, encourage each other to be a witness.

#2 Sent with Power. ⁷ *and gave them authority over impure spirits.* ¹³ *They drove out many demons and anointed many sick people with oil and healed them.* Jesus transfers some of his authority and power in the spiritual realm to the disciples for this particular mission. Here's the principle: When Jesus sends you, he will give you what you need for the work he wants you to accomplish. He will fill you with the Holy Spirit to speak, to anoint, to pray, to discern, to serve, to teach.

#3 Sent with Proclamation. ¹² *They went out and preached that people should repent.* The pattern that we see all throughout the gospels and the book of Acts is that gospel deeds should be accompanied by gospel words. Demonstration and declaration. And just as Jesus received both hospitality and hostility, so did these disciples. ¹¹ *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.* Not everyone would listen, not all would accept the good news and repent. And the shaking off the dust was an ancient way of saying, "You are now responsible for the rejection of Jesus as Lord." Friends, part of what it means to be a disciple is to face rejection of your faith, because the gospel is an offensive message. We shouldn't use offensive methods, but I find that in today's world, people aren't as offended at the idea that they have sinned, although they may disagree on what counts as sin. I find that most are offended that God is offended by it and that our sin has eternal consequences. Also people are offended at the exclusivity of the gospel. That Jesus is the only way and I can't mix and match pathways. But I find encouragement in the fact that Jesus and the disciples were rejected by some people as well. This should challenge us. On one hand, if you are never offending anyone, if you are never rejected for your faith, no one ever has a problem with you and anything you ever say or do, you are probably being a coward or inconsistent in your faith. On the other hand, if you are always offending everyone, if there is a trail of social media wars after many of your posts, if you always feel persecuted by others, clashing over your Christian beliefs and practices, if everyone has a problem with you, As Tim Keller puts it, "You are probably not being persecuted for righteousness's sake, but for obnoxiousness's sake."

Now up until this point, there really haven't been many surprises about how Jesus sends them. Partnership, Power, Proclamation...but what may be shocking is...

#4 Sent without Provisions

⁸ *These were his instructions: "Take nothing for the journey except a staff—no bread, no bag, no money in your belts.*

⁹ *Wear sandals but not an extra shirt.* ¹⁰ *Whenever you enter a house, stay there until you leave that town.* This is a curious method isn't it? They were to enter these villages the opposite of Prince Ali in Aladdin [Picture]. They came with nothing but quite literally the shirt on their backs. It even says, [Scripture Slide] only where one shirt (tunic). It would have been common to carry two tunics, the second would have acted as a blanket to keep you warm at night. Not even that. No staying at a nearby hotel on the outskirts of town and commuting in and out.

They were to rely on the local, humble hospitality of the villagers for their needs...for food, shelter, a blanket, someone else's toilet and soap. [Sent without Provisions Slide] Now when I was in my 20s and doing things like hiking in the mountains, I could have slept anywhere, slept in hostels and dirt floors, no problem traveling like a minimalist...as I get older, I find myself becoming more particular... and if I need to travel there are just certain things I struggle to leave behind. I gotta have my Sonicare toothbrush and Sensodyne (I have sensitive teeth), I will struggle to fall asleep without my noise machine and my own pillow with just the right fill...why is it that no one else's pillows will do? Now this one is embarrassing...but I sometimes will bring my own hair dryer- not all hair dryers are created equal, I need a certain level of heat and air quality...Can I get an amen? Ladies are with me, and I've lost all respect from half the dudes. I don't like being dependent on others...and this instruction for the disciples is far more extreme. Being dependent on others is uncomfortable, awkward and make you feel exposed and vulnerable. Many of us avoid these feelings at all costs. What is Jesus up to with his methods?

This is especially curious in juxtaposition to the fact that they are sent with all this spiritual power, and yet they are sent with no earthly possessions. They can cast out demons...but need to use someone else's potty. Does this sound familiar? Who else was sent on mission like this? Jesus of Nazareth. *Philippians 2:6-8 Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be used to his own advantage;*

⁷ rather, he made himself nothing by taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. ⁸ And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself. The incarnation is the shocking story of the King of Kings leaving behind all the splendor of heavenly riches and glory to come in utter weakness, through the hospitality of a poor teenager's womb, to dwell among us in humility, vulnerability and dependence on the creatures...creatures he made with just a word! He came with no earthly possessions, he owned no property. Consider the radical dependence and radical power dichotomy of Jesus. He stayed in people's homes to get some sleep and yet says "Come to me all who are weary, and I will give you rest from your souls." He sleeps on someone else's boat and yet calms the storm. A woman cleaned his feet and yet he cleansed the lepers and the sick. He ate meals in other people's homes and said "I am the bread of life, whoever believes in my will never be hungry again." He asked the woman at the well for a drink of water and said, "I offer living water and you will never be thirsty again." And it wasn't just physical dependence, it was relational- what a shock to consider Jesus needed his friends to be with him and pray for him as he battled the anxiety of the cross.

What do we make of such a contrast of unlimited power and authority and yet such vulnerability and dependence on human relationship, hospitality and provision? What can we learn from Jesus calling the disciples to do the same here? Two observations that have significant implications for how we live on mission. *A Missional Life requires us to get uncomfortable.* It would seem today that some Christians are the exact opposite. Some Christians have all the earthly possessions they could possibly need and yet seem to have little spiritual power and authority to offer to others. Could it be we have traded spiritual dependence and power on the Spirit for comfort and security? The most effective the local church has ever been in history is when it was the least comfortable. When it was most

physically, politically and financially powerless and vulnerable, and completely dependent on the Spirit. When it needed God to come through or all would be lost. Look to the first several centuries in the Roman empire, look to the great awakening in Europe and the colonies, look to the gospel movements in Africa and China today. But it's not just physical comforts, it might be emotional comforts. Fear of rejection, wanting to be liked, wanting to be considered successful and smart.

A Missional Life is a two-way street. It requires vulnerability. It's interesting to me that this idea of vulnerability is trending among leadership gurus today. Brené Brown is probably considered the foremost thought leader on this topic. Her TED "The Power of Vulnerability" has been watched 48million times as the fourth most popular TED talk of all time. She demonstrates that without this two-way street of mutually shared need and vulnerability it is impossible to have authentic relationships that last. Leadership guru Patrick Lencioni in his book *The Advantage*, argues that vulnerability-based trust is the secret sauce to effective teams and leadership. It's always fascinating when people rediscover what Jesus modeled 2000 years ago.

The disciples were not to have all the power and all the possessions, needing nothing and having only something to give but nothing to receive from others. Gospel ministry is always a two-way street of giving and receiving, of speaking and listening, an exchange of the meeting of needs just as Jesus did. These disciples were to humble themselves, be vulnerable enough to not have all the control and all the answers, to be dependent on others, partaking in meals in homes, in a way that opened up doors to share the good news. One of the largest failures of ministry among under-resourced urban communities over the last century is well-meaning Christians who believe help is a one-way street. That because you are poor or under-educated, you have nothing to teach me, give me, help me learn. When Helping Hurts **"Until we embrace our mutual brokenness, our work with low-income people is likely to do far more harm than good."**

I was reflecting on how I came back to faith in Christ. Largely because of Pastor Bob. Pastor Bob was a youth pastor and a truck driver. **Title Slide** There was something very disarming about him. His ministry was among us, not to us. He asked for help to build stuff in his backyard, he let the students design and decorate the youth wing. And he was share his life, both the struggles and successes with us. He would ask us to pray for him because he needed our support. Because of all of this, for the first time in my life I let my guard down and shared what was really going on in my heart and allowed him to speak truth in my soul.

If we are going to be an effective church on the move, a sent church- these are two critical ways for us to grow. We are going to help each other to get there. But for now, let's reflect on our own lives. Prayer...

Where is the Spirit calling you to get uncomfortable? In your witnessing relationships or service to others, have you been attempting to place yourself in a position to have all the answers, to not have any needs or any wounds or struggles? Any failures? Pray and ask the Spirit to teach you vulnerability.