

Gospel Getaway

(Mark 6:6b-13)

(preached 1/4/15 Pine Grove BC; Sunday AM)

Introduction

Some of you may know the name Ronald McNair.

He was an astronaut from SC who was killed when the space shuttle Challenger exploded in 1986.

Also on that ill-fated flight was Christa McAuliff, who was selected to be the first teacher in space.

McNair and McAuliff are two of the well-known astronauts killed when the Challenger exploded 73 seconds after takeoff.

However, I doubt few of you would know Fred Hauck.

No, he wasn't another astronaut who was killed on Challenger.

Rather, he was the flight commander of the next space shuttle mission.

Hauck was at the controls of Discovery when he was given the order to "throttle up."

2 ½ years earlier at that same command, the Challenger exploded into 1000s of pieces.

There is no question that Hauck was a little nervous putting his hand to the throttle at the sound of that command.

I am sure he had watched the Challenger explode time and time again as part of his training.

Yet, now he was at the controls.

The happy ending to that story is that the Discovery performed well on that day..

It flew on into space and returned safely to earth a few days later.

However, to be the man at the controls on the flight after Challenger exploded must have been pretty nerve racking.

Hauck later said that although he had confidence in the mission, his heart was definitely beating a little fast during takeoff.

Last week in the first 6 verses of Mark 6, we witnessed a disaster of sorts when Jesus went to preach in his hometown of Nazareth.

In a place where the disciples probably assumed that everyone would love Jesus, they witnessed a great rejection of the Lord.

According to the Bible, those is the synagogue in Nazareth took offense at Jesus and sent him out of town.

In some ways, the disciples has just watched Jesus' mission blow up before their very eyes.

Here was a town that knew Jesus better than anyone.

Here was a town that should be proud of their hometown boy.

But the truth is that here was a town that would be like so many other towns in Israel.

Here was a town full of people who reject the Messiah.

Now on the heels of what must have seemed very unusual to the disciples, Jesus is going to send them out into the world.

I can't help but imagine their nervousness at such an assignment.

Jesus has just been rejected by people who knew him well...

What hope did the disciples really have?

IF they ran Jesus out of town, what would be their fate?

On top of that, Jesus' teaching was remarkable.

He was the world's greatest preacher.

He understood the OT perfectly.

He explained it accurately.

He preached with passion and gave the people perfect understanding.

Here they were....

Fishermen, tax collectors, terrorists.

They weren't trained like Jesus.

They weren't anywhere close to the level of knowledge of the scribes and Pharisees.

Yet, Jesus is preparing to send them into the world.

What will they say?

How will they be treated?

I'm sure there was sweaty palms, racing hearts and fast breathing.

But Jesus has spoken and they will obey.

And I want us to look at their mission in these verses this morning in the gospel of Mark.

This is a huge turning point in Jesus ministry in the gospel of Mark.

Up until this point, He has been the one going and preaching and teaching.

He now sends the disciples as messengers in the world.

And this is the same way to do ministry today.

This is the pattern for gospel proclamation that we should practice today.

If you sit here today and call yourself a Christian, you are a messenger of Christ.

An ambassador of the gospel.

You take the gospel into the world.

For some of you that is an intimidating thought.

For these men on this day it was equally intimidating because not only did they probably feel unprepared...

They had just watched their Master be rejected.

Yet, when the Lord sends them, they go.

So, let's read this passage this morning and then we will go back and look at it a little more closely....

Mark 6:6b....

*And He was going around the villages teaching. ⁷ And He *summoned the twelve and began to send them out in pairs, and gave them authority over the unclean spirits; ⁸ and He instructed them that they should take nothing for their journey, except a mere staff—no bread, no ^[f]bag, no money in their belt—⁹ but ^[g]to wear sandals; and He added, “Do not put on two ^[h]tunics.”¹⁰ And He said to them, “Wherever you enter a house, stay there until you ^[i]leave town. ¹¹ Any place that does not receive you or listen to you, as you go out from there, shake the dust ^[j]off the soles of your feet for a testimony against them.”¹² They went out and ^[k]preached that men should repent. ¹³ And they were casting out many demons and were anointing with oil many sick people and healing them.*

This passage has four simple parts....

We see the first one in the last part of verse 6 and verse 7...

I. Go Your Way (6b-7)

The journey of a 1000 miles begins with what?

A single step!

A reporter was asked an Olympic Gold Medal swimmer what is the hardest part of training?

She responded very easily, “Getting out of bed every morning.”

And I think we can all relate to this.

The hard part of any job or project is simply getting started.

During seminary, I took a job painting with another seminary student who did it for a living.

And I can testify that the actual painting and rolling is by far the easiest part of the work day.

The part that is really difficult is getting to a job, unpacking, prepping, and taping.

Just getting started is so hard.

And that is so true with taking the gospel to the world.

The hard part is often simply starting a conversation.

The hard part is asking someone a question about the Lord.

And I am sure that was the hard part for the disciples here.

Notice that no one is volunteering to go into the world for Jesus.

In verse 7, Jesus sends them out.

And notice two things about this sending out.

First, they are given authority over unclean spirits.

Jesus gave the disciples this power in order to validate the message that they would preach.

You need to remember, the disciples are not wearing Jesus capes when they walk into a town.

They are not easy to identify as messengers of God.

Simply put, they were very ordinary men carrying an extraordinary message.

But their common look would be a hindrance in this day.

And their message would just be another message among hundreds of the day.

So, Jesus gives them the power over unclean spirits.

They would walk into town, preach a message and then cast out a few demons if necessary.

And the miracle of doing that was only a servant to the message.

It would authenticate it.

If some simple fishermen could cast out demonic forces, people would be more willing to what they have to say.

It is similar to having a friend who has lost 80 lbs in a year.

So, you ask him how he did it and whatever he says will carry a lot of significance because you saw the weight loss.

On the other hand, a pastor with a pot belly and three chins like me gets up and tells you how to lose weight and you simply yawn.

This was the pattern of the early church.

For a limited time, people were given this power to heal and cast out demons and do other miracles so that their message would be given weight.

Now, there is no such authority given to us today as we take the message to the world.

So, how do we authenticate or know whether a messenger is real today?

Simply put, we know messengers are from God today if their message lines up with Scripture.

However, the Scripture was not complete at this time, so Jesus gives them power to cast out demons.

Secondly, notice how they went out.

They went out in pairs.

OT teaching required the testimony of two witnesses..

There would also be benefits of accountability and safety.

But I love what one commentator says here.

He says that it tones down the individuality of the messenger.

And that is so true in many churches today.

You have pastors who are celebrities.

You have pastors who are bigger than Jesus in many people's minds.

And that is extremely sad but also extremely sinful.

Christ is the one that we all point to.

Our finger never points to us only to Him.

And sending the disciples out in pairs would prevent them from rising too high in their own eyes if they were successful.

Can't you just see Peter coming back and reporting?

I got 25 to repent and believe the gospel.

Y'all boys don't have any idea what you are doing!

The gospel is never about any one person's talent or way with words.

The gospel is about God's power to raise a man dead in his sins to new life in Christ.

The gospel is a display of God's greatness, never man's cleverness with the message.

And so first of all, Jesus tells them to....

Go your way....

Secondly, Jesus want the disciples to....

II. Show Your Dependence (8-9)

Verses 8 and 9...

⁸ and He instructed them that they should take nothing for their journey, except a mere staff—no bread, no^[f] bag, no money in their belt—⁹ but^[g] to wear sandals; and He added, “Do not put on two^[h] tunics.”

Here, we see Jesus give clear instructions on what they were to take on their journey.

Essentially, they would be travelling very light.

They could take their staff that they already had.

This would make their walking a little easier and could also be used for protection from people or animals.

Surprisingly, they were to take no food with them.

There were not to take a bag full of belongings.

They were not take any money.

And they could not wear 2 tunics.

They could wear their sandals.

Now, how does this sound for a trip?

Take your walking stick, one tunic and your sandals.

That's it. Nothing more.

I remember going to the beach my junior year of high school.

Me and 4 friends packed ourselves into a 1990 Chevy Spectrum.

If you don't know how big a chevy spectrum is, imagine a Smart Car and add about 2 inches to it.

So there's five guys in a phone booth of a car headed down I-20 to Myrtle Beach.

And you know what we essentially had?

Our car and our flip flops.

We had nowhere to stay.

We had no money for a hotel.

We had no suitcases.

There was no place to put them.

We just took off for a weekend at the beach just like that.

Once we got there, one of my friends had the bright idea that we park in a hotel parking lot and sleep on the lounge chairs around the pool.

That worked until hotel security ran us off around 2 am.

So, we drove around, parked in the lot of a 24 hour restaurant and slept in the car.

And I tell you that story as an illustration of how dumb we were to take off to the beach with no money and one set of clothes.

On the other hand, Jesus was incredibly wise to send out his disciples this way.

And he did it for two very important reasons.

First, it set them apart from the religious leaders of their day.

The Pharisees were known for their two tunic outfits.

They had the fancy clothes of their day.

They had fancy tassels on their robes.

And they always wore two or more tunics to show off their prosperity.

Only a common man wore one tunic.

Yet, that is what Jesus wanted the disciples to wear.

They were ordinary men going with a message to the common people of their day.

Their simple clothing would set them apart from the Jewish religious system of the day.

Pharisees were also known for their great wealth, - a wealth that came from exploiting the poor.

We will eventually meet a widow who puts in her last two mites to satisfy the oppression of the religious system of her day.

Yet those financial burdens placed upon the poor in that day made the religious leaders rich.

So, Jesus tells them to take no money with them.

They are not like the scribes and Pharisees who are in it for the money.

And that leads to the second reason for giving these instructions....

The disciples needed to see that God would provide for them.

They needed to learn to be dependent upon God while taking the gospel throughout Israel.

Eventually, Jesus would not be by their side in ministry.

So, they need to see that He can provide for them even when he is not physically beside them.

Now, this is not a call to Christian poverty.

Eventually, Jesus will send the disciples out again, and he will tell them to take a money bag with them.

He will tell them to live wisely in the world.

And there are people who are wealthy, yet their wealth is used to send the gospel farther into the world.

However, the principle here is to teach the disciples that God can and will provide for their needs.

So far, Jesus has told the disciples...

Go Your Way...

And Show Your Dependence....

But there is a third action to take here....

III. Know Your Reception (10-11)

Verse 10...

¹⁰ And He said to them, “Wherever you enter a house, stay there until you ^[1]leave town. ¹¹

This goes hand in hand with what we just saw...

When people in a town respond to the message to repent and believe the gospel....

Someone would invite the pair of disciples in the town to stay with them.

This was customary in the days before hotels.

As teachers moved from town to town, they would stay in houses.

But Jesus had a stipulation, stay at the same house the entire time that you are there.

When someone who has accepted your message invites you in, say yes.....

But stay at that same house until you leave town.

And the principle is this....

You don't need to show favoritism to anyone.

Even if a wealthier home owner responds on the second day in town and asks you to stay at his place...

You don't go.

Be loyal to the one that invited you first.

There is no house hopping...

You don't switch homes because the second home has a pool.

Returning to my unwise beach trip before, do you know why 5 of us packed into that tiny car?

He was the only one of us at the time who had a car.

So, he quickly became our best friend.

But guess what?

One of those guys got a new car a few months later, and though it was older car..

It was bigger, and he quickly became everyone's best friend.

And that is how the world operates...

They are only interested in things that give them the most benefit.

But that is not the way of Jesus and it should not be the way of his disciples.

Accept the hospitality when someone offers, but never take advantage of it for selfish reasons.

Yet the good news is that instruction was what?

Some people will respond favorably to your message.

But verse 11 brings the bad news....

11 Any place that does not receive you or listen to you, as you go out from there, shake the dust ⁱⁱoff the soles of your feet for a testimony against them.

Rejection of the message was coming.

And it was coming often.

Yet, that was to be expected.

Jesus just got rejected by his former hometown.

So, the disciple hopes were not that high.

And let me say this here.

What people reject is not the messenger but the message.

This is so important to remember when you share the gospel with me.

When you tell people that they are sinners before a holy God..

But that God has provided a Savior from that sin.

When you tell them that and they refuse to turn from their sin and trust in the Savior....

They are not rejecting you.

They are rejecting the message of what you are saying.

People refuse to see their need of being saved.

Most people don't see themselves in trouble.

And until they see themselves drowning in their sea of sin.

The life raft of Jesus is not that big of a deal.

And you aren't responsible to convince people of that.

Only the Holy Spirit can show someone the enormous size and utter blackness of their sin.

You simply point out the sin and tell of the Savior.

And when they reject that, they are rejecting you
they are rejecting God.

And Jesus tells the disciples to observe a common
Jewish practice in that day...

OF dusting off your feet when you leave a town that
has rejected you.

When Jews returned from a foreign land, they
would stop at Israel's borders and dust off their
shoes from a foreign land in order to not
contaminate Israel soil.

In the same way, the rejected disciples would dust
off their feet outside a city that rejects Jesus.

It is done as a testimony against them.

It is to show the seriousness of rejection.

It is a testimony that these Jewish towns are to be
regarded as Gentile territory.

And what a great reminder today...

You can be Jewish, live in Israel and pray to God...

But if you have rejected the Messiah Jesus Christ,
you are the same as a pagan.

And the same can be said for those in the church.

You can live every day in the church.

Have 50 years of perfect Sunday School attendance.

You may even have your name on the outside of the building....

But if you have rejected Jesus, you are no better than an unbeliever and possibly worse.

That is the seriousness of the gospel message of repentance and faith in Jesus.

If you get Jesus wrong, it doesn't matter what else you may have right.

If you get Jesus wrong, you get everything wrong in this world.

So, Jesus says, when they reject you, shake off the dust and move on.

And then finally....we see one last very important part of taking the gospel to the world...

You need to **GO YOUR WAY.**

You need to **SHOW YOUR DEPENDENCE.**

You need to **KNOW YOUR RECEPTION..**

But last and most importantly, you need to....

IV. Bellow Your Message (12-13)

Verse 12...

12 They went out and ^[k]preached that men should repent. 13 And they were casting out many demons and were anointing with oil many sick people and healing them.

Bellow simply means to cry out shout out...

And what exactly show we bellow to the world...

What should we say to the world..

Do we tell people that they simply need to love Jesus in order to be saved?

Do we tell them that they simply need to do more good works to be saved?

Do we tell them that they just need to start going to church to be saved?

What do we shout to the world?

The best place to see what to tell the world is in the Bible.

And the consistent cry from beginning to end is something that many pastors even refuse to preach.

Because it is an offensive word that is offensive to people.

But the message that Jesus preached and the message the disciples preached and the message that every Christian must preach is...

Right there in verse 12...

REPENT!

And though I don't have time to explore the incredible truth behind that word.

Here is what repentance is in a nutshell....

REMORSE.

REJECTION.

And **RELIANCE.**

True repentance is sorry for sinning against God.

That is remorse.

True repentance turns from sin.

Instead of chasing sin, a repentant person chases the Savior.

That is rejection.

Finally true repentance trusts only in Christ.

A repentant person stops relying upon their own goodness or lack of badness....

And simply trusts in the righteousness of Jesus alone to save them.

That is reliance.

When all of those combine, you find biblical repentance.

Without true repentance, there is no true salvation.

And that is why that message must be preached today.

That is why it has been preached throughout the age of the church.

That is why it was preached by the disciples, and more importantly that is why it was preached by Jesus Himself.

Repent for the kingdom of God is at hand.

And with that the disciples are sent on their way, and we will have to wait for a few weeks before they return and report what happened.

Conclusion

But I want to end with this before I close...

As we start a new year out, I pray that this would be a year in your own life where you carried Jesus to the world.

If we have learned anything today, it is this...

You don't have to be fancy in how you do it, the disciples wore one tunic.

You don't have to be a Bible scholar to do it, the disciples were a bunch of untrained men.

You don't have to have money to do it, the disciples carried no money or food with them.

But you do need a staff and shoes.

And that jumps simply means you need to be travelling to do it.

Every trip is an opportunity to share the gospel with the world.

Whether that is to work, to the doctor, to the store or the restaurant.

And I would urge you to pray these two things in advance.

God, give me the opportunities to proclaim your name.

And God give me the courage to do it...

I want to close with this well-known quote by Charles Spurgeon on the need to share the good news of salvation in the world....

“If sinners will be damned, at least let them leap to Hell over our bodies. And if they will perish, let them perish with our arms about their knees, imploring them to stay. If Hell must be filled, at least let it be filled in the teeth of our exertions, and let not one go there unwarned and unprayed for.”

Let us pray.