

Jesus Sends Out the Twelve

Lesson Text: Mark 3:13-19 **Devotional Reading:** Luke 9:1-6 **Background Scripture:** Mark 3:13-19; 6:6b-13

Time: A.D. 28 **Place:** Mountain in Galilee; Galilee

Lesson Aims:

- To show how Jesus equipped the disciples before He sent them out into the world to preach.
- To emphasize that Jesus never sends us to do His work in the world without equipping us.
- 3. To challenge His children to strive to do God's work in God's power.

Mark 3:13-19

¹³ Jesus went up on a mountainside and called to him those he wanted, and they came to him. ¹⁴ He appointed twelve^[a] that they might be with him and that he might send them out to preach ¹⁵ and to have authority to drive out demons. ¹⁶ These are the twelve he appointed: Simon (to whom he gave the name Peter), ¹⁷ James son of Zebedee and his brother John (to them he gave the name Boanerges, which means "sons of thunder"), ¹⁸ Andrew, Philip, Bartholomew, Matthew, Thomas, James son of Alphaeus, Thaddaeus, Simon the Zealot ¹⁹ and Judas Iscariot, who betrayed him.

Mark 6:6b-13

⁶ He was amazed at their lack of faith. Then Jesus went around teaching from village to village. ⁷ Calling the Twelve to him, he began to send them out two by two and gave them authority over impure spirits.

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. 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."

¹² They went out and preached that people should repent. ¹³ They drove out many demons and anointed many sick people with oil and healed them.

Introduction

Last week, our 17-year-old son acquired a gently used automobile from a dearly deceased great-uncle. Although this was our son's first car, he was not new to driving. In fact, he completed two segments of driver's education training, passed a rigorous driving road test, obtained a learner's permit, and logged in well over the required number of driving hours for a beginning driver all within the past year-and-a-half. But, because of high auto insurance in the city we once lived, and lower than expected school grades during his junior year, we chose not to get a car for him... right away. During this very cheerless time, however, he continued to drive-as a "learner"-his parents around. He would drive us to the grocery store, to the mall, to school to drop him off, to relatives' homes, and to church services. Whenever the car moved, it was he who navigated from behind the wheel.

Our job-as responsible parents and experienced drivers-was to instruct him in safe and disciplined driving skills. If he exceeded the speed limit, we quickly brought this to his attention. If he failed to acknowledge a yield sign, we would explain why this was a bad habit to begin forming. When he turned the music up too loudly, it was our duty to tell him that his first and foremost priority was driving, and not "bumping" to the latest song. And, sometimes it was necessary to have him pull the minivan over to the side of the road and exchange seats with him when he continued to exhibit poor driving skills in heavy traffic.

After getting his legal driver's license last week, and picking up his "new" car, he was allowed to immediately begin driving it by himself because he had completed a continual training period for many

months prior, and because his driving had improved tremendously. We felt that it was "time." All of the, "Where's your turn signal?" and "Put both hands on the steering wheel, please!" and "Pedestrians always have the right of way." and "Didn't you see that pothole?" remarks on my part were not completely pointless. His dad and I had been equipping him all along so that one day he would be able to safely drive a car by himself. He also has the duty as eldest sibling to set a good example for his two younger sisters who eagerly ride, watch, and comment on his car-handling technique offering him unwanted but "expert" driving tips at the drop of a dime.

In today's lesson, we read where Jesus chose and equipped his twelve apostles in much the same way as our son was prepared for his then-imminent solo drive. One day he may find himself in the role of "teacher" when he shows his sisters or his own children how to drive. The apostles were placed in the role of "teacher" after Jesus commissioned them to be mouthpieces, hands, and feet for Him.

Background

According to Luke, the calling of the twelve apostles was followed (apparently on the same day) by the teaching of the lesson we've come to call the "Sermon on the Mount." This has led one writer to refer to it as "The Ordination Address to the Twelve." These events were of tremendous importance to the ministry of Jesus. As part of His preparation before choosing the Twelve, He *"went out to a mountainside to pray, and spent the night praying to God"* (Luke 6:12).

It was probably sometime in A.D. 28 when Jesus "ordained" the twelve apostles. Several months would pass before the Master would send forth those Twelve on their mission. Note that the "calling and sending of the Twelve" can also be referenced in the following scriptures: Matthew 10:1-15, Mark 6:7-13, and Luke 9:1-6. Those wanting to get a broader account of this lesson would greatly benefit from studying all four gospel standpoints of the Twelve's call and dispatch.

His Selections - Mark 3:13-19

In a very general sense, there is little difference between an "apostle" and a "disciple." The two words are sometimes used interchangeably, but both terms refer to "passionate adherents of a movement or philosophy who seek to further that philosophy through teaching," and both are most often used to refer to the twelve men who were the original followers of Jesus Christ of Nazareth.

According to the Catholic Encyclopedia, "It is at once evident that in a Christian sense, everyone who had received a mission from God, or Christ, to man could be called 'Apostle.' In fact, however, it was reserved to those of the disciples who received this title from Christ." So it seems that while the Twelve Apostles were disciples, not all disciples are apostles.

The word "disciple" comes from the Latin *discipulus*, or pupil, or learner. "Apostle" comes from the Greek word *apostolos*, or delegate. The word "apostle" is the closest approximation to the Aramaic word "seliah," which referred to "those who were dispatched from the mother city by the rulers of the race on any foreign mission, especially such as were charged with collecting the tribute paid to the temple service."

1: What is the difference between an "apostle" and a "disciple?"

Jesus had to choose those men whom He wanted as His constant companions and learners to carry on the ministry He was beginning. These men were going to be learning what kind of people they should be, what they should believe, how they should live, and what and how they were to teach others. They would eventually be the commissioned ones for beginning a worldwide outreach with the gospel.

2: What important decision did Jesus have to make in today's lesson text? (Mark 3:13)

The Apostles' appointments were not to be made without careful consideration first; the entire future of the ministry would be resting upon them. Before making His choices, Luke 6:12 says that Jesus, "went out to the mountain to pray, and continued all night in prayer to God. And when it was day...." Jesus prepared by praying to His Father all day and all night long! Jesus-God in the flesh-consulted with His Father through earnest prayer. This is one of His many examples of disciplined prayer to us today. As children of the Most High God, when we pray, we exhibit an attitude of dependence upon God.

3: Why was this an important decision, and how did Jesus prepare for making it? (Mark 3:13, and Luke 6:12)

Mark expresses a double purpose for the ordination of these "twelve." First, they are to, "be with Him." This may reveal to us a "change of allegiance" in their hearts (see Peter's comment to Jesus in Mark 10:28). However, to "be with Him" does not imply that these twelve will just "hang out" with Jesus! He calls them so that they will be available to be sent, "out to preach, and to have power to heal sicknesses and to cast out demons."

In formally setting these men apart, Jesus has yet a third purpose in mind for them, one not mentioned by Mark: they are to become the foundation stones upon which Jesus' church is to be built (see Ephesians 2:20). This concept is far more extensive than the other two, and certainly has an importance beyond what any of the Twelve can comprehend at the time.

4: For what two purposes did Jesus choose the twelve men He did? (Mark 3:14-15)

It was going to take a while for this rough, untrained group to become what Jesus wanted. (Read Luke 9:51-56 for a good example of what Jesus was dealing with as it concerned His newly chosen apostles.)

In fact, anyone involved in any type of ministry must spend quality time alone with the Lord before engaging in that ministry. Whether it be: preaching, teaching, singing, witnessing, or one-on-one evangelism; the heart must be ready first.

5: Why was it so important that the Twelve spend time with Jesus before going out on their own? (Mark 3:14-15)

As Jesus sent the apostles forth, He commissioned each pair that they should be His representatives. They were to speak what He personally taught them; go where He told them to go. He sent them as extensions of Himself and His own work.

The apostles were authorized by Jesus to: 1) cast out unclean spirits, or exorcise demons from possessed people; 2) cleanse lepers, or heal diseases; and 3) raise the dead. This authorization was not within the apostles themselves--as it was supernaturally given and exercised; but it was given by Jesus, to God's glory.

6: What special authority did Jesus confer or bestow upon these men? (Mark 6:7 and Matthew 10:8)

Simon Peter is named as the first disciple in all four gospels' accounts. He is the most prominent of the Twelve and one of the great leaders of the early church. Although Peter denied the Lord during His last days, he eventually would go on to author the two epistles in the New Testament that bear his name. Peter was also the leader of what is described as Jesus' "inner circle" of disciples (see Mark 5:37; and 9:2).

7: Who is named as the first disciple in each list, and what roles did he eventually fill? (Matthew 10:2-4; Mark 3:16-19; Luke 6:14-16; and Acts 1:13)

His Commission-Mark 6:6b-13

As Jesus sent the apostles forth, He divided them into pairs and apparently commissioned each pair individually as His representatives.

Our congregation's evangelical ministry employs a systematic form of witnessing that is used to canvas our neighborhoods. To this end, a buddy system is used to provide specific advantages to going "out two by two." These include a pooling of spiritual wisdom and common sense, brotherly and sisterly fellowship, and much needed encouragement-not to mention the safety aspect of having a partner in the field. It also results in a more powerful testimony. As mentioned previously, many modern-day church "calling" programs follow this procedure, with significant results.

8: What took place at the commissioning service Jesus held, and what was the result? (Mark 6:6b-7)

Only essential items were to be taken on the "journey." No reason is given for the limitations, but perhaps Jesus did not want his emissaries or messengers to appear affluent. Such an appearance can give the wrong impression of discipleship. No one, then or now, should be induced to become a follower of Jesus for the material things that he or she can get out of following Him.

Jesus also prohibited them from taking any backpacks, food, money, or extra clothing. They were to wear sandals and only take one staff/walking stick with them. Their needs apparently were to be met by those among whom they labored. The barest of necessities were required for lighter travel.

9: What instructions were the disciples given regarding what to take on their mission? (Mark 6:8-9)

The Jews believe that even the "dust" of Gentiles/non-Jewish people is impure and is to be shaken "off" when leaving Gentile territory. By Jesus' instruction, those who reject His messengers are to be treated like profane, pagan Gentiles. This symbolic act was to be a testimony against them.

This act in essence would show that by rejecting Jesus' disciples the people were rejecting God and His message to them. This should have provoked serious thought on the part of those watching. It was the hope of Jesus and His disciples that this might cause some to reconsider and accept Him as their Messiah. If they would not, they would face great judgment.

10: How were they to handle rejection when it came? (Mark 6:11)

The message of repentance had been given repeatedly since the days of John the Baptist (see Mark 1:4, 14-15). Repentance is "taking God's side against sin." When Jesus began preaching, He echoed the same theme as John the Baptist. It is logical, then, that the apostles should preach a message of repentance.

This is a message that never becomes irrelevant. Certainly our times call for it. We need to repent of our practice of abortion, our immoral movies and TV programs, our drunkenness, and drug use, our immodest dress that we flaunt before people and God, our indifference to suffering, our disregard of law, and our greed that grows more excessive with each passing year.

Our preachers today, like the apostles of old, need to preach that people "should repent." When was the last time that you heard such a message from your church's pulpit?

11: What did the men preach, and how did they validate their Master? (Mark 6:12-13)

CONCLUSION

The results of the apostles' efforts were outstanding (Mark 6:13)! They exorcised "many demons," and "many sick" are made well. Although it is not said, we assume that many hearts were softened and many were made hard. The message of Jesus tends to have those two effects on people! But, those who refuse to repent face a dismal future (see Revelation 16:8-11).

An old poem says, "Christ has no hands but our hands to do His work today; He has no feet but our feet to lead men in His way." The poem is true. There is no other way for the work of Christ to be done except through people who respond when they hear His call to service. That is God's plan on how He chooses to accomplish the work of His kingdom.

Our service will certainly be different in significant ways from that of the Twelve. But God still expects us to respond.

PRACTICAL POINTS

1. Spending time with Jesus is a prerequisite for any effective work for Him (Mark 3:13-14).
2. No work we seek to do can be successful without the authority and power of Jesus (Mark 3:15, and John 15:5).
3. Trust Christ; He knows you better than anyone else does (Mark 3:16-17, and Psalms 139:1-6).
4. Beware; no matter how auspicious the group, betrayers may be present (Mark 3:18-19).
5. Jesus supplies all that is needed for those whom He sends out (Mark 6:6b-7). 6. We may be sent to preach, but only Christ can change people's lives (Mar 6:8-13)

PRAYER

Dear God and Father, we know there are still many sick and sinful people in this world. Help us to bind up the wounds of the physically ill and preach to the lost a message of repentance unto salvation. In Jesus' name, amen.

THOUGHT TO REMEMBER

"Jesus still calls people to be with Him and to go forth."