

Session 5

Sends

Jesus commissions His followers to point others to Him.

Mark 6:7-13,30-32



**What about your job matters to someone else—maybe someone you’ll never meet?
How does that affect the way you approach what you do?**

You get up in the morning, shower, and head to work. Hopefully, at the end of your day you finish with a sense of satisfaction. When you do something that matters for someone else, you know that your job is not just a job. It makes a difference. During His time on earth, Jesus prepared the disciples for a task that really mattered. It still does. When we fulfill His mission, we’re making a difference.

UNDERSTAND THE CONTEXT

Jesus demonstrated His power over things people truly fear. His miracles reinforced His message about the kingdom of God. His disciples had been witnesses to it all. They had heard Jesus’ parables and received instruction that others did not receive (Mark 4:1-20). They had seen Jesus calm a storm (4:35-41) and cast out demons (5:1-13)—proving He was Lord over both the natural and the supernatural. They had been there when He healed a woman (5:25-34). Peter, James, and John were present when Jesus did the unthinkable—He raised someone from the dead (5:35-43).

Along with acclaim, Jesus also faced rejection. Mark 6 opens with the account of Jesus’ homecoming to Nazareth. Instead of seeing Jesus for who He is, the residents of Nazareth could only see Him for what they thought He should be. To them, Jesus was the kid they had seen grow up. He was Mary’s son and the brother of their neighbors. They could not reconcile what they thought they knew with what Jesus claimed. Therefore, they stuck with what they knew. Jesus moved on because their unwillingness to recognize Him for who He really is was a hindrance to His ministry.

After leaving Nazareth, Mark described how the disciples, who had seen so much, were challenged to put what they had learned into practice. Mark wove two stories about the apostles—one about being sent out (6:7-13) and another about feeding a multitude (6:30-43)—around an explanation of John the Baptist’s death (6:8-29). In each situation, Jesus’ closest followers got a taste of what their future would be like as proclaimers of the gospel.

Chapter 6 concludes with more miraculous healing accounts (6:44-56), while chapter 7 opens with a now-familiar image—Jesus at odds with the religious leaders over His interpretation and application of the law (7:1-23).

MARK 6:7-13,30-32

7 He summoned **the Twelve** **A** and began to send them out in **pairs** **B** and gave them authority over unclean spirits. **8** He instructed them to **take nothing** **C** for the road except a staff—no bread, no traveling bag, no money in their belts, **9** but to **wear sandals** **D** and not put on an extra shirt. **10** He said to them, “Whenever you enter a house, stay there until you leave that place. **11** If any place does not welcome you or listen to you, when you leave there, shake the dust off your feet as a testimony against them.” **12** So they went out and preached that people should **repent** **E**. **13** They drove out many demons, anointed many sick people with oil and healed them. ... **30** The apostles gathered around Jesus and reported to him all that they had done and taught. **31** He said to them, “Come away by yourselves to a remote place and rest for a while.” For many people were coming and going, and they did not even have time to eat. **32** So they went away in the boat by themselves to a remote place.

Passage Outline

Sent By Jesus
(Mark 6:7)

Equipped By Jesus
(Mark 6:8-11)

Empowered By Jesus
(Mark 6:12-13)

Resting With Jesus
(Mark 6:30-32)

Keywords

- a. Jesus’ chosen disciples
(Mark 3:16-19)
- b. This practice ensured companionship, support, and fulfillment of the Old Testament requirement of two witnesses (Deut. 17:6; 19:15; 2 Cor. 13:1).
- c. They weren’t to make any provisions for their journey, depending on God to supply their needs.
- d. Mark said the disciples were to take a walking stick, belts, sandals, and one shirt—the same items God told the Israelites to take on their departure from Egypt in Exodus 12:11.
- e. The central message of the apostles’ ministry—that all people should change their minds and their lives.

EXPLORE THE TEXT

Bringing His followers together, Jesus paired them off and sent them out. To this point, the message of the kingdom had gone wherever Jesus had gone. His ministry expanded only where His feet could take Him. The disciples could move out in multiple directions so the gospel could spread. Mark specifically mentioned authority over unclean spirits. That could mean casting out demons as they had seen Jesus do or standing against the work of Satan as the devil attempted to blind people to the truth of the gospel.

All believers should be involved in ministry to others. To what degree do you agree with this statement? Explain.

KEY DOCTRINE: Stewardship – Christians have a spiritual debtorship to the whole world, a holy trusteeship in the gospel, and a binding stewardship in their possessions (1 Cor. 4:1-2).

Jesus told the disciples to travel light. The only thing they needed was a walking stick. He even told them to leave behind the basic necessities of life. They could take sandals, but they didn't need to pack an extra shirt. What they had on their backs would be enough to accomplish what they had been called to do. Jesus instructed His followers to find a suitable place to stay when they reached their destination. Once they had secured a spot, they were to remain there until they were ready to leave town. While a host in one city might receive the disciples graciously, that was no guarantee the residents of that village would accept the message of the kingdom. For the disciples, shaking the dust off their feet was essentially a sign of warning and judgment. Jesus stated that this action would be a testimony to the unbelief of the city.

When is it appropriate to “shake off the dust” and give up on a particular person? What are some things that might lead someone to that decision?

Jesus had promised they would have power over demons, and Mark recorded that they took advantage of that promise. They also were able to heal many sick people. In doing so, they demonstrated that they were working under the same authority as Jesus worked. While they had no claim of divinity as Jesus did, they had the power of God working in their lives.

What does acting in the name of Jesus look like in our world? How does Jesus empower believers to do His work?

Jesus already knew what kind of powerful things had occurred in the lives of the disciples and in the people they helped. He had given them the authority and power to accomplish that task. But the disciples needed a chance to tell their story—and to be encouraged by the stories of others. They needed a chance to celebrate God's power and goodness.

Does taking time to rest reflect weakness or strength? What shapes your answer to that question?

APPLY THE TEXT

- Jesus expects all His followers to be a part of His ministry.
- We can trust Jesus to provide for the needs of those He sends to do His work.
- Jesus empowers His followers to preach and act in His name.
- Those whom Jesus calls to serve He also calls to rest and renewal.

What role are you fulfilling for the kingdom right now? Ask God to show you new areas to which He might be calling you.

As a group, share times when God proved Himself faithful by providing for a ministry need in your life.

What are some things you can do to refresh yourself spiritually? How can you encourage other believers to renew themselves spiritually?

Prayer Requests



DAILY EXPLORATION

Day 1: Believers should share the gospel.

Read Mark 6:7, noting Jesus' instructions to His disciples.

While Jesus sent the disciples out in pairs, contemporary believers should not think this is the only method for evangelism. In Jesus' day, truth was established by the testimony of two or more people (Deut. 17:6). Today, it provides a sense of unity as members of the body of Christ work together. It also offers security and support, along with an important degree of accountability.

One-on-one evangelism can also have powerful results. Many unbelievers might feel less intimidated or be more open to the message coming from an individual. Plus, one-on-one evangelism allows a believer to invest in someone's life over time and opens the door for conversations about faith—dialogues rather than monologues.

The key issue is obedience in every context—being prepared to fulfill God's mission alone or with others. The Greek wording for send them out is related to the English word "apostle." All believers are called to be on mission and to share God's truth with others.

How are you involved in ministry to others? With whom are you sharing the gospel?

Day 2: Jesus meets our needs.

Read Mark 6:8-9, considering what Jesus asked His followers to leave behind.

Jesus was not trying to deprive His followers of their basic needs. This was a short-term training mission, so they didn't need a lot of material things. Plus, He was teaching them a lesson about faith. In the future, they would be in situations where the deprivation wasn't voluntary. If they learned to trust Him to meet their needs now, they would be ready to trust Him later.

Jesus also wanted to remove any questions the disciples' audience might have. For instance, the traveling bag may have referred to a sack that beggars would use to get money from other people. Jesus did not want the disciples to be beggars, and He did not want people thinking they were trying to get money from them. So, it was better to leave something like that behind to maintain the integrity of the message.

The less the disciples had to manage, the more they could focus on the message and the mission. Material possessions are fine, as long as they don't create distractions. It helps to remember that all we have is a gift from God in the first place. When we keep that perspective and remember that we are to trust God and not our things, we can fulfill the mission God calls us to perform.

What lesson can you learn from Jesus' instructions? What material items might you need to let go of to better focus on your mission for God?

Day 3: Telling others about Jesus is fulfilling the task He has given us.

Read Mark 6:10-11, identifying the steps the disciples were to take when a city was not welcoming.

In the first century, inns were few and far between. Jesus told His disciples to go a different route—one that would again require them to trust God for provision. Choosing to stay in one place would also encourage them to be content with what the Lord had provided. Instead of always looking for a “better offer,” they were instructed to be satisfied with their situation and to show gratitude for it.

While a host in one city might receive the disciples graciously, that was no guarantee that the residents of the village would accept the message of the kingdom. In the first century, devout Jews who had traveled through Gentile territory would shake the dust from that region off of their clothes so they would not be defiled or have any association with the foreign land. Jesus stated that this action would be a testimony to the unbelief of the city.

This instruction is a good reminder to believers today that we are responsible for sharing the message of truth, but we are not responsible for the response or the results. If we are faithful in telling others, we are fulfilling our task.

When is it appropriate to “shake off the dust” and give up on a particular person in your life? What are some things that might lead you to that decision?

Day 4: The gospel is a powerful message.

Read Mark 6:12-13, highlighting verse 12.

Just as the disciples had been commanded to trust God with their needs, they also were entrusted with a particular message to share: repentance. The gospel is founded on grace, but its goal is eternal life through repentance. The idea of repentance literally means to “turn around.” Those who experience true repentance understand that they are heading the wrong way, so they change direction and begin moving back toward God.

The call to repentance was essential to John the Baptist’s message (Mark 1:4-5), and Jesus also made it the basis of His teaching (1:14-15). Now, as representatives of Jesus, the disciples spread the same message. We are called to share the same message today, challenging people to turn from their old way of living and toward the new life offered by Christ.

The message of the gospel has power of its own. God’s provision not only included a powerful message, He also allowed the disciples to perform powerful miracles. As they preached, their words were affirmed through physical and spiritual healings.

What does acting in the name of Jesus look like in your world?

Day 5: Believers should testify to what was done in Jesus' name.

Read Mark 6:30-32, underlining verse 30.

When the disciples came back from their ministry time, Jesus gave them an opportunity to report. Mark used the term apostles to designate the group who had gone, and the term is accurate. The Greek word used describes someone who was sent—and went—on a mission. Now that they had fulfilled that mission, they had the opportunity to testify to all that they had done and taught.

BIBLE SKILL: Use a concordance and/or Bible dictionary (either print or on the Internet) to learn more about the Twelve whom Jesus sent out. – Use a concordance to find references in the New Testament to “disciple” and “apostle,” terms Mark used to refer to the Twelve (6:30,35). Look up each word in a Bible dictionary.

What is the meaning of each term? How are the terms used differently in the Gospels and in the rest of the New Testament?

TALK IT OUT

Reflect on the truths found in Mark 6, sharing with two other members of your Bible study group.

What is the significance of Jesus' giving His followers His authority?
What are the dangers of followers who go on their own authority?

How can we communicate the need for repentance to someone we know well? To someone we don't know well?

How does it help to share both victories and frustrations as you minister in Jesus' name?



For additional context, read “Authority: A Word Study” in the Spring 2019 issue of *Biblical Illustrator*. Available at LifeWay.com/BiblicalIllustrator.