



THE GOSPEL OF MARK

Study Guide Full
Mark 6:6b-13
October 27, 2019

Rooted in the faith that saw Jesus calm the storm in Mark 4, and in Mark 5 heal the bleeding woman and raise “the sleeping” daughter of Jairus, the disciples—and we, necessarily by extension—are sent out as missionaries.

As Anthony reminds us, at the heart of our identity as disciples, as Christ followers, is the truth that **we are all missionaries**. It is thus our prayer that the questions in this Study Guide this week will encourage you to think and dialogue deeply about how you are living as the ones sent by the sending God.



*Jesus Sending Forth the
Apostles*
Duccio Buoninsegna
13th Century
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6b *And he went about among the villages teaching.*

7 *And he called the twelve and began to send them out two by two, and gave them authority over the unclean spirits. 8 He charged them to take nothing for their journey except a staff—no bread, no bag, no money in their belts— 9 but to wear sandals and not put on two tunics. 10 And he said to them, “Whenever you enter a house, stay there until you depart from there. 11 And if any place will not receive you and they will not listen to you, when you leave, shake off the dust that is on your feet as a testimony against them.” 12 So they went out and proclaimed that people should repent. 13 And they cast out many demons and anointed with oil many who were sick and healed them.*

Mark 6:6b-13

Notes:

Commentary Notes:

v. 6b. Jesus continues to teach, not discouraged by the cold reception and the narrow opinions of the hometown crowd of Nazareth.

There is some disagreement among translators and commentators as to whether verse 6b, “And he went about among the villages teaching,” is better located with verses 1-6, or verses 7-13. If we take the verse with this week’s passage, then it is likely as a result of his village teaching that he decides to send out the 12.

v. 7. In Mark 1, Jesus had called his disciples to follow him and become fishers of men (1:17). In Mark 3, he appointed them to be with him and to preach and to cast out demons. Now, emphasizing their continued authority over

Discussion Questions:

Reflect: Who was one of the most effective teachers in your life? Why do you think that were they so helpful in teaching you? What about their teaching content or style do you still remember?

Discern: In what ways is Jesus sending you out to your “villages” to teach? Noting that κώμη (*kome*) usually refers to

unclean spirits, he sends them out.

The verb here to send is the common Greek verb ἀποστέλλω (*apostello*), which often carries with it a sense of official representation—as in being sent out to achieve a particular objective on behalf of another party. In this sense, Jesus sends out his disciples to be his delegates, imbued with his power and message to reveal the kingdom of God.

v 8. It is helpful to note the cultural associations of these items. The “staff” or “rod”, ῥάβδος (*rabdos*), was used regularly by travelers for protection. The “bag”, πήρα (*pera*), was a kind of traveler’s knapsack usually used for food. The command is at its essence, one to encourage complete dependence upon God and the hospitality of others.

James Voelz’s *Concordia Commentary* (p. 393) interestingly points out that Cynic philosophers (the ancient philosophers who were concerned with finding the path to the

a relatively small community, ask yourself: a) Who are those small groups of people naturally in your life to whom God is sending you? b) How are you “teaching” them, in word and deed?

Discern: Just as Jesus had first called the disciples two by two in Mark 1, so does he send them out two by two here. Discern: How can we walk *together* in teaching the truths about the kingdom of God? For support, protection, and witness, what might it look like team-up, “sharing” neighbours, coworkers, acquaintances whom we long to encounter Christ?

Discuss: As followers of Jesus in the 21st century, what does it mean for us to have Jesus’ authority over unclean spirits? While not diminishing the reality of unclean spirits, how can we tie our authority in Christ to systemic social, political, economic evils?

Encourage: Have you experienced a time in your life when, having to depend radically upon God, you saw God meet your needs, particularly through the provision and blessings of community? Sit silently upon this question for a couple of minutes, and then encourage one another if you have such a testimony.

Confess: In what ways does your heart hear this week’s passage and respond fearfully, doubting the wisdom of depending totally upon God? Search your heart, and if comfortable, confess to one another, receiving afresh his forgiveness.

Discuss: Keeping in mind the commentary note about the Cynic philosophers (aside), consider: What does

virtuous life) were quoted as carrying precisely some of these items—a double cloak, a traveler’s knapsack, a traveler’s staff—in the interest of self-sufficiency.

v. 9. As regards the single “tunic” or “cloak”, it may be that an extra tunic was helpful as cover from chilly night air; Jesus wanted the disciples trust to include the nightly needs of lodging. However, the Church Father Augustine, in his *Harmony of the Gospels*, offers additional food for thought: “What is forbidden is neither the carrying nor the possessing of two coats, but more distinctly the wearing of two coats at the same time...What counsel is conveyed by this? They ought to walk not in duplicity, but in simplicity.”

v. 10. In his *Expositor’s Commentary*, Mark Strauss suggests that this command to stay in one home aimed to counter the human tendency to move up the social ladder: as friendships developed over time, especially with more influential people, more attractive lodgings would be offered to the disciples; accepting those offers would likely sew favoritism and disunity.

v. 11. The Jewish custom of shaking off the dust was a matter of distinction and warning: for Jews, the dust of non-believers was defiling, and so the action pronounced a place to be heathen, and its people to be judged.

vv. 12-13. Those who rejected the message of the kingdom of God and who were covered in the condemning dust of the disciples still had a chance to repent; judgment was to stir repentance, and to bring about the healing of the kingdom of God.

contemporary Vancouver culture have to say about self-sufficiency? Is self-sufficiency valued?

Discuss: How universal are these “packing” commands for us, the church sent out by the Sending God, in the 21st century?

Discuss: How do these verses speak to us as we look forward to a renovated building? How are we to approach that building with the right mindset?

Reflect: How are you doing in terms of “entering a house and staying there”? In living as Christ’s sent ones, are we taking the time to develop meaningfully deep relationships with non-believers? If not, why not?

Discuss: How might this practice of shaking off the dust, interpreted metaphorically, be liberating for us who are sent out into our corners of Vancouver by Christ’s authority?

Pray: Pray that we would truly be Christ’s ambassadors at FBC—ones sent into our city to reveal the kingdom of God, wholly depending on God and others.