

ON MISSION

MARK 6:7-13

Mark 6:7 And he called unto him the twelve, and began to send them forth by two and two; and gave them power over unclean spirits; 8 And commanded them that they should take nothing for their journey, save a staff only; no scrip, no bread, no money in their purse: 9 But be shod with sandals; and not put on two coats.

10 And he said unto them, In what place soever ye enter into an house, there abide till ye depart from that place. 11 And whosoever shall not receive you, nor hear you, when ye depart thence, shake off the dust under your feet for a testimony against them. Verily I say unto you, It shall be more tolerable for Sodom and Gomorrha in the day of judgment, than for that city.

12 And they went out, and preached that men should repent. 13 And they cast out many devils, and anointed with oil many that were sick, and healed them.

May 22, 2016

Introduction:

I read the story in Readers Digest of a newly married flight engineer with the Air Force who had planned a weekend getaway with his new bride. But on Friday, his squadron called and told him he was to leave the next afternoon for an eight-day mission.

His wife was obviously disappointed.

"Don't you get weekends off like normal people?" she asked.

He gently explained that as a member of the US Air force he was on call 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.

She looked longingly into his eyes and said "But, honey, couldn't you just explain to them that we had plans?" (*Reader's Digest 9/95 p. 51*)

This is Armed Forces Day weekend.

It's a day we set aside to remember the dedication and sacrifice of our active Armed Forces. They are people who understand they can't just explain they have plans. These young men and women answer the nation's call. They are serious about doing a serious job. They set aside their own dreams and serve by protecting our nation and its people. And they are on call 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. They understand that they are not to shrink from their duties... no matter what the cost

As a Christian, we are called to a spiritual warfare. We also have a serious task laid out before us...on call 24 hours a day...365 days a year.

Early in Jesus' ministry, He sent His recently selected disciples on a mission into lands controlled by the enemy. It was not a secret mission; they were to fully present themselves to the enemy in their territory. The plan was to send them on their mission, two-by-two, supporting each other. Jesus gave them their marching orders:

1. The Urgency of the Message is Critical, pack light, I have your back.

1. Time was precious, reject the rejecters of the message, abide with the receivers
2. Preach the Message and Care for the wounded. (cast out devils, cure diseases, heal the sick)
3. Repent and Deliver the Message of the Kingdom of Heaven

Mark 6:7-13	Luke 9:3-5
a) they should take nothing for their journey save a staff only c) no scrip d) no bread (pouch for food) e) no money in their purse: f) But be shod with sandals; and not put on two coats. g) And he said unto them, In what place soever ye enter into an house, there abide till ye depart from that place. h) And whosoever shall not receive you, nor hear you, when ye depart thence, shake off the dust under your feet for a testimony against them..	Luke 9:3 And he said unto them, a) Take nothing for <i>your</i> journey, b) neither staves c) nor scrip (pouch for food) d) neither bread e) neither money f) neither have two coats apiece g) And whatsoever house ye enter into, there abide, and thence depart. h) And whosoever will not receive you, when ye go out of that city, shake off the very dust from your feet for a testimony against them.

The Great Shepherd was sending His lambs out amount the wolves. Jesus selected as their first mission to send the 12 to witness to the Children of Israel on His behalf. The best way to prepare them was, “On-the-job” training. Their only message; “repent.”

What can we glean from Jesus instructions?

Travel Light – Understanding the Urgency of the Message and not getting distracted with extra stuff

Linda and I just returned from France for 12 days. That is two plus days just in flights alone. The weather report was for rain, 20% or greater every day. Highs in the mid 60’s. How do you plan your wardrobe? We ended up taking more than we needed which ultimately meant we took pounds of extra weight we didn’t need. When traveling abroad it is important to take what you need, but not one ounce more.

This was the message Jesus was giving to his followers. There was an urgency to the message they were to preach and therefore, go quickly and take only what you need. Nothing more. It is almost as if He was saying “Do what I say, I will take care of the rest.

Jesus wanted them to concentrate on the mission trip and the message they were to deliver. “Don’t sweat the small stuff, and it’s all small stuff.”¹.

¹ Carlson, Richard, *Don’t Sweat the Small Stuff; and Its All Small Stuff*, Hachette Books

Look what they were to pack:

*take nothing for their journey, save a staff only; no scrip, no bread, no money in their purse: 9
But be shod with sandals; and not put on two coats.*

“...take nothing for the journey”. At first we might think this is a strange and uncaring request on the part of the Rabbi. But as we will see, the Apostles needed to learn how to trust Jesus, in every aspect of their mission. Trusting in leadership has to be earned by following orders.

In Luke ‘s account (Luke 22:35) there is an encounter when they returned from their mission. Jesus asked them,

“When I sent you without purse, bag or sandals, did you lack anything?” They responded, “Nothing,”

Trust must be earned and the lesson confirmed.

Jesus is the Good Shepherd and as His sheep, He would supply “...all heir need, according to His riches in Glory.”

The exception to the rule was:

- A staff
- The shoes on their own feet
- The coat on their back

There is an Urgency of the Message, it is Critical, pack light, I have your back.

Time was precious, - Reject the Rejecters, Disciple the Receivers

10 And he said unto them, In what place soever ye enter into an house, there abide till ye depart from that place. 11 And whosoever shall not receive you, nor hear you, when ye depart thence, shake off the dust under your feet for a testimony against them. Verily I say unto you, It shall be more tolerable for Sodom and Gomorrhah in the day of judgment, than for that city.

Once again this may seem like a strange command. They were to preach to everyone who they came into contact with. And yet the Master told them not to waste time on those who would reject the message they preached, or not give them hospitality.

I have friends who don’t necessarily want to be around me for long periods of time, as the subject of Jesus is going to come up. You see they just don’t want to hear about the Gospel. Sports, television, music, politics they will gladly join in on the conversation. But let’s don’t take this “Jesus” thing so seriously.

It is hard for me to consider that those who do not have a relationship with Jesus are not concerned with knowing him.

Jesus knew they might get discouraged when people rejected the message. He later told them that the people were not rejecting them, they were rejecting Jesus and the message of God.” Basically He was saying, “Don’t worry about it.”

The Apostle Paul had the same lesson for Timothy:

But foolish and unlearned questions avoid, knowing that they do gender strifes. And the servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient, In meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth; And that they may recover themselves out of the snare of the devil, who are taken captive by him at his will. 2 Timothy 2:23-26 KJV

Let's relate this to fishing. I am not a "die-hard" fisherman. I enjoy the time spent fishing with others, but I don't go fishing without the camaraderie of others. I like the fellowship of fishermen to fishing.

When invited, I would go with a couple of deacons on their boats to fish, normally when one of my grandsons was staying with us in East Texas. We would let loose the lines from the dock and go out in search for the "big one." We would find a spot where we had caught fish before, cast out our lines and wait. Most of the time, we would not even get a nibble. When that happens, the general consensus is to move to another spot. It would be ridiculous to spend hours fishing in an area where either, (a) there were no fish, or (b) the fish weren't interested.

You cannot talk those fish into biting the bait on the hook or just jumping into the boat. So you go to where the fish are hungry. You move to where they are, not to where you currently are. All you have to do is find the fish that are hungry.

When Jesus called Simon called Peter and his brother Andrew, fishermen by trade, he told them that if they followed him, they would become "fishers of men." (Matthew 4:19; Mark 1:7)

So in instance, Jesus told the disciples to go where the people would be hungry to hear the word.

Lesson Number One; The Urgency of the Message is Critical, pack light, I have your back.

Lesson Number Two; Time was precious, reject the rejecters and disciple the receivers

Preach Repentance and Care for the wounded. (cast out devils, cure diseases, heal the sick)

12 And they went out, and preached that men should repent. 13 And they cast out many devils, and anointed with oil many that were sick, and healed them.

May I say that the Gospels do not inform us of any questions the disciples might have asked? Nor do they identify any concern, doubts or concerns on their part. Instead they simply went out. They did what they were told to do like any good soldier. The Master said "go" and they went.

Their message was simple in delivery and yet drilled down to the core of the issue surrounding men, "Repent." In order to enter the Kingdom of Heaven, man must repent from their ways.

The account in the Gospel of Matthew says:

Matthew 10:7 And as ye go, preach, saying, The kingdom of heaven is at hand. 8 Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out devils: freely ye have received, freely give.

If there was such a thing as marketing the mission that the Apostles was on, it would be to heal, cleans, raise the dead and cast out devils. By doing these actions people will respond to the miracles and want to hear the message that they would say after performing miracles.

People will always be found with disease. Loss of life is an everyday event. While leprosy is not as prevalent as it once was, other diseases have taken its place like cancer. And the world is following the

devil as the “Pied Piper.” He plays the music that draws the masses and they need to have the demons driven out, so the Holy Spirit can enter.

Jesus gave them power so that they could “Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out devils.” But it doesn’t end there. Notice the last phrase of this verse with me:

...*freely ye have received, freely give* – We do not hear of any of the Apostles that were sick. None were lepers. None were dead. None were devil infested. The message wasn’t about these miracles. It was about entering the Kingdom of Heaven. This was freely given to the Apostles. They gave up their lives to follow Jesus. They made a decision to repent. They have been freely given eternal life. They have been freely given a place in the Kingdom of Heaven. They have been freely given a life without penalty of sin. They have been freely given a life to follow Jesus.

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Lesson Number Three; Preach Repentance and Care for the wounded. (cast out devils, cure diseases, heal the sick)

Deliver the Message of the Kingdom of Heaven

Why aren’t people flocking to hear the message of the Cross today at 4393 W. US Highway 190 in Belton, Texas? Why aren’t we having two or three services every Sunday? I can tell you why: there are more “nones” than ever before in the church.

The “nones” do not want to:

Read their Bible every day

Pray and fast before a holy God

Continue in the sin that they have become so comfortable with

Witness to their family, friends, neighbor or those that God puts in their path

Only want to give lip service to their Savior when action is needed

Do not want to rescue folks from eternal hell

Throw out a lifeline to those that are ready to hear the message

Have not witnessed or led anyone to a saving relationship with Jesus in the last three years.

Care about Jesus and His church, that they are having “none” of the church

Live the moral purity of the Bible, people professing their Christianity are living together instead of marriage

Back in 1620, the pilgrims landed on the shores of America and they founded a civilization that was dedicated to God. They prayed and worshipped all the time and they did their best to live as servants of God. They were a people that you and I would have been proud to know and would have enjoyed being around.

But about 100 years later the nation went from being a land filled with people who wanted to worship God to a land filled with immorality and impurity. America became a nation filled with “nones”! Getting drunk, and living like you wanted to was the rule of the day, and there were more people living together than those who were married.

America had become a land of “nones”. They had become a people who were having NONE of God’s rules and authority in their lives.

Conclusion

I started this message concerning that this was Armed Forces Day. And like the servicemen that protect us from the enemy, the Christian is also in a war with superior numbers. Jesus declaration to His followers then, can be the battle cry of the 21st century Christian:

Lesson Number One; The Urgency of the Message is Critical, pack light, I have your back.

Lesson Number Two; Time was precious, reject the rejecters and disciple the receivers

Lesson Number Three; Preach Repentance and Care for the wounded. (cast out devils, cure diseases, heal the sick)

Lesson Number Four; Deliver the Message of the Kingdom of Heaven