**Jesus Made the Twelve into Apostles**

May 24, 2020

Mark 6:1-13

Key Verse 6:7 “Calling the Twelve to him, he began to send them out two by two and gave them authority over impure spirits.”

Apostle means “the one who is sent; King’s representative.” Verse 6:30 says, “The apostles gathered around Jesus and reported to him all they had done and taught.” They were called apostles. The twelve were promoted to apostles, namely, they were elevated from students to the level of preachers. A disciple is a student; an apostle is a sent one. A disciple is a learner; an apostle is a preacher. A disciple is one gathered in for instruction; an apostle is one sent out for proclamation. It was time now for them to go out. This is a crucial transition point in Jesus’ ministry. The world in which Jesus lived looked dark. There were many unbelieving people especially in his hometown, and the political rulers such as King Herod were immoral and there was no justice. Jesus has only one year left before he would be crucified. He was always surrounded by the crowd who demanded healing. He couldn’t barely eat a meal, let alone go from town to town, with that kind of crowd crushing him. The work was just too much. The workers were few. But Jesus did not despair. Jesus sent his disciples out with power to drive out demons. He multiplied the number of preachers and the number of miracle workers. The final sending of the Twelve did not come until after the resurrection in Mark 16:15, “Go into all the world and preach the gospel to all creation.” This was their short-term mission. In this way, Jesus raised the gospel workers for the kingdom of God.

I. Jesus was rejected in his hometown (1-6a).

Jesus had been in Capernaum. Jesus had revealed that he is the Lord of nature, the Lord who heals chronic disease, and the Lord of life who raised the dead. Then Jesus left the vicinity of Capernaum and went to his hometown of Nazareth, about 20 miles to the southwest. This is not a private family visit; He came for public ministry. About a year earlier, he visited Nazareth, where he declared himself to be the Messiah. (Lk 4:21) Then they tried to kill him. This time he brought his disciples. Why? Because they were going to learn a lesson about rejections. It is part of their preparation for their missionary life. Later in verses 7 to 13, Jesus sends them out on their first trial run, and they are going to experience rejection. So here is an opportunity for them to see it firsthand.

When the Sabbath came, Jesus went into the synagogue and began to teach. Jesus’ message had power and authority. When people heard him, they were amazed, and said many amens. Then they should have obeyed his teaching. Instead, they asked, “Where did this man get these things?” They called him “the carpenter,” despising him as a common laborer. They called him “Mary’s son,” referring to the circumstances of his birth: It must have been well known that Mary was pregnant before marriage. So it was a derogatory term, implying that Jesus was an illegitimate child. They also pointed out that Jesus’ brothers and sisters were ordinary people just like them. They concluded that Jesus was presumptuous for preaching to them and they took offense at him. What a contrast they make to those who just believed. Jairus just believed in Jesus’ word and fought against fear. Then he experienced the power of Jesus to raise his daughter to life. A bleeding woman touched Jesus with faith and was healed of her chronic disease. The hometown people had enough evidence to conclude that Jesus was God’s servant and to believe his message. But they discredited him and did not believe. Mark says that Jesus could not do any miracles there. The sick remained sick, and the demon-possessed remained as they were. These people missed Jesus’ blessing. Jesus said, “A prophet is without honor among his relatives and in his own home.” It is the same as the English expression, “Familiarity breeds contempt.” It means that the more acquainted one becomes with a person, the more one knows about his or her shortcomings and, hence, the easier it is to dislike that person. Those who grow up in a Christian family are familiar with Bible and they think they know the Bible when in fact they don’t know. So it is easy for them to have contempt for Bible study. We studied Matthew’s gospel last year. It is easy to say that since Mark’s gospel is similar to Matthew’s gospel, we know it and hence we have nothing to learn. We need to be very careful that we do not take the Bible study for granted, and miss the truth of God’s word.

II. Jesus sends out the Twelve (6b-7)

Jesus could have become discouraged by his hometown people’s lack of faith and their rejection of him as the Son of God. He could have despaired and done nothing for weeks and weeks. Instead, he acted positively. What did he do? He continued to go from village to village and preach the word of God. Then, he went one step further. He sent the Twelve out on their first missionary journey. Look at verse 7. “Calling the Twelve to him, he sent them out two by two and gave them authority over impure spirits.” Jesus made the Twelve into apostles. Jesus looks like a commanding general who attacks his enemy on the battlefield. The spirit of Jesus is to advance, advance, always advance. We learn several things from Jesus who sent out the Twelve.

**First**, Jesus had a vision to spread the gospel through his disciples. Jesus loved his disciples as his own family members. They were all very dear to him and he wanted to be with them always. However, the purpose of their calling was not merely to hang around with Jesus. It was to preach the kingdom of God to the whole world. To attain this vision, Jesus helped them step by step. Until now, Jesus had shown them his divine character and example of serving through life together. It was an observation period. Now they were entering the practical training period. They would go out and do what they had seen Jesus doing. Bible students must grow to become Bible teachers. We should help them step by step to go out and evangelize.

**Second**, Jesus gave them authority over impure spirits. The only thing Jesus gave them was authority over impure spirits. Jesus displayed this authority throughout his ministry. Once, Jesus preached in a synagogue in Capernaum. An impure spirit caused a man to react strongly against Jesus. Then Jesus said, “Be quiet! Come out of him!” The impure spirit shook the man violently and came out of him with a shriek. In Gerasa, Jesus met a man possessed by a legion of demons. Jesus said, “Come out of this man, you impure spirit!” The impure spirit was exposed, shaken and subdued. As we know, demons do not move by the power of money, or by the threat of nuclear bombs. But at one word of Jesus, demons are driven out. This is the authority of Jesus. Jesus gave this authority to his disciples. The disciples did not earn it or deserve it, it was given to them freely by Jesus. This was all they needed for a successful evangelistic campaign. Jesus still gives his disciples power to drive out demons in his name.

**Third**, Jesus sent them two by two. Why did Jesus send them out two by two? This is because each person can help support the other. Ecclesiastes 4:9-12 says, “Two are better than one…If one falls down, his friend can pick him up. But pity the man who falls and has no one to pick him up! Though one may be overpowered, two can defend themselves. A cord of three strands is not quickly broken.” Here the third strand refers to God. When two are united together, God is there with them and they become a powerful force.

III. Jesus’ instructions and the advance of God’s kingdom (8-13).

Some people think that as servants of Jesus, we must live totally by inspiration and do freely whatever we feel is right at the time. This is not true. Servants of Jesus must follow Jesus’ instructions. Just as good cooks follow the recipe to make a delicious meal, Jesus’ servants must

follow his instructions to have a successful ministry. Let’s see what Jesus’ three instructions are.

**First**, depend on God alone. Look at verses 8-9. “These were his instructions: ‘Take nothing for

the journey except a staff–no bread, no bag, no money in your belts. Wear sandals but not an extra shirt.’” God’s work is not done by money or an organization. God’s work is done by the Spirit of God through those who depend on God. When UBF ministry began in Korea, students were very poor. Many church leaders told Dr. Samuel Lee that they could not do mission work because they had no money. But God’s servants believed that Jesus could do mission work through them without money. They depended on God alone, by faith. Now we see that more than 1,500 missionaries have gone out to over 90 nations of the world through UBF ministry. To be fruitful gospel workers, we must depend on God, and God alone.

**Second**, stay in one place. Look at verse 10. “Whenever you enter a house, stay there until you leave that town.” Jesus’ disciples should not move around seeking better accommodations or better food. Even if they are given only salad, they should thank God. When God leads them to a house, they must stay there and make friends with that person or family. They must commit themselves in one place until the gospel is planted there. Then the seed of the kingdom will grow and bear fruit in that family and community.

**Third**, anticipate rejection (11). Look at verse 11. “And if any place will not welcome you or listen to you, shake the dust off your feet as testimony against them.” The disciples were instructed to accept the hospitality which was offered to them. However, they were not to compromise with the people’s sins. Rather, they were to rebuke those who did not accept the message. They were to do so by shaking the dust off their feet as a testimony against those who did not welcome them and listen to them. Back in those days, this meant not associating with these people. The action of Jesus’ disciples’ shaking the dust off of their feet did not mean that everyone who rejected them was at that moment irrevocably doomed. Since the people would have understood the action as marking them off as unclean, it would give them something to think about. We must consistently warn people of the wrath of God even when they reject us. Later, they may think on that warning, and God may use it to bring them to faith. When people reject the servants of God and the message from them, they are actually rejecting God himself. Jesus said in Luke 10:16, “He who listens to you listens to me; he who rejects you rejects me; but he who rejects me rejects him who sent me.” We should not take their rejection personally. When Jesus gave the disciples these instructions, he clearly wanted them to believe in the superiority of the gospel. They must have confidence in the gospel and teach people by their attitude that the gospel is absolute and it should be taken seriously. Jesus teaches us that we must anticipate rejection, and not get discouraged or give up when we are rejected.

What was the disciples’ message and what was the result of their fieldwork training? Look at verses 12-13. “They went out and preached that people should repent. They drove out many demons and anointed many sick people with oil and healed them.” The disciples’ message was simple and clear. It was “repent.” We see here that the disciples delivered the message that they heard from the Lord Jesus (1:15). The disciples did not create their own message. They didn’t give their opinion about something or talk a lot of theology, or political and moral issues. They simply were servants of God’s word. Their message “repent,” is the best message. Not only was it brief and to the point, it also could touch people’s conscience. “Repent” means to change our ways. We must change our beliefs. John the Baptist also preached the message of repentance, especially to King Herod. It meant to King Herod that he should confess his sins of marrying his brother’s wife, Herodias, while his brother was still married to her. Because of this, John the Baptist was beheaded. Preaching the message of repentance is never popular but dangerous. It may bring rejection and persecution. For the Israelites who had a fixed idea about the Messiah saving them from the Roman oppression, they had to change their beliefs and accept the Messiah who came to save them from their sins. But they refused to repent and crucified Jesus. To those who trust in themselves and follow their own way, we should tell them to repent and follow God’s way. To those who are fearful, we should boldly preach that they should repent of their fear and trust in God.

Look at verse 13 again. “They drove out many demons and anointed many sick people with oil and healed them.” Their mission was both powerful and successful. According to verse 14, even King Herod heard about all these things. He was stricken with guilty conscience for beheading John the Baptist. The work of God through the disciples shook the stronghold of Satan. In spite of all opposition, the kingdom of God was advancing, overcoming the evil of the world.

From today’s passage we learned Jesus’ vision for world salvation. Jesus called the Twelve and sent them out two by two. He gave them authority over the impure spirits. God used them to spread the good news through the message of repentance. In our times, God wants to use us like the Twelve as his apostles. God has given us authority through faith in Jesus to do his gospel work.

Big Idea: God wants to use us as his apostles