

Surprisingly Sent

Mark 6:7-29; April 18, 2021

Today we're going to dive into Mark 6:7-29. As you turn their in your Bibles or your Scripture Journal, take a walk down memory lane with me about a time in your life when you were pushed out of your comfort zone to do something new for the first time.

For me, my mind goes to my first job here in Boston. When we moved here 11 years ago, I applied to become a server at P.F. Chang's in the Cambridge Galleria Mall. I told Steven Dray, who I still text with, that I've never been a server or even in the restaurant business, but as a follower of Jesus, I've learned a lot about serving...and I'll be one of the best servers you've ever had. Always...I studied the menu, passed the test and then got scheduled to shadow for a few shifts. Eventually, the time comes when I go from *observing* to *doing*. You don't get paid just to shadow someone. You've actually got to step out and do it.

- Focused on getting the initial spiel right
- Focused on not spilling their drinks all over their laps
- Worried about getting the timing right...a balance between being a nuisance to neglecting them.
- I don't know about you, but doing something new for the first time makes me nervous. I don't want to mess up.

Transition: I imagine that the disciples faced a similar experience.

They knew what was coming:

And Jesus said to them, "Follow me, and I will make you become fishers of men." (Mk. 1:17 ESV)

And he appointed twelve (whom he also named apostles) so that they might be with him and he might send them out to preach and have authority to cast out demons. (Mk. 3:14-15 ESV)

What has Mark taught us about being a follower of Jesus?

- WITH and SENT
- Proximity and Ministry
- Receive and Give
- Sit and Go (CITGO)

We live in the multiplication middle.

- Jesus —> ME —> Others
- Jesus multiplies himself in me. Then I multiply myself into others.

What was anticipated in 1:17 and 3:14-15 now happens in Mark 6. Jesus continues to prepare them by sending them out on a trial mission. He shifts responsibility and give ownership to his disciples. In essence he says, "It's your turn. I'm sending you out."

I'm sure they were filled with the similar emotions and nerves to an even greater degree than I experienced. Let's read and find out what happens.

Read Mark 6:7-29

What we see here is a foretaste of the mission that Jesus has for his church. Here's the point and challenge I want to put before us today:

The Point: Live Everyday Sent.

On one hand, this sending of the Twelve shouldn't surprise us. That's been Jesus' plan from the beginning (cf. Mark 1:17; 3:14-15).

On the other hand, it should surprise us. Do you think the disciples are ready? No way! But that's the point!!!

- This passage teaches Mark's church and believers of every age, including us, that the success of our mission depends not on our perfection or merit but on Jesus. The success of our mission depends on Jesus: his authority, his provision and his ministry.

Are you ready to live everyday sent?

- We go in complete dependence/trust/faith on him. Faith looks beyond the surface.
- Faith unlocks the power of God. Faith moves the heart of Jesus.

5 Principles for Living Everyday Sent

1. Go in the Authority of Jesus (7).

- He sends them out "two by two."
 - This was probably according to Jewish custom.
 - *Two are better than one, because they have a good reward for their toil. For if they fall, one will lift up his fellow. But woe to him who is alone when he falls and has not another to lift him up! (Eccl. 4:9-10 ESV)*
 - It's also the practice we see in the early church:
 - Peter and John (Acts 3:1; 8:14).
 - Paul and Barnabas (Acts 11:30; 12:25; 13:2; 1 Cor. 9:6)
 - Barnabas and Mark (Acts 15:39-40)
 - Paul and Silas (Acts 15:39-40)
 - As you live everyday sent, do it in community.
- Mark doesn't tell us *where* Jesus sent them but Matthew does:
 - *These twelve Jesus sent out, instructing them, "Go nowhere among the Gentiles and enter no town of the Samaritans, 6 but go rather to the lost sheep of the house*

of Israel. (Matt. 10:5-6 ESV)

- “He gave them authority...”
 - What does this teach us about Jesus?
 - Jesus doesn’t pray and ask God to give them authority, he gives it directly to them.
 - 1:22, 27: he teaches as one who has authority.
 - 2:10: he has authority to forgive sins.
 - 3:15: sent out to preach and have authority to to cast out demons.
 - Jesus, as a result of being the “Son of God,” can pass his own authority on to others.
 - We see this fully in the Great Commission of Matthew 28:18 when Jesus says, “All authority on heaven and earth has been given to me. Go, therefore, and make disciples....”
 - What implications does it have for living everyday sent?
 - This means we go in confidence and power.
 - We engage in mission as if Jesus were physically there with us.
 - Specifically, now we go in the power of the Holy Spirit.

Application:

- You may not feel qualified to live everyday sent. Neither were the disciples.
- What qualifies us is that we know and have been WITH Jesus.

Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were uneducated, common men, they were astonished. And they recognized that they had been with Jesus. (Acts 4:13 ESV)

- Over and over in the Bible we see examples of God working in ways that seem impossible to us.

2. Trust in the Provision of Jesus (8-11).

- What they should take (identical to the flight from Egypt - cf. Exod. 12:11).
 - Staff: as a walking stick and protection against wild animals
 - A belt
 - Sandals
 - One tunic: a long garment worn under the cloak next to the skin (shirt and undergarment don’t adequately explain what it was).
- What not to take:
 - Bread
 - Bag (knapsack)
 - Money

- Extra Tunic
- Example: It's like laying everything out on your bed that you want to take with you for April vacation and then leaving it all behind.
- What about the differences in the parallel accounts of Matthew 10:9-10 and Luke 9:3?
 - Matthew and Luke seem to suggest they weren't to take sandals or a staff either.
 - The best solution to this apparent contradiction is that in Matthew and Luke, Jesus was telling either...
 - Not to get a *new* staff or sandals.
 - Not to take an *extra* staff or sandals.
- What's the point of these instructions?
 - For this particular mission, they were to travel as light as possible.
 - This suggests that it was going to be a relatively quick missionary journey.
 - They were to depend and trust entirely on God, not in their supplies or training.
 - I love what Kent Hughes says, "The minimum of provisions were meant to call out the maximum of faith" (Hughes).
 - Faith looks beyond the surface.
- How will God provide for them? Through receptive homes.
 - They were to be grateful guests and stay put where they were received.
- How should they respond to rejection?
 - "Shake off the dust off that is on your feet as a testimony against them."
 - Receiving them was tied with listening to and receiving Jesus. But rejecting them and not listening to them was tied to rejecting Jesus.
 - This was an illustration showing that their rejection of Jesus leaves that town accountable to God.
 - Matthew says it will be more bearable for Sodom and Gomorrah than for that town.
 - Examples in Acts:
 - Paul and Barnabas did this in Acts 13:51 at Antioch in Pisidia when the Jews stirred up persecution and drove them out of the city.
 - *And when they opposed and reviled him (Paul), he shook out his garments and said to them, 'Your blood be on your own heads! I am innocent. From now on I will go to the Gentiles.'* (Acts 18:6 ESV)
- Did God provide for them?

And he said to them, "When I sent you out with no moneybag or knapsack or sandals, did you lack anything?" They said, "Nothing." (Lk. 22:35 ESV)

- Let's you think that we should always be minimalists, later Jesus says:

He said to them, "But now let the one who has a moneybag take it, and likewise a knapsack. And let the one who has no sword sell his cloak and buy one. (Lk. 22:36 ESV)

- In this particular mission, Jesus wanted them to travel as light as possible. Later, he tells them to a moneybag and a knapsack. What's the point?
- Whether we go with little or with a lot, we always go in faith!!!

3. Imitate the Ministry of Jesus (12-13).

- Proclaim repentance
 - Luke 9:6: "...preaching the gospel"
 - Matt. 10:7-8: "And proclaim as you go, saying, 'The kingdom of heaven is at hand.'"
 - This recalls Mark 1:14-15:

Now after John was arrested, Jesus came into Galilee, proclaiming the gospel of God, and saying, "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe in the gospel." (Mk. 1:14-15 ESV)

- Cast out demons
- Anoint the sick with oil and heal them.
 - "Anointing with oil" is only found here and in James 5:14

Is anyone among you sick? Let him call for the elders of the church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord. (Jas. 5:14 ESV)

- The oil functioned less as a medicine and more as a symbol of God's presence and blessing.
- Summary:
 - Word and Deed
 - Gospel and Acts of Compassion
 - Declare and Display
 - They aren't sent to do a new work but to continue and extend the work already begun by Jesus (cf. 1:34; 3:11-12; 5:8).
 - The focus isn't on innovation but continuation.
 - They go in his authority to participate in and further his mission and ministry.
 - What we see here is a foretaste of the mission the church would be commissioned to engage in in the Book of Acts in the power of the Holy Spirit.
 - To be a disciple is to live everyday WITH and SENT.

- Living everyday sent means being and everyday missionary.
 - Practice life on mission where God has placed you.
 - Think not just addition, but primarily intersection.
 - Intersect gospel intentionality into your everyday life.
 - BLESS:
 - Begin with Prayer
 - Listen
 - Eat
 - Serve
 - Story

Why does Mark include here the report about John the Baptist, sandwiched in between the disciples being sent out and their return (6:30)? Jon, how are you going to connect this to living everyday sent?

- The last thing we heard about John the Baptist was that he was arrested (cf. Mark 1:14).
- The way this narrative connects to the previous one is that Jesus' name and fame was growing (cf. Matt. 14:1). I'm sure the successful mission of the disciples played some part in this. The greater their success must mean the greater must be the one who sent them.
- King Herod becomes paranoid, wondering if John's death has come back to haunt him. **It raises the question: Who is Jesus?**

Option A: John the Baptist

Option B: Elijah (cf. Mal. 3:1-2; 4:5-6)

- At the end of Malachi, the last OT book in our English Bibles, God says,

"Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the great and awesome day of the LORD comes." (Mal. 4:5 ESV)

- This explains why some might think Jesus was the expected Elijah.
- But Jesus describes John the Baptist as actually having come "in the spirit and power of Elijah" (cf. Luke 1:16-17; Matt. 9:11-13).
- Elijah was an OT prophet who was caught up into heaven without dying (cf. 2 Kings 2:11)

Option C: A Prophet (cf. Deut. 18:15, 18).

- In Deuteronomy, the last book of the Law, Moses had said:

"The LORD your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among you, from your brothers-- it is to him you shall listen-- (Deut. 18:15 ESV; cf. 18:18)

- Deuteronomy ends telling of the death of Moses and leaving the reader anticipating another prophet like Moses, “a New Moses,” to come one day (cf. 34:10-12).

Herod’s Conclusion: “John, whom I beheaded, has been raised” (16).

- The verses that follow look back into earlier events and explain how John was killed.
- Mark intends for us to consider what John’s death means for discipleship and mission.

4. Count the Cost of Following Jesus (14-29).

- Why was John arrested (17-20)?
 - Explain the characters:
 - King Herod
 - Not technically a king but a tetrarch, equivalent to being governor of a region. He ruled over Galilee from 4 BC - AD 39.
 - Being called a king reflected popular usage rather than an official title.
 - Jesus once called Herod Antipas “that fox” (cf. Luke 13:32) and this points to his cunning and malice.
 - Herodias: ex-wife of Philip, new wife of Herod
 - Philip: brother of Herod, ex-husband of Herodias
 - Herod Antipas had to divorce his own wife and convince Herodias to divorce her husband (his half-brother) in order for them to marry.
 - John confronted Herod regarding this “unlawful” marriage (cf. Lev. 18:16; 20:21).
 - Herod feared John (20) and knew he was a righteous and holy man, so he resisted Herodias’ plan. He probably feared an uprising on account of John’s popularity.
 - Herodias help a grudge against John and wanted him dead. She is actually the real mover in the story. She’s willing to sacrifice her daughter to get what she wants.
- Why was John killed (21-28)?
 - Herod throws a party for his birthday which becomes an opportunity for Herodias to carry out her plan to have John killed.
 - The invite list included the wealthy, powerful and prestigious.
 - Nobles: high-ranking government leaders of Galilee
 - Military officers
 - Leading men: wealthy and prominent Galileans.
 - Herod’s daughter (whom Josephus says is named Salome) dances and pleases all of the guests.
 - The text is vague regarding what kind of dance she performed. While it

could've been sensual, it's also possible that she was a fairly young girl and that this was more like a "child's performance."

- Either way, Herod was moved to offer her up to "half of my kingdom" (cf. Esther 5:3, 6; 7:2).
- She connects with her mom, Herodias, and her mother requests John the Baptist's head on a platter (to prove his death).
- Herod, though exceedingly sorry, gave into the request because:
 - His oaths
 - His guests
 - Summary: his authority and reputation were at stake.
 - He was trapped between what was right and what was expedient.
 - He chose the favor and acclaim of the world in exchange for his soul. Don't spend your life basing your decisions on what other people think. Are you fearing others or the leading of the Holy Spirit?
 - The concerns of the world choked out the message of the gospel and seeing who John and Jesus really were.
 - What is clear is that John the Baptist was killed not because of any crime that he had done.

Some conclusions:

- John's death foreshadows Jesus' death.
 - Jesus, also innocent, will be put to death by a reluctant political leader.
- John's death is also a warning for all disciples to consider.
- The call to discipleship is a call to die.

And calling the crowd to him with his disciples, he said to them, "If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. For whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake and the gospel's will save it. For what does it profit a man to gain the whole world and forfeit his soul? (Mk. 8:34-36 ESV)

5. Know: God's Mission is Unstoppable.

Key observation by Bock: "In effect, what Herod had sought to remove had now returned with even greater authority. The attempt to stop God's plan by execution had only intensified its presence.... This may also foreshadow the effect of Jesus' removal, a new community that spreads over the world" (Bock).

- God's mission is unstoppable.
 - The death of John the Baptist couldn't stop God.
 - The death of Jesus couldn't stop God.
 - Martyrdom in the early church couldn't stop God.

Conclusion

Were the disciples surprisingly sent? Yes. But that's the point not just for them but for us. We are to live everyday sent not because we are great but because he is great.