



Main Focus: Jesus sending the disciples on mission, and the death of John the Baptist.

Main Scripture: Mark 6:6b-32

I want you to think back to the first time you were given a mission by your parents, specifically in the grocery store. [Teacher Note: Share of a time that you were given a task in the grocery store, or a similar place. Try to think of the emotions you felt at the time. You get bonus points if you completely failed at the task that was given to you, like grabbing the wrong type of noodles, or whatever it may be.]

Think back to those times where you were sent on a mission in the store by your parents to grab something. I remember being excited that I was entrusted with such great responsibility. Up to this point, my grocery store experience had been merely tagging along beside mom, asking if we could get this or that, and usually, I was shot down. So, when I was asked to run and grab these three things or told to run to the other side of the store to grab some shampoo or ramen noodles, I was excited for the task.

But I also remember failing on these missions. I'd grab the wrong brand, or the wrong type of milk, or a size that my mom wasn't looking for. I even remember failing at this when I was in high school. If you've never been sent on the grocery store mission, maybe ask the next time you are at the store, ask: "Hey, can I go grab some of the things on the list?" And see how that goes for you. Why in the world am I talking about being sent on a mission in a grocery store?

Well, we are starting a new series called *Mission and Misunderstanding*. It's about how the disciples, the closest followers of Jesus, were sent on a mission by Jesus. In this series, we will be looking at a specific section in the Gospel of Mark (from Mark chapter 6 through the first part of Mark chapter 8.)

In this series, we will talk about the mission of Jesus, along with understanding who Jesus is.

So today, let's start by jumping into Mark where we learn about the first time that Jesus sent His twelve disciples on a mission. This is the first time they were sent by Jesus on their own, maybe feeling like you felt when you were sent to the store on your own.

Mark 6:6b-13 (NIV) *Then Jesus went around teaching from village to village.*

7 Calling the Twelve to him, he began to send them out two by two and gave them authority over impure spirits.

8 These were his instructions: "Take nothing for the journey except a staff—no bread, no bag, no money in your belts. 9 Wear sandals but not an extra shirt. 10 Whenever you enter a house, stay there until you leave that town. 11 And if any place will not welcome you or listen to you, leave that place and shake the dust off your feet as a testimony against them."

12 They went out and preached that people should repent. 13 They drove out many demons and anointed many sick people with oil and healed them.

Up to this point, the disciples had been with Jesus, observing Him, hearing what He was teaching, and learning from Him. Now, they were sent on a mission. This mission was a bit bigger than grabbing milk, eggs, seasonings, soap and paper towels for your parents or grandparents. It was to participate in Jesus' mission, to move from observers to participants.

Let's talk about what we can learn from this passage.

Here are some observations:

1. Jesus sent them out, two by two.

Jesus did not send them out on their own, they all had partners in their mission. Maybe you aren't a fan of group projects because you have to work with people and deal with people who either want to do all the work, or none of the work. You should be a fan though, of the fact that we aren't called to live our Christian lives and our participation in the mission of Jesus alone.

In my experience, doing ministry alongside others is much easier. You can use each other's gifts and strengths, support one another, and encourage

one another. So, as you live your lives in your schools and extracurricular activities, think about who you can be on the mission with. You don't have to do it alone. [Teacher Note: This would be a great time to share about your volunteers, or others who you've served alongside in ministry.]

Our next point is:

2. Jesus told them to have trust.

In Jesus' instructions for what to take on their journey, He told them to trust in God's provision. Jesus' instructions were more of a list of what not to take than what to take.

Mark 6:8-9 (NIV) *8 These were his instructions: "Take nothing for the journey except a staff—no bread, no bag, no money in your belts. 9 Wear sandals but not an extra shirt.*

These things were standard. People on a journey would want to be prepared, so they'd have some food, a bag with some simple supplies, and money so they could buy things when needed. It would be like going backpacking and just taking what you were wearing and not packing a giant pack full of gear.

Though Jesus may not be sending us on a specific journey like He was with His disciples, Jesus does send us on a mission every day. We have to trust in God to provide what you need for being in the mission of Jesus. It may be scary to be sent on mission by Jesus, but the key is to have trust in Him. Jesus had His disciples trust in an even greater way by not taking with them typical things for a journey.

Our third point:

3. Jesus sent them to preach and heal.

In this context, the people with impure spirits and people who were sick, these were people who would be outcasts in their society. This is who Jesus sent the disciples to.

We can help the sick and the poor and the hungry. We can be with the outcasts of our society and tell them about Jesus' love and grace and forgiveness. We can be on mission for Jesus.



Main Scripture: Mark 7:1-36

1. Has there ever been a time that you tried to get around a rule without actually breaking the rule? If so, explain.
2. How do you think that Pharisees felt when Jesus challenged their way of understanding things?
3. Share of a time where you had to admit that you were wrong? Is it easy for you to do this? Why or why not?
4. What do you think about the woman and Jesus' conversation about food and scraps to the dog? Does it make sense to you? Explain.
5. Why do you think Jesus used spit to heal the man at the end of Mark 7?

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