

First Baptist Church Merritt Island
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On Mission With Jesus
Mark 6:7-13

In the 1950s, a man named Finley Stephens embarked on a mission that would define his life for the next several decades. He spent time and energy pursuing his mission. He traveled throughout his corner of the world, enlisting help and getting the word out to further the cause. By the mid-1970s, Mr. Stephens finished his mission not long before he died.

What was his mission? A giant ball of string. It's 19 feet around in circumference and weighs well over 3,000 pounds. Stephens made it at a time when people tied packages with thin, postal string. And his entire ball is made from nothing but that thin string. He had postmasters from neighboring towns save all the string they could for him. He would regularly collect them, tie them end-to-end, and wind them tightly around his prized possession. It now resides in Weston, Missouri as part of the décor in a local pub.

You know, as I thought about a man dedicating such a significant portion of his life to something as insignificant as the mission to make the world's largest ball of string, I couldn't help but wonder about the rest of us. If your life's work was reduced to a mission, what would it be? Accumulating wealth? Pursuing earthly pleasure? Experiencing this world and all it has to offer? What's the mission of your life and, in the end, will it prove to be any more significant than Mr. Stephens' ball of string?

Well, if you are a follower of Jesus, you have been given a mission from Jesus Himself. You have a calling and a cause. And that's the focus of our next passage in the Gospel of Mark. It's about the mission Jesus gives to those who answer the call to follow Him. So, with that in mind, let's read our text and get a glimpse of what it means to live on mission with Jesus.

Mark 6:7–13 (ESV)

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.

Let's quickly get a handle on what's going on here. It's not hard to see that this passage is about Jesus sending His followers out on a mission.

- Verse 7 says that very thing...**And he called the twelve and began to send them out two by two...**
- Now, jump down to verse 12...**So they went out and proclaimed that people should repent.**

So, Jesus is sending His disciples out on a mission to proclaim a message of repentance. But, before we dig into the details, we need to back up for just a moment. Our text is connected with a passage from chapter 3.

Mark 3:13–14 (ESV)

¹³ *And he went up on the mountain and called to him those whom he desired, and they came to him.*

¹⁴ *And he appointed twelve (whom he also named apostles) so that they might be with him and he might send them out to preach*

This passage has a very similar feel to our text in chapter 6. Jesus is calling His followers to Him. This is foreshadowing what he will do in chapter 6... send them out to preach, or proclaim, a message. But there's a detail in chapter 3 that isn't in chapter 6. I hope you noticed it. There's something that goes alongside being sent out by Jesus. What is it? Verse 14 says Jesus wanted them to "be with him" and "to send them out to preach."

The mission of Jesus isn't just to send His disciples out on their own to tell other people about Him and His Kingdom. The mission of Jesus is to be with His disciples in the mission. The mission isn't primarily something we do for Jesus, it's something He does through us.

We see that in the first verse of our text: ***7 And he called the twelve and began to send them out two by two, and gave them authority over the unclean spirits.***

He gave them His authority. He enabled them to do something that only He could do...in other words, the mission is something Jesus wants to do in and through us, not primarily something He wants us to do for Him.

Matthew 28

18 And Jesus came and said to them, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. 19 Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in[a] the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, 20 teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age."

All authority...Go, therefore (in and with my authority) and I will be with you to the very end of the age (until He comes again.) Jesus doesn't just send His followers out. He places His power and authority within them as they go. He goes with them.

So, let's quickly recap what we are seeing here.

1. Our mission with Jesus includes being with Jesus – personally knowing Him and learning from Him.
2. Our mission with Jesus includes going out into this world – making His message known to others.
3. Our mission with Jesus includes depending on Jesus and the authority and power He will give us.

And, when you put that all together, you get our big idea for this morning. And I want to warn you that it rhymes, and I didn't try to make it rhyme but, I didn't want to spend an hour of my study trying to keep it from rhyming. So, I guess the main point for today is a poem...

Big Idea: Our mission with Jesus is to know Him and to Make him known by His power, not our own.

If you are a follower of Jesus Christ, that mission is why you are still on planet earth: To know Jesus and to make Him known. If you want your life to matter more than a giant ball of string, to be eternally significant, then make your life a focused mission to know Jesus and to make Him known.

This mission is so central to being a follower of Jesus that our pastors have felt led to reinforce our focus on it as a church over the course of the next year. From our Wednesday night men's and

women's Bible studies beginning in August, to our Neighbors and Nations mission conference in October, to our community engagement ministries, we want to reinforce our focus on the one and only Mission of Jesus – to equip you to know Him and to make Him known. So, as the Lord may stir your heart this morning, just know that there will be practical steps for you to take into this mission in the weeks and months ahead.

Now, let's walk back through our big idea and meditate on each part for a few moments.

1. Our mission is To Know Him

Mark 3:14

¹⁴ And he appointed twelve (whom he also named apostles) so that they might be with him and he might send them out to preach

The center of our mission is a personal, growing, thriving, relationship of love and faith in Jesus. And that's been the heart of our study of Mark. To this point, we've focused most of our attention on getting to know Jesus and having a growing relationship with Him as we follow Him. But for this morning, I just want to help you make a connection between knowing Jesus and making Him known. And it's this: Knowing Jesus is the great motivation for making Him known.

I call this the "You have to try this" phenomenon. You probably know what I mean, but just in case you don't, let me explain.

I love food. Let me rephrase that. I love good food. My wife is the same way. And, for the most part, we have very similar preferences. We appreciate the kindness God showed us by making it possible for food to be delicious. Just think of what He made when He made a cow. He didn't have to make it possible for cows to turn into filet mignon, but He did. He didn't have to make it possible to get butter from cow's milk so you could soak a Ruth's Chris steak on a plate of sizzling butter, but He did. He didn't have to make it possible to turn cows' milk into cream so you could have the glorious goodness of ice cream, but He did. He made our taste buds to taste, and He made it possible for food to taste good and to be enjoyed. And, whenever Emily and I bite into something that's truly delicious, we automatically say this to each other – "You have to try this!"

That's just how we are wired. We do it with television shows. We do it with songs we've heard. We do it with restaurants and shopping stores and beautiful vacation spots.

And, in an infinitely greater way, that's how we have been made to live on mission. The great motivation for wanting others to know Jesus is a growing experience of Him for ourselves. To experience His love and grace and glory firsthand. To be in His presence each day and hear His voice in the Word. To taste and see that the Lord is good.

Nothing will motivate your heart to make Jesus known like knowing Jesus for yourself. That means, when we talk about the mission of Christ in this world, we need to start with the work of Christ in us as individuals. Jesus didn't come to offer love and salvation to everyone in general and no one in particular. Jesus came for you.

Jesus came to this earth to live the life YOU have failed to live because of your sin. He went to the cross to die as a sacrifice for YOUR sins, for each and every sin you have committed. He rose from the grave so that He could raise YOU up to a brand new life with Him, a life that experiences His power and love and peace and presence. He wants to make YOU a masterpiece of His grace.

So, if you don't know Jesus as your personal Lord and Savior, I want to invite you trust in Him today. At the end of this service, our pastors and prayer partners will be down front and would love to talk with you about beginning a personal relationship with Jesus.

And for those who are already trusting in Jesus, let me ask you this: Can you honestly say that you are living as though your life's mission is to grow in your relationship with Jesus? To spend time with Him each day in His word and in prayer?

What needs to change about your day-to-day life for the real and living Jesus to be the center? Our mission is to know Him.

2. Our mission is To Make Him Known

Mark 6:7 And he called the twelve and began to send them out

Mark 6:12 So they went out and proclaimed that people should repent.

The message of the disciples was the same message as Jesus and John the Baptist: repent. So, why would I say that our message is to make Jesus known if the message of the disciples was for people to repent?

Well, when Luke tells about this account of Jesus sending out the Apostles, he describes their message in a slightly different way:

Luke 9:2 - and he sent them out to proclaim the kingdom of God...

Luke 9:6 - And they departed and went through the villages, preaching the gospel...

So, what was their message? Repent? The Kingdom of God? Or, the Gospel?

The answer is "yes." Their message was a message made up of all three and all three culminate in Jesus.

- The Gospel is the good news I mentioned just a moment ago - that Jesus Christ is our Lord and Savior who will save anyone and everyone who will place their faith and trust in Him.
- The message of the Kingdom is that God's Kingdom is opened to anyone who will bow before Jesus as their King.

So, what do those things have to do with the call to repent? The word "repent" means "to change one's mind." And if we don't have a fundamental change of mind, we will never believe the gospel and bow before Jesus as our King.

We need to change our minds about our sin, ourselves, and our Savior. We need a change of mind that sees our sin the way God sees it. Sin is an attack on the holiness of God. Sin is the selfishness in our hearts that wants to do life our way and wants the world to revolve around us, as though we are the kings and queens of our own kingdoms. We need to see ourselves the way we really are. We are slaves to sin and Satan unless Jesus sets us free.

We need a change of mind. To see that we Jesus is our only Hope. He is our Savior and our King. That's how repentance fits with the good news about King Jesus. We will never turn to Jesus to save us until we recognize that we are sinners who need saved. We will never bow before Jesus as Lord and King until we see that he is the King, and we are not.

So, making Jesus known means telling people the good news that King Jesus has come to save us from our sin and calling them to turn to Him, to change their minds and agree with God about their sin, themselves and their Savior – King Jesus.

That's the message of the church of Jesus Christ. That's what we are on a mission to make known to our world – to our family and friends and neighbors and coworkers and classmates.

This greatest need of this work isn't a message of social improvement or self-help or self-esteem or modern psychology or government reform or a better political platform. Those things may all have their rightful place and can certainly be used in God-honoring ways. But those aren't the messages this world most desperately needs to hear. This world needs the message of Jesus. A message that confronts our sin and calls us to repent by turning to Jesus Christ as the One and Only Lord of our lives and the Savior of our souls.

And I understand that a message that confronts sin and sinners is a message that is wildly unpopular in our world today. Friends, it's always been unpopular. That's why the crowds killed Jesus.

The message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but for those who will believe it is the power of God to save and redeem! And for a world that is dying and headed for hell, it's the only message of hope there is.

So, who in your life needs to hear the message of Jesus? How might Jesus be leading you to be the one who lets them know?

Around here, we have something we call "Who's Your One?" "Who's your One?" is an approach to living on an intentional mission to make Jesus known to someone who is far from God but close to you. That might be a family member or a friend or neighbor or coworker or classmate. In our lobby, there's an area set aside as a reminder of "Who's Your One?" I love seeing the visual representation of our ones and the gospel conversations we have been able to have with them. Most of all, I love seeing the indicators of those who have given their hearts to Jesus.

And some of us need to pray that God will help us identify our "Ones" or to renew our commitment to praying for the Ones God has already laid on our hearts.

Who in your life needs to know about Jesus? Will you step out on a mission today to pray for them, to serve them, and to look for opportunities to tell them about Jesus? Our mission is to know Jesus and to make Him known. But, before we go out into our world on mission, there's something we need to remember.

Our mission is dependent on Christ's power, not our own.

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.

When Jesus sent His disciples out on mission, notice what He did. He gave them something to take with them. What did He give them? He gave them His authority. He gave them His power.

Now, these particular disciples occupied a special place in the history of the church. Chapter 3 tells us that they were designated as Apostles. The Apostles had a unique kind of authority. For instance, they had the authority to write the Bible through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. And I think you need to know, you don't have that kind of authority. If you try to write a new book to be added to the

Bible, that makes you a heretic and cult leader, not an apostle. So, there was a unique authority that was given to the Apostles.

But that's not to say we don't have Christ's authority. Remember in Matthew 28:18-20, He promises to be with us as the One who has all authority in heaven and earth. We may not have the same role as the Apostles, but we have access to the same power as the Apostles – the very power and authority of Jesus Himself.

You don't need to be afraid or intimidated to tell others about Jesus. It doesn't depend on you. It doesn't depend on your ability to speak eloquently or compellingly. It depends on Jesus and He is right there with you, living in and through you as you trust in Him.

And that's critical to the way we approach telling others about Jesus. I want you to notice something else Jesus does to reinforce our dependence on them. He doesn't just give something to them, He keeps something from them. He also keeps them from taking something with them in verse 8.

He tells them not to take bread or money or even a change of clothes. Why? Because He wants them to completely depend on Him to provide everything they will need. He wants them to step out in faith and believe that God will supply whatever they need for whatever they'll encounter. He doesn't want them to have a backup plan. He doesn't want them to trust in anyone or anything but Him.

And that's how Jesus wants us to go on mission, as well. He wants us to step out in faith, trusting Him to show up and work in ways that only He can work. As you are living to make Jesus known to your friends and neighbors, Jesus wants you to have a front row seat to watch Him work in ways that only He can work because when Jesus does the work, Jesus gets the glory.

- He will give you open doors to tell others about Him when you depend on Him to open doors.
- He will give you the words to say when you depend on Him for the words to say.
- He will give you the ways to serve when you depend on Him for ways to serve.

We aren't called to save people; we are called to depend on our Savior to save people. And there are countless applications of this truth to our lives, but the first and most important one is prayer. Depending on Jesus to use you in His mission begins by praying for Jesus to work in the lives of those around you.

So, what if you answered the call of Jesus to know Him and make Him known and began your mission this week by praying for God to do what only God can do in the lives of those around you? How would you engage those around you with the love of Christ and the message of the gospel if you believe Jesus would do the work through you and you would get a front-row seat to seeing Jesus work?

Who is Jesus laying on your heart to tell about Jesus? How would you pray if you believed the work of telling them about Jesus was dependent on Christ's power and not your own?

Our mission with Jesus is to know Him and to make him known by His power, not our own.