

Sent Out By the Carpenter

In our text today, we learn how important it is that we listen and carefully put into practice everything the Lord teaches us.

Mark 5:1-20

1 He went away from there and came to his hometown, and his disciples followed him. **2** And on the Sabbath he began to teach in the synagogue, and many who heard him were astonished, saying, “Where did this man get these things? What is the wisdom given to him? How are such mighty works done by his hands? **3** Is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary and brother of James and Joses and Judas and Simon? And are not his sisters here with us?” And they took offense at him. **4** And Jesus said to them, “A prophet is not without honor, except in his hometown and among his relatives and in his own household.” **5** And he could do no mighty work there, except that he laid his hands on a few sick people and healed them. **6** And he marveled because of their unbelief.

And he went about among the villages teaching.

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.

In the two major paragraphs within this text we observe:

I. Those most familiar with Jesus must not squander their privileges. (6:1-6)

Jesus returns to his hometown and does here things:

1. He teaches them. (vv. 1,2a)

When He goes to the synagogue of His youth to teach, they are amazed at His teaching (see Mark 1:27), but they quickly uphold Him to ridicule, saying things like—“He’s just one of us; who does He think He is; He’s just a local carpenter; and He was born illegitimately to Mary!” Sometimes, familiarity can breed contempt. With Jesus, our familiarity ought to breed gratitude and eager service.

2. He warns them. (v. 4)

He warns them because He loves them. They are, by their rejection of Jesus, in real spiritual danger. So are we, if we squander the enormous privileges we have been given through Christian rearing or abundant training or easy access to the Gospel.

3. He leaves them. (vv. 5,6)

This is the most awesome of all His actions. There comes a time when our rejection of Him can drive Him from us. This is Jesus last visit to Nazareth and His last appearance in a synagogue in Mark’s gospel. (Many of us, however, are happy to report that after rejecting Jesus, He has graciously returned to us later in life).

Notice that when Jesus leaves them, He goes on to minister in a different place. As Dr. David Garland says in his commentary, Jesus was perplexed by His hometown, but He was not paralyzed.

II. Those who have received privileges from Jesus must not forget our calling. (6:7-13)

As we have seen in Chapter 3 of Mark, our occupation is gainful employment, but it is not our vocation. Our vocation is a calling from Christ to follow Him. Here again, Jesus calls His disciples, and, in this instance, their calling to the mission is emphasized. He tells them five things:

1. He sends us (v. 7a)

The Church is compelled into the world by the Word of Christ. We can not stay in our “holy huddle.”

2. He yokes us (v.7b)

We must not attempt this ministry as loners. Both Jesus and the Apostle Paul were constantly surrounded by their brothers—both for encouragement and for accountability.

3. He empowers us (v. 7c)

We go into the world not on our own authority, but on His. We are His ambassadors in this world. We bear His Name upon us.

4. He supplies us (vv. 8-10)

We shall not accomplish His work by our ingenuity or our technology, but by the power of His Spirit. In this mission we must trust Him, not ourselves.

5. He uses us (vv. 11-13)

Our ministry is actually His ministry. Look at the things He calls us to do:

- a. Warn, just as He did in 6:4 (v. 11)
- b. Preach, just as He did in 6:2 (v. 12)
- c. Heal, just as He did in 6:5 (v.13)

So this is our calling: to go where He sends us, with whom He sends us, with His authority and His supply, to do His work.

Discussion Questions

1. What are the symptoms of a person who is squandering his spiritual privileges? How can we keep from doing this?

2. When we've been rejected because of our faith, why is it sometimes difficult to keep going? Why must we?

3. Describe a time when your spiritual siblings kept you on the right spiritual path.

4. What are the implications of our having been given Christ's authority to engage the evil and broken world around us?

5. How should we apply the truth of vv.8,9 to our lives today?

6. What does it mean for us to proclaim that people should repent? And how do we now best demonstrate the very practical, healing aspects of the gospel ministry? Why is it important that we offer both verbal and physical expressions of the gospel?

Going Deeper

How would your life change if you clearly saw yourself as one sent by Christ to minister to a needy world? Are you willing to begin making these changes?