

## WHEN WE WALK WITH THE LORD ... (Mk. 6:7-13; 30-32)

**Mark 6:** <sup>7</sup> And he called unto him the twelve, and began to send them forth by two and two; and gave them power over unclean spirits; <sup>8</sup> And commanded them that they should take nothing for their journey, save a staff only; no scrip, no bread, no money in their purse: <sup>9</sup> But be shod with sandals; and not put on two coats. <sup>10</sup> And he said unto them, In what place soever ye enter into an house, there abide till ye depart from that place. <sup>11</sup> And whosoever shall not receive you, nor hear you, when ye depart thence, shake off the dust under your feet for a testimony against them. Verily I say unto you, It shall be more tolerable for Sodom and Gomorrha in the day of judgment, than for that city. <sup>12</sup> And they went out, and preached that men should repent. <sup>13</sup> And they cast out many devils, and anointed with oil many that were sick, and healed them. ... <sup>30</sup> And the apostles gathered themselves together unto Jesus, and told him all things, both what they had done, and what they had taught. <sup>31</sup> And he said unto them, Come ye yourselves apart into a desert place, and rest a while: for there were many coming and going, and they had no leisure so much as to eat. <sup>32</sup> And they departed into a desert place by ship privately. <sup>33</sup> And the people saw them departing, and many knew him, and ran afoot thither out of all cities, and outwent them, and came together unto him.

On Thursday evening we are studying the disciples, one-by-one. In this passage, though, Mark makes the simple statement, <sup>7</sup> And he called unto him the twelve, and began to send them forth by two and two ... Since their names are already listed in Mk. 3:16-19, He is centring more on their 'sending-out'. ... The Lord delegates to His chosen representatives the task of taking His message and proclaiming it throughout the towns and villages of Galilee.

Indeed, that is exactly what v.6 has been showing Jesus had been doing, <sup>6</sup> And he went round about the villages, teaching. ... He was presenting how the work was to be done, and how the disciples were to follow His example ... He knew this was coming now to the launch of His third and final tour of Galilee for He is on His way to the cross, and it is now time to assign the duties to the disciples. On an ordinary human level, He could only be one place at one time but now He was *delegating* to His disciples, so the work would be multiplied by twelve. At this point, these disciples who had been with Him every day of the week were being commissioned to put into action their training.

They have heard Him preach ... so they must preach like Him, and what He preached and taught. They have watched Him demonstrate His authority in His miracles ... and they must do the same, on His behalf. It is time to put into practice what He has shown them, **Jn. 14:12** He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do.

Luke tells us how Jesus began with *many* disciples, **6:13** And when it was day, he called unto him his disciples: and of them he chose twelve, whom also he named apostles.

John also tells us about a great number who initially followed Him, - the majority of whom were taken up by His miracles, **Jn. 6:28** Then said they unto him, What shall we do, that we might work the works of God? ... We love these 'signs and wonders' You're doing and we want to do these marvellous things too, so show us how to

do them! <sup>29</sup> Jesus answered and said unto them, This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent. It is not about signs and wonders ... it is about believing in and preaching the Gospel of the Kingdom of God ... <sup>30</sup> They said therefore unto him, What sign shewest thou then, that we may see, and believe thee? what dost thou work? ... They were not listening and they were not understanding, so then He began to show them what it means to work in His service, as His disciples ... as His followers.

First of all, He explained to them how He was 'the Bread of life' ... and He used the illustration, - with which they all would have been familiar, - of the manna in the wilderness during the Old Testament times, **Ex. 16:1** And they took their journey from Elim, and all the congregation of the children of Israel came unto the wilderness of Sin, which is between Elim and Sinai, on the fifteenth day of the second month after their departing out of the land of Egypt. <sup>2</sup> And the whole congregation of the children of Israel murmured against Moses and Aaron in the wilderness: <sup>3</sup> And the children of Israel said unto them, Would to God we had died by the hand of the LORD in the land of Egypt, when we sat by the flesh pots, and when we did eat bread to the full; for ye have brought us forth into this wilderness, to kill this whole assembly with hunger. <sup>4</sup> Then said the LORD unto Moses, Behold, I will rain bread from heaven for you; and the people shall go out and gather a certain rate every day ... <sup>13</sup> And it came to pass, that at even the quails came up, and covered the camp: and in the morning the dew lay round about the host. <sup>14</sup> And when the dew that lay was gone up, behold, upon the face of the wilderness there lay a small round thing, as small as the hoar frost on the ground. <sup>15</sup> And when the children of Israel saw it, they said one to another, It is manna: for they wist not what it was. And Moses said unto them, This is the bread which the LORD hath given you to eat.

... And Jesus continued, <sup>35</sup> And Jesus said unto them, I am the bread of life: he that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst.. They had to 'feed' on Him ... in other words, they had to 'eat' ... to receive Him through what He was teaching... that He was the Messiah, the Son of God. ...

They listened, but they were confused, <sup>36</sup> But I said unto you, That ye also have seen me, and believe not. What did He mean by that?! <sup>37</sup> All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out. <sup>38</sup> For I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me. <sup>39</sup> And this is the Father's will which hath sent me, that of all which he hath given me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day. <sup>40</sup> And this is the will of him that sent me, that every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life: and I will raise him up at the last day. ... They were 'lost', - they hadn't a clue what He was talking about ... Remember what Jesus had told the twelve disciples earlier, when He was with them along the Sea of Galilee, **Mk. 4:10** And when he was alone, they that were about him with the twelve asked of him the parable. <sup>11</sup> And he said unto them, Unto

you it is given to know the mystery of the kingdom of God: but unto them that are without, all these things are done in parables: <sup>12</sup> That seeing they may see, and not perceive; and hearing they may hear, and not understand; lest at any time they should be converted, and their sins should be forgiven them.

So, these people, - these ‘disciples’ who were with Him to try and learn how to do the spectacular, - were not going to understand! They had never heard anything like this before, - it was not what they were brought up to believe, and they were not prepared to believe it! ... They are *Jews*, after all ... Of course, God would accept them. They are the sons of Abraham! What nonsense is Jesus speaking?! And they began to grumble and mutter among themselves, - like their forefathers had done with Moses in the wilderness, <sup>42</sup> And they said, Is not this Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? how is it then that he saith, I came down from heaven?

But Jesus knew what they were up to, <sup>43</sup> Jesus therefore answered and said unto them, Murmur not among yourselves. <sup>44</sup> No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day. <sup>45</sup> It is written in the prophets, And they shall be all taught of God. Every man therefore that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto me. <sup>46</sup> Not that any man hath seen the Father, save he which is of God, he hath seen the Father. <sup>47</sup> Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me hath everlasting life. <sup>48</sup> I am that bread of life. <sup>49</sup> Your fathers did eat manna in the wilderness, and are dead. <sup>50</sup> This is the bread which cometh down from heaven, that a man may eat thereof, and not die. <sup>51</sup> I am the living bread which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever: and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world. <sup>52</sup> The Jews therefore strove among themselves, saying, How can this man give us his flesh to eat? <sup>53</sup> Then Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you. <sup>54</sup> Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day. <sup>55</sup> For my flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed. <sup>56</sup> He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in me, and I in him. <sup>57</sup> As the living Father hath sent me, and I live by the Father: so he that eateth me, even he shall live by me. <sup>58</sup> This is that bread which came down from heaven: not as your fathers did eat manna, and are dead: he that eateth of this bread shall live for ever. <sup>59</sup> These things said he in the synagogue, as he taught in Capernaum.

... He said all this *in the synagogue*! Often the hardest place to preach the Gospel is in a religious institution steeped in error ... and that is what Jesus was dealing with. Then, <sup>60</sup> Many therefore of his disciples, when they had heard this, said, This is an hard saying; who can hear it? <sup>61</sup> When Jesus knew in himself that his disciples murmured at it, he said unto them, Doth this offend you? <sup>62</sup> What and if ye shall see the Son of man ascend up where he was before? <sup>63</sup> It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life. <sup>64</sup> But there are

some of you that believe not. For Jesus knew from the beginning who they were that believed not, and who should betray him. <sup>65</sup> And he said, Therefore said I unto you, that no man can come unto me, except it were given unto him of my Father. <sup>66</sup> From that time many of his disciples went back, and walked no more with him. ... That is what sometimes happens when people listen to what the Word of God is saying ... but they don't like what they hear! They might claim to be Christians, but they don't like what the Bible says ... and they turn their back on Jesus. ... Do you know what that indicates? It strongly indicates they were never saved in the first place because they are not willing to accept the infallible Word of God. In Jn. 6, <sup>67</sup> Then said Jesus unto the twelve, Will ye also go away? <sup>68</sup> Then Simon Peter answered him, Lord, to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life. <sup>69</sup> And we believe and are sure that thou art that Christ, the Son of the living God.

You see, when the Lord Jesus truly saves you, you believe all He says to you through His Word, and you have nowhere else you want to go for you are safe and confident in Him. ... Even if He says something in His Word you have never heard before, and it might sound strange, and 'out of kilter' to what everyone else is saying ... if His Word says it, it is the truth and you accept it without question. You might not understand it now, but it *will* become clearer when you keep on reading and believing God's Word.

God's Word is never wrong. It never contradicts itself. It never goes against the holy nature of God. It is thorough and complete in itself. It is never out-of-date. It never needs to be revised or edited, **Ps. 119:89** For ever, O LORD, thy word is settled in heaven. ... **Is. 40:8** the word of our God shall stand for ever. ... **1 Peter 1:25** the word of the Lord endureth for ever. And this is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you. ... That is how Peter and the disciples would have been trained, **Ps. 119:140** Thy word is very pure: therefore thy servant loveth it.

And when Jesus **Mk. 6:7** called unto him the twelve, and began to send them forth by two and two, they were interested in Christ from the outset because of the inner working of the Holy Spirit, and how He trained them. It was He, - the Holy Spirit, - who convinced Matthew to leave his tax-collecting business. It was the Holy Spirit who drew the fishermen away from the nets to become disciples of Jesus. ... Each of those twelve disciples was *drawn* to Him, and so He gifted them to follow Him ... and they followed Him in the direction He led them.

That is what a Christian does, - he/she follows Christ. What does that mean? You want to be like Him, as Paul wrote to the church in Corinth, **1 Cor. 11:1** Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ. ... What would *Jesus* do? What would *Jesus* say? What would *He* think? ... You might wonder if there are certain places

you should go, or should not go ... Well, here is a simple way of working it out ... Could I take Jesus there? Would He want to go there with me? ... And if the answer, - in line with what you read in the Bible, - would be “Yes”, then that is okay ... But if you are going or doing something which you knew wasn't right, - and you could not take Him with you, - well, you should not be doing it and you should not be there! ...

And how do you know? You know because you have read what God teaches you from His Word. ... He will show you the difference between what He finds acceptable for His people to do, and what is not acceptable. ... He is not an angry taskmaster, out to spoil your fun ... but He *is* a loving Father who wants the absolute very best for His children, in line with His glory!

And here are these disciples, and it is time now for them to put into action what Jesus has been teaching them. ... Isn't it so very true that there is no point in learning without putting into practice what you have been taught? Ours is not a hypothetical faith but it shows itself in how we live out our faith. We know Him as Saviour and Lord, and that is what we should be showing.

And notice also how Jesus sent them out two-by-two. That means they were each responsible to the other, and for the other. They had to encourage each other, and not argue. They had to uphold and compliment each other's ministry. Regardless of how different they were, they had to work together. ... How would you have liked to work with Peter? How would you have liked to have been sent out with Judas Iscariot? How would you have liked to have worked with either of the two 'sons of thunder', James or John? ... And you wouldn't have had a choice, - you would have had to work with whoever Jesus sent you out with! From the human perspective ... it was a risky business sending men like this out with the Gospel!

And look at how bad the situation in the land was ... into which they were being sent! Like, did Jesus not realise these men were 'amateurs' and inexperienced ... they were still learning and would almost certainly struggle in the task to which He was sending them?! ... Yes, He did know ... He was fully aware and that is why *He* [Mk. 6:7](#) gave them power over unclean spirits ... *He* sent and [8](#) commanded them that they should take nothing for their journey, save a staff only; no scribe, no bread, no money in their purse: [9](#) But be shod with sandals; and not put on two coats. ... The bare essentials ... How were they supposed to survive?! This was an impossible task He was sending them to do. ... Aye, but Jesus knew all about it for they had heard Him say previously, [Mt. 8:20](#) *The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests; but the Son of man hath not where to lay his head.* ... And when they thought

about how they had seen and watched Jesus do it, they realised, on His authority, they could do it too.

Being a disciple, - being a Christian, - is not for anyone who is not prepared to be committed. On another occasion, **Mt. 8:19** And a certain scribe came, and said unto him, Master, I will follow thee whithersoever thou goest ... <sup>21</sup> And another of his disciples said unto him, Lord, suffer me first to go and bury my father. <sup>22</sup> But Jesus said unto him, Follow me; and let the dead bury their dead. ... A disciple/follower of Christ is a person who has Him as their priority.

Aye, but it is terribly hard nowadays to be a Christian ... Yes, so it is ... you get your encouragements, and you also get your discouragements. First of all, Jesus told them how warmly they would be received in some places, **Mk. 6:10** And he said unto them, In what place soever ye enter into an house, there abide till ye depart from that place. Yes, there are the lovely people who welcome what you have to say, they receive you with open arms, and they accept the message you are teaching ... But there are also many others who don't want to hear what you have to say, and Jesus gave instruction about how the disciples were to deal with them, **11** And whosoever shall not receive you, nor hear you, when ye depart thence, shake off the dust under your feet for a testimony against them. Verily I say unto you, It shall be more tolerable for Sodom and Gomorrhah in the day of judgment, than for that city.

It is against the backdrop of such a nation that He chose these twelve men. There wasn't a single priest among them, or scribe, or Pharisee, or Sadducee ... there wasn't a rabbi or anyone from the religious establishment. It could not have been any more unlikely a group, - fishermen, common labourers, a tax-collector, a 'freedom fighter' (terrorist?). ... It was a judgment on the condition of the religious nature of the nation. That is how apostate Judaism had become. Solomon was right when he wrote centuries earlier, **Prov. 14:34** Righteousness exalteth a nation: but sin is a reproach to any people.

Yes, mention Jesus to that religious elite and you would have seen 'the blood rising in their faces', - they hated Him, and what he stood for. And yet, He sent these twelve men with a Gospel akin to the Old Testament message, **II Chron. 7:14** If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land. ... That is why Jesus came to the people of Israel. Before coming to the cross He wept over them. He left Heaven's glory to come to them. His message of redemption was to buy them back to Himself again, and the means by which He would purchase them was by the shedding of His own precious blood on Calvary.

Imagine! He chose twelve ordinary men ... men who others looked down upon. ... And why did He choose *Twelve*? He chose twelve because there were twelve tribes in Israel, - ... one disciples for each tribe ... - and He was setting these twelve men up as the new spiritual leadership in the land for He declared, [Lk. 22:29](#) I appoint [*'covenant'*] unto you a kingdom, as my Father hath appointed unto me; [30](#) That ye may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom, and sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel. And in the meantime, within the capacity Jesus had inaugurated them, they had only one duty to fulfil, - to serve Him as their Lord and King Messiah ... and they had only one message to preach, [12](#) [And they went out, and preached that men should repent.](#) ... They went to where Jesus sent them, and they preached what Jesus commanded them. They did not devise their own schemes for evangelism or construct a suitable message attractive for the people to accept ... No, they simply went out and did as Jesus instructed them.

Maybe that is where we go wrong sometimes ... It is as if many in the contemporary church scene know better that God how to do His work! But, we don't, and that is how we are in such a mess today. God's work *has* to be done God's way, or else it does not receive His approval or achieve His purpose ... which is to bring Him glory ... and a consequence of His glory being revealed is the salvation of lost souls and the strength of His people, the Church.

I'm reading through Exodus and Leviticus and it's amazing how detailed God's plans were for the building of the tabernacle, the dress of the high priest and the priests, and the way by which all the offerings had to be presented to Him. He had a meticulous way for every aspect of how the priests had to fulfil His instructions. If they deviated, He would not accept their work. And it was the same for the disciples, - they had to do the Lord's work the Lord's way. And nothing has changed ... We are not seeing blessing today because, - by and large, - the Church is not doing the Lord's work the Lord's way.

And it is examination time in our own fellowship ... How are *we* doing His work? It doesn't matter how they are doing it anywhere else ... It doesn't matter how much money they are spending to get the latest and most contemporary styles ... Do you notice Jesus sending His disciples out with 'wads of money'? Do you see Him telling them to try and outdo the world using its latest ideas? ... No, they were simply sent out with the old-fashioned message to preach [12](#) ... [that men should repent.](#) ... The same old message God in the Old Testament sent out His prophets to proclaim.

That was it! That was all He sent the disciples out to do. It wasn't their remit to go into the temple, and infiltrate the Sanhedrin, and sit down with the apostates,

and form a 'unity' committee with some sort of cosy arrangement among them, and try and see what they could do together. No ... Instead, Jesus sent them out to preach the Gospel of the Kingdom, and God blessed their efforts because <sup>13</sup> they cast out many devils, and anointed with oil many that were sick, and healed them.

Regardless of what century we live in, or the type of people we live amongst ..., there is only one way to do the Lord's work, and that is *obediently* ... That is how the disciples were taught to do it, and the Lord blessed them, and they did it *successfully*. There, then, is the lesson for us ...

When we walk with the Lord in the light of His Word,  
What a glory He sheds on our way!  
While we do His good will, He abides with us still,  
And with all who will trust and obey.

But we never can prove the delights of His love  
Until all on the altar we lay;  
For the favour He shows, for the joy He bestows,  
Are for them who will trust and obey.