

A Disciple's Job Description

Mark 6:7-13; 30

Introduction

Please turn in your Bible to Mark 6:7-13.

And He summoned the twelve and began to send them out in pairs, and gave them authority over the unclean spirits;

and He instructed them that they should take nothing for their journey, except a mere staff – no bread, no bag, no money in their belt –

but to wear sandals; and He added, “Do not put on two tunics.”

And He said to them, “Wherever you enter a house, stay there until you leave town.

“Any place that does not receive you or listen to you, as you go out from there, shake the dust off the soles of your feet for a testimony against them.”

They went out and preached that men should repent.

And they were casting out many demons and were anointing with oil many sick people and healing them.

There is something exciting about doing something for the first time. Perhaps you remember your first airplane trip; the first time you boarded an airplane.

I can remember that time. If there was ever a point in my life when all of my sins were totally confessed, it was at that time!

Perhaps you remember the first time you slid behind the wheel of a car and drove on your own. Of

course, there was probably someone in the seat beside you, driving with you, but you remember that first time you drove.

Perhaps those of you who are married remember the first date you had with the person that you would end up marrying. My wife and I recently celebrated the anniversary of our first date. I shocked her by remembering that. It was on December 7th, eleven years ago. That is an occasion though, that I think I might choose to forget because I almost “nipped it in the bud” on that first date. I will tell you what happened.

I showed up on Marsha’s doorstep, all decked out. I was extremely impressive looking in my pinstriped suit. Now, my pinstriped suit had the big, fat pinstripes and it was a sort of an aqua blue color. I loved that suit. No one else liked it, but I thought it was pretty sharp. The real catcher was the cream and blue saddle oxford shoes that I was wearing with that pinstriped suit.

I know you are thinking, “Those shoes went out of style a long time ago.”

That is true, but I guess it took me longer to catch on because I had those things on. I also had on a dark, dark royal blue shirt with a snowy white tie.

I knocked on the door and Marsha came. I do not know if she knew whether she should cry or laugh. She told me later that that occasion was almost our last date. But, anyway, it worked out.

In our text today, we are coming to a first time in the lives of Jesus’ disciples. For the first time, Jesus Christ is going to send them out all by themselves.

The disciples have just completed two years of intensive training. Jesus may have called the meeting and said, "Men, I am now going to send you out two by two."

I would imagine Thomas fainted and Philip probably began to cry. Peter was perhaps, the only one who said, "Lord, it's about time! I've been ready for almost two years now."

However, it was probably a frightening time in their experience as Jesus' disciples. This was the first time they would be without Jesus Christ. They will be doing the teaching. They will be kind of, taking control of the situation. Jesus is now going to send them out.

Let us, because you and I are to be disciples, take a look at this passage of scripture. We will discover some fascinating principles that we can apply to our own lives. These will translate, not only to the first century, but even to this century on being a disciple.

Some of you may be new disciples for Christ. Some of us may have been living for the Lord for a few years. Together we will discover principles that will help us as we enter the arena of discipleship.

The Qualities The Disciples Must Evidence

Look at Mark 6 again. We will begin with verse 7a.

And He summoned the twelve . . .

Luke 10:1 adds that the Lord appointed seventy others. There were at least seventy. He begins to send them forth by two's.

The word "send" is the little Greek word "apostello," from which we get our word "apostle". Every disciple, at some point in time, becomes, in one sense, an apostle. An apostle is merely, "a disciple who is sent or commissioned."

Now, for someone to be a literal apostle, they had to have been an eye witness of Christ or perhaps, His resurrection. So, you and I would not call ourselves apostles, other than the fact that we are being sent by Jesus Christ.

We are told, in Mark 6:7b, that Jesus,

. . . began to send them out in pairs, and gave them authority over the unclean spirits;

Let me give three qualities that we can discover in this passage, that disciples must evidence.

1. The first is the quality of willingness.

The disciples had every opportunity to say, "Lord, I've come this far now, and no thanks; no commissioning for me. I'll go back to my hometown; I'll return to Capernaum or Galilee. I've learned some tremendous things from You. It's been a wonderful two years, but no thanks. I'm finished."

However, we have the record in scripture that all twelve agreed. There was a willingness.

2. Secondly, there is another quality of disciples, and that is, abandonment.

Perhaps I could give some speculations as to the reason Jesus sent the disciples out in pairs.

- First, the disciples were sent out in pairs by Jesus to perhaps, provide a balance.

There is Peter, the impetuous one. I imagine Jesus paired Peter, the man of faith, with Thomas, the man who doubted, so that they could complement one another. There was a sense of balance, I think, in the way that Jesus type-cast them. We do not know exactly how He sent them out.

- Secondly, I think Jesus sent the disciples in pairs for encouragement.

It was going to be very discouraging for the disciples to go out without Jesus Christ; to go out on their own.

If He had sent them one by one, they could have gone to twice as many places. However, I think the Lord knew they needed the encouragement and the accountability of having someone else along. They may need someone to get them out of bed in the morning or to encourage them when difficult times came.

So this pairing was perhaps, for balance and for encouragement.

Notice there is a real sense of abandonment. Look at Mark 6:8-9.

and He instructed them that they should take nothing for their journey, except a mere staff – no bread, no bag, no money in their belt – but to wear sandals; and He added, "Do not put on two tunics."

The kind of sandals mentioned in verse 9, were evidently, a kind of simple sandal. There were two kinds of shoes in this day and time. There was a boot that was made popular by the Romans. There was also a simple sandal with a matted grass sole or a

piece of leather sole with some thongs drawn through it to attach it to the ankle. It was a very simple shoe – a sandal. That is what Jesus was telling the disciples to wear.

The “bag” or “scrip,” depending on your translation of verse 8, is the Greek word “pera”. This refers to, interestingly enough, the beggars bag. It was common, in that day, for a proselyte or for a priest of some secular or pagan religion to have with them the “pera,” or the beggars bag. He would go about so that people could contribute to his cause. He would always have that bag unfolded and ready to receive.

Jesus said to these men, “You represent Me and the Christianity that we will share, but I don’t want you to be receiving. I don’t want you to be professional beggars. I want you to go with the attitude of giving.”

So there was a real sense of abandonment.

All of the pieces of clothing mentioned in these verses are very interesting. We will not take time to look at all of them, but we will discuss the tunic or cloak. They were not to take two of them.

The tunic was a rather large piece of material that was literally, seven feet in width. They would double it over in three and a half feet folds, and it would fold under their arms.

I thought, “That is the perfect garment for the Christmas and the Thanksgiving season – it has room to expand; it has three and a half feet! When someone asks if you’ve put on a couple of pounds, they do not realize you have actually put on two hundred because you have all of that three and a half feet!”

The tunic was, in other words, very simple. It was nothing more than a hole cut in the neck and holes cut in the arms. The disciples would go about and do their business in very simple garb. There was more professional attire; there were nicer things to wear, but this that they were commanded to wear, was very simple. I imagine they were like the Monks of yesteryear, who would travel about simply clad.

The disciples had a real sense of abandonment.

3. Thirdly, there was a sense of boldness.

Look at Mark 6:12.

They went out and preached that . . .

- . . . men should appreciate them. No.

- . . . they should be popular with the masses.
No.

They went out and preached that men [and women] should repent.

There are two words for preaching or teaching. One word is “didaskalon,” which refers to simply imparting the truth; to simply giving out the facts. There is also the word “kerugma,” which refers to giving out the facts and then, drawing the verdict. In other words, “All right, you’ve heard the facts of the kingdom. You’ve heard who Jesus Christ is. You’ve heard the message. Now, I want you to understand that that message has a verdict, and that verdict is to repent.”

So, the disciples had to be bold men. And, I think, they would not necessarily be appreciated.

Turn now, to Matthew, chapter 10. Look at Matthew 10:7. In this amplified or further detailed story, Jesus says to the disciples,

And as you go, preach, saying, “The kingdom of heaven is at hand.”

We can observe, as we read this verse, that the disciples were not to create a message. They were not to go out and tell people what they thought. They were not to preach their own personal opinion. They were not to go out, gather a crowd around them, and tell them what they each thought was right. Understand that they were to preach,

. . . “The kingdom of heaven is at hand.”

They were not to create a message, they were to deliver a message that Jesus had already given to them.

Jesus then says, in Matthew 10:8,

Heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse the lepers, cast out demons. Freely you received; freely give.

In the last phrase, Jesus is telling them, “Don’t charge for preaching, freely give it out.”

The disciples had to have a sense of real boldness.

I think the overall quality needed for these disciples, and for you and me, is:

A disciple must be totally reliant on God’s supply.

It is almost as if Jesus is making it difficult to be a disciple. He is, in effect, saying, “I don’t want you to pack your bags. Don’t take extra apparel. Don’t take extra shoes.”

In fact, when Jesus tells the disciples to take a stick or a staff, there are two possible kinds. There is the club, which was used for protection. There is also the stick with a crook, which was used for walking. He says, “I don’t even want you to take the stick for protection. Take the one that’s used just for walking. I want you to be unencumbered. Just hit the road and know that your Father is with you.”

The Responses the Disciples Can Expect

Let us see what happens as the disciples go out. Turn back to Mark 6.

The Lord is unlike perhaps, the manager of the sales force that you may work for. After the manager gives you all of the facts, he tells you, “Look, the world is waiting for you. I mean, they can’t wait to hear what you’ve got to say. You won’t be turned down. You just get out there and, if you go through the plan just right, you’re going to have them in the palm of your hand.”

Jesus Christ did not do that. He prepared the disciples for a realistic response. There are two of them.

1. The first response that the disciples could expect is that of hospitality.

Look at verse Mark 6:10.

And He said to them, “Wherever you enter a house, stay there until you leave town.”

Luke 10:5-7 amplifies this and tells us that when they arrived in a town, they were to seek out someone who respected God. The person might not have heard the kingdom program, but they knew God; the God of their fathers. Perhaps they were loyal to the Abrahamic covenant. So, when they heard the disciples, something in their heart opened up to these men. As a result, they offered their homes in hospitality.

One of the most exciting events in the life of my wife and I was when we came to this town. We had raised about six hundred dollars a month in support. Marsha went to her family’s home in Atlanta, and I came here. I came without knowing anyone who could provide hospitality. However, there was one couple that I had met several months earlier.

Now, I had planned to go to Goldsboro to spend the night in a missionary home. Looking at the map of this area, while still in Dallas, Raleigh looked real

close to Goldsboro. I, in fact, thought it would be about a thirty or forty minute drive. The map, though, left out all of the red lights and the speed limits, so it was actually a drive of over an hour. I tried it the first night and got lost; I never got there. I came back to Cary, after spending the night in a hotel that was of ill repute.

I then called the only couple that I knew in Cary, and talked to the husband. He said, “Where are you staying? Who is taking care of you?”

I replied, “Well, I’m driving to a missionary’s home.”

I was optimistic at that point at night. He called me back a little later and said, “I’ve talked to my wife. We want you to stay here.”

So, for thirty days, that couple opened their home to me. They fed me, washed my clothes, and gave me the use of the upstairs of their home.

That was a beautiful illustration of what these men were to expect. It is what you and I should expect, as a body.

We can apply this to our own lives. We can provide hospitality to those who are engaged in a full time ministry, perhaps as a missionary. It has been exciting to see this little church provide for three families in our church body who are engaged in full time ministry. They are not working to support themselves. They are working, by way of counseling or on the campus of North Carolina State University. We are showing them hospitality. So we, as a body, can see people coming into this town, perhaps to go to another country, and we can provide hospitality.

These disciples were to go to towns and they were to preach. Hopefully, after they preached once or twice, someone would invite them into their home.

Now, Jesus gives the disciples three rules of hospitality.

- First, the disciples were to choose the home in which to stay carefully.

Luke 10:5-6 adds that they were to be careful that there was a son of peace in the home. In other words, they were not to take the first invitation, necessarily. They were to make sure that the people were really concerned with the gospel.

- Secondly, they were to go to the home not wanting to receive, but to give.

In Mark 6:10, we are told,

And He said to them, “Wherever you enter a house, stay there until you leave town.”

In other words, “Don’t be picky. Don’t get into that home and walk in with a menu. Don’t say, ‘Well, if you’re going to keep me, my favorites are baked potato and steak, medium well, green beans, and apple pie with a little ice cream. Then, in the morning, a couple of eggs, and bacon – well, forget the bacon – perhaps grits. By the way, I take a nap after breakfast and your bed, in the master bedroom, looks more comfortable than this little cot, so I’ll take that one.’”

No. They were to go to this home, not wanting to receive, but to give. The first home where there was a son of peace, if it was a shack and they were drawing water from a creek, they were to go there and stay.

Notice again that Jesus says,

... stay there until you leave town.

This is interesting. In other words, once they had converted someone who was perhaps, a wealthy business person in the town and had an estate with more comfortable surroundings, they were not to leave the shack.

Jesus is saying to these disciples, “I don’t want jealousies arising in this little body. Don’t embarrass My name. So, stay there until you leave the town.”

- Thirdly, the disciples need to be concerned.

Luke 10:9 tells us that the healing ministry and teaching ministry of the disciples is to begin with those in the home where hospitality has been provided.

These are tremendous rules of hospitality.

2. Now, the Lord gave a second response that the disciples could expect. He says, “I want you to know that not only will you be received by some, but you will be rejected by others.”

Perhaps you are a new believer and something that has shocked and surprised you is that you have gone back to your job after accepting Christ, and have soon discovered that you can talk about anything but Jesus Christ. You can talk about the weather; you can talk about the upcoming election year; you can talk about who you think is going to win this football season. You can talk about anything, but the moment you bring Christ into the picture, you are frequently not going to be received, but are going to be rejected. So, be prepared.

Notice what Jesus says, in Mark 6:11.

Any place that does not receive you or listen to you, as you go out from there, shake the dust off the soles of your feet for a testimony against them.

In other words, “Don’t be surprised when you are not received, just shake off the dust from your feet.”

Let me give two points on this.

- First, I think Jesus is telling the disciples not to take rejection personally. These individuals are rejecting Jesus Christ.

Now, it was the custom in that day, for a pious Jew who had traveled through a Gentile region or city, to, before he entered the holy land, take off his sandals and slap them together. This would clear the dust so that he would not bring defiled dust into Jerusalem. They would always do that.

When a Jew left a Gentile home, before he would come back, he would take off his sandals and get rid of the dust. It was as if to say, “These people are despicable and I don’t want even the dust of their city to enter this holy city.”

That is exactly what Jesus Christ is telling the disciples to do. In other words, “If you go into a city and preach and they reject you, you need to understand that they are rejecting Me. So, treat them as a pagan. They are accountable. If they don’t receive you, then take off your sandals, slap them together, and, in effect, say, ‘You are accountable for the message that you’ve received. I want to rid even my sandals of the association I have had with you.’”

What a powerful statement!

- Secondly, it seems that Jesus implies that the disciples should not take rejection lightly.

So, Jesus is saying, “Don’t take it personally. They are rejecting the message of Myself. And, don’t take it lightly.”

Look at Matthew 10:15.

Truly I say to you, it will be more tolerable for the land of Sodom and Gomorrah in the day of judgment than for that city.

Why? Because they had been given, I believe, further revelation. Sodom and Gomorrah had revelation, no doubt. They had Abraham nearby, and they had Lot, who lived in the city, who perhaps, told them of God and the covenant. They rejected that and God held them accountable. But these people are going to hear the kingdom message. If they reject that additional revelation that has made it *so* clear that the

King is here, their accountability is going to be much greater.

My friend, this makes it even more clear that you and I are accountable. We have even more revelation. And all who hear the sound of my voice and reject Jesus Christ, are extremely accountable for receiving it. If it is rejected, it will be worse for them than for Sodom and Gomorrah.

I have never been there, but I understand that the south end of Jordan is charred. I was listening to one man recently, as he spoke of his travels there. Scientists are trying to figure out a way to explain all of the burned rock and the parched land in that area. It is as if there has been a volcanic eruption, yet there is no volcano. There is speculation that this area at the south end of Jordan, was the location of the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah.

God's judgment did fall. He promised it would. My friend, He has promised a judgment to those who reject Jesus Christ that will be much more terrible than the charred rock and the parched land. It involves our eternal destiny.

So Jesus told the disciples, "Be prepared, not only for hospitality, but for hostility."

The Rejoicing The Disciples Should Experience

Now, we have looked at the qualities that the disciples must evidence and the responses they can expect. Notice also, in Mark 6:30, the rejoicing that they should experience.

The apostles gathered together with Jesus; and they reported to Him all that they had done and taught.

Did you catch the order in this verse? The disciples came back to Jesus Christ and told Him everything that they had done. Then, they said, "Oh, and by the way, we taught a few things too."

According to Matthew 10:6-8, Jesus Christ specifically told the disciples to go and *preach*, and *then* do miracles, healings, exorcisms, raising from the dead.

Notice that these disciples had gotten caught up with the results, just as you and I do. They came back to the Master, and the first thing out of their mouths was, "Thousands came! People were following us. You would not believe it! Oh, and You need to know as well, we did teach a few things. But, what results!"

And Lord, You would not believe the fact that the demons were subject to us through Your name."

There were two kinds of rejoicing in this passage. Turn to Luke 10 to see the response of the Lord to the disciples. We will begin at verse 17.

The seventy returned with joy, saying, "Lord, even the devils are subject to us in Your name."

Did Jesus respond to them by saying, "Fantastic! Great!"

No. What did He say? Look at Luke 10:18-20a.

And He said to them, "I was watching Satan fall from heaven like lightning. Behold, I have given you authority to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy, and nothing will injure you. Nevertheless do not rejoice in this, . . .

The words "serpents and scorpions" are perhaps, used in a figurative way to speak of demons, by the way.

The disciples tell Jesus, "Oh, look at what we're doing! The demons are subject to us through Your name. You wouldn't believe what's happening. People are being healed. All of these things are going on and it is fantastic!"

Do you know what is happening? What occurred in the hearts of the disciples is the same thing that can potentially happen to you and to me. We major on the experience and diminish the doctrine.

Now, there are at least four or five different views surrounding Luke 10:18, as to what the Lord meant by,

. . . I was watching Satan fall from heaven like lightning."

Perhaps the Lord was saying, "Oh, you think that's really something. You cast out a little demon, but I was in heaven and I saw Satan fall."

However, of all of the views, there was one that I particularly appreciated because it seemed to grasp the context of the passage. If we look again at what the disciples said to Jesus and imagine that scene in our minds, perhaps they were filled with pride as they said, "Lord, the demons are subject to us! You won't believe what we are doing! Hundreds of people are following us!"

Jesus Christ says, "I want you to understand that Satan fell out of heaven because he manifested in

himself the same thing that I sense in you – pride. Do not rejoice in all of that.”

I can just imagine one of the disciples saying, “Lord, I’ve got four notches on my belt – these are four miracles of healing. And over here, I’ve got seven notches – for seven demons. Look at that, Lord!”

The Lord said, in effect, “I am not impressed.”

In fact, He says in Luke 10:20b,

... “rejoice that your names are recorded in heaven.”

In other words, “If you want to rejoice, rejoice in this – that your names are written in the Lamb’s book of life.”

Do you want something to rejoice about? Turn to Revelation, chapter 20. As you serve as a disciple, do you want to rejoice? When you put your eyes on the experiences and on the results, it is easy to become discouraged because they fluctuate so much. However, this rejoicing is constant. Notice what we are told in Revelation 20:12-15.

And I saw the dead, the great and the small, standing before the throne, and books were opened, which is the book of life; and the dead were judged from the things which were written in the books, according to their deeds.

And the sea gave up the dead which were in it, and death and Hades gave up the dead which were in them; and they were judged, everyone of them according to their deeds.

Then death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. This is the second death, the lake of fire.

And if anyone’s name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire.

Do you want to know why we should have a tremendous burden for lost relatives, friends, and associates who have never come to Jesus Christ? Perhaps you do not know Him. Do you want to know the reason someone may have been praying for you and has been so concerned with your spiritual relationship? It is because of Revelation 20. Whoever is not found with their name written in the Lamb’s book of life, will face an eternal death.

Turn to Revelation 21:23-27.

And the city has no need of the sun or of the moon to shine on it, for the glory of God has illumined it, and its lamp is the Lamb.

The nations will walk by its light, and the kings of the earth will bring their glory into it.

In the daytime (for there will be no night there) its gates will never be closed;

and they will bring the glory and the honor of the nations into it;

and nothing unclean, and no one who practices abomination and lying, shall ever come into it, but only those whose names are written in the Lamb’s book of life.

Ladies and gentlemen, if your name is written in the Lamb’s book of life, it did not get there by osmosis. It did not start to fade onto the page as you began attending church. It did not begin to appear on the page as you began to turn your life around and treat your mate with respect. It did not make an appearance on the scene when you decided, “I need to be a better person.”

There is one moment in history when your name is written in the Lamb’s book of life. You do not need to know the date or the time or the hour. You only need to know that there was a moment in time when the sovereign hand of God wrote *your* name in the Lamb’s book of life.

Do you want to rejoice in your Christian experience, as you disciple and some reject you and your message and others receive your message? Rejoice if your name, sometime in history, was written in and never to be erased from the Lamb’s book of life.

The Rest The Disciples Should Expect

Now turn back to Mark 6. I imagine, had Jesus been like most men, He would have said, “Great men! All of the results are fantastic! People are following. Let me straighten out some theology. Now hit the road again. In fact, this time, I’ll send you out one by one, so you can cover twice the territory.”

Look at Mark 6:30-31a.

The apostles gathered together with Jesus; and they reported to Him all that they had done and taught. And He said to them,

“Come away by yourselves to a secluded place and rest a while.” . . .

There is not a company in the world that has this kind of strategy – not a chance. If there are results, they hire more people and take on some more work. However, when you are a disciple of Jesus Christ, there is a balance between ministry and rest.

There are times, my friend, when it is as spiritual to take an hour nap as it is to spend an hour in prayer. There are times that it can be as much the will of God to take a break as it is to preach the gospel or to witness to someone on the job or to be involved in ministry.

What is the key? What is He teaching? There is a balance between ministry and rest; relaxation.

When you have time to just meditate, do not take any books along, do not say, “Well, Lord, I feel guilty to just be lying here, so I’ll pray.” Just close your eyes and try something new – rest.

One man who wrote, “There is a high distance between the thin wire of fanaticism and the hard floor of realism.”

Oh, I know the saying, “I’d rather burn out for God than rust out.”

That is logical – either way, you are out.

There is the balance between ministry and rest that Jesus Christ was giving to you and to me by His disciples.

Application

Let me close with two questions, by way of application.

1. First, are you a believer?

Have you had the gospel presented to you? Have you been told that Jesus Christ died for you? Have you received it?

2. Secondly, if you are a believer, are you a disciple?

Are you one who is following after Jesus Christ? Are you presenting the kingdom message by the way you live and by the way that you speak?

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