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 Title: The Sending of the Twelve  
 Text: Mark 6:7-13, 30-34 (Gospel Parallels – Matt. 10:1-11:1; Luke 9:1-6)

**Theme:** In the face of growing opposition, Jesus sends twelve disciples to proclaim the gospel of the kingdom both verbally and visually.

### **Introduction:**

In these exceptional passages, Jesus sent out the twelve on a missionary journey. He gave these men travel instructions, the command to preach, and spiritual power. They are going as His ambassadors. They speak and act in His behalf (Gal. 2:20). I believe this is a reflection of what is called the CHRIST LIFE. The life I live in the flesh I live by the Son of God who loved me and gave Himself for me (Gal. 2:20). The fruit I bear is His fruit borne through me. The disciples are a picture of this truth. The strength of this statement will be seen in 6:37.

### **THE BIG PICTURE:**

- The Sin of Unbelief (vv 1-6)
- **The Sending of the Twelve (vv. 7-13, 30-32)**
- The Slaying of John the Baptist (vv. 14-29)
- The Supplying of food for the 5000 (vv. 33-45 [cf 8:1-9])
- The Storm on the Sea of Galilee (vv 46-53)
- The Summarizing of His Ministry (vv 54-56)

REMEMBER, the authority of Jesus Christ is still being exhibited. Mankind's response to that authority in all of its manifestations (partial, postponed or perfect) is still essentially two-fold in nature, unbelief versus belief.

### **KINGDOM TRUTH:**

Summary Statement: (6:1-6)

[The King's hometown rejects Him]

### **Third Cycle: Withdraws from Galilee (6:6b-8:21)**

[The King sends out ambassadors]

The King withdraws into a desert place (6:31)

- Jesus sends out the 12 apostles (6:7-13, 30-34)
- [The political authorities kill the King's forerunner]
- King Herod kills John the Baptist (6:14-29)

### **Its Eternal Value:**

Understanding this as a broad principle, "The life of Christ is still working in and through His people for the expansion of His kingdom."

**The Problem:**

Although we live in a different time, we would be in error if we did not see how the risen Christ is still working mightily in the advancement of His kingdom.

**The Storyline:**

I believe we need to think carefully concerning this area, but I would be hesitant to say the distinction between what Jesus did in the Gospels and what He is doing in the Letters of Paul are two separate programs or purposes. **I believe the kingdom of Christ planned for creation and its foreshadowing under the old agreement is continuing to unfold under the new agreement and is progressively moving toward a certain completion.**

The sending of the twelve is not simply a story of delegation and kingdom multiplication, but one of urgency. The manner in which Jesus sent His disciples “was a deeply symbolic act of witness to the Israel of his day as to what time it was in God’s urgent timetable. History – Israel’s history, the world’s history – was rushing towards its climax, its showdown.” (N.T. Wright, *Mark for Everyone*, 70).

This story finds culmination at the cross and continues to unfold today.

**Questions:**

1. What reasons might you offer as to why Jesus sent the twelve out in pairs? Do you think this might still be a good pattern to follow and why?
2. What kind of power were they given?
3. Note the instruction He gave them in verses 8-11. If the instruction is not directly applicable to us, what kind of application might this have for us? Consider Luke 22:34-38 in your musings.
4. What was the message the twelve preached? How is it similar to ours and how is it different?
5. What actions accompanied their preaching? Are these same actions present today?
6. What place does anointing have in our present context? Consider James 5:14 and 15 in your response.
7. Is the idea of reporting back and testifying biblical? Why might this continue to be a good idea?
8. After their “tour of duty” what instruction did Jesus give to His disciples and what reasons might you offer as to why He did this?
9. What are your thoughts concerning the thinking of the twelve as it relates to the Lord’s popularity and perhaps theirs by association? Is this same pattern going to continue after the cross? Consider John 15:18-25 in your response.

The Holy Spirit is calling to us from this passage to consider three ideas.

**To Know:** The Holy Spirit desires for us to know the power behind His ministry in us and through us to those around us.

**To Choose:** The Holy Spirit desires for us to choose to rest in His power working in and through His people.

**To Feel:** The Holy Spirit desires for us to feel the joy of seeing His life manifested in and through His people.

**Outline:**

- I. Jesus identified the twelve (“He summoned the twelve” [See also Mark 3:13-21])

The language used earlier in Mark’s account to describe the twelve matches that in our present passage. Jesus is calling certain people to be with Him and to go forth from Him. They will carry with them His life, His authority. Unlike our earlier passage, this passage does not name the twelve individuals. Luke 6:13 identifies these twelve as “apostles.” The word “send” (**apostello**) in Mark 6:7 and the word “apostle” (**apostolos**) in Luke 9:13 come from the same word. One is a verb and the other a noun.

Most translations recognize that idea that Jesus called to Himself the twelve. This is always where the calling of God leads. **His call is always to Himself. The work of God flows from the person of God.**

Among the mass of individuals surrounding Jesus and the number of actual disciples, He was still able to select from a larger number twelve who would go forth as His ambassadors. The twelve appear to have a distinction that set them apart from the larger grouping of disciples.

I still believe all Christians are disciples, yet from the larger group there are those whom God sets apart and whom the leadership of a local church should identify as having a specific gifting for the purpose of planting churches. However, those who are identified in this manner are still taken from within the larger group. They are remarkable in their non-remarkable character.

We cannot dismiss too quickly the “normal” nature of those God chooses to use for the expansion of His kingdom. One way this may be related to the first story is in the common-place-ness of the messengers. The power to do the miraculous doesn't necessarily depend upon the faith of the messenger, but the authority/power (**exousia**) given by Jesus.

<http://www.crossmarks.com/brian/mark6x1.htm>

- II. Jesus equipped the twelve

We will note two ideas: His authority and His instruction.

### A. He gave them authority (v. 7b)

The word used for “authority” is the word used to describe a person whose position gives them the power to act and order. “The [authority] is both the right to do a thing and the power to exercise that right.” (R.C.H. Lenski, Mark, 240). Mark uses the word “authority” nine times. Jesus taught as one having authority (Mark 1:22). He exercised “power” over demons (Mark 1:27). In healing the sick Jesus revealed His power over sin and its consequences (Mark 2:10). It is this same “authority” He gave to the twelve disciples (Mark 3:15; 6:7). The power exhibited by Jesus Christ was evident to all, from where this power came was openly questioned (Mark 11:27-33). The religious establishment desired to assign its source to Satan (Mark 3:20-30). Jesus openly refuted such blatant error.

There is a parable unique to Mark in Mark 13:28-37. In the parable our Lord speaks of the time when He will be physically absent from the work. Verse 34 continues the thought found in Mark 3:15 and 6:7 where authority is given to His servants in His absence. **It is through His people that His presence is continued.** It is because of this authority transfer that His people are able to go into all the world and call everyone, everywhere to repentance and faith in Christ. It is the idea contained in Matthew 28:18 where Jesus is described as having been given all authority in heaven and in earth.

There are three areas in which His authority is expressed.

#### 1. He gave them authority to preach the kingdom (v. 12)

“I would translate verse 12: ‘Going out, they proclaimed, SO THAT they might repent.’ The second part of the sentence is a **hina** clause in Greek. **hina** normally indicates purpose, aim, or goal. The **purpose** in their proclaiming is that people might repent -- have a change in mind.” <http://www.crossmarks.com/brian/mark6x1.htm>

Mark reminds us of the expected response to the message which he has already summarized in 1:15. Repentance involves an acceptance of the dawning kingdom in Christ by turning toward the living God in Christ for mercy and forgiveness.

<http://www.lectionarystudies.com/studyg/sunday14bgaii.html>

The message preached by the prophets, Jesus, His disciples, and the early church was Christo-centric. All biblical preaching has as its centerpiece Jesus Christ. All biblical preaching up to the cross was a shadow or type of the promise to come. All biblical preaching after the cross is the substance or antitype of the promise that came.

Their message was of the same content as our Lord’s in Mark 1:14, 15. **Although the kingdom that awaits its final installment is still yet future, we must not neglect the truth of the kingdom today.** If we were to consider the idea of the kingdom from the book of Acts through the book of Revelation, I believe our understanding of this idea would be greatly enhanced.

**First**, after our Lord's resurrection He continued "speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God" (Acts 1:3).

**Second**, the Jewish disciples of Christ looked at such teaching as directly applicable to them (Acts 1:6). Our Lord did not answer their question directly, but guided their focus to the larger purpose of God (Acts 1:7, 8).

**Third**, Philip, in Samaria, preached "the things concerning the kingdom of God, and the name of Jesus Christ" (Acts 8:12).

**Fourth**, Paul, after his first missionary journey, returned to Antioch and encouraged his audience "to continue in the faith, and saying, 'Through many tribulations we must enter the kingdom of God'" (Acts 14:22).

**Fifth**, Paul, during his second missionary journey, "he entered the synagogue and continued speaking out boldly for three months, reasoning and persuading them about the kingdom of God" (Acts 19:8). "This took place for two years, so that all who lived in Asia heard the word of the Lord, both Jews and Greeks" (Acts 19:10).

**Sixth**, when Paul addressed the Ephesian elders he referenced the content of his preaching by saying, "among whom I have gone preaching the kingdom of God" (Acts 20:25).

**Seventh**, in Paul's final statements "he expounded and testified the kingdom of God, persuading them concerning Jesus, both out of the law of Moses, and out of the prophets, from morning till evening. Preaching the kingdom of God, and teaching those things which concern the Lord Jesus Christ, with all confidence, no man forbidding him" (Acts 28:23, 31).

**Finally**, throughout the rest of the New Testament letters consistent reference is made to the already-not yet idea of the kingdom of God (Rom. 14:17; 1 Cor. 4:20; 6:9, 10; 15:24, 50; Gal. 5:21; Eph. 5:5; Col. 1:13; 4:11; 1 Thess. 2:12; 2 Thess. 1:5; 2 Tim. 4:1, 18; Heb. 1:8; 12:28; James 2:5; 2 Pet. 1:11; Rev. 1:9; 12:10).

Part of my past struggle was my attempt to explain the bible via systems, but the bible does not always fit into our systems. I believe systems can contribute to our learning, but I do not believe any system can afford to be closed. What I just exposed you to is biblical theology and biblical theology says Jesus and Paul and the rest preached the kingdom of God and somewhere along the journey the church has been unclear on this point.

A part of the continuity between their preaching and our preaching is this idea of repentance as it relates to the unbelieving.

Paul admonishes Timothy to preach a message that drives the unbelieving to a place of repentance. Notice the language of 2 Timothy 2:22-26.

<sup>22</sup> "Now flee from youthful lusts and pursue righteousness, faith, love and peace, with those who call on the Lord from a pure heart. <sup>23</sup> But refuse foolish and ignorant speculations, knowing that they produce quarrels. <sup>24</sup> The Lord's bond-servant must not be quarrelsome, but be kind to all, able to teach, patient when wronged, <sup>25</sup> **with gentleness correcting those who are in opposition, if perhaps God may grant them repentance leading to the knowledge of the truth,** <sup>26</sup> **and they may come to their senses**

and escape from the snare of the devil, having been held captive by him to do his will" (2 Tim. 2:22-26).

2. He gave them authority to deliver the demon possessed (v. 13a)

Jesus casts out a few, his disciples "many". The mission serves to extend Jesus' authority to the many. Note, the imperfect implies an ongoing success in the casting out of demons. The casting out of demons, as noted above, serves as a powerful sign of the dawning kingdom. <http://www.lectionarystudies.com/studyg/sunday14bgaii.html>

3. He gave them authority to heal the sick (v. 13b)

Mark summarizes the mission in terms of a proclamation by word and sign. The disciples proclaimed the coming kingdom in the message of the gospel, and they proclaimed it in the messianic signs of exorcism and healing. Mark summarizes their message as a call for repentance. In the face of the coming kingdom, and thus the day of judgment, we can only but turn toward ("repent") the living God and seek his mercy. <http://www.lectionarystudies.com/studyg/sunday14bgaii.html>

This principle sounds very similar to that of James 5:14 and 15.

<sup>14</sup>“Is anyone among you sick? Then he must call for the elders of the church and they are to pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord; <sup>15</sup> and the prayer offered in faith will restore the one who is sick, and the Lord will raise him up, and if he has committed sins, they will be forgiven him” (James 5:14, 15).

I think we struggle with what this might look like today, but I am willing to concede that it is happening and I am not willing to deny its presence simply because it does not look like I think it should or simply because I do not understand everything about it.

- B. He gave them instruction (vv. 8-11)

1. His instruction concerning their provision

Crossan compares and contrasts Cynic missionaries and Jesus missionaries. Both groups were allowed to carry a staff. The Cynics were to carry "a bag" (or "knapsack"). Crossan writes: "What it symbolized for the Cynics was their complete self-sufficiency. They carried their homes with them. All they needed could be carried in a simple knapsack slung over their shoulders" [p. 118]. In contrast, he writes about Jesus' missionaries without "a bag": "...they could not and should not dress to declare itinerant self-sufficiency but rather communal dependency" [p.119]."

<http://www.crossmarks.com/brian/mark6x1.htm>

I believe the work of God is to be inter-dependent. I do not believe ministry or missions should have an independent or self-determining mindset. "The orders which Jesus

issues are to teach the apostles absolute dependence upon their Lord who sends them out." (R.C.H. Lenski, Mark, 240, 241).

"Jesus didn't even let them take a bag, or money. These are emergency instructions for a swift and dangerous mission, not a [program] for the continuing life of the church after Easter. The church has usually . . . recognized that these commands are specific to Jesus' own day and the setting of his mission in first-century Palestine." (N.T. Wright, *Mark for Everyone*, 68, 69).

The tone set by Jesus in His instructions in Mark 6 is one of dependency and urgency. Notice the contrasting instruction in Luke 22:35-38.

<sup>34</sup> And He said, "I say to you, Peter, the rooster will not crow today until you have denied three times that you know Me." <sup>35</sup> And He said to them, "When I sent you out without money belt and bag and sandals, you did not lack anything, did you?" They said, "No, nothing." <sup>36</sup> And He said to them, "But now, whoever has a money belt is to take it along, likewise also a bag, and whoever has no sword is to sell his coat and buy one. <sup>37</sup> "For I tell you that this which is written must be fulfilled in Me, 'AND HE WAS NUMBERED WITH TRANSGRESSORS'; for that which refers to Me has its fulfillment."

<sup>38</sup> They said, "Lord, look, here are two swords." And He said to them, "It is enough." (Luke 22:34-38).

In Luke 22 our Lord is making specific reference to His earlier instruction in Luke 9. The urgency of the earlier mission changes because of the killing of their king and the shift from the king's immediate, physical presence to the work of the Holy Spirit and what kingdom work will look like now. In His bodily absence, He prepares His disciples for the open animosity that will be shown them. This is part of His parting comments to His disciples in the upper room of John 15:18-25.

<sup>18</sup> "If the world hates you, you know that it has hated Me before it hated you. <sup>19</sup> If you were of the world, the world would love its own; but because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, because of this the world hates you. <sup>20</sup> Remember the word that I said to you, 'A slave is not greater than his master.' If they persecuted Me, they will also persecute you; if they kept My word, they will keep yours also. <sup>21</sup> But all these things they will do to you for My name's sake, because they do not know the One who sent Me. <sup>22</sup> If I had not come and spoken to them, they would not have sin, but now they have no excuse for their sin. <sup>23</sup> He who hates Me hates My Father also. <sup>24</sup> If I had not done among them the works which no one else did, they would not have sin; but now they have both seen and hated Me and My Father as well. <sup>25</sup> But they have done this to fulfill the word that is written in their Law, 'THEY HATED ME WITHOUT A CAUSE'" (John 15:18-25).

"They are to expect persecution and bitter hostility (John 15:18-21). Jesus does not mean that his disciples are to repel force by force, but that they are to be ready to defend his cause against attack. Changed conditions bring changed needs. This language can be misunderstood as it was then." (A.T. Robertson's *New Testament Word Pictures*)

I believe we would be in error not to see the significant shift that comes in our Lord's presence and then absence through His death, burial and resurrection. To take Mark 6 as normative in sending out church planters without considering Luke 22 would be a grievous mistake.

2. His instruction concerning their preaching

a. Positively considered (v. 10)

This principle is evoked by Lydia, a seller of purple fabric, when Paul went to Thyatira in Acts 16:14, 15.

<sup>14</sup> "A woman named Lydia, from the city of Thyatira, a seller of purple fabrics, a worshiper of God, was listening; and the Lord opened her heart to respond to the things spoken by Paul. <sup>15</sup> And when she and her household had been baptized, she urged us, saying, 'If you have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come into my house and stay.' And she prevailed upon us" (Acts 16:14, 15).

b. Negatively considered (v. 11)

Shaking the dust off one's feet was a gesture of cursing a place. It symbolized a complete break from a community. Not a trace of it will be carried with them. I would assume this is what our Lord did to the city of Nazareth (Mark 6:1-6).

Nehemiah uses the same symbolism when speaking of God's rejection of those who do not fulfill the issue at hand (Neh. 5:13).

<sup>13</sup> "**I also shook out the front of my garment and said**, 'Thus may God shake out every man from his house and from his possessions who does not fulfill this promise; even thus may he be shaken out and emptied.' And all the assembly said, 'Amen!' And they praised the LORD. Then the people did according to this promise" (Neh. 5:13).

Paul does this same symbolic act toward the people of Iconium in Acts 13:48-52.

<sup>48</sup> "When the Gentiles heard this, they began rejoicing and glorifying the word of the Lord; and as many as had been appointed to eternal life believed. <sup>49</sup> And the word of the Lord was being spread through the whole region. <sup>50</sup> But the Jews incited the devout women of prominence and the leading men of the city, and instigated a persecution against Paul and Barnabas, and drove them out of their district. <sup>51</sup> **But they shook off the dust of their feet in protest against them and went to Iconium.** <sup>52</sup> And the disciples were continually filled with joy and with the Holy Spirit" (Acts 13:48-52).

This same symbolic act is repeated in the city of Corinth in Acts 18:1-6.

<sup>1</sup> "After these things he left Athens and went to Corinth. <sup>2</sup> And he found a Jew named Aquila, a native of Pontus, having recently come from Italy with his wife Priscilla, because Claudius had commanded all the Jews to leave Rome. He came to them, <sup>3</sup> and

because he was of the same trade, he stayed with them and they were working, for by trade they were tent-makers. <sup>4</sup> And he was reasoning in the synagogue every Sabbath and trying to persuade Jews and Greeks. <sup>5</sup> But when Silas and Timothy came down from Macedonia, Paul began devoting himself completely to the word, solemnly testifying to the Jews that Jesus was the Christ. <sup>6</sup> **But when they resisted and blasphemed, he shook out his garments and said to them, 'Your blood be on your own heads! I am clean. From now on I will go to the Gentiles''** (Acts 18:1-6).

### III. Jesus sent the twelve (vv. 7, 12)

The missionary effort began with the initiative of Jesus. He gathered the Twelve together so he could send them out with spiritual power. **In one respect, the journey of the Twelve extended the messianic mission of Jesus.** In another respect, the journey changed the Twelve into Apostles (the root word for apostle literally means "to send out.") The ministry of the Twelve began with the call of Christ.

<http://www.word-sunday.com/Files/b/15-b/A-15-b.html>

The authority Jesus gave to His disciples was to function as a "sign that God's kingdom was breaking in at last. They were kingdom-heralds, outriders warning people that something was about to happen and that everyone should get ready for it." (N.T. Wright, *Mark for Everyone*, 69).

I do find it appropriate to note how our Lord sent His disciples out in pairs. I do not think it is binding, but I do think it is practical. "Sending the disciples out two by two may have been done for safety reasons. It was dangerous to travel alone on the ancient roads. It may have been associated with legal requirements for two witnesses to testify in a case (Num. 35:30; Deut. 19:15). It may have been for mutual strengthening. Often I have needed the support of a colleague when times were difficult."

<http://www.crossmarks.com/brian/mark6x1.htm>

This same pattern is seen in Revelation 11:3, 4 concerning the two witnesses of God before the unbelieving world.

<sup>3</sup> "And I will grant authority to my two witnesses, and they will prophesy for twelve hundred and sixty days, clothed in sackcloth. <sup>4</sup> These are the two olive trees and the two lampstands that stand before the Lord of the earth" (Rev. 11:3, 4).

Some would suggest this number was necessary because under the law it required two witnesses to establish the truth (Deut. 19:15; Matt. 18:16; 2 Cor. 13:1; 1 Tim. 5:19; Heb. 10:28).

"Amidst the trials and opposition which they would meet with, mutual counsel and aid would greatly lighten their burdens, and alleviate their calamities. Mutual counsel might also contribute to their success, and lead to united plans to advance the kingdom of the Redeemer." (*Albert Barnes' New Testament Commentary*)

This same idea is reflected in the wisdom literature of Ecclesiastes 4:9-12.

<sup>9</sup>“Two are better than one because they have a good return for their labor. <sup>10</sup>For if either of them falls, the one will lift up his companion. But woe to the one who falls when there is not another to lift him up. <sup>11</sup>Furthermore, if two lie down together they keep warm, but how can one be warm alone? <sup>12</sup>And if one can overpower him who is alone, two can resist him. A cord of three strands is not quickly torn apart” (Eccl. 4:9-12).

As we prepare to send out church planters, we should seek to send them out in pairs and perhaps with teams. This is for their encouragement and their protection.

How far do we consider the application of this instruction for us today? Are there principles that are equally binding on us?

- First, have we been given a mandate to go into the world and preach the gospel to every creature?
- Second, do we have His power in us to see the supernatural manifested? Do we believe demons are present and active in the world? Then should we not equally believe His power is working through us to deliver them from their bondage.
- Third, do we believe God heals the sick and diseased? If God still heals, what prohibits us from acting in faith for the healing of the infirmed?

I believe I am living kingdom truth. I do not believe I am seeing the full and undiluted expression, but I also believe I am in an already-not yet state. I think we have a tendency to strip the church age of real kingdom power. As if to say, “That was then, this is now.” However, I am not willing to concede defeat and not to live in the victory of Christ over the world, the flesh, and the devil. The big idea and the real “ah-hah” moment is coming in verses 35-45. Let us just read verse 37 without too much commenting and let us place it in our present passage. When Jesus sent them out, it was not to replace Him or to make them independent of Him. His intent is that His power, His life, would flow through them and spread like wild fire in a dry forest.

#### IV. Jesus gathered the twelve (vv. 30-32).

Followers of Christ always gather around Jesus. Jesus is the center, the focus, the core, the axis, the hub of the Christian church. We always gather around Jesus. Jesus is our center.

##### A. Jesus gathered them to hear their testimonies

It is right and proper for us to hear of God’s goodness and kingdom advancement on regular occasions. What our Lord does is reinforce the truth of what He had spoken prior to Him sending them out. He is saying, “Did you not see and do what I said would be done?” Where are you seeing the power of God displayed?

## B. Jesus gathered them to refresh their spirits

In America today, we too are living in a rat-race culture where we are forever coming and going and don't even have time to rest or eat a leisurely meal. We are a fast paced society in a fast food world.

This same harried existence is noted in Mark 3:20.

<sup>20</sup> "And He came home, and the crowd gathered again, **to such an extent that they could not even eat a meal**" (Mark 3:20).

We could underline this sentence because these words so accurately describe our lives here in America or wherever we live which has become a rat-race. We know how busy we all are, with all our comings and goings, so much so that we don't even have time to eat.

God is continuing His kingdom ministry in and through the church of Jesus Christ. He is calling us to live lives of simplicity that are gospel rich in order that any and all who hear might respond and be saved. In the midst of our comfortable and convenient lives we must not lose sight of God's kingdom program working in and through His people. No Christian is exempt from this. All of us must live kingdom lives in order that His purpose might continue to be fulfilled.

### **SHEPHERDING THE PEOPLE:** (What is the NEXT STEP?)

1. Are you willing to become a part of a team of people who would take a Christ-exalting, Word-centered, Global-impacting, Grace-based message into our community, our nation, and our world?
2. Are you willing to minister in the power of Christ to those around you?
3. Are you willing to live with kingdom values in order for the expansion of His kingdom? What are those identifying qualities present in the kingdom? Those same characteristics are to be lived out in our everyday lives.
4. Do you believe Jesus is still able to accompany preaching with power actions?
5. What testimony can you give of God's power in your life?