

## **Sending them Out: Mark 6:1-13**

*6He left that place and came to his hometown, and his disciples followed him. <sup>2</sup>On the sabbath he began to teach in the synagogue, and many who heard him were astounded. They said, "Where did this man get all this? What is this wisdom that has been given to him? What deeds of power are being done by his hands! <sup>3</sup>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. <sup>4</sup>Then Jesus said to them, "Prophets are not without honor, except in their hometown, and among their own kin, and in their own house." <sup>5</sup>And he could do no deed of power there, except that he laid his hands on a few sick people and cured them. <sup>6</sup>And he was amazed at their unbelief.*

*Then he went about among the villages teaching. <sup>7</sup>He called the twelve and began to send them out two by two, and gave them authority over the unclean spirits. <sup>8</sup>He ordered them to take nothing for their journey except a staff; no bread, no bag, no money in their belts; <sup>9</sup>but to wear sandals and not to put on two tunics. <sup>10</sup>He said to them, "Wherever you enter a house, stay there until you leave the place. <sup>11</sup>If any place will not welcome you and they refuse to hear you, as you leave, shake off the dust that is on your feet as a testimony against them." <sup>12</sup>So they went out and proclaimed that all should repent. <sup>13</sup>They cast out many demons, and anointed with oil many who were sick and cured them.*

*<sup>30</sup>The apostles gathered around Jesus, and told him all that they had done and taught. <sup>31</sup>He said to them, "Come away to a deserted place all by yourselves and rest a while." For many were coming and going, and they had no leisure even to eat. <sup>32</sup>And they went away in the boat to a deserted place by themselves. <sup>33</sup>Now many saw them going and recognized them, and they hurried there on foot from all the towns and arrived ahead of them. <sup>34</sup>As he went ashore, he saw a great crowd; and he had compassion for them, because they were like sheep without a shepherd; and he began to teach them many things. <sup>35</sup>When it grew late, his disciples came to him and said, "This is a deserted place, and the hour is now very late; <sup>36</sup>send them away so that they may go into the surrounding country and villages and buy something for themselves to eat." <sup>37</sup>But he answered them, "You give them something to eat." They said to him, "Are we to go and buy two hundred denarii worth of bread, and give it to them to eat?" <sup>38</sup>And he said to them, "How many loaves have you? Go and see." When they had found out, they said, "Five, and two fish." <sup>39</sup>Then he ordered them to get all the people to sit down in groups on the green grass. <sup>40</sup>So they sat down in groups of hundreds and of fifties. <sup>41</sup>Taking the five loaves and the two fish, he looked up to heaven, and blessed and broke the loaves, and gave them to his disciples to set before the people; and he divided the two fish among them all. <sup>42</sup>And all ate and were filled; <sup>43</sup>and they took up twelve baskets full of broken pieces and of the fish. <sup>44</sup>Those who had eaten the loaves numbered five thousand men.*

*<sup>45</sup>Immediately he made his disciples get into the boat and go on ahead to the other side, to Bethsaida, while he dismissed the crowd.*

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Eventually it's going to happen. Traveling from town to town, disciples in tow, he's going to eventually get there. He's going to find home. Now remember, Jesus was baptized, he began his ministry. People are coming from far distances to see and hear Jesus. He's healing the sick, bringing the dead to life. A lot is going on in Jesus' life. He's even gotten the attention of the government officials as well as the religious leaders. People of all walks of life are realizing there's something different about this man. But when Jesus goes home to Nazareth, the town looks at him and says, hey, that's Mary and Joseph's boy. You know, I remember when he was little playing with our kids. Yeah, we know him. He's nothing special, why would we waste our time listening to him? He's like us, he can only do things that we can already do for ourselves. And they took offense at him and he left, moving on to the next town.

How sad is that? Verse 4 reads, Jesus said to them, "Only in his hometown, among his relatives and in his own house is a prophet without honor." Jesus, already knowing these people, was amazed at their lack of faith. Lack of faith in God, lack of faith in him, lack of faith in humanity. I don't know about you, but I'm not the same person I was when I was a child. My mom and aunt can tell you stories of how I would cry if someone tried to talk to me in the grocery store. It wasn't until the second to the last week of first grade that I raised my hand for the first time in class. I'm not the same person I was when I was a child. I've grown as a person. My faith and life experiences have given me confidence to be who I am called to be that I didn't have when I was a child. Here, Jesus comes home and the good people of Nazareth don't even hear him out. They look at him like he's just a regular hometown kid like all the rest of them and they go back to their regular routines.

Not letting that get the best of him, Jesus continues on to the next town, only this time, and I don't know if it's because he's so close to home or because it's time for them to begin hands-on learning, Jesus sends his disciples out in pairs to teach of God's message of love. He's giving them comfort by not being alone and confidence by telling them they have the authority to do this work. He reminds them there are no required tools or equipment. They have within them everything they need. And he

reminds them that if they aren't welcome in one place to shake it off and keep going.

So much of this chapter is good advice. And when the disciples returned they told Jesus all the things they were able to do. Two weeks from today, on the 24<sup>th</sup>, our own youth will share with us all they were able to do during their summer mission trips. They'll report back to us the things they learned, the things they saw and heard, the things that changed the way they view the world. The ways they showed love to people and the ways they accepted others love and hospitality. And I image they'll come to us with the same excitement the disciples had when they came to Jesus.

Jesus, being the good mentor he was, realized the disciples needed some down time. They had done a lot and he didn't want them to burn out, so he instructed them to get on the boat so they could get away from the crowds. Only the crowds followed them on the seashore and when they docked, Jesus said, ok, to the crowd, your persistence wins. And he began teaching them. As the day progressed the disciples asked Jesus to send the people away so they could go to a nearby town to buy some food. But instead Jesus tells them to feed the people. I'd love to have seen the disciples' faces. Remember they've only had one trip or outing of serving people on their own, so they are like the rest of us, still learning. They look back at Jesus and virtually tell him that's impossible for them to do. They're in the country and even if they weren't out in the middle of nowhere, they couldn't afford that much food. Remember, they were instructed not to take anything with them. So they do as Jesus asked and they gather what food they can find, it's blessed, it's shared and people are eating. People are getting to know each other and sharing themselves as well as their food. The items that people had held back, the food they weren't ready to share when the disciples asked for food, they are now generously sharing with all. They are filled with goodness and generosity from each other as well as food for their bellies.

When there's a need, people are at their best, they all chip in and help those around them. In this case, food that people had was shared and distributed as they got to know the people around them. They saw someone hungry and they fed them. This week, as the world saw our

darkest side replayed over and over again. Literally, Tuesday, watching real human life lost on camera. Wednesday, again, watching real human life die on camera. And Thursday, as we watched distant scenes where 12 were shot, 5 of which killed. As we sat in our homes, able to tuck our children in at night, and then crying because we knew somewhere someone else wasn't getting that same privilege. As we prayed, not knowing what to say. As we got angry at God and angry at the people around us. As we continued life, without our words or voices, we awoke to scenes of people lined up to hug total strangers. We awoke to video of people passing out water to those who are thirsty. We awoke to prisoners breaking out of confinement to save a guard's life. We awoke to people who had found their voice, people who stood up and said what we were all frustrated at each other for, that you can be pro black lives and pro police, that those two are not mutually exclusive. We saw people walking hand in hand alongside each other peacefully, showing the rest of us that peace and love is possible regardless of who is beside you. We were reminded that love always wins over fear. We were finally able to mourn for the families of Alton Sterling, Philando Castile, Michael Krol, Brent Thompson, Michael Smith, Patrick Zamarripa, Lorne Ahrens, and those still hospitalized and traumatized because we found our hope and faith again. We remembered that there is good in people, and the good shines brighter than any darkness.

There are lots of good lessons to be learned in this chapter. Jesus is reminding us today, wherever we are in this process, that no special tools are needed. You possess all you need to spread love to others. Even when it doesn't feel like it in the moment, love always wins. Sharing love, no strings attached, changes people. Experiencing unconditional love is what changed me. It's what gives hope to people throughout different time periods and across cultural lines.

Let us be motivated by love, caring and serving those around us. Listening and hearing them. Let us be encouraged by those around us. Let us accept love from others as we offer love to others. For love is all we need.