

## What Happens When The Gospel Is Rejected

Mark 6: 7-13

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<sup>7</sup> And 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 charged 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 put on two tunics. <sup>10</sup> And he said to them, “Whenever you enter a house, stay there until you depart from there. <sup>11</sup> 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.” <sup>12</sup> So they went out and proclaimed that people should repent. <sup>13</sup> And they cast out many demons and anointed with oil many who were sick and healed them.

On November 20, an article was published in Time magazine about the LA wild fires earlier this year. The introduction to the article was the following, “*This year the L.A wildfires came for my hometown, what happened next is a warning for us all*”. How bad was the fire? The report said, “*The January fires that hit Los Angeles are, when taken together, among the costliest disasters in U.S. history, with some estimates of the economic toll topping \$250 billion. Some 16,000 structures were destroyed and, at peak, 200,000 people were hit with evacuation orders and warnings. More than 30 people died.*” The damage was great in terms of financial and personal property. The loss of life was the most tragic part. The report also said the best way to avoid risk is to take action beforehand.

Imagine if we changed the report to say, “The L.A fires should be a warning to those who reject the Gospel!”. The magazine would reject us.

What happens to those who reject the Gospel or those who do not repent but obey unrighteousness? The short answer - Unquenchable fire. Unbearable judgment!

That is why we have an urgent announcement to make to this world every week.

- The announcement is that Jesus Christ is the Savior of the world. Jesus Christ came to save sinners.
- We seek the conversion and building of souls because God desires that no one should perish but all come to repentance.
- We seek to persuade others because of the terror of God and the awful and dreadful judgment that awaits unrepentant ungodly sinners.

Here Jesus sends his disciples in the proclamation of the Gospel. Which implies Jesus

wants you to be about the Gospel. So many people out of a fear of rejection just won't share the Gospel. That would amount to disobedience.

Not all may respond favorably to the Gospel message. Some may reject the Gospel. Because you see even Christ was rejected in his own hometown.

We saw that in our previous passage. The people of Nazareth dishonored Jesus. The people of his own hometown treated him with contempt and attempted to push him off a cliff. They were self-righteous, proud and disdainful. They rejected Jesus.

Why? Because of their unbelief.

So what does Jesus do after being rejected? Does he retreat into safety? Does he call his disciples and say, "Let us close our Gospel mission here and run away?" No. Does Jesus say, "Let's gather for a bible study and never step out?" No.

What does Jesus do? Jesus sends out his disciples to preach the Gospel in every town. You see Jesus' *rejection* in Nazareth was training ground for his disciples.

Jesus was *rejected* by men but do you ever see him *dejected*? Never!

You never see a dejected or a disappointed Jesus.

Why? Because Jesus was *approved* by God the Father.

Although Jesus Christ is the Eternal and Beloved Son of God, he *took* on frail humanity.

Jesus was *sent* by the Father. Jesus was *loved* by the Father.

Jesus was full of the Holy Spirit.

Jesus was rejected yet joyful. Luke 10:21- "*that same hour he rejoiced in the Holy Spirit and said, "I thank you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that you have hidden these things from the wise and understanding and revealed them to little children; yes, Father, for such was your gracious will."*"

Jesus shed many tears but he was always joyful in his mission.

When you embrace Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord, you are approved by God. And you have the joy of God. The whole world may reject you, yet you have God with you.

God told Abraham – "*Do not fear, Abram, I am your shield*" Genesis 15:1

And, as you walk through this life, when you are faced with tests and trails that tempt you to despair, leave no room for dejection. Instead, make room for joy. Because Jesus wants to fill you with a joy that is unspoken of in this world. Jesus said in John 16:24 "*Ask, and you will receive, that your joy may be full.*" When is the last time you have asked the Lord for joy?

So here the disciples are given an assignment, a pilot commission.

Look at verses 7 through 10.

<sup>7</sup> And 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 charged 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 put on two tunics. <sup>10</sup> And he said to them, “Whenever you enter a house, stay there until you depart from there. <sup>11</sup> 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.”

We see four observations:

Jesus *calls*. Jesus *gives*. Jesus *sends*. Jesus *instructs*.

First observation – Jesus *calls* his disciples to himself. Verse seven says “Jesus called the twelve”. Another translation says, he called them to himself.

The call to discipleship is very simple but very hard. First – deny yourself, then pick up your cross and follow Jesus.

Any ministry done without fidelity to Christ is of no avail. Any gospel ministry done independently of the Lord Jesus Christ is anti-Christ. Every Christian is called to belong to Christ. And when you belong to Christ, you must grow to become a holy vessel for Christ. And in order to be a holy vessel for Christ, you must know the enemy of godliness and holiness. Who is that enemy? Self-reliance. Jesus told his disciples in John 15:5 – “*Apart from me, you can do nothing*”.

It is said that we use about 16000 words on average in a day. I wonder how many words do you spend in a day to pray for your family, for your children, grand-children and those who are lost without Christ.

If you are the man of the house, the least you could do is lead prayer in the home.

And what a great ministry mothers have – to build the home (Proverbs 14:1).

As disciples of Jesus, know who you are *called* to and who you belong to – Christ!

Second observation – Jesus *gave* them authority. Jesus gave them supernatural power. He gave them the power to cast out demons and heal sickness. Not only did our Lord possess extraordinary power and authority, he also delegates this authority to his disciples. When the Lord Jesus Christ gave his final command, he said, “*All authority has been given to me*” (Matthew 28:19). Many people who claim and promote they have some power and authority to heal and cast out demons. I wonder what their prayer life looks like? Here our Lord directly transfers his power to his disciples.

Now, you may not have all the supernatural power to do exactly what these disciples did but Jesus gave much more than just spiritual power.

What is that?

- Ephesians 5:2 “Christ loved us and *gave* himself up for us”.
- Ephesians 5:25 “Christ loved the church and *gave* himself up for her”.

- Titus 2:14 “Jesus Christ, who *gave* himself for us to redeem us from all lawlessness and to purify for himself a people for his own possession who are zealous for good works”
- Paul says it in a very personal way in Galatians 2:20 “And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and *gave* himself for me”.

Third observation – Jesus *sends* his disciples.

Jesus sends them out two by two. Two is better than one. A three-fold cord cannot be broken easily. As iron sharpens iron, one brother encourages another.

In Matthew 10, we see where Jesus sends his disciples out in his mission.

*“Go nowhere among the Gentiles and enter no town of the Samaritans, but go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel”* Matthew 10:5-6.

We’ll come back to this when we get to verse 11. God is a sending God. God sent his Son into this world. In the same way, Jesus sends his disciples.

John 20:21 *“As the Father has sent me, even so I am sending you”*.

As a disciple, think of yourself as someone on mission in this world. If you are in the work place, you are a witness, you are a light. If you are a parent, then there is not a single time you are not disciple maker.

Fourth observation – Jesus *instructs* his disciples.

Here are our Lord gives *three* kinds of instructions.

1. The first instruction is a field instruction. Very practical. Very relevant to our day as well. What does our Lord say? *“He charged 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 put on two tunics”*. So travel light. Why? Because their lifestyle is going to be evidence of their faith.
2. In the second part of the instruction, Jesus tells his disciples to stay in the house they were invited to. Hospitality was a big cultural norm in the first century. If people received them and invited them into their homes, their message was accepted. So, Jesus tells them, stay there as their guests.
3. However, if a place does receive them and does not hear them, then shake their dust of their feet. This is significant. What shaking the dust off their feet indicate? It means the disciples were *not* responsible for their rejection of the message. It is said that Jewish travelers going to Jerusalem would shake the dust off their feet whenever they passed through a Gentile town. The disciples understood what Jesus said. Remember, where Jesus wanted to them to go (in this mission)? To Jewish towns only. To the *lost sheep of the house of Israel*. Matthew 10:5. But now Jesus says, if a town in Israel rejects you, then treat it like a Gentile town.
  - a. In Matthew 10 and Luke 10, Jesus goes a step further.

- b. And if anyone will not receive you or listen to your words, shake off the dust from your feet when you leave that house or town. <sup>15</sup> Truly, I say to you, it will be more bearable on the day of judgment for the land of Sodom and Gomorrah than for that town. Matthew 10:14-15.
- c. “Woe to you, Chorazin! Woe to you, Bethsaida! For if the mighty works done in you had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago, sitting in sackcloth and ashes. <sup>14</sup> But it will be more bearable in the judgment for Tyre and Sidon than for you. <sup>15</sup> And you, Capernaum, will you be exalted to heaven? You shall be brought down to Hades. <sup>16</sup> “The one who hears you hears me, and the one who rejects you rejects me, and the one who rejects me rejects him who sent me.” Luke 10:13-16

What Jesus says in both Matthew and Luke is quite profound. This constitutes both the positive and negative part of Gospel reception.

- Those who hear and receive the message of the Gospel, for them the Kingdom of God has come near. They have heaven rejoicing.
- But those who do not *receive* and do not *hear* the Gospel, those who *reject* the Gospel message, they only have a terrifying expectation of judgment. How terrifying? It is going to be worse than Sodom and Gomorrah.

What happened to Sodom and Gomorrah? Peter tells us in 2 Peter 2:6 “*if by turning the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah to ashes he condemned them to extinction, making them an example of what is going to happen to the ungodly*”. The cities were reduced to ashes and extinction. How did that happen? We have to look at Genesis 19.

The sin of Sodom and Gomorrah was very grave. Men brazenly carrying out sexual acts with other men and wanting to do that even with angels. What was the outcome? Genesis 19: 24-25 – “*Then the Lord rained on Sodom and Gomorrah sulfur and fire from the Lord out of heaven. <sup>25</sup> And he overthrew those cities, and all the valley, and all the inhabitants of the cities, and what grew on the ground.*”

If you were in a chemistry lab, you’ll know what sulfur smells like. Rotten eggs. Sulfur can be very toxic. God rained down sulfur and fire and destroyed the cities. So here Jesus says, for those who entirely reject the Good News, Sodom and Gomorrah will look bearable than that town that rejects the Gospel in first century Israel. And Jesus denounced at least three cities - Chorazin, Bethsaida and Capernaum in the Gospel of Luke.

- The Gospel is called Good News because it warns you of God’s Fury and Wrath to come.
- The Gospel is also Good News because it addresses man’s greatest need.

What is man’s greatest need? Man’s greatest need is to be right with God. To be forgiven

of your sin. To find favor with God. To be reconciled with God. To have fellowship with Jesus Christ.

Now, you cannot expect worldly, un-spiritual or unregenerate people to understand these things because they are spiritually discerned. “*The natural person does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are folly to him*” 1 Corinthians 2:14

To be more precise, in Paul’s language, folly is the word “*moria*”. We get the English word *moron* from here. In the world’s eyes, the Gospel is moronic and those who preach the true Gospel are like morons. But it is the “*folly*” of the Gospel that saves people.

You see Jesus taught his disciples to not give their own version of the Gospel but the Gospel of Jesus Christ. I don’t know why people want to water down the Gospel.

Now, we don’t want to needlessly provoke or offend anyone. That is why Jesus also told his disciples to be “*wise as serpents and innocent as doves*”.

Finally, the Gospel is Good News because it tells you of action to take before it’s too late.

What is that action? This is main thrust of the Jesus’ instruction to his disciples. Verse 12 and 13.

<sup>12</sup> So they went out and proclaimed that people should repent. <sup>13</sup> And they cast out many demons and anointed with oil many who were sick and healed them.

The disciples did exactly what Jesus told them to do. They were *sent* and they *went*. They proclaimed. They emphasized one thing in their proclamation. We know this because of how the sentence is structured. Verse 12 ends with a purpose clause – they went out and preached *in order* that they should repent!

For all the towns in first century, the call to repentance meant the call to repent of their *unbelief* in the Messiah Jesus and to repent of sin.

You are a Christian or a disciple of Christ because you repented.

How do you know if your repentance is real?

Not Sunday church attendance. There is no lack of Sunday Christians in churches today—attend Sunday and disappear for the rest of the week. Not Bible Study attendance.

You know your repentance is real if you respond to God with fear and trembling. With grief for your sin. With sorrow for your rebellion against God. 2 Corinthians 7:10.

So, the disciples went and proclaimed the Gospel. With the authority Jesus gave these men, they cast out demons, they healed people and they anointed with oil. The oil is symbolic. All this was done to authenticate Kingdom of Christ.

Do you presume God's grace is available without repentance?

If you are saved, then bear fruits of repentance.

Continue in fellowship with God's people.

Continue in prayer.

Continue in the Apostles' teaching.

Because, narrow is the way to heaven. And we must examine ourselves so that we may prove to be his disciples.

May the Lord bless His Word!

## ----- Discipleship Questions-----

MESSAGE SUMMARY: What happens when the Gospel is Rejected. Mark 6:7-13

HEAD: These questions help you examine the truth of God's Word.

1. What do you observe with Jesus calling his disciples, sending them and their subsequent response?

HEART: These questions help you wrestle with what you believe.

2. What is the main message that the disciples were to proclaim in all the towns? Go around and share.

3. What is God convicting you of and to believe in light of this message?

HANDS/HABITS: These questions help you bring the truth into your everyday life and develop behaviors that change your habits.

4. For personal reflection: What does repentance look like in your life?