

The title for today's message is: **Proclaiming One's Faith.**

Jesus said: **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."**

Grace and peace to you from God the Father and from our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen

What was it Mark said about Jesus? *And he called the twelve and began to send them out two by two, and gave them authority over the unclean spirits.*

Interesting, this is the first time the disciples, now called apostles, were sent out without Jesus to do God's work. Here Jesus was preparing them for when He was in heaven.

You may even call this sending out a practice run because Jesus only allowed them to preach in the area of Galilee.

Unlike many evangelist today, the apostles didn't travel in jets, wearing Rolex watches and beaming God's message out via the internet or satellite.

The apostles had to travel in a completely different way. They walked to there destination. However they had something modern day evangelist don't have.

That's right, they were given the power to drive out demons, to heal the sick and special guidelines on what they were allowed to take with them.

Jesus charged them: *to take nothing for their journey except a staff—no bread, no bag, no money in their belts—but to wear sandals and not put on two tunics.*

The apostles trusted in God to provide for them, as for modern day evangelists, they seem to trust not in God, but in their origination to provide for them.

I remember an interview of a popular evangelist a few years ago. He was asked about his extravagant way of traveling and lifestyle.

He answer was quite amazing, He replied: Well, I'm a representative of God, and He always goes first class. The evangelist; Jim Baker

Now in contrast, I remember a story regarding Billy Graham. He was traveling to a certain city. Where the city dignitaries were waiting for him.

They stood there while the train carrying Graham pulled into the station. Everything was good the train was on schedule.

Now, when the first class passengers disembarked, the officials noticed Graham wasn't among them.

The officials then waited for the second class passengers to disembark, and again still no Graham.

The city officials decided that Graham must of missed the train, and wasn't coming. As they were leaving the station, there he was.

Graham was disembarking with the third class passengers, and worse yet he was carrying his own suitcase.

One of the city's officials asked Graham: "Why on earth do you travel in the third class coach?" Graham answered; "Because there's no fourth class."

Here too, God sent Billy Graham out into the world with only those things necessary for him to travel.

Yes, Billy Graham fully depended on, and trusted completely in God to provide everything he would need all the way to his death.

Now, Mark began verse 7 saying: *And he (meaning Jesus) called the twelve and began to send them out two by two, and gave them authority over the unclean spirits.*

Why two by two? I mean Jesus could have covered more territory and more people by sending the apostles out alone.

So why two by two? Well, according to Jewish law, two witnesses were required to pronounce a truth.

The thought was one person would speak the truth and the other person would confirm its truth.

But there is another possible reason for this, and maybe a more convincing reason. Maybe going out two by two was to give each other support.

You know, just a little moral support. Jesus did warn them that there would be some who would reject the message they were bring.

And more importantly that the one who brought the message would be in danger of being run out of town.

Mark tells us that Jesus went so far as to instruct the apostles on how they should act in case they were rejected and run out of town.

Jesus said: *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.*”

This was an act of defiance the apostles knew very well. It was another Jewish custom. You see, when a Jew traveled outside Jewish territory.

Before returning to Jewish territory he would have to shake the dust off his feet. It was a cleansing of sorts.

The Jewish people believed if they didn't do this, they would contaminate their own territory with the dust from a heathen land.

The message Jesus wanted them to send to those who rejected them was that their wouldn't be any fellowship between them and God.

Mark said that: *they (The apostles) went out and proclaimed that people should repent. And they cast out many demons and anointed with oil many who were sick and healed them.*

Today, our mission as Christians is the same. Our world today is in desperate need for evangelists such as the apostles.

My friends, even today there are demons all around us. Demons that try to turn us away from God.

So we need to be careful, because the 21st century evangelist has many different faces.

For example, during the 60's and early 70's the key words we heard was, "Meet'em on a neutral turf".

And the result of all this was all across the country, churches developed what then was called a "Coffee House Ministry".

And today the "Coffee House Ministry" falls under the title of the "Contemporary Service".

For many, these services were places where people could come to church drink coffee and listen to loud music. Of course all first class.

The 70's through the 80's was the birth of yet another strategy for winning new Christians. The trick was to get them into the church first.

Then "Meet'em on our turf", by offering them things that will meet their needs, right now.

And once there drawn in with the promise of worldly things, there invited to become a member of the church.

Finally yet another change took place in the 90's to the present. It seems that most evangelism efforts have dropped altogether.

The truth is statistics tell us that the majority of new members are brought to the Lord by a friend or relative who brought them to church.

Were even told that the best evangelism, is that which is done by those who don't realize that they doing it.

Sure this method can be good, but not the best. The best method is found right here in our gospel lesson today.

My friends, God has called you and I to be evangelists, that is evangelists like the Apostles in our text.

Which is to go out into the world and lead sinners to repentance, and if its God's will, to cast out demons and heal the sick.

Sure that's a tall order, but its our task, because our calling as Christians is to be ministers of the Good news. And to serve the Lord.

Look, there are many ways to serve our Lord, such as being a witness to God's Word and proclaiming the truths.

Or by our willingness to give our life to God, even if that means our death. Remember many died for preaching God's Word of repentance.

And today, all around the world many are still dying for preaching repentance.

Only by the grace of God were not persecuted in our own country, for preaching God's Word of repentance.

Yet our Church buildings have become the only place we preach God's Word.

Remember what Jesus said in Matthew chapter 9; *"It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick... for I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners."*

Sure its not easy for us to find time for evangelism, but its not always necessary to set aside special time out of our busy day.

No! When were at the grocery store waiting in line to be checked out, we can share the Good News with someone in the line next to us.

Or simply when were talking to our neighbors, someone at work or a stranger on the street, we can share the Good News with them.

So as you can see, God gives us many opportunities in the course of our normal day to share the Good News with someone.

Look, its not necessary to go door to door, because we have plenty of un-churched and non-believers around us every day.

Remember what Jesus said: Come, follow me... and I will make you fishers of men.

Amen

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ and the Love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with us all. Amen.