

THRU THE BIBLE EXPOSITION

Mark: Jesus The Perfect Servant Of God

Part II: The Perfect Service Of Jesus, The Perfect Servant Of God, Mark 1:1-10:52

S. Christ's Work To Extend God's Own Ministry Through His Disciples

(Mark 6:7-13)

I. Introduction

- A. We learned in our first lesson in this series that Mark's Gospel presents the perfect service of God's Perfect Servant, Jesus, with Mark's focus of having rebounded unto upright Christian service from personal failure.
- B. Sometimes such failure rises from failing to understand the great importance God and Christ place upon the ministry to which a messenger of God is thus called, what may have caused John Mark to fail in Acts 13:13.
- C. Mark 6:7-13 reveals the enormous importance that Christ Himself placed on the ministry of the disciples He sent out as His representatives to Israel, and it serves to instruct and to edify us today (as follows):

II. Christ's Work To Extend God's Own Ministry Through His Disciples, Mark 6:7-13.

- A. When Jesus in Mark 6:7-13 sent the twelve to minister to Israel, He aligned with the "Jewish concept of *sheluhim*" in which "a man's representative (*shaliah*) was considered as the man himself (cf. Matt. 10:40 and T. D. N. T., s. v. "*apostolos*," 1:413-27." (Ibid.) Since the Father had sent the Son as His representative, and the reaction of men to Christ reflected their reaction to the Father, the Son's sending His disciples to Israel left Israel responsible to Jesus, and to Him in turn to the Father, for their response to these human messengers!
- B. Thus, Christ's messengers had to be as credible and as righteous as He and His heavenly Father were, and this explains Jesus' Mark 6:7-10 instruction to the twelve on how they were to go and minister to Israel:
 - 1. The disciples were sent out in pairs of two, a common practice at the time for "practical and legal reasons (cf. 11:1; 14:13; John 8:17; Deut. 17:6; 19:15)," Ibid.; Mark 6:7a,b. For cultural and Biblical credibility, Jesus wanted His men to appear to be and to function in completely upright, acceptable ways.
 - 2. Christ also spiritually gifted the twelve with authority over evil spirits, Mark 6:7c. Such power to cast out demons would "authenticate their preaching (cf. 6:13; 1:15)," Ibid.
 - 3. The twelve were not to be excessively materially endowed as would be greedy false teachers (1 Timothy 6:5), but to live by faith in God to meet their livelihood needs, 1 Tim. 6:8-12; Mark 6:8-9. [Mark's Gospel allows for a staff and sandals where both such items are forbidden in the Matthew 10:9-10 account, and the staff is forbidden in Luke's account at Luke 9:3. This apparent discrepancy disappears when we note that Matthew used the verb "to procure; acquire" (*ptaomai*) instead of Mark's verb *airo*, "to take," and Luke's prohibition of taking a staff presumably meant no additional staff where Mark meant the staff one already had, Ibid., p. 128. The Lord wanted them to take only what they had, not excessive provisions that would detract from a life of faith in God's provision and hence their credibility as His messengers.]
 - 4. This life of faith and modesty would also be reflected in their requirement to stay in only one place when reaching a city rather than in moving from house to house to take advantage of the required cultural hospitality of the people so typical of Oriental cultures, Mark 6:10. Instead of taking advantage of others, the disciples were to be content with just the basic hospitality that was required for their housing, Ibid.
- C. In going as representatives of Christ Himself, and thus in turn in representation of the Father Himself, if the disciples faced rejection of their ministry, they were to shake off the dust of their feet as Jews would do when leaving unclean Gentile territory for Israel, a testimony of impending judgment, Mark 6:11a; Ibid. [The Mark 6:11b KJV statement about Sodom and Gomorrah does not appear in the earliest Greek manuscripts, Ibid.]
- D. The disciples thus went out, preaching for men to repent and casting out many demons and anointing many who were ill and healing them, effectively being representatives of Jesus and of God the Father, Mark 6:12-13.

Lesson: Since Christ's disciples represented Himself, and He in turn represented the Father, the disciples had to go as adequate representatives of the Father and of Jesus. Accordingly, they were to function in God's gifting with full conformity to accepted cultural practices and personal credibility, and to live modestly by faith in God's supply, not imposing on the goodness of others, but seeking to avoid being a burden to other people. In so doing, God would hold their hearers accountable for how they responded to them as if they were Himself.

Application: As God's servants, (1) may we function in God's gifting with full conformity to accepted cultural norms with personal integrity, living modestly by faith without imposing on the goodness of others, (2) being confident God will hold our hearers accountable of thus responding to Himself through us!