

Prayer of the Day: Almighty God, we thank you for planting the seed of your Word. By your Holy Spirit, help us to receive it with joy and to bring forth fruits in faith and hope and love; through your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

Verse of the Day: Alleluia. The Word is very near you; it is in your mouth and in your heart so you may obey it. Alleluia. (Deuteronomy 30:14 cf. NIV)

Sermon:

Let's say your boss had just finished with what by all worldly accounts was a complete flop of a presentation. He was so unwelcomed by the crowd that they had actually driven him from the building in disgust and contempt for the words he had presented. The following day, your boss then called you and the rest of the office in and said, "Okay everyone, it's time for you to take my presentation out to highways and byways. It's time to spread the message." Would complete trust and confidence be the foremost thoughts of your mind?

In our lesson today, the Twelve find themselves in a live version of our scenario. While Jesus' presentation was perfect as always, the crowd of His hometown last week wanted nothing to do with claims of divinity from the kid that grew up down the street. As Pastor Ehlert told us, they couldn't get past their familiarity with Him and they "*took offense at Him*" as verse 3 recorded. Now, He turns to the disciples and sends them out. What must have been going through their minds? Were they nervous? Were they scared? Did they secretly wish He had picked someone else? Today, Jesus teaches an important lesson to those called to proclaim His Word whether it's publically, like our pastors and teachers, or privately in the various vocations we all occupy. Jesus reminds them and all of us, It's all about **THE WORD, THE WORD, THE WORD. ... JESUS WOULD HAVE US TRUST IT COMPLETELY ... JESUS WOULD HAVE US SHARE IT FAITHFULLY.**

Right away Jesus takes things up a notch. *These were his instructions: "Take nothing for the journey except a staff—no bread, no bag, no money in your belts. ⁹ Wear sandals but not an extra tunic. ¹⁰ Whenever you enter a house, stay there until you leave that town. ¹¹ And if any place will not welcome you or listen to you, shake the dust off your feet when you leave, as a testimony against them."* Only the bare essentials, that's what Jesus is basically telling these men that they are allowed to take with them. The point is not to be comfortable. They are to travel light. Like soldiers headed into enemy territory, they don't take luxury but only that which is absolutely necessary for the job at hand.

But why? Jesus even reminds them of the trouble encountered in that seemingly unsuccessful proclamation in His own hometown. There will be those who receive them well, but there will also be those who completely refuse to listen to them. It doesn't seem to be the greatest of pep talks, now does it.

Of course, that's not the point of these Words of the Savior. There is a lesson to be learned in this sending: complete and total reliance on God. No bread, no bag, no money, no change of clothing, they are to rely completely on the hospitality of the people of God. Perhaps there is a lesson in here on why we as a congregation take care of our called workers the way that we do. For sure there is a lesson on trust.

Later, as He draws near the cross Jesus is going to remind us of this important lesson as He prays for His disciples and for the church. ¹⁴ *I have given them your word and the world has hated them, for they are not of the world any more than I am of the world. ¹⁵ My prayer is not that you take them out of the world but that you protect them from the evil one. ¹⁶ They are not of the world, even as I am not of it. ¹⁷ Sanctify them by the truth; your word is truth* (John 17:14-17). We believers in Christ are not worldly as the world is. I know that's one

Mark 6:7-13

⁷ Calling the Twelve to him, he sent them out two by two and gave them authority over evil spirits.

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¹² They went out and preached that people should repent. ¹³ They drove out many demons and anointed many sick people with oil and healed them. - NIV

of those tough statements which Jesus makes. But the Master Teacher is teaching here. He's not just making it tough for the sake of it but wants His disciples to realize what they really need to rely on and who is really taking care of them. How are we with that lesson as we wade in the pool of worldly stuff? Are we content with what our Lord gives us or are we increasingly concerned with the extras, money, popularity, worldly success, and even if we have it is the sweat of our brow that has produced this wealth for us, or instead is it the never-failing and always abounding grace of our God?

While I find myself scratching my head at the lesson, and truth betold often failing at it in the emersion of worldly stuff, I then marvel at the faith of the men as the final verses unfold. ¹² *They went out and preached that people should repent.* ¹³ *They drove out many demons and anointed many sick people with oil and healed them.* The Master Teacher had properly prepared His pupils after all.

What do they do? The only thing they could have. They had seen Him perform miracles and forgive sins. They had listened to Him as He opened the Word in synagogues and in the private studies they had grown accustomed to. So as Jesus sends them out they cling to the only thing they know has the power and ability to help them in the task, even as they hold it out to others, even though they fully realize they might have to dust off their feet from time to time. They cling to the Word, trusting in it completely.

So they preach repentance. Think repentance in the wide sense here: terror over sin and faith clinging to the cross for the forgiveness that only Christ can and so willingly provides. As Lutherans, we so regularly refer to this as the proper distinction between Law and Gospel. They expose sin for what it is, drowning slowly in the ways of our enemies: Satan, the world, and our own sinful flesh. They point to the Messiah, to Christ, the Lamb of God, whose blood cleanses every sinful spot and stain. They know the Savior themselves and they can't help but hold Him and His Word out to the world around them.

Oh, and note those results. *They drove out many demons and anointed many sick people with oil and healed them.* The authority which Jesus gave them, given and strengthened in the Word, it worked. Every demon and disease obeyed them. If there had been any timidity, as they return from their lesson it has been completely wiped out in the confidence of Christ and the power of His Word.

Dear Christians, Christ has not called us all to head out without extras and publically proclaim His Word. That was a specific command for the twelve. But He has called some of us to be teachers in our homes and examples for our children. Others He asks to display Christ in the world around them as they perform their daily tasks with joy that can only come from the Word of Christ which shows us our sin and soothes us in the saving power of Jesus, His cross and resurrection, and His sustaining work as king. Still, others are examples of the trust that is only built in hardship and hope which finds its foundation in the promise of a better home in heaven. Some of us are so blessed that we have the opportunity to partake in more than one or all of these throughout our lives.

While the course can sometimes be challenging and fraught with danger, and there will be times when we must knock the dust off our shoes, like the disciples we go forward the only way we know how, holding to the Word even as we hold it out to the world around us. But we do not do it alone. Jesus sent the disciples out in pairs because He realized the support that can come from fellow believers firmly grounded in the Word. So He has brought you into a visible fellowship with one another, into families and churches, even synods that we might encourage one another in this Word as well.

No, you probably will not spend your days pouring out the visible power of Christ as you cast out demons and heal every disease but that doesn't mean this Word isn't working. Every day, living in the waters of Baptism strengthened in the Supper, surrounded by the Word, we are reminded that our enemies have fallen, the victory is ours. That message has the power to change your eternity and others. As it does, it even changes the way we live right now, no longer consumed with the extras but focused on the one thing needful: Christ and His holy Word. With such authority, placed in our hands, we can confidently and faithfully share the Word with the world around us.

On its face, our lesson almost leaves us thinking Jesus has completely lost His mind. It's no surprise that He has not. The Master Teacher is teaching again, even as He sends the disciples out. The lesson is worth our attention. Jesus reminds them and all of us, it's all about **THE WORD, THE WORD, THE WORD. ... JESUS WOULD HAVE US TRUST IT COMPLETELY ... JESUS WOULD HAVE US SHARE IT FAITHFULLY.**