

TEXT: Mark 6:7-13

THEME: MASTERFUL DELEGATION

1. Jesus Delegated to a Select Group
2. Jesus Provides Adequate Resources
3. Jesus Provides a Powerful Message

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

We all have seen it. Many of us have experienced it. A person in charge delegates a job to another. Most often, however, the job is not really delegated. It is dumped. No training is offered. Little direction is given. No benchmarks are established. “Just get it done!”

This happens even in churches. A willing volunteer stands there with all the details of the delegated job piled around him, feeling as if a dump truck has just backed up and dumped its load on him. Fewer things make a person feel more unappreciated—fewer things create more resentment than that. During our associate pastor vacancy, I will need to delegate more tasks to more of you. I do not want you to feel unprepared for the task, unappreciated, or resentful. Please, let me know if I need to give you more training, direction, or help with a particular task. Only with God's blessing and a strong partnership among us will be able to continue to do things well to God's glory and the good of his people.

In our text today, we see the MASTERFUL DELEGATION of Jesus. He delegated the work of building his church to a SELECT, hand-picked GROUP, namely, the twelve apostles. After months of letting his disciples observe his ministry, Jesus was ready to get them involved in his ministry. He did this carefully and masterfully. Even when he delegated, we see how good and perfect a Shepherd Jesus is.

One of the things that Jesus did was to PROVIDE THEM WITH ADEQUATE RESOURCES. Think of the last trip you took. Whether it was a couple of days or a couple of weeks, I'm sure you packed a number of things. I'm sure you checked to see if you had enough cash with you.

Although life was simpler in biblical days, the instructions Jesus gave no doubt caught the disciples by surprise. **These were his instructions: "Take nothing for the journey except a staff—no bread, no bag, no money in your belts. Wear sandals but not an extra tunic. Whenever you enter a house, stay there until you leave that town."** Even in those days, Jesus' instructions bordered on the extreme. No bread? No bag? No money? No extra tunic? We can easily picture the Twelve looking at one another with questioning expressions on their faces.

However, with these instructions, the Lord was freeing them from worry. By making them dependent on him, they would remain independent of worldly influences. He wanted them to remain fixed on their mission.

We can see a parallel in our own lives. In speaking about the necessities of life, Jesus said, **“Seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well” (Matthew 6:33).** With those words, Jesus wants to free us from

worry. He wants us to remain dependent on him so that we remain independent of worldly influences. Jesus wants us to be single-minded in our focus on his kingdom.

We are citizens of God's kingdom and every citizen is a child of the King. Our citizenship began the moment we were brought to faith. Faith is the gateway to heaven. But already in this life we citizens of God's kingdom enjoy the wonderful protection and provisions of the great King. And we don't have to fill out mountains of paperwork, wait numerous years, and finally take a citizenship test to qualify. Citizenship in Christ's kingdom is something Jesus earned for us with his perfect life and innocent suffering and death on the cross, and now freely gives us through the means of grace—the Gospel in Word and Sacraments. So don't get all bent out of shape and tied up in knots over the little things of this life. Think of the things that frustrate you, that anger you, that worry you. Everyone has something in mind? Now, ask yourself, will any of those big, weighty problems matter in a hundred years? Will any of them be remembered in a hundred years? No! So focus on something that will last—will last for all eternity. Focus on his kingdom, and trust in him just as he called his disciples to do.

JESUS ALSO PROVIDES US WITH A POWERFUL MESSAGE. We read, **“They went out and preached that people should repent.”** Is there a difference between preaching and teaching? The Bible distinguishes between the two and says that both are important, both are necessary. Yet preaching is not very popular these days. Who wants to be preached to? Modern outreach and evangelism techniques tell us pastors not to preach a sermon but to share a message, not to talk about sin and what is wrong with people and their behavior but to make people feel welcome and good about themselves, not to talk so much about heaven but to make life better here on earth. That's what is relevant! That's what people want to hear! That's what will bring in the huge crowds.

Yet in our text, Jesus sent out his apostles to do some raw outreach and evangelism work by *preaching* repentance. The message Jesus gave them was that people must turn away from trusting in themselves to trusting in Jesus. That really is what repentance is. It's being brought to the realization that because of sin, I am damned. I am overcome by the terrors of hell. I realize I can't save myself. The messenger—the preacher—points me to my Savior and urges me to turn to Jesus and trust in his work of saving me.

That powerful message of repentance is what the apostles preached. It's what they proclaimed. There still is great need in today's world for preaching and proclamation. There is a place for teaching and explanation, to be sure. But sometimes, people need to hear, “Be still and listen. This is what the Lord says—to you, about you, and for you!” Sometimes people need to be preached to.

It's not just the professional “preachers” who need to be doing this. When your child, including your young adult child, is going against God's Word, you need to preach God's law to him or her. When a friend feels as if God has forgotten him or her, you need to preach God's comfort. In these and many other situations, people need to hear—to hear what God has to say to them.

The Holy Spirit powerfully works through the simple Word. He works repentance and faith in people's hearts even when there is less than complete understanding about the fine points of the gospel message. God's Spirit is at work through the clear, basic message of sin and grace. As Paul told the Corinthians, **"My message and my preaching were not with wise and persuasive words, but with a demonstration of the Spirit's power, so that your faith might not rest on men's wisdom, but on God's power" (1 Cor 2:4-5).** May Jesus help each of us to proclaim his Word—clearly, carefully, and confidently. Amen.