

King of Glory Lutheran Church

July 3/4, 2021

Year B: 6<sup>th</sup> Sunday after Pentecost: Mark 6:1-13

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**Mark 6:1-13**

*6 He left that place and came to his hometown, and his disciples followed him. <sup>2</sup> On the sabbath he began to teach in the synagogue, and many who heard him were astounded. They said, "Where did this man get all this? What is this wisdom that has been given to him? What deeds of power are being done by his hands! <sup>3</sup> Is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary and brother of James and Joses and Judas and Simon, and are not his sisters here with us?" And they took offense at him. <sup>4</sup> Then Jesus said to them, "Prophets are not without honor, except in their hometown, and among their own kin, and in their own house." <sup>5</sup> And he could do no deed of power there, except that he laid his hands on a few sick people and cured them. <sup>6</sup> And he was amazed at their unbelief.*

*Then he went about among the villages teaching. <sup>7</sup> 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 ordered 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 to put on two tunics. <sup>10</sup> He said to them, "Wherever you enter a house, stay there until you leave the place. <sup>11</sup> If any place will not welcome you and they refuse to hear you, as 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 all should repent. <sup>13</sup> They cast out many demons, and anointed with oil many who were sick and cured them.*

I have gone on many youth trips with many church groups in my lifetime. Some as a youth and some as the adult in charge. In less than two weeks I will be heading out with 13 youth and 3 other adults from King of Glory and Zion to Idaho for a week of service and adventure.

You won't be surprised when I tell you that as an adult leading these trips there is a lot to worry about. Will the group get along? Will everyone have enough to eat? Will the van break down? Will we have a good experience, grow in faith and serve God?

But honestly, one of the things I worry about the most is this: will all of our stuff fit in the vans? I worry about this because in my experience, people pack a lot of stuff!

For any of you who have gone on a trip with a group of people, or any trip at all really, you might just know what I'm talking about.

Seventeen teenagers and adults going on a road trip to Idaho for 9 days. That roughly comes out to seventeen sleeping bags, seventeen pillows, and seventeen bags stuffed with clothes,

toothbrushes, towels, water bottles, shoes, sunscreen, etc. Then of course there are snacks and food packed for the first two days before we get to the camp where food is provided. And most importantly a couple of first aid kits to handle the unexpected minor injuries that go along with energetic teenagers.

Do you think we will have enough stuff with us on our trip to serve our neighbors in Jesus' name? I think a better question is will we have the *right* stuff?

When I think about how much effort and time and stuff it takes to plan and go on a summer youth trip I have to laugh when we come to a gospel reading like the one we have today from Mark. It puts my own worries in perspective.

After heading home to Nazareth (and not receiving a very warm welcome) Jesus goes out teaching to other villages. And as he does so, Jesus calls the twelve disciples and sends them out two by two and gives them authority over the unclean spirits. He sent them out to preach and teach, cast out demons and cure the sick.

And what exactly do they take with them?

I can tell you what they didn't take. Definitely no vans filled with sleeping bags and supplies for these disciples. Not even a first aid kit or a water bottle. Nope, Jesus sends them out without bags or bread or money. They are sent with just the sandals on their feet and the clothes on their back.

And guess what? They did it! We give the disciples a hard time because they just don't get it so much of the time. They don't understand who Jesus is and what he came to do, they are afraid, they argue over silly things, they lose faith.

And yet today there is no arguing, no grumbling, no uncertainty. Jesus sends them out two by two, dependent on the kindness of strangers, and they go.

This, after all, is why they have been following Jesus, watching him, listening to him and learning from him. Jesus was preparing them to be sent out to call people to repent and know God's love and be healed.

We as Christians so often sit back and think, I don't have the right stuff to be sent out to preach the good news of God's love and forgiveness, to teach what Jesus taught, to heal the sick or feed the hungry. I don't have the right stuff, or the right tools, or the right words.

Now it's possible that the disciples thought the same thing, maybe they worried that they didn't have enough stuff to survive or the right words to speak his message. But still they followed Jesus' call and went out, uncertain of how they would be received, trusting in God to give them the power to preach and heal.

God calls God's people again and again to speak God's word and do God's work. How many prophets and disciples across the generations have wondered if they would have the right words when called upon or the right stuff for ministry?

In our first lesson today, God speaks to Ezekial and says, "I am sending you to them, and you shall say to them, 'Thus says the Lord God.'" Ezekial will be God's messenger. He has nothing to say on his own. Only by God's Spirit will he know the words God's people need to hear. It was Ezekial's job to be open to God's Spirit and follow God's call.

To be called by God is a humbling experience. God calls us to places that sometimes make us vulnerable and uncomfortable.

In his letter to the Corinthians, Paul writes in 2 Corinthians 12:9-10, "the Lord said to me, 'My grace is sufficient for you, for power is made perfect in weakness.' So, I will boast all the more gladly of my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may dwell in me. Therefore I am content with weaknesses, insults, hardships, persecutions, and calamities for the sake of Christ; for whenever I am weak, then I am strong."

Pauls' words make all the more sense when you find yourself in a position of weakness and vulnerability. Sharing your faith not knowing the reaction you will receive. Offering help not knowing if it will be accepted. Following God's call to service unsure if you are up to the challenge.

We, like Paul and Ezekial and the disciples, are humbled by the power of our God and by the work our God calls us to.

Jesus himself reminds us that it is not for us to worry about the outcome of our journey. He tells the twelve disciples not to worry about the ones who don't listen to them or reject them.

And he says so just after being rejected by his friends and neighbors in his own hometown. Jesus knows first hand what it means to be vulnerable and uncomfortable. God's work and word is offensive and scary to some because it turns the rules of our world upside down. And yet we are called and sent to share God's word of love and forgiveness and grace, this life changing word, to all the world.

Whether the people you share this word with hear or not is not your concern. We are not responsible for the response of others but only for our own faithfulness. And we are called to be faithful. We are called to go out, trusting that God has given and will provide what we need on our journey.

We don't know who we will meet or what we will encounter on this journey. And still we are called and sent out. We go on this journey depending on the kindness of others, extending that same kindness in return.

So I wonder today what stuff do we need as this congregation called King of Glory Lutheran Church to go out and share the good news? Do we have the right tools, the right resources, the right words?

We do! Jesus sends us out, you and me. And he has equipped us with gifts, varied and wonderful, that will show God's love and good news to all people.

And if you need an example of the ways we can share God's gifts and grow in faith we can look to our own youth. They have the right stuff. And I'm not talking about sleeping bags or water bottles. They have servant hearts and are open to God's Spirit moving through them and with them, even when they are uncomfortable or unsure. They serve their neighbors in the name of Jesus and are open to new experiences, places and people.

Jesus says to you and me today, don't be afraid of what you have or don't have, of how you will be received or not. Jesus is with us even when we think we are weak and he makes us strong. And it is in his name that we are sent out into the world to share the gospel in word and in deed that God's love may be made known to all the world.

Blessings to you on your journey!

Amen.