



Fifteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time, 'Called and Sent'

When Jesus sends out his disciples, he sends them in pairs, to be a support for each other. We need to ask ourselves two questions: how ready are we to speak out God's truth when we know it will make us unpopular? How best can we support and encourage each other to live and work as Jesus asks us to do, especially if we are in an environment that is hostile to hearing the good news of God's love.

GOSPEL Mark 6: 7-13

Jesus called together his twelve apostles and sent them out two by two with power over evil spirits. He told them: “You may take along a walking stick. But don’t carry food or a travelling bag or any money. It’s all right to wear sandals, but don’t take along a change of clothes. When you are welcomed into a home, stay there until you leave that town. If any place won’t welcome you or listen to your message, leave and shake the dust from your feet as a warning to them.” The apostles left and started telling everyone to turn to God. They forced out many demons and healed a lot of sick people by anointing them with oil.

LITURGICAL ACTION

With the help of the adults in your life read the following story like a play, with each person being a character

Jesus was traveling around with his friends. And each place they went, Jesus helped people. Just that day he’d been teaching people about the kingdom of God. Plus he met some people who were sick, and he healed them. Jesus actually did this kind of thing a lot. So finally his friends decided to ask Jesus about it.

Of course they made Peter ask the question.

“Um, Jesus?” **Peter said.** “Why is it that you always make us come along when you are healing and teaching and stuff?”

“What?” **asked Jesus** “Don’t you like traveling around with me?”

“Oh no, nothing like that,” **said Peter,** “It’s great and all. We’re having lots of fun. But—I mean, why do you want us along?”

“Ah, good question Pete.” **Jesus said.** “I want you to learn how to help people. Someday, you know, you’ll be doing all the same kinds of things I do.”

“No way!” **said Peter.**

“Yes way!” **said Jesus.** “In fact I just had a great idea. I’m going to send you guys out on a little practice trip. You’ll have a mission. We’ll call it a ‘*Mission trip.*’”

“Ooh...” **said Thomas**. “That sounds kind of scary. I doubt I could do that.”

“Well I think it sounds great,” **said Peter**. “Let’s make it a contest. I bet I can go farther than any of you guys! I bet I can teach more and—“

“Um, slow down there, Peter,” **said Jesus**. “It’s not a contest. And I’m not sending any of you alone. You’re so confident, and Thomas is so full of doubts, I think the two of you should travel together. The rest of you pair up. It’s the buddy system. ”

So each of Jesus’ twelve friends found a traveling partner.

“Okay,” **said Peter**, “Now we just need a packing list. I have this big backpack I brought from home. What should I put in it?”

Jesus said, “Well, Pete, you can skip the backpack. That’s number one on my not-packing list.”

“What’s a ‘not-packing’ list?” **asked Thomas**, kind of nervously.

Jesus said, “It’s a list of all the things *not* to bring on this mission trip. Item One: No bag.”

“But where am I going to put this loaf of bread?” **said Peter**. “I always get hungry on the road.”

Jesus said, “Item two on the not-packing list. No bread.”

Then Judas spoke up. “Oh, I get it,” he said. “We just bring enough money to buy food along the way.”

(Judas carried the group’s money bag, so thought he could divide it up.)

“Nope,” **said Jesus**. “Item three: No Money.”

“But Jesus,” **Peter complained**. “Where am I supposed to put my clothes?”

“Oh Peter,” **said Jesus**, “You’re still stuck on the bag thing aren’t you? Well, just wear what you have on. That’s item four: No extra clothes.”

“Oh man!” **Peter complained**. “Can I at least go home and get my hiking boots?”

“Nope,” **said Jesus**. “Item five: No boots. Just your everyday sandals please.”

“Um, Jesus?” **asked Matthew shyly**. “Can I bring this stick? It helps me keep my footing on trails.”

“Sure, Matthew,” **said Jesus**. “Sticks are fine. But just one each.”

“But Jesus—” **said Peter.** “How are we supposed to eat and stay warm and stuff for a whole week if we can’t bring anything but what we’re wearing?”

“Good question, Peter,” **said Jesus.** “First of all, you’ll have each other. Together you can solve all kinds of problems.”

“What’s second?” **asked Thomas.** I guess he doubted Peter would come up with many good ideas.

“Second,” **said Jesus,** “you’ll have all the people you’ll meet everywhere you go. You know, there are good and kind people everywhere!”

“But what if the people are mean to us?” **asked Thomas.** He really did have doubts about this whole ‘mission trip’ idea.

“Well Thomas,” **said Jesus,** “if they won’t welcome you, wipe the dust off your feet and go somewhere else.”

“So we have each other,” **Thomas said, looking doubtfully at Matthew.** “And we *might* meet some nice people along the way. Don’t we have anything else to rely on?”

“Yes,” **said Jesus, smiling.** “You have exactly what I rely on to do what I do. You have God.”

“Oh!” **said everybody.**

“That’s actually why I’m sending you on this mission trip,” **Jesus said.** “So you will learn to trust God—that’s called faith. And so you’ll learn to help each other. That’s called love.”

So they went out, two by two, for a week-long trip doing what they’d seen Jesus do.

REFLECTION

- Can you think of a time when you have been asked to do something new or different for the very first time, that made you feel very unsure or worried about how you would do it? (First day in a new school, being asked to do a new job or taking on some responsibility without much help or preparation) Can you remember how that felt? How did you manage? Did you make any mistakes? What did you learn from this experience?
- Why do you think Jesus wanted His disciples to travel light like this, instead of taking everything they wanted with them?

