

Home Study

Mark's Epiphany



TUESDAY, JANUARY 19, 2021

Introduction

Be it traveling across the world to deliver news or merely cleaning the dishes, we all know what it is like to be called on for a mission. Most jobs consist of completing “missions:” filing reports, making pitches, transporting goods, or teaching lessons are a few examples.

Some missions in our life are fun and exciting, but others can be boring or intimidating. What missions (doesn't have to be employment-specific) are you called to today?

Today's Reading

Today in our reading Jesus calls twelve of his disciples for a unique role in his mission to spread the gospel.

Open up your Bible and read Mark 3:13-21. As you're reading, pay attention to the role and activities that Jesus calls his disciples to. Also note anything that particularly catches you by surprise, or that stands out in the story.

In the passage before ours, we see that Jesus has a huge crowd following him and his disciples. We should be clear that the crowd is distinct from Jesus' disciples. The people in the crowd have come for all sorts of reasons: to be healed, to hear what Jesus is teaching, or just to behold the spectacle. The disciples, however, followed Jesus because they were committed to his mission. They didn't fully understand what Jesus had come to do, but they believed he was the Messiah and followed where he went. This raises the question for us, why do we follow Jesus? What are we looking for?

In the midst of a great crowd and a band of disciples, Jesus appoints twelve men to serve as apostles. Mark tells us the mission they were called for, “so that they might be with him and he might send them out to preach and have authority to cast out demons” (verse 14). This was quite the position they had been tasked with! Let's look at each aspect of the job description.

First, “so that they might be with him.” Jesus spent three whole years with these apostles to make them the followers that could carry on his mission when he was gone. The apostles learned directly from Jesus and by witnessing the events of his ministry. As Jesus' disciples today, how can we benefit as from spending time in prayer and reading about Jesus' ministry?

Second, “he might send them out to preach.” Jesus sends out these apostles in Mark 6, but they do most of their preaching after Jesus has ascended into heaven. The bold preaching of these apostles, and a later apostle named Paul, led to the

Home Study

Mark's Epiphany



explosion of Christianity in the first century. Not every disciple is called to preach on a consistent basis, but all disciples should be ready to share the gospel in a basic way. If you were given the opportunity to share what Christians believe, how would you go about it? What would you say about Jesus?

Third, “and have authority to cast out demons.” Enemy forces abound in the gospels. Earlier in Mark, Jesus withstood the temptations of the devil and throughout the rest of his ministry he will combat forces of evil. Jesus is sending the apostles out to take part in his work, and that includes freeing people from the bondage of evil. Jesus gives the apostles authority to cast out demons because as God’s Son he has authority over all of creation.

Jesus called the apostles for particular work in his kingdom. He spent time with them to teach, and then he sent them out to preach the good news. But they are far from the only people called to work in God’s kingdom. Throughout the ages God has been calling men and women to do his work in the world, and God has called you. Why do you suppose that Jesus called such ordinary guys to be his disciples? What does that have to say about your calling, and your mission, as a Christ-follower?

Not everyone has been called to preach publicly, but we’ve all been called to live our lives as disciples of Christ Jesus. This changes the way that we engage as a parent, child, sibling, friend, worker, and citizen. It affects every area of our life. What is an area of your life that is difficult to engage in as a Christian?

Thank God that our position in God’s kingdom is not maintained by performance. Jesus’ inner circle of apostles made many mistakes, even deserting him in the end when he needed them most, but Jesus’ call remained. We, too, fall short in living as Christians, but thanks be to God for his continued forgiveness. In the peace that can only come from God’s assurance, let us go out today and engage with the world as disciples called and shaped by Christ Jesus.

Prayer

Lord Jesus Christ, thank you for bringing me/us into your kingdom. Please give me/us strength for the day as I/we go about my/our daily tasks. Sometimes my/our work can be difficult, dull, or boring, but let me/us do the work you have set before me/us with joy and live my/our life as a testimony to those around me/us. Amen.