



July 15, 2018 Mark 6:7-13 & Amos 7: 12-15

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Link to [Beck](#) (paywall) other [Beck](#)

Stone, Naomi. [A Divine Drop](#)

Rolheiser, Fr. Ron. [Speaking our Truth from a Deeper Place](#)

https://newmelleray.org/Homily_Library

[Sending out the 12](#)

ENTERING THE SCENE:

In these days of trails and treadmills; walking is totally different. We buy good walking shoes; wear clothing that is designed for comfort and style. That is a far different activity than in Jesus' day. Walking meant discomfort and often danger. You wanted to dress in a way that advertised that you had nothing of value to steal so as to deter robbers. Beggars had bags so as to carry with them anything they might have been given to tide them over in case no one gave them anything the next day. Jesus' instructions sent out the disciples as safely as he could, but without any sense of self sufficiency. He knew from experience that would be the only way that they would open themselves to whatever the Spirit wanted them to receive. We come to the text today hopefully with this same openness.

Mark 6: 7-13

7 Calling the **Twelve** to him, he **sent** them out **two by two** and gave them **authority** over **evil spirits**. 8 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." 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.

DISCUSSION QUESTION: Who would you hope to be teamed with as you witness to the God of Jesus? Why did you choose that person?

PRAYER: Travel guide Jesus, you ask me to trust your instructions as I walk through the days of my life. You often send me out with nothing but the clothes on my "spiritual back". If I am open and trusting enough, you also send me to places and people who welcome me and nourish me. Thank you for all those persons you give me to companion me along the way. Amen.

WORD STUDY AND QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION:

TWELVE: Over and over we find the number twelve that represents fullness and perfection in the minds of Jesus' day. It is as if Jesus gathers up all his energy and resources and moves on confident that God will open the way for whatever he and his disciples have to share.

What do you think went on in the minds of the disciples as they left Jesus' hometown? If you had been one of them, would you be apprehensive about it, or relieved?

TWO: In those days it took two male witnesses to be seen credible. Jesus sends the twelve out in pairs when he gives them authority over unclean spirits.

Why do you think he did this? Who would you hope to be paired with if you were on a similar mission? What do you think the two of you would talk about as you traveled to your destination?

AUTHORITY: To author something is to create it. To have authority is to have the power over what is created. To have someone share his or her authority is to be given power by the one who has the power.

Do you think the disciples really understood what was going on at this moment? Will it take their own personal experience (v13) before they begin to realize what true authority is over unclean spirits? Can you remember a time when you went forward in some task, and only later understood what was really going on?

EVIL SPIRITS / DEMONS: Demons were personifications of great power, most often spoken about as evil spirits in Jesus' day. People in Jesus' times believed that spirits were more powerful than humans but less powerful than God. These spirits readily interfered or intervened in human life, sometimes for evil.

How do you know when you are in the presence of a spirit that intends evil? What do you do in the face of an 'evil spirit'? Is your faith in God's power strong enough to counteract such power?

INSTRUCTIONS: The disciples are now beginning their internships in ministry. They are to be totally open to whatever the Spirit of God prepares for them.

How is your ability to go into the new with confidence that God will prepare the way for you?

NOTHING: Jesus' culture had a commitment to welcoming the stranger. In a day where people walked for the most part, they had to travel light, and would be less attractive to robbers if they appeared to have nothing worth stealing.

Knowing this, does Jesus' instructions make more sense to you?

JOURNEY: To be on a journey is to say that you have somewhere to go, someone to see, something to do.

As the disciples walked and talked, how do you think they decided where to go, who to see, and what they would do when they got there?

STAFF: The country was rugged, and the chance of needing a staff for protection or help in climbing the hills was good. It was also a sign of a poor traveler. Historically, it was a symbol of God's protection.

If you were taking along the basics for a similar journey, what would you take? What would that thing tell about you?

BREAD: The disciples would sooner or later get hungry. Having no bread, they could not dally around too long, or trust in their own resources.

Are you more open to risk when you know you are not your own source of nourishment? Would you, or your partner be the one most likely to be first in knocking on the door in the town you come into?

BAG / MONEY: Wandering preachers carried begging bags. They would then have some hedge against rejection.

What is Jesus doing when he forbids such insurance? What will the disciples learn about God when they venture out with only their faith to provide for them? Can this explain why the poor so often seem to have more faith?

SANDALS: Mark has Jesus telling the disciples to wear sandals. Luke in 10:4 and Matthew in 10:10 have different instructions.

Read these three accounts and reflect on the differences.

TUNIC: The poor in Jesus' day often only owned a single undergarment and a single over garment called a coat/tunic. This was often the only thing they had to sleep under to keep warm and dry. There are several references in the Hebrew Scriptures mandating that a creditor cannot keep a person's coat overnight as payment of a debt. (See Ex. 22:25-7; Dt. 24:10-13, 17; Amos 2:7-8; Ezek. 18:5-9.).

If someone came to your door in bare feet, no begging bag, no food, with just the clothes on their back, what would you do?

ENTER: To enter is to move into a place with an expectation of welcome.

Does the one receiving also enter into something when they welcome someone in?

WELCOME: This word means that it is well that someone has come.

How do you show that it is well that someone has come to you?

LISTEN: To listen is to attend to someone or something. It is to open yourself to the other. Jesus is preparing the disciples for the possibility that they would not be welcomed or listened to.

If you were a disciple would this help you as you ventured off into the unknown for the first time? How?

SHAKE: To shake is to move rapidly back and forth or up and down. It causes things to tremble. It was a symbol of the fact that rejection has consequences.

Would this gesture have the same impact today? What would be a current symbol that would carry the same meaning?

LEAVE: Jesus did not tell the disciples that they must stay in a town until they succeeded in getting their message across. They were not to get bogged down, or try to force something on people that were not ready to hear.

Do you think this made it easier for the disciples to try? Does it make it easier for you to try if you know that you only need to be faithful not successful?

PREACHED: Preaching is very different than teaching?

Can you distinguish the difference? How do you respond to teaching that is different than preaching?

REPENT: The message that the disciples were to give is the same message of John the Baptist, that is, to turn around and look at things in a new way.

How has this gospel caused you to turn around and look at something in a new way? Does this have the potential to change something in your life?

ANOINTED / OIL: All illness was thought to be caused by an 'evil spirit'. Anointing with oil was believed to bring the spirit of God upon the person. : To be anointed is to be set apart for holy use.

Do you think those who were healed came away feeling that they were then set apart for God's holy use? Have you ever experience someone saying that a healing meant that there was something they were meant to do with this new health and that it was God's plan? What do you think of this explanation?

PARALLEL TEXTS: Mk. 6: 7-11 // Mt. 10:1, 9-14; Lk. 9:1; 10:4-11; Mk. 3:14-15; **Mk. 6:13** // James 5:14;

OTHER TEXTS OF THE WEEK: Amos 7: 12-15; [Ps. 85: 9-14](#); Eph. 1: 3-14; Mk. 6:7-13;
Revised Common Lectionary: 2 Sam. 6:1-5; [Ps. 24](#); Eph. 1 3-14; Mk. 6: 14-29

SUPPORTIVE INFORMATION:



13 years ago, a young man named Chris came to our home with a few dollars in his pocket and the clothes he could carry on his bike. He was in the process of becoming a Jesuit and fulfilling the part of his formation process. He was sent out with virtually nothing so as to rely on the welcome of people who might be open to his next stop. This picture was taken the drizzly morning as he left our home in the woods. He is now ordained and continues to give his life to serving God.

good leaders must have a certain capacity for thinking beyond polarities and tapping into full, embodied knowing (prayer). They have a tolerance for ambiguity (faith), an ability to hold creative tensions (hope), and an ability to care (love) beyond their own personal advantage. Richard Rohr

Service is the rent we pay for living. It is the very purpose of life and not something you do in your spare time. - Marian Wright Edelman

Discipline is the other side of discipleship. Discipleship without discipline is like waiting to run in the marathon without ever practicing. Discipline without discipleship is like always practicing for the marathon but never participating. It is important, however, to realize that discipline in the spiritual life

is not the same as discipline in sports. Discipline in sports is the concentrated effort to master the body so that it can obey the mind better. Discipline in the spiritual life is the concentrated effort to create the space and time where God can become our master and where we can respond freely to God's guidance. Thus, discipline is the creation of boundaries that keep time and space open for God. Solitude requires discipline, worship requires discipline, caring for others requires discipline. They all ask us to set apart a time and a place where God's gracious presence can be acknowledged and responded to. Henri Nouwen

A good witness isn't like a salesman, emphasis is on a person rather than a product. A good witness is like a signpost. It doesn't matter whether it is old, young, pretty, ugly; it has to point the right direction and be able to be understood. We are witnesses to Christ, we point to him. - John White

When people are truly following Jesus, they enjoy a great freedom from themselves—they can laugh at themselves, and let others do the same. They can accept humiliations and not being first or best—because their own reputation is not at stake. They know it is all about the One Eternal Christ Mystery and not about them. Richard Rohr

Mk. 6:7: Two by two, perhaps to ensure that there would be two witnesses in accordance with Deut 17.6; this would be relevant for the testimony in v. 11. 13: Anointed with oil, a common medicinal practice in the ancient world (Isa 1.6; Josephus, J. W. 1.657). Pg. 71. Levine, Amy-Jill & Brettler, Marc Zvi. [The Jewish Annotated New Testament](#). NY. Oxford Univ. Press. 2011

The Epistles of Diogenes (in Malherbe, op. cit.) 7. To Hicetas

Diogenes to Hicetas. Do not be upset, Father, that I am called a dog and put on a double, coarse cloak, carry a wallet over my shoulders, and have a staff in my hand. It is not worth while getting distressed over such matters, but you should rather be glad that your son is satisfied with little, while being free from popular opinion, to which all, Greeks and barbarians alike, are subservient. Now the name, besides not being in accord with my deeds, is a sign that is notable as it is. For I am called heaven's dog, not earth's, since I liken myself to it, living as I do, not in conformity with popular opinion but according to nature, free under Zeus, and crediting the good to him and not to my neighbor. As for my clothing, even Homer writes that Odysseus, the wisest of the Greeks, so dressed while he was returning home from Ilium under Athena's direction. And the vesture is so fine that it is commonly acknowledged to be a discovery not of men but of the gods. First she gave him a cloak, tunic and mantle, seedy, dirty, and stained by filthy smoke. She put around him a large, hairless hide of swift deer and gave him a staff and a poor leather pouch, riddled with holes, with a knapsack strap on it (Homer, Odyssey 13.434-38) Take heart, Father, at the name which they call me, and at my clothing, since the dog is under the protection of the gods and his clothing is god's invention.

The letter is not an authentic work of Diogenes but comes probably from the second century BC."A.]. Malherbe, op. cit. 1977, pp. 98-9.

Dog. In Greek, ΚΙxοV (kyon), whence the word cynic was derived. The philosopher's clothing and equipment recall Mark 6: 8-9 and parallels. Pgs. 30-31. Barrett, C. K. The New Testament Background: Selected Documents. San Francisco. Harper & Row. 1989.

Twelve men were chosen to represent the twelve tribes of Israel which Jesus is reconstituting with his work. The Twelve are also called "apostles", a word derived from the verb *apostello*, "I send". They are therefore the "sent ones." When the Twelve are sent out, their period of being-with Jesus has ended; they can now extend his presence as they do the very things he has been doing: to preach repentance and to bring about healing. (Note however that Mark 6:13 mentions the anointing with oil, something that we don't see Jesus doing. The fact that in James 5:14 it has become a standard practice for the sick makes one think that perhaps Mark is reporting something that the apostles developed on their own with the implicit approval of Jesus.

The apostles are sent out two-by-two since it is safer to travel with a companion. There are therefore six pairs of apostles, perhaps corresponding to the six days of creation as they labor towards the Sabbath rest, "the day without sunset" as St. Augustine would call it. The list of the apostles in 3:16-19 may reflect -- at one time or another -- how they were paired. Compared to the lists in Matthew 10:2f and Luke 6:12f the list in Mark differs in that Simon Peter is paired with James, the brother of John while Andrew is paired with John, the other half of the Boanerges. In Luke and Matthew, the brothers are paired with one another. Again, while Matthew and Mark concur in their pairings of the last four apostles, in Luke we find James of Alphaeus going with Simon the Zealot and Thaddeus going with Judas the Iscariot. However, from these lists alone one cannot make a definite judgment on who went with whom.

To be noted in these lists is the pre-eminence given to Simon Peter who is always mentioned first. In Mark's version, Simon is already called Peter, a nickname explained in Matthew 16:18-19. The guidelines that Jesus gives to the twelve puts a high premium on trust in God's providence and the goodness of men. While he allows his chosen men the luxury of a walking stick and sandals -- comforts for those traveling far -- he tells them not to bring a change of clothing and provisions for food. This last reminds one of the teachings about not worrying food and clothing but to work first for the kingdom of God (cf. Matthew 6:25-34; Luke 12:22-31). Could it be that the Sitz im leben of the texts from Matthew and Luke is the mission? Finally, Mark 6:10-11 is a directive for the apostles to stay in the house where they are welcomed and to shake the dust off their sandals wherever they are not. Both these situations can perhaps explain two other sayings of Jesus: the one about the cup of cold water given to his own (Mark 9:41; Matthew 10:42) and the woes to Chorazin and Bethsaida (Matthew 11:21; Luke 10:13. In our lives God speaks to us through people in whom the Word takes on human clothing. Today's texts present several cases of people sent by God. The quality of a gospel proclamation cannot be measured by its immediate acceptance. What is important is the fidelity of those sent, to the mission entrusted to them.

A young woman, an Episcopalian priest, was being interviewed. She had just published a book with a very strong message challenging us all to be more respectful of nature and was about to set off on a book-promotion tour. The interviewer asked her whether she was nervous because she had written the book in San Francisco, known for its liberalism, but would now be setting off for less-liberal locales, the bible-belt, and other places not known to be as liberal as San Francisco. Her response contains a lesson: In effect, she said, "I'm not worried. Most people are sincere and I find that, among sincere people, there isn't any spiteful resistance to God's word. People resist ideology (and they should) but my experience is that, if you preach God's word and not liberal or conservative ideology, most sincere people will hear you!" Taken from: [Speaking our Truth from a Deeper Place](#)

A disciple must have discipline. He or she must not be afraid of being asked by God for some of the time, the money, and the pleasure he has been in the habit of calling his" own." This does not mean that there will not be time for the family, and time for some healthy diversion. But it does mean that we are never--on vacation, or wherever we may be--exempt from our primary commitment to Him. - Samuel M. Shoemaker (1893-1963), *The Experiment of Faith*

Do not be daunted by the enormity of the world's grief. Do justly, now. Love mercy, now. Walk humbly, now. You are not obligated to complete the work, but neither are you free to abandon it. - The Talmud (Echoing Micah 6:8.)

Jesus promised his disciples three things — that they would be completely fearless, absurdly happy, and in constant trouble. - G.K. Chesterton

16 A discipline won't bring you closer to God. Only God can bring you closer to Himself. What the discipline is meant to do is to help you get yourself, your ego, out of the way so you are open to His grace. - James Kushner

SUGGESTED READINGS:

Links to all the books mentioned in this guide are on The Ark web site: www.theark1.com

Beck, Robert. Sunday Homilies: Cycle B 2015. Pgs.102-104. To order contact Carol.Oberfoell@loras.edu

Beck, Robert. Sunday Homilies: Cycle B. 2005. Pgs/ 101-105.

Beck, Robert. Sunday Homilies: Cycle B. 2009. Pgs/ 121-124.

Beck, Robert. Sunday Homilies: Cycle B 2011-12. Pgs. 99-101.1

Shea, John. [Stories of Faith](#). Thomas More Pub. Chicago. 1980. **SENDING OUT:** Page 176.