

Eighth Sunday after Pentecost
July 19, 2015
St. Mark 6:7-13
The Church Travels Light in Our Mission
Rev. George Ferch

Dearly loved by God in Christ Jesus,

God wants his church to travel light. It always has been that way. Noah did not take all the animals on earth into the ark, only one pair of the unclean and more for the clean animals. In the Exodus, the people gathered only enough daily bread for that day. They did not have to carry much baggage because their clothes and shoes did not wear out.

Jesus warned against being weighed down internally with the sins of “carousing, drunkenness and the anxieties of life.”[Lk. 21:24] Our Savior tells us to exchange the burdens of life that weary us for his yoke that gives rest for it is easy and light. Paul reminds us that our troubles are light and momentary compared to eternal glory that far outweighs them all. God wants us to travel light on the narrow road that leads to life.

God wants us to travel light in our mission of spreading the good news that his Son, Jesus, is the Christ, God’s Chosen One, our only Redeemer. God has called us to himself and sends us out just like he did the twelve apostles. As we see that **The Church Travels Light in Our Mission**, we note first, we are not to weigh ourselves down with the unnecessary. Then, we see that Jesus gives us the only thing necessary.

“Calling the twelve to him, Jesus began to send them out two by two..” Several pictures come to mind; the quarterback calling a huddle then sending the backs and wide outs to their positions to run their pass patterns, the sales manager gathering his people around him for instruction and a pep talk then sending them to their territories, the preschool teacher brings in her charges then spreads them out to do their projects.

All these have one thing in common. One person is in charge. One person has the plan. One person is responsible for the outcome. Our Savior has called us to himself for our mission. He gives us the plan, our mission to preach repentance and the forgiveness of sins in him. He sends us out with the message to share and give us what we need to share it yet He alone is responsible for the results.

The church travels light in our mission. That is why Jesus told the apostles to take only a staff, no bread, no wallet, no coins, not even an extra shirt, only sandals. Jesus was telling the twelve keep your mind on the mission. Do not be weighed down by the anxieties of life. They were to move from place to place with their provision and housing dependent upon those who welcomed them and their message.

Fast forward to today. What are some heavy burdens that weigh the church down and prevent the church from traveling light in our mission? The church weighs itself down with financial problems due to our fear and misdirected priorities with our money. The church weighs itself down by tolerating self-serving ministers and unscriptural beliefs. The church loses sight that the mission is Christ’s mission and not ours and focuses on our will and goals instead of preaching repentance of sin and forgiveness for sin alone in Christ. Lord, please forgive us, and lead us away from these sins.

Our Savior’s deeper meaning then and now in wanting the church to travel light is trust in me and obey my Word. Keep focused on your mission which is my mission. Travel light. Do not let anxiety and things weight you down. Go out two by two, that is, rely on the fellowship and

support of fellow believers. Look for those who will welcome you and your message to take you in and provide for you.

The Church travels light in our mission. That does not mean, however, that we are a church of light-weights. Jesus gives us the only thing necessary. We travel in our mission with Christ's authority. That authority carries great weight.

"He gave them authority over impure spirits. They went out and preached that people should repent. They drove out many demons and anointed many sick people with oil and healed them."

The authority the twelve exercised, the only thing necessary to carry out their mission, was Christ's authority. Jesus said, "All authority in heaven and on earth had been given to me." [Mt. 28:18]. Throughout his ministry Jesus manifested that authority by driving out demons, healing the sick, raising the dead, and preaching repentance and forgiveness through which his Spirit brought many to saving faith in him. The apostles manifested Jesus' authority by doing the same things in his name.

The word authority has the sense of a warrant, like a search warrant, or an arrest warrant. Someone issued it, others carry it out. The authority of the latter is the authority of the former. So it is here. The authority we have on our mission is Christ's authority.

Our mission carries the authority to raise the dead to new life in Christ. Our mission heals the soul from the power and consequences of sin. We heal the body as the believer's body rises in perfection and glory on the last day. We wield Christ's authority to end the rule of unclean spirits, demons, over hearts.

Not everyone will welcome us and our mission. We figuratively shake the dust off the bottom of our sandals as a sign against them and their rejection of Christ's authority. We leave them and continue on and carry our mission to others.

The warrant we carry on our Savior's mission is the Bible, especially the gospel. When someone asks us by whose authority are we speak, we may answer boldly, we speak with Christ's authority. When someone tells us we cannot judge them, or we cannot say what is right and wrong, or we cannot say what is the only way to heaven, we must agree, because only Christ's authority applies.

The church travels light in our mission. We have Christ's authority. We have the authority of Scripture. Those are equal. Denial of their authority does not change, cancel, overrule their authority. Carrying that authority in our mission is not heavy baggage that weights us down. The church travels light in our mission. Amen. <SDG>