

Daily Bread with Brother Hwa-Chi (Not reviewed by the speaker, for personal use only)

Mark 6: 7-14

Peace be with you, brothers and sisters, this is Hwa-Chi. Thank the Lord, it's time to read the Bible again, today we'll continue to read Mark chapter 6, verses 7 to 14.

After choosing the twelve disciples, Jesus brought them alongside Himself and began their discipleship training: in preaching, casting out demons, and healing the sick, Jesus provided them with comprehensive training so they could meet the needs of people in spirit, soul, and body. The Gospel of Jesus Christ is a complete salvation, supplying the needs of the spirit, bringing peace to the soul, and restoring strength to the body. Jesus completed the first phase of discipleship training, and now He was about to send them out; they would become true apostles, those sent by the Lord Jesus Christ.

Yesterday, we discussed the final lesson before sending out, which is how to face rejection, especially from those who think they know you but only value superficial appearances, unwilling to humble themselves, making it difficult for you to work among them. After completing the final lesson, today we will read about Jesus sending out His disciples to preach. Before delving into the text, it's important to have a comprehensive understanding of Jesus sending out workers for preaching in order to truly grasp how to apply the scriptures; because at this point, Jesus' training of the disciples has not yet been completed. It's only the end of the first phase, meaning the disciples have not graduated yet; they've only completed one stage. Therefore, this sending out can be seen as a final exam, and the scope of the exam is limited, with the equipment the students can carry being time-bound. Hence, some principles cannot be applied today.

The most comprehensive revelation of Jesus sending out the disciples is found in Matthew 10:5-42. It can be divided into three stages. The first stage is from verses 5 to 15 when Jesus was still carrying out His earthly ministry, with the disciples mainly preaching to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. This stage lasts until Jesus' crucifixion. The second stage is from verses 16 to 23, representing the period from

Jesus' resurrection to AD 70, when Jerusalem was destroyed. During this time, due to the Jews rejecting Jesus and crucifying Him, the Gospel began to turn towards the Gentiles. However, the route of Gospel preaching still began with the Jewish synagogue; when the Jews rejected it, it was then preached to the Gentiles. The major hindrance during this period was the Jewish synagogue. The third stage is from verses 24 to 42, after AD 70 when Jerusalem was destroyed, and the Jews were scattered among the nations, with the synagogue completely losing its influence. Therefore, the application of this passage extends from AD 70 until the second coming of Christ. The primary target for preaching the Gospel becomes the Gentiles, with the greatest hindrance to the Gospel coming from the world. Those interested in further pursuit can refer to the daily readings in Matthew 10. I will provide the link in the comment section.

And today's passage, Mark 6:7-14, corresponds to Matthew 10:5-15, covering the period when Jesus was with His disciples until His crucifixion. Their primary audience for preaching was the Jews, and the purpose of Jesus sending out the disciples was to teach them to rely on God in the work of preaching. This principle still applies today, but some adjustments must be made in its implementation. After the conclusion of this phase of their training, they were to return to Jesus and report their results. In verse 30 of this chapter, the disciples gathered around Jesus and reported to Him all they had done and taught. From that time on, the disciples continued to follow Jesus, receiving further discipleship training from Him. Now, let us proceed to read through this passage verse by verse.

Verse 7: "And He called the twelve to Himself, and began to send them out two by two, and gave them power over unclean spirits."

The twelve disciples were divided into six pairs, with each pair going out to work for God. This is the first principle we see in God's sending: you must not be alone; there must always be companionship. Going out to work alone, if things don't go smoothly, it's easy to get discouraged, or even retreat; if things go well, it's easy to become proud and arrogant, putting the fruits of labor in your own pocket and

forgetting that it was the Lord who sent you. You must bring the results back and give an account to the Lord; those sent by the Lord represent Him, so the Lord gives them the authority to subdue unclean spirits. This is a very honorable thing. Initially, when God created humans, His intention for them was to represent Him, managing all created beings, as stated in Genesis 1:26. Later, due to human failure, sin entered the world through one person. Satan then seized power through death, usurping God's created world and becoming its ruler. Now, God's Son comes into the world, first gathering twelve disciples, sending them out, and giving them the authority to subdue unclean spirits; they go out to establish God's kingdom. Jesus sent them out two by two, but Mark does not tell us how these twelve disciples were paired up. In Matthew 10:2-4, we quickly see Jesus' grouping, and we have looked at these six pairs.

The first pair is Peter and Andrew, who are brothers and fishermen. Peter is brave and outspoken, always the first to rush out when something happens, while Andrew is just the opposite—cautious, observant of details, and attentive to things that others overlook, like the little boy with five loaves and two fish, whom Andrew saw and brought to Jesus. This is a highly complementary team. The second pair is James and John, another pair of brothers and fishermen, both hot-tempered. Jesus called them 'sons of thunder'; with this highly homogeneous team—brothers whose thoughts and habits are the same—there should be a highly efficient team. The third pair is Philip and Bartholomew (or Nathanael). Bartholomew's Jewish name is Nathanael, and they were good friends. John 1:43 tells us that Philip was personally encountered and called by Jesus, and as soon as he met Jesus, he immediately brought his good friend Nathanael to Jesus. Nathanael is a true Israelite in whom there is no deceit, wholeheartedly hoping for the Messiah promised to Israel. The Lord is particularly attractive to those sincere Jewish people who seek Him. The fourth pair is Thomas and Matthew. Thomas is skeptical by nature, insisting on evidence; unless he sees with his own eyes and touches with his own hands, he won't believe. Matthew is a tax collector, good at keeping accounts. Whatever evidence Thomas has, Matthew records it all. This is an extremely practical team. Because Matthew, being a tax collector, was despised by Jewish society, he had a special affinity for the marginalized in Jewish society and could particularly identify

with them, having a special charm. The fifth pair is James, the son of Alphaeus and Thaddaeus. There is not much recorded in the Bible about these two individuals. Perhaps they were introverted and quiet individuals, and Jesus put them together to form an unnamed team, making it easy for ordinary people in Jewish society to identify with them. They don't put pressure on people, they just sincerely and genuinely testify for Jesus. The sixth pair is Simon the Zealot and Judas Iscariot, who betrayed Jesus. This pair is enthusiastic about politics and interested in personal gain. They are particularly attractive to revolutionary elements who like mass movements and advocate for the restoration of Jewish rule. These six pairs have different compositions and operate in different ways, attracting different groups of people. Here we see Jesus' careful grouping, showing that the gospel is for everyone, and different people have different needs. There will always be a team that can meet these needs. In today's church, it is the same. God calls people of all kinds to be members of the church, to contact many different backgrounds, and to have different needs, including people from all walks of life in society. The gospel is for everyone, and everyone needs Jesus.

Verses 8-9: "He commanded them to take nothing for the journey except a staff—no bag, no bread, no copper in their money belts— but to wear sandals, and not to put on two tunics."

The disciples were sent out to preach, and Jesus gave them spiritual authority to cast out demons, but Jesus instructed them not to bring many provisions for their daily needs. They were told not to bring food, bags, or money belts, except for staff; they were to wear sandals and not to put on two tunics. The disciples were to rely on God's provision for their sustenance, as a test of their faith. They were not to bring money, as trusting in riches would undermine their faith. As Paul tells us in 1 Timothy 6:17, "Command those who are rich in this present age not to be haughty, nor to trust in uncertain riches but in the living God, who gives us richly all things to enjoy." Carrying a staff symbolized their authority. While they were not to worry about their needs, they were to carry the staff given to them by Jesus, signifying their commission. They were to wear sandals, as the Gospel brings peace: those

who preach the Gospel of peace leave behind beautiful footprints, and wherever their feet tread, peace follows. They were not to wear two tunics, as they were to travel light. Jesus sent them out without provisions but with authority staff in their hands and the Gospel of peace on their feet.

As mentioned earlier, the first phase of Jesus' sending continued until His crucifixion, focusing primarily on the lost sheep of the house of Israel. Therefore, when Jesus sent them out, He instructed them not to bring any provisions for sustenance, a practice that ceased after His crucifixion. Jesus personally recounted this to the disciples, as recorded in Luke 22:35-36. At the last supper with His disciples, preparing to go to the Garden of Gethsemane, Jesus said to them, "When I sent you without money bag, knapsack, and sandals, did you lack anything?" And they said, "Nothing". This refers to the method Jesus employed when sending out the disciples during this phase. Then Jesus told them what to do in the next phase. In verse 36, Jesus said, "But now, he who has a money bag, let him take it, and likewise a knapsack; and he who has no sword, let him sell his garment and buy one." This instruction came because Jesus was about to be crucified, and after His resurrection, the Gospel would be preached not only among the Jews but also among the Gentiles. This marked the beginning of a new principle, as stated in 3 John 1:7, "For they went forth for His name's sake, taking nothing from the Gentiles."

Verse 10: "And He said to them, 'Whatever place you enter a house, stay there till you depart from that place.'"

In Matthew 4:5-6, it is specifically pointed out that at this stage, the Lord instructed them not to go to the way of the Gentiles, and not to enter the city of the Samaritans, but rather to go to the lost sheep of the house of Israel, proclaiming that the kingdom of heaven was at hand. Before Jesus ascended into heaven, as mentioned in Acts 1:8, He made it clear to the disciples the path of preaching the Gospel, saying, "But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth." Therefore, the route of the Gospel was clear, starting

from Jerusalem and all Judea, focusing on the Israelites, as they were the chosen people of God in the Old Testament. Despite their stiff-neckedness, God gave them numerous chances, until they completely rejected Jesus, and then the Gospel turned to the Gentiles.

The first phase was preaching the Gospel among the Jews, then it went to Samaria. Samaria was a place where Jews and Gentiles mixed, and Samaritans were a mixed race of Jews and Gentiles after intermarriage, and their faith was mixed. Finally, the Gospel reached the ends of the earth, where the Gentiles dwelt. We are still in the initial phase, so the Gospel is preached to the Jews, after all, they are the chosen people of God in the Old Testament, until they rejected Jesus by crucified Him to the cross, and then the Gospel turned to the Gentiles.

Paul also mentioned in Romans 1:16 that the Gospel is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes, first for the Jew and then for the Greek, representing all the Gentiles. Therefore, Jesus now tells these six pairs of Gospel carriers that no matter where they go, when they enter a house, they should stay there until they leave; meaning that their eating, clothing, and sleeping should all be provided by that house. Mark's account is more concise, but Matthew 10:11-13 adds some details, "Now whatever city or town you enter, inquire who in it is worthy, and stay there till you go out. And when you go into a household, greet it. If the household is worthy, let your peace come upon it. But if it is not worthy, let your peace return to you." This means those who are willing to believe in the Gospel and willing to receive them in their homes.

When they go to that house, they should greet the people of that house, and because of the arrival of the disciples, peace comes upon them so they are not there in vain; they bring spiritual peace to that household. It is right for that household to receive spiritual blessings and provide for the disciples' livelihood. Moreover, they are to remain in that house until they leave. This means they are to establish that household, have deep fellowships and sharing, become a base for the Gospel in that city, and ultimately develop into a church.

Verse 11: “And whoever will not receive you nor hear you, when you depart from there, shake off the dust under your feet as a testimony against them. Assuredly, I say to you, it will be more tolerable for Sodom and Gomorrah in the day of judgment than for that city!”

This means that when you arrive at a place and that place refuses to receive you, when you leave, in front of them, shake off the dust from your feet. This is to tell them that when you reject the Gospel, you will bear the consequences yourself. What consequences? You will lose salvation, and when I shake off the dust from my feet, I am saying that it has nothing to do with me. Very specifically, Jesus said that when you shake off the dust from your feet, it is a testimony against them. It turns out that testimony has two sides: acceptance and rejection. When the Gospel reaches a place, it creates a distinction, separating those who believe from those who do not. Paul tells us in 2 Corinthians 2:14-16, “Now thanks be to God who always leads us in triumph in Christ, and through us diffuses the fragrance of His knowledge in every place. For we are to God the fragrance of Christ among those who are being saved and among those who are perishing. To the one we are the aroma of death leading to death, and to the other the aroma of life leading to life. And who is sufficient for these things?” It turns out that preaching the Gospel is diffusing the fragrance of Jesus Christ in every place, and to those who believe, it is the aroma of life, but to those who do not believe, it becomes the aroma of death. Therefore, this is a very serious distinction, to which Paul adds the question, “And who is sufficient for these things?” This is not something we can take responsibility for; it is from the will of God.

Verses 12-13: “So they went out and preached that people should repent. And they cast out many demons, and anointed with oil many who were sick, and healed them.”

These six pairs went out. Their area of preaching should have been in Galilee. They did three things: firstly, they preached, calling people to repentance; secondly, they cast out demons, exercising the authority of God, and drove out many unclean

spirits; and thirdly, they healed the sick. They anointed many sick people with oil and healed them. The oil here should be olive oil, which was often used as a medicinal substance at that time. Therefore, oil was often applied in healing, not because the oil healed the disease, but because of the power of God. From a spiritual perspective, oil symbolizes the Holy Spirit. This also indicates that the healing by the Holy Spirit is from the inside out: when the spirit of a person is revived, the soul will be filled with peace, and when there is peace in the soul, it will bring about physical recovery. So, when the disciples went out, the training they received was the same: to do three things—preach, cast out demons, and heal the sick—so that people’s spiritual and physical bodies could be made whole.

Verse 14: “Now King Herod heard of Him, for His name had become well known. And he said, ‘John the Baptist is risen from the dead, and therefore these powers are at work in him.’”

It was originally Jesus alone preaching, but now, simultaneously, six pairs went out to six different places, preaching, casting out demons, and healing the sick. And each person who went out represented Jesus. Jesus also gave them authority. As they went out to preach the gospel, the name of Jesus was spread, to the extent that it even shook the underworld. Herod Antipas, who ruled over Galilee at that time, representing the worldly authorities, heard about Jesus’ name and saw the works done by Jesus’ disciples. He said, “John the Baptist is risen from the dead.” Why did he say this? For he had just beheaded John the Baptist.

As for the matters concerning Herod Antipas, we will read about them in more detail tomorrow. Through Jesus sending out His disciples, the gospel spread throughout the region of Galilee. Even the ruler of Galilee was shaken, especially since he had just done something that troubled his conscience, causing him to think that John the Baptist had risen from the dead. Here we see the twelve disciples becoming apostles, going out two by two, and bringing great shock to the region of Galilee at that time. Dear brothers and sisters, not only was it like this back then,

but it is the same today. Jesus is still looking for people in every church whom He can send out. Are you willing to answer Jesus' call?

Let us pray: Lord, thank You for the great grace You have shown us, granting us wisdom for salvation through faith in You as our Savior for life. But Your grace does not stop there; You are still calling people, willing to go out on behalf of You to preach the gospel and advance Your kingdom. This is even greater grace. The gospel we have received freely, we also want to give freely. Grant us such a disposition, willing to receive proper training in the church, to understand Your word, and to let our lives grow. Our life's testimony is our best gospel. Bless the church I am in, and may every family in the church be a witness for You through their daily lives. In Jesus Christ' holy name, we pray. Amen.