

Sunday Message

FIFTEENTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

THE WORD

Year B • 14 July 2024 • Psalter Week 3

"GO, MOVE, SHIFT"

MARK 6:7-13



Last Sunday we read about Jesus' unsuccessful visit to Nazareth. Now Jesus sets out on a teaching tour of other Galilean villages.

The implication is that these villages accept him in a way his own village did not. Jesus also begins to share his mission with the Twelve. Jesus has already chosen them as his closest confidants. Now he puts them to work, sending them out in pairs armed with his authority to confront the power of evil.

They are to travel light. This means no bread, because food will be provided by the hospitality of others. It means no (sleeping) bag, as lodging will be provided. It means no money, for they will be looked after. They may bring a staff, sandals and a single tunic since they will be continually journeying.

This text reminds us that the earliest Christian missionaries travelled light and set themselves apart from the wandering preachers of other religions, who brought lots of baggage with them.

Mark is saying something important as he records Jesus' instructions. Jesus is on an urgent missionary journey. The staff and the sandals are the symbols of that journey and so are appropriate for those who share in his mission. Any other baggage, especially any that might slow them up, is not permitted.

Jesus also instructs them about where to stay. If they encounter lack of hospitality they are to move on from that village. This is exactly what he has done in response to the hostility of Nazareth. Jesus even tells them to shake the dust of such places from their feet. Jews returning to the Holy Land would perform this ritual as they left pagan territory so as not to import "uncleanness" with them. It symbolised the godlessness of the pagan land and the holiness of Israel. The Twelve, in performing the same gesture, relegate to the godless world those inhospitable places that have rejected the Gospel. In this way, the Twelve proclaim the Gospel as Jesus does, with integrity of word and deed.

The Twelve set out and their mission is successful. Mark adds some important details. The preaching of the Twelve is so "all should repent," which is the key missionary goal of Jesus. They also heal the sick, something Jesus has also done many times. Mark adds that they anoint the sick with oil. This was a widespread practice in the Greek world by the time Mark's Gospel was written and now becomes part of the practice of the Christian church.

Ironically, the mission of the Twelve is more successful than Jesus' own mission in Nazareth. Yet they are missionary only to the extent that they are with Jesus, recognise that his authority has been given to them, and travel light. At all times they remain his followers. ■

PRAY

Thank God for missionaries, those who left home and travelled light, in order to preach the Good News. Pray for them.

DO

Think about your attitude to material things. How light do you travel?

LEARN

As followers of Jesus, we all have a mission to preach the Gospel.

We can preach the Gospel wherever we live and work.

Jesus asks that his disciples be detached from all things.

REFLECT

My mother's four sisters were nuns. One, Aunt Peggy, spent all of her 96 years in Ireland as a nurse and carer. Two of my aunts spent most of their lives abroad. Aunt Celia worked as a teacher in the Philippines from the 1950s to the early 70s; then transferred to Kenya where she spent another two decades. Aunt Jo spent most of her life teaching in the United States, first in Salt Lake City, among the local Mormon population, and then in an African American neighbourhood in Los Angeles. Aunt Mary, after retiring as a teacher in Ireland, wanted to do more. So she went to Kenya where she spent several more years in the classroom.

My aunts were wonderful women, generous and zealous, but there was nothing unique about what they did. It's what countless Christian women and men have done down the centuries. They obeyed Jesus' command to go and preach the Gospel. Some, like my aunts, were 'professional' missionaries – but most were not. They preached the Gospel simply by the witness of their lives.

Pope Francis says that church people must be "shepherds living with the smell of the sheep." In other words, Christians must leave their comfort zones to make Christ present in all places and at all times. They mustn't confine themselves to the security of their churches, sacristies and homes but must go out into the streets and alleyways to proclaim the Good News. There is an urgency to our task as Christians because there is a whole world out there that is hurting, and that needs to hear the message of Jesus. Our great commission is to "go."

A popular ballad of some years ago is called "Go, Move, Shift." It describes the discrimination that members of the Travelling community so often experience. But it also describes the instruction of Jesus to the Twelve – and to all of us. We are to "go, move, shift." We must not hang around. There is a whole world out there waiting to hear the Good News. ■

SAY

"Lord, help me to always be an effective witness to you. Amen."

ENTRANCE ANTIPHON

As for me, in justice I shall behold your face;
I shall be filled with the vision of your glory.

GLORIA

Glory to God in the highest,
and on earth peace to people of good will.

We praise you,
we bless you,
we adore you,
we glorify you,
we give you thanks for your great glory,
Lord God, heavenly King,
O God, almighty Father.

Lord Jesus Christ, Only Begotten Son,
Lord God, Lamb of God, Son of the Father,
you take away the sins of the world,
have mercy on us;
you take away the sins of the world,
receive our prayer;
you are seated at the right hand of the Father,
have mercy on us.

For you alone are the Holy One,
you alone are the Lord,
you alone are the Most High, Jesus Christ,
with the Holy Spirit,
in the glory of God the Father.
Amen.

COLLECT

O God, who show the light of your truth
to those who go astray,
so that they may return to the right path,
give all who for the faith they profess
are accounted Christians
the grace to reject whatever is contrary to the
name of Christ
and to strive after all that does it honour.
Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,
who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the
Holy Spirit,
one God, for ever and ever.
Amen.

FIRST READING

Amos 7:12-15

A reading from the prophet Amos.

Amaziah, the priest of Bethel, said to Amos, "Go away, seer; get back to the land of Judah; earn your bread there, do your prophesying there. We want no more prophesying in Bethel; this is the royal sanctuary, the national temple." "I was no prophet, neither did I belong to any of the brotherhoods of prophets," Amos replied to Amaziah. "I was a shepherd, and looked after sycamores: but it was the Lord who took me from herding the flock, and the Lord who said, 'Go, prophesy to my people Israel.'"

The word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

PSALM

Psalm 84 (85):9-14

Response:

Let us see, O Lord, your mercy, and give us
your saving help.

1. I will hear what the Lord God has to say,
a voice that speaks of peace,
peace for his people.
His help is near for those who fear him
and his glory will dwell in our land. (R.)
2. Mercy and faithfulness have met;
justice and peace have embraced.
Faithfulness shall spring from the earth
and justice look down from heaven. (R.)

3. The Lord will make us prosper
and our earth shall yield its fruit.
Justice shall march before him
and peace shall follow his steps. (R.)

SECOND READING

Ephesians 1:3-14

A reading from the letter of St Paul to the
Ephesians. (Shorter form between ><)
>Blessed be God the Father of our Lord Jesus
Christ,
who has blessed us with all the spiritual
blessings of heaven in Christ.
Before the world was made, he chose us, chose
us in Christ,
to be holy and spotless, and to live through love
in his presence,
determining that we should become his
adopted sons, through Jesus Christ
for his own kind purposes,
to make us praise the glory of his grace,
his free gift to us in the Beloved in whom,
through his blood, we gain our freedom, the
forgiveness of our sins.
Such is the richness of the grace
which he has showered on us
in all wisdom and insight.
He has let us know the mystery of his purpose,
the hidden plan he so kindly made in Christ from
the beginning
to act upon when the times had run their course
to the end:
that he would bring everything together under
Christ, as head,
everything in the heavens and everything on
earth.<
And it is in him that we were claimed as God's
own,
chosen from the beginning,
under the predetermined plan of the one who
guides all things
as he decides by his own will;
chosen to be,
for his greater glory,
the people who would put their hopes in Christ
before he came.
Now you too, in him,
have heard the message of the truth and the
good news of your salvation,
and have believed it;
and you too have been stamped with the seal of
the Holy Spirit of the Promise,
the pledge of our inheritance
which brings freedom for those whom God has
taken for his own, to make his glory praised.

The word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

Alleluia, alleluia! Your words are spirit, Lord,
and they are life;
you have the message of eternal life. Alleluia!

GOSPEL

Mark 6:7-13

A reading from the holy Gospel according to
Mark.

Jesus summoned the Twelve and began to
send them out in pairs giving them authority
over the unclean spirits. And he instructed
them to take nothing for the journey except a
staff – no bread, no haversack, no coppers for
their purses. They were to wear sandals but,
he added, 'Do not take a spare tunic.' And he
said to them, 'If you enter a house anywhere,
stay there until you leave the district. And if any
place does not welcome you and people refuse

to listen to you, as you walk away shake off the
dust from under your feet as a sign to them.' So
they set off to preach repentance; and they cast
out many devils, and anointed many sick people
with oil and cured them.

The Gospel of the Lord.
Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

PROFESSION OF FAITH

I believe in one God,
the Father almighty,
maker of heaven and earth,
of all things visible and invisible.
I believe in one Lord Jesus Christ,
the Only Begotten Son of God,
born of the Father before all ages.
God from God, Light from Light,
true God from true God,
begotten, not made, consubstantial with
the Father;
through him all things were made.
For us men and for our salvation
he came down from heaven,

(all bow during the next three lines)

and by the Holy Spirit was incarnate of the
Virgin Mary,
and became man.

For our sake he was crucified under
Pontius Pilate,
he suffered death and was buried,
and rose again on the third day
in accordance with the Scriptures.
He ascended into heaven
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.
He will come again in glory
to judge the living and the dead
and his kingdom will have no end.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord,
the giver of life,
who proceeds from the Father and the Son,
who with the Father and the Son is adored
and glorified,
who has spoken through the prophets.

I believe in one, holy, catholic and
apostolic Church.
I confess one Baptism for the forgiveness
of sins
and I look forward to the resurrection of the
dead
and the life of the world to come. Amen.

PRAYER OVER THE OFFERINGS

Look upon the offerings of the Church, O Lord,
as she makes her prayer to you,
and grant that, when consumed by those who
believe,
they may bring ever greater holiness.
Through Christ our Lord.
Amen.

COMMUNION ANTIPHON

The sparrow finds a home,
and the swallow a nest for her young:
by your altars, O Lord of hosts, my King and
my God.
Blessed are they who dwell in your house,
for ever singing your praise.

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Having consumed these gifts, we pray, O Lord,
that, by our participation in this mystery,
its saving effects upon us may grow.
Through Christ our Lord.
Amen.