

Mark 6:7-14

Two by Two

Please turn in your Bibles to Mark 6:7-14. We're going to read verse seven through the very first section of verse fourteen. Okay, so I'm going to read one verse past what we have here, just because I want to make a note about what it says there. Now it just so happens, I was thinking about the baccalaureate service at the beginning of the summer. And yes, it feels like it was just a few minutes ago that we had that service. But there is one of those things you see with the sort of lectio continua is what they call the style of preaching that you're getting here at Briarwood, where we're going through books. In the Bible, the Lectio is the reading continua, continuing readings of Scripture. One thing you'll notice is that when we have special Sundays, it's always interesting to me how the Lord just Providentially lands us in a text that's appropriate for the special service. The special event and this is a text about Christian pedagogy. This is a text about the formation of the Christian in mission. And so we do want to sit in here, how the greatest of teachers goes about the work of training and equipping and teaching and forming his disciples, his pupils. And so we learn something about that here tonight.

Jesus called the twelve and began to send them out, two by two. And he gave them authority over the unclean spirits, and he charged them to take nothing for their journey except a staff. No bread, no bag, no money in their belts, but to wear sandals and not put on two tunics. And he said to them, whenever you enter a house, stay there until you depart from there. And if any place will not receive you, and they will not listen to you when you leave, shake off the dust that is on your feet as a testimony against them. And so they went out and they proclaimed that people should repent. And they cast out many demons and anointed with oil many who were sick and healed them. Now King Herod heard of it, for Jesus name had become known.

This is the word of the Lord. Please be seated.

Well, as I said, this is a text about Christian pedagogy. We're learning something here, and we could actually pull together all of the texts in the gospel of Mark. Mark, you know, true to form, is very succinct. So he gives us a shorter, more concise version. He's kind of just the facts when it comes to the life of Jesus. And so we could really pull together sections like Mark three, where he calls his disciples, and we learn that here's the first cycle of discipleship of apostleship. They come, and at first they are with Jesus. They spend time with him. And then it says so that not so that they can stay with him, but so that he can send them out. But it's not until this passage that we see Jesus actually sending them out. So we've had about three chapters of Jesus having the disciples with him and watch him do the things that he's been doing. And as you know, we've had a series of teachings and a series of signs that are attending to the teachings. We're going to come back and talk about the signs in a minute. But this passage helps us kind of reframe the way that we've been reading those previous passages, because they haven't just been passages about Jesus lordship. They haven't just been passages about all the amazing things that Jesus is doing. We could think, oh, these are just examples of how Jesus is Messiah, right? Remember we talked about this last year in the

missions conference with Rico Tice. He said, ask yourself every question. What does it mean for him to be Messiah? What does it mean? What's the message of Messiah and what does it mean to follow Messiah? And we could read these past passages where he's raising people from the dead and declaring women clean, who are unclean, and casting out demons and speaking with authority. We could all say, here's examples of how Jesus is Messiah. But now we come to this interesting passage where Jesus now sends out his apostles, and he says, you go out and do what I've been doing. So you see here already those passages that have come before it are showing us a little insight. It's just a brief glimpse into how our Lord and Savior trains up the people that he is sending out. Sending out in his name. We actually learned that the casting out of the demons, the teaching with authority, the arguing for the sake of the kingdom, the repentant believe. For the kingdom of God is at hand. All of that has been, yes, efficacious in itself, but it has also a role modeling for the apostles who are about to now go out and do it themselves. So I want to talk a little bit about this mission that they've been sent to. And I want to particularly note the educational or the pedagogical aspects of what the Lord is doing here. So we're going to look at the authority of the mission. We're going to look at the dependency of the mission, and we're going to look at the urgency of the mission. And each time along the way, I want to pause and just notice. Look at how Jesus is training them in, equipping them to the work that he has called them to. Like a master craftsman, he does not just send his apostles out like a master craftsman. He does not just teach in class, but rather what does he do? We've seen him teach now after having given them the information, the tools that they need, he is now sending them out to practice the tools that he has given them. That's how you learn in discipleship itself. That is one of the most effective ways for us to be disciplined. It's not just to sit and listen to a lecture or listen to a sermon, or listen to a Sunday school. But it is then, after having received the message to go out and practice the message.

So let's look first, then at the authority of the mission that we see here in Mark chapter six, verse seven. Look, he called the twelve and began to send them out two by two, and he gave them authority over all unclean or over the unclean spirits. Okay, look, first of all, at the way in which they are sent, they are not going on their own authority. He hasn't he hasn't taught them the techniques of salesmanship. And now he said, go out and find something that you think is important and go try to sell that to people who you're talking to. He doesn't he doesn't say that. He doesn't. He doesn't say, go out and find the thing that's your passion and sell that to everyone you meet. But rather, what is he doing? He is saying, I give you authority to proclaim my message. He sends them out having called them to this work. This is not a random group of people. He's not just crowdsourcing people who can go out on his behalf and teach and speak, but rather he is calling people who have both the internal desire and the external ability to fulfill the call that he has called them to. Okay. There's an importance in calling. So I want to talk about the authority of the mission. And first, in the authority, I want to talk about calling. The importance of calling Christian mission begins with a call. And yes, that's true of the gospel message, but that's true of every vocation. As a matter of fact, that's all that that word vocation means. It means calling. How are you called? Okay. We could have a whole sermon tonight on the issue of discerning a call, but let me just give you a couple of starting points. Okay. I see some young folks out there, and I see some older folks, too, some of whom may be thinking, okay, what am I going to do for second half? Right. The second half of life. But if you're a young

person, you know this because you and all of your friends are trying to discern what is my calling. Let me just give you a couple of quick steps. It's going to be a very practical section of the sermon. Okay. Here's the first thing you can do when you're considering what your calling may be. One of the first things you have to ask yourself is, is it a sinful thing to do? Or is it a righteous thing to do? Right? If you're trying to think about whether you should do one thing or another, you can ask yourself this. Sometimes this will weed out a lot of your options. Okay. Is it a sinful thing to do or is it a righteous thing to do? Is it faithful to God or is it unfaithful to God? Okay. Does the job entail you lying? Does it entail you stealing? Does it entail you breaking other kinds of commandments of the Lord? Will it be a detriment? Will it be a deficit to your spiritual growth? That's a good sign that you're not called to do it. Okay, I know that sounds silly and kind of obvious. You'd be surprised, having worked in seminaries and in a pastor's office and had people come to me and say, I'm trying to discern a call, and you start asking them questions and you realize one of these things will require you to sin. Okay? That means you're not called to do it.

All right. So you start with that. Is it righteous? The second thing you ask yourself is this do I desire to do it? Okay. A lot of people skip that, that step. They think, well, they've maybe developed a kind of tough love view of life. And they think, no, if it's something I want to do, then it's probably not something I should do. Right. You've probably even talked this way before. I didn't want to do it, but the Lord made me do it. Okay. And that feels kind of righteous to say that. However. And that sometimes happens, no doubt. Okay. But I would actually argue that more often than not, Christian calling the Christian notion of calling requires or is about you discerning in your heart what you desire to do. Okay. If it's sinful, what you desire to do, then that's not your calling. Okay. And yet, if it's righteous, then you can ask yourself now the next question. But ask yourself, is this something I want to do? Do I find myself yearning for it?

I remember when I first discerned a call to ministry. I was doing a job that I liked, I enjoyed it, I was good at it, I had a future at it. I was already there. So providentially it was like right there available to me. And yet I found my heart being drawn towards Christian ministry. Well, it was in seminary. I found my heart being drawn towards a deeper study of the word, and that was going to form the way that I pursued the call that God had put in my life. So is it righteous? Is it something you want to do?

Now, here's the next question. Is it something that's wise for you to do? Okay. Okay, it might not be sinful, but is it foolish? Is it not a good use of your gifts? Now, you want to be careful on this one, because there will be times where you will be called to do things that do not align with obvious gifts. They might align with lesser gifts, but not obvious gifts. We have two important examples in Scripture, the first one being Moses, who seems to have had some kind of speech impediment. He says that he has a fat tongue. That's literally what the Hebrew says. And so the Lord says, you are called to go and be my ambassador. That's a speaking job before Pharaoh. And Moses says, I'm the wrong guy, If I took a Myers-Briggs test, I would not qualify for this job because I have a fat tongue. I'm not good at speaking. Can you imagine that we may meet Moses in heaven and realize that he has a speech impediment? And notice the Lord doesn't say, don't be silly, don't think so low of yourself. That's not what the Lord says. The Lord goes, you're right. You do. And so I'm going to give you Aaron to help you out. Okay?

Notice as we look at Peter and Paul, we have Peter who's called to the Hebrews in the second in second Temple period, the Judeans there. And then you have Paul, who is sent to the Gentiles. Isn't it interesting, Peter, who probably had some social standing, because we know that he has access to the high priest's court when Jesus is about to be crucified. So he does have some kind of social status. It's very interesting. Try to read between the lines and see how much the disciples actually had at their disposal. But notice he is not educated as a student and a scholar of Torah, and yet he's sent to people who believed that the Word of God is Torah, and he's told to tell them about the gospel of Jesus Christ. That seems like a weird fit, and yet his heart is for it, and he's good at it. Okay, Paul, on the other hand, who is trained in Torah, is sent to the only group of people around him who actually don't care anything about Torah. He sent to the Gentiles. It's interesting. Sometimes the Lord will do that. Sometimes you'll find yourself being called in ways that are surprising to you, and yet you do want to ask the question, do I have a basic capacity? Do I have a basic wisdom to me pursuing this call? Okay. Another question is this if I desire to do it, I'm good at it. It's not sinful. Okay. Do I have opportunity to do it? As the Lord providentially ordained a state of affairs so that I can pursue this job. Okay. Now, sometimes that's going to require something special happening. Okay. Someone showing up and giving you the money that you need to do the PhD, or to do the MDiv, or to go on to school, someone giving you a free place to live so that you can live a life of a missionary, somebody you know. Sometimes it's going to require that kind of thing, no doubt. And yet, more often than not, I think this often gets ignored in the discernment of call is what are the doors that the Lord is opening to me? And what are the doors that the Lord is closing to me? I can't tell you how many times over the course of twenty years of working in a seminary. I've had a seminary in graduate. And when we have the graduation party and he talks about or she talks about what they're going to do next, they'll have a very specific call in mind, and then you check in with them ten years later and they're doing something totally different. I remember one, uh, one person who felt called to go and to be a missionary, a counselor, missionary to the missionaries in Southeast Asia. In ten years, he and his wife owned a practice in Orlando, Florida. Okay. Now guess what? If you talk to them, they would not say we failed in our call. They would say the Lord opened doors for a time and closed doors for a time, and we discerned our call, much like Peter does, much like Paul does when they're figuring out where they should go next based on where doors are open. So it's important for us, as we're thinking about mission and Christian mission, to think about calling. The reason why I lay it out the way I do is I want to be clear, calling is not mystical. There's not some secret path. There's not a labyrinth. That's how the pagans think about it. That's not how we think about it. There's not a there's not a hidden path. And you have to either be in the path or off the path. Okay, this is not about reading tea leaves or opening up your Bible and closing your eyes and putting your finger down on a verse to try to figure out what you should do next. Okay, that's not biblical notions of calling. That's not a biblical notion of calling, but rather that's a pagan notion. We want to realize this. God works on the stage of our consciousness and our awareness about ourselves and the world around us, as he calls us into ministry.

Notice each one of these disciples has been organically called by Jesus Himself and sent out to do this work. Paul reminds us of this. How can people believe this is Romans 10. How can people believe if they haven't heard? How can they hear if no one's preached to them? And

then notice the last part. How can they preach if no one has sent them? Okay. Pursuing mission means being called and sent.

Secondly, they are sent out two by two. Another way to say this is they are sent out in community. Now, this is crucial for the disciples. They don't just receive their authority from Jesus. They receive their authority in how to pursue their call in the manner of their call by going out two by two. Notice this is for multiple reasons mutual encouragement and accountability. As the book of Ecclesiastes says, Ecclesiastes four nine, it's better to have two than just one because they can hold each other up. It doesn't just give them mutual encouragement and support on the mission field. It confirms their witness. Have you ever thought about this? In the Old Testament, the Deuteronomic law. If you are to hear witnesses in a court case, it's always said you need to have two witnesses. It's not enough to have one witness. You need to have two. Okay. Two. Confirm the witness. Jesus understands this. Have you ever been about the work of sharing the gospel with someone? And you have a friend who comes alongside you or joins the conversation, maybe even later in one of your later meetings, and the friend sits down and they corroborate the things that you have said, and you can sit back and they start saying things. And it's the same things you were saying two weeks before, even though you hadn't, you know, gotten together and made sure you said the same things. And you realize the power of that, of having two or more people bearing witness to the same truth. So Jesus sends them out for mutual encouragement and accountability. He sends them out two by two to confirm their testimony.

And lastly, I do believe that he sends them out two by two because everywhere they go, they are themselves a visible expression of the community of belief in the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Okay, it's one thing to have one guy out there kind of doing his thing, but it's another to have two so that people can see the fellowship. They can see the friendship. Have you ever had someone say about you and your Christian friend, you know, maybe an unbeliever says about you and your Christian friend or your Christian family, you know, there's something about you. It's different the way you guys interact, the way you love each other, the way you care for one another. You see, when you go out two by two like that, they are a visible expression of the community that is created by the gospel. The key here is this - Jesus does not allow for lone rangers. He doesn't allow for isolated religious heroes. He's calling you out to work in groups, As we'll see later, we don't even get the names of any of these disciples. Their names don't matter. It's the message that matters. So Jesus sends them out two by two to support each other, to confirm one another's testimony, and to be a visible expression of the community.

The third thing I want to point out about the authority of the mission is this. Notice they minister with borrowed authority says that Jesus gives them the authority to cast out the unclean spirits. Now, now, I do want to note here, in light of our sermon today, another providential, you know, pairing of these texts in light of our sermon today on Psalm 82. If you were here this morning, you recognize there's something going on here. Here are some of those spirits, some of those principalities and powers that the Lord is standing up and taking his place in his assembly to judge because of their lack of discernment, because of their showing partiality toward the wicked, because of their ultimately unbelief and encouragement of unbelief. And here Jesus is giving them authority over those spirits. Think about that for a

minute. Jesus Christ is giving them authority over the principalities and the powers. What does that tell you about the person of Jesus Christ? It's very subtle here. Can another angel do that? No. Can a sort of a vague apparition of spiritual power and force do that? Absolutely not. Who is the only one who has authority over the principalities and the powers in the heavenlies? That is God Himself. The Lord takes his place at the head of the courtroom. He stands in judgment over the principalities and the powers. And notice Jesus himself is the king from the courtroom, and he is bestowing. He is delegating upon his disciples the power to conquer Satan, sin, and in death. If you remember, when Jesus engages with those that legion that army of demons, do you remember what they say? They actually use the language that's very similar to what we see in Psalm 82. They say, *O son of the Most High, why have you come to persecute us before the given time?* They know who he is, they recognize it. And the disciples do not go out on their own authority, but they do go out with great authority. It is the authority of the king who sits at the front of the heavenly throne room. Okay, that means, by the way, if you are doing gospel proclamation, you are engaged in spiritual warfare. If you're doing gospel proclamation, you are doing your part a called by God, called by Jesus himself to reign in those principalities and powers that resist his rule and his reign. Sometimes hear that about, you know, I've had friends who are more vocal in their discussions of spiritual warfare come and say, you know, the problem with you guys, you Presbyterians, you don't talk enough about spiritual warfare. You just you preach the gospel, but you don't talk about the spiritual warfare part. And I go, no, no, no. Preaching the gospel is the best thing you can do in spiritual warfare. That is how you tame. That is how you gather in. That is how you bind the demons and the principalities and the powers of the world. You do it by proclaiming the name of Jesus Christ because he has given us that authority. So we go out and we speak clearly and notice there is no battle, there is no contention. The demons don't say, put up your dukes, let's fight. They don't say that they are bound because you come with the authority of the king who sits on high.

So notice first of all, Christian mission. Christian pedagogy is about authority, and that includes calling. That means learning and doing and practicing in community. And that means recognizing that everyone, everyone operates on borrowed authority. Especially in the mission of the church. So let's move on now to the second part. I want to point out here in verses eight through ten, the dependence of the message, the dependence of the mission. Notice as Jesus is sitting them out, he makes it clear to them that he wants them to be dependent on God's provision as they do the work. He wants them to be dependent on God's provision. You would think that they would then plan, okay, before we go out, Jesus, let me go back home. Let me talk to my parents. Let me see if I can save up some money. Let me see if I can get enough food in my bag that will last for a couple of weeks. Okay. Notice Jesus in this situation says you need to recognize when you are in mission. You are entirely dependent on the Lord. Now let me be clear. His stipulations here are for this particular instance. I'm not saying we shouldn't plan for our travels or our missions trips. You know, when Brian Winterstein and I went to Australia, we got plane tickets. We checked into hotel rooms ahead of time. We planned ahead. Okay. It's not saying you don't plan ahead. But here's the thing. You should remember. Even when I'm planning ahead, I need to be entirely trusting in God's provision. Because you can have the plane tickets figured out. You can have the hotel figured out, you can have your meals figured out, and it all goes sideways as soon as you step out the door. We are always reliant on the

provision of God. Notice what he says here. He's it's interesting. He says in uh, um, uh, in verse chapter six down at verse. Sorry. Let me just find it here real quick. Verse eight. *Rather, he charged them to take nothing for their journey except a staff. No bread, no bag, no money in their belts, but to wear sandals and not put on two tunics. And he said to them, whenever they enter our house, we'll come back to that in a second.* Okay, so notice the stipulations here I want to have because this is educators night. I want to I want to have a seminary moment real quick. Do you notice what he said here? He said, when you go, don't bring certain things, but maybe you can bring something. So for instance, take nothing for your journey, but you can bring a staff. Okay. You can bring a staff, but don't bring any bread, don't bring any bags, don't bring any money in your belts. But you can wear sandals, but don't bring more than one tunic, okay? Okay. Do not put on two tunics so that you can change clothes down the road. Well, why am I pointing this out? This is one of those passages that's called a synoptic passage. This shows up in Matthew in Mark. And what's interesting about it is that in Matthew and Mark, we get the same instructions. Don't bring certain things. Okay. However, what's interesting is that in Matthew, it is actually pretty clear that you're not supposed to bring a staff either. Okay. This is what it says in Matthew chapter ten, verse nine, going into ten, acquire no gold or silver or copper for your belts, no bag for your journey, or two tunics or sandals or a staff for the laborer deserves his food. Okay, you hear that? And Mark, it says you can bring a staff, but don't bring any of the other stuff. And Matthew says, don't bring a staff. All right. The reason why I'm pointing this out is because I want to argue this is the closest thing that you have to a difficult contradiction to actually harmonize in the Gospels. I would argue this is one of the hardest. Okay. You maybe heard from some other people like, well, Matthew and Mark and Luke don't line up. You know, some of the facts don't work. I'd actually argue just about all of the supposed contradictions that people bring to mind are very easy to resolve. This one is the hardest. Okay. Mark my words. This one is the hardest because it seems like they're clearly talking about the same event. They're talking about the same thing that Jesus said, and yet it reads slightly differently in the Greek. One says to bring a staff. One says, don't bring a staff. So here's our seminary moment. What do we do with this? Okay, first of all, I want to start with this. I would argue we're not supposed to be really spending a lot of time harmonizing gospels. When you try to harmonize the Gospels, notice there's a subtle presupposition that's slipping in. You're saying this, Mark, Matthew and Luke, they're not really enough, right? I need to come up with a third option, which is my harmonization of Matthew, Mark, and Luke. But if you think about our doctrine of scripture and you take it seriously, you have to confess that the Word of God is inerrant and infallible in the way that it is given to us in its canonical form. And Mark has been given to us. It is the words of the King. I don't read Mark and say, well, I don't know about that Mark. Let me check it against Matthew and Luke and see if I can trust you on this matter. I just want to be clear, epistemologically, be careful about a spirit of harmonization where you say, I need to go check these scriptures and make sure that I can trust in them. Okay. I just want to say that first of all, however, if these scriptures are inerrant and they are infallible, then we should be able to come to some consensus about what the scripture is actually describing. All right, so I want to give you four options on how we can deal with this apparent contradiction. And the reason why is because it helps us just kind of think a little bit more clearly about how we're receiving the scripture that we're receiving. So this is not a new thing

to the church. This has been known for the last two thousand years. People note this because people read the Bible closely. Like all of you here at Briarwood. Do people read the Bible closely in the church and in church history? And so we have a couple of different opinions for different opinions that have emerged on the scene. So let me give you a couple examples. Calvin says this, okay. John Calvin, the great theologian, uh, of Geneva and of Switzerland. Calvin says that this teaching about not bringing a staff is actually a specific use that Mark is using for a staff. And that's this, that word that's used for staff can mean walking stick, okay. But it can also mean club for defending myself against thieves or marauders on the road. And so what Mark is doing, and you can imagine the context, you got to be careful about this. But Jesus is talking to everyone and he's saying, you don't need to bring this. You don't need to bring this, you don't need to bring this. And Mark is recording for us that Jesus said, you know, don't bring your handgun, okay? Don't bring your club. Trust in me. I'll protect you. Like Psalm one nineteen, the Word of God will protect me even on the pathway, even on the road at night. The Word of God protects me. And Jesus is saying, don't bring your club. You don't need that protection. Now in another instance, he's saying, well, yeah, sure, you can bring a walking stick. I mean, everybody needs a walking stick, right? Particularly when you're going to be walking, you know, tens and tens and tens and hundreds of miles at some points. So Calvin harmonizes it this way. It seems like Jesus is talking about two different things in two different passages. It's the same word. But remember, they're not sitting down next to each other writing these things out. They use words differently in the Gospels. That's, that's a part of our understanding of organic inspiration of Scripture. The authors use the words the way they want to use the words. And that's why you can't just say, oh, it's used this way in this book and this way and this book, and they're somehow in contradiction. But Mark is talking about one thing. Matthew and Luke is talking about another on one side, a club on the other side, a walking staff. Morris says this, okay, he's interpreting this. And he goes, well, you got to realize as they are giving you the words of Jesus. Some are giving you more. This is literally what he said, and some of you are kind of giving the gist, like a summary of what he said. We know that there are summaries in the scriptures, okay? The prophets at other points will summarize something that someone said, and Morris says this. Both of them are basically saying this as I send you out, disciples, go as you are. Right. That's the point. In other words, we're all standing here. Imagine me tonight saying we're going to go out and take Birmingham for Jesus tonight. Everyone go out and preach the gospel. And some people are like, well, should I run home and get my walking shoes? Should I go get my Hoka's? Yeah, no, just go out right now. Go out as you are. And some guys are standing there with walking sticks and some guys don't have walking sticks. If you got your walking stick, you can take it. If you don't, don't take it. Go as you are. All right. That's possible. These are all possible. By the way, I'm only giving you arguments. I'll tell you which one I prefer, but I'm only giving you arguments that I think are plausible ways of interpreting it. Okay. There's another possibility, and this is one that's kind of emerged over a couple of different voices. And it's this it might possibly have to do with some confusion. Jesus is not preaching in Greek. He's preaching in Aramaic. And there is a little bit of ambiguity in the words in Aramaic between neither or except. Okay. Take nothing. Bags, money, tunics. Neither a staff or except a staff in Aramaic, it might be the same word that can be translated in multiple different ways. And in the Greek, mark is going one way with it. And in the Greek, Matthew and

Luke are going another. That's possible. That to me is a little bit of a stretch. And I say this as a Semitic scholar there, right? There is ambiguity in Aramaic. But that still to me doesn't really answer the question, but it's possible. It's a plausible one.

And then lastly, I would argue this, you know, I would put this one forward. This is Al Mooney who taught New Testament at BTS. He was my professor. And he argues here that Mark is being more indirect. But Matthew and Luke are being more direct in their discourse. In other words, Jesus is saying probably something along the lines of don't take anything with you, but Mark is kind of communicating the gist, okay? He's communicating, you know, maybe there was a, there was a nonverbal that Jesus said that was kind of like, don't take anything with you. I mean, I'm not going to nitpick about stabs and tunics and stuff, but don't take anything with you and Mark. Excuse me, Matthew and Luke are being more direct. They're saying exactly kind of the words that Jesus said. This is similar to the summary argument. Perhaps Mark is conveying the meaning in context. If you were in the room, you would have understood why Mark said what he said. Maybe it was a facial expression. Maybe it was a gesture. Maybe it was a hand. Okay. Whereas Matthew and Luke leave the exaggeration that Jesus is using to make his point. And Jesus admittedly does sometimes teach in exaggerations. He might have said, don't take anything with you. That doesn't mean you can't take your clothes, right? And so that's also possible. As a matter of fact, I think to me, I think is probably the most satisfying, recognizing that there are all kinds of non-verbals involved in language, and the Gospels are just relating to us as they are seen infallibly and inherently. But still raises the question at what point do you translate it literally? At one point, do you translate the context and the gist of what the person is saying? The reason why we go through this is not just to have an academic exercise. It's just to point out, brothers and sisters, this is the hardest contradiction that I find in the Gospels, and I already have four decent explanations that are drawn out of real academic study, that are drawn out of real understandings of human language and communication, all of which preserve for us the inerrancy of Scripture, and yet at the same time recognize these are describing real events that took place with real people in the room who are recording them for our use. So notice Jesus says, be dependent. Don't take a lot of stuff. Don't try to control your circumstances, but rather let God provide for you, even trust in the hospitality of others. I'm convinced of this.

When you're on the mission field, it is important for you to go and to find allies, to find cohorts, to find people out there in the field with whom you can live and stay and be encouraged, encouraged, and be nourished while you're in the mission field. I've spent multiple trips and I usually go with someone else. That's the two by two method, and I usually get to stay with Christians in the area where I'm going. But I do remember one trip, and it was just because some circumstances and travel plans got messed up, where I ended up going by myself and not being able to stay with Christians where I was. I still got to do the work. There are other Christians that I interacted with, but I wasn't relying on the hospitality and the care and the fellowship of other believers. And I can tell you that was one of the most exhausting mission trips I've ever been on. I remember coming home and just being wiped out. And it wasn't even that long. It was just a week. It was one of the most exhausting weeks of my life, because I wasn't able to just trust and rest in the provision of God through the hospitality shown by the

church. It's so important for us at Briarwood as we support so many missionaries, and we bring so many of them back for the missions conference to make sure that we're showing them hospitality and care to fortify them. The job of the mission is difficult, and we want to come alongside them and care for them. Notice then as we talk about sharing in the hospitality of others. We don't forget that at the end of the day, all of this reflects the simplicity of the message. The message is merely this. Repent and believe. It's not well adorned. It's not a long dissertation and monologue. The gospel message is a simple one Jesus Christ reigns. He's had the victory. Repent and believe. And Jesus is telling his disciples go in a manner that reflects the simplicity of the message.

All right. Lastly, and just in brief, we've talked about the authority of the message, the dependency of the message. Lastly, I just want to end on this, the urgency of the message. It says, so they went out and they proclaimed that people should repent. Notice the gospel message. No matter how much we might want to beautify it, no matter how much we might want to adorn it. Okay. And again, there's nothing wrong with good contextualization of the gospel so that people can hear it and properly understand it. There's nothing more useless than going out and declaring the gospel in a way that people will not understand. We want to remove a fence that is not the offense of the gospel itself. We want to remove any kind of cultural baggage that might confuse the message of the gospel. It's important to be aware of the people to whom you are preaching the gospel. And yet we should always remember this. The gospel message always ends with conviction and consolation. It's never just consolation. As these disciples go out invigorated for the mission of the gospel, notice they go out and they call people to repent. At the end of the day, we're telling people, you've got to turn away from where you're going, and you've got to get on the path to go the other way. You've got to turn away from death. I know you don't think it's death. I know you think it's the best thing in the world, but it's not. It's going to kill you. You need to. Turn away from it and seek life. Turn away from the sin. Turn towards Christ. That's the urgency of the message of the gospel. Notice we see it here, right here at this very beginning with the very earliest times, examples of the preaching of the gospel by the disciples. And notice this as we would expect, when you go out with a message of repentance, the gospel will be rejected. There will be times when you go out and you present it clearly and articulately and lovingly and with respect, and they outright reject you. Look, even before they're out the door, Jesus tells them that this is going to happen. And we've got to imagine again, think about the pedagogy of this. Jesus is applying what just happened in the previous section, in verses one through six, where Jesus goes into his house, he preaches in his synagogue. Everyone knows him there. You think now he's really going to have revival. And what happens because of their familiarity with the Son of Mary? They don't believe Jesus is taking that experience, and now he's applying it in a theology of mission to his disciples. And he's telling them, you will be rejected. Even the prophet Isaiah experienced this, the grunt of the greatest prophets. Think about the impact of the book of Isaiah, its use in the. In Handel's Messiah, its importance in terms of its clear messianic prophecies. And yet, do you remember when Isaiah is called to ministry in that passage we talked about this morning in Isaiah six, where he's in the temple, and all of a sudden the veil is drawn back, and he sees the Lord there, and the Lord sends him out. And he says, who will go for me? He goes, here I am. After having his lips atoned for by buy coal from the from the altar of the temple. And then the

Lord says, go out and tell them the city's going to be destroyed. And Isaiah says this. He says, how long, O Lord? Okay. Do you say that when you like a thing? How long, O Lord, if you're getting a back massage, do you go, how long do I have to endure this pain? Right. When I when I buy my daughters ice cream, they don't go, how long in between licks? How long do we have to eat this ice cream? Right? They don't say that. You see, Isaiah knows that he's being given a hard message. He says, how long, O Lord, do I have to declare this to them? And do you remember what he's told? This is the goal of his mission, Isaiah the prophet. Until their hearts are hardened, until having eyes they don't see, they don't hear, and they turn away into judgment. That's how you know you're succeeding. It's because the people reject the message. Notice the apostles also ran into rejection, and that's part of the work of the gospel. It divides like a sword dividing down between the bones and the marrow of a person. It divides belief from unbelief and you will be rejected. But that does not mean that you have failed. That just means that the gospel is doing its. It's discerning its winnowing work. Will they go out? They proclaim the message of repentance. They are rejected, but they also see incredible liberation and healing. It says that many believe the disciples cast out many demons. They heal the sick. These acts are like trumpets declaring the message of the gospel. When an army marches forward and you hear, or a football team runs out to take the field and you hear the music kick in. Okay, when the Chicago Bulls come in and you hear that song right as the lights going all around, the power of the Bulls is not in the song. The power of the football team is not in the band that's playing displaying the power of the army is not in the trumpets, or the drummer boy who walks ahead of them. That's just declaring the presence. The same thing is true with the miracles, the casting out of the demons, the healing of the disease. That is the proclamation. That is the thing that is declaring the arrival of the gospel of Jesus Christ. We have to remember that we will preach the gospel, and sometimes amazing things will happen in our culture as a result. And yet, that's not the gospel. The gospel is the gospel. Okay? If you become a believer and your life gets better and you make more money, that's a proclamation maybe of the arrival of the gospel. But that's not the gospel. That's not the ends unto which you have been saved. The people who were healed of their diseases still had to go and die sometime later on in life. The gospel message is that when you believe you have been united with Christ, and death for you is now no longer the end of the story. Your life is not a tragedy, but rather it is merely the soil. The grave becomes the soil out of which new life sprouts. You see, the urgency of the message drove them forward. They were sent with the authority of the king. They were provided for by God's providence, and the urgency of the message drove them forward as they saw success and the places that they went to minister. And then I add verse fourteen, a notice this small band of ill equipped unnamed disciples who go out into the land of Samaria, Samaria and Judea to preach the gospel of this little known, Nazareth born prophet. And in short term and short time, King Herod himself hears the words, it's a reminder to us of God's M.O., his modus operandi. He loves to do great things through small effects, small people. He loves to show his strength in our weakness. He loves to confound the nations through this small and little known people, the people of Israel. He loves to confound the world and the powers of this world by a man who is known for suffering, who is acquainted with grief, who, if you saw him, there was nothing to esteem him to you unless the Holy Spirit testified on his behalf to you.

You see, this is how God loves to work. I love the fact that we don't get their names, which disciples these are who are being sent out as proclaimers of the gospel of Jesus Christ. We want to be like clear glass on a window. When the light shines in in the morning, you don't stop and stare at the glass. You want to enjoy the light. And that's what we're called to here as we're training, as we're being formed, as we're participating in Christian pedagogy. We want to create clear, crystal clear panes of glass through which the glory of Christ can be seen in the world around us. That's the end of Christian education. That's our goal. Whether you're in the school or you're in the family, or you're in the church, or you're in the seminary, or you're in the university, that's our goal. I want people who are going out, and whenever people see them, they see Christ. And whenever people talk to them, they hear the words of the shepherd. When people take a breath, okay, as Paul says, they, they smell the spiritual odor of everlasting life. That's what we want the end of Christian education to be. Let's close in prayer.