

The First Commission
Mark 6:7-13

This morning we are returning to our study in Mark's gospel. So, as you make your way there, I'll just talk to you briefly about education, the concept of education and learning. Since many people are on break from school (although some are back already), it's an opportunity to talk about education without getting things thrown at me - but learning; something that we have all across our society. Many of us have our own experiences, our own backgrounds and our own studies, of how we were brought up, how we were educated and learned, not just in the school systems or whatever system we were in, but in the workplace, learning still takes place, and families are still educating and learning, and there's a lot different ways that can take place. Some of the more obvious ones are just the simple aspect of observation. You can just watch. You cannot even be in a classroom; you can just be watching someone doing something and you're learning. There's observation just through what you're taking in with your eyes. There's learning through what you hear, and some people prefer that. They'd rather listen to things, and as they listen to someone talk, or as they listen to a program or something that they're into or listen to an audiobook of something like that, they learn in that way.

And so these methods have been tapped and utilized for ages now, and they're definitely prominent in our school systems as we think about it, as many of us are familiar with terms like lecture, the lecture. Alright? The lecture aspect and component carries with it this idea that someone is talking and someone is on the other end listening and hopefully learning too, not just completely glazed over and out of it. We think about this, and we think learning, listening through observation, those are good things, but that's not it. If that was it, then we'd be falling very, very short in terms of actual learning. Think about how you learned how to ride a bike maybe, or how your parents taught you that, or a sibling. Did they put on a television program with a lot of people biking and leave the room and say, yeah, you'll pick it up one of these days? No. It wasn't through observation that you learned how to ride a bike. At some point, you had to do it - some point, you had to try. You had to, actually, get on the bike with the helmet and the training wheels, or the hand of a parent guiding you, and fall (some of us more than others), before we actually got the hang of it. Even in issuing driver's licenses, we don't say pass this test and we give you your license.

You took a written test. You apparently know a lot in your head, so you can drive on the road now; that's not what we do. We need people to actually try with an instructor in the car with them, but they actually have to, at some point, get into the car and drive themselves - this action of doing.

Learning by doing is so important, and that's why many of our education systems have adopted another word called lab. It's not just lecture, it's also the lab. There is this idea, theoretically what you're learning and understanding and having going on in your mind and interacting with, but at some point, it needs to be practiced. At some point, it actually manifests itself in some way, and there's more learning that is done by doing. And Jesus was the master teacher as we would all admit. We know that Jesus was perfect in His educational practices and what He did, and He Himself engaged in having His disciples learn, not only through observing and listening, but also through doing. And that's what we find this morning in our text, a text where it is time for the disciples to learn in another way, to learn in an internship, to learn in on-the-job training, to learn by doing.

So, let's look at our text this morning in Mark chapter 6:7-13, and see how they also apply to us. In verse 7; "And he called the twelve and began to send them out two by two, and gave them authority over the unclean spirits. 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.' So they went out and proclaimed that people should repent. And they cast out many demons and anointed with oil many who were sick and healed them." We have this shift in Jesus' instruction of His disciples.

We've seen so much of what Jesus's done in Mark's gospel so far and by way of Him doing amazing miracles and Him teaching with precision and even hiding the message with these parables and stories with a point. We've seen Jesus doing it all Himself and many people swarming to Him - some liking what Jesus has to say and actually following Him, others not so much and rejecting Him. Nonetheless, these disciples that were actually following Jesus, had had tons of observation hours. They'd had kind of hours and minutes and days on end of watching Jesus, listening to Jesus, and now

Jesus shifts the strategy and says it's time for you to do. It's time for you to learn by doing, actually getting in the game, getting your feet wet so to speak. This is how we see it surface in our first verse. In verse 7, we see the disciples summoned and sent. He calls them to Himself and sends them. The disciples are summoned and sent. Very simple; "And he called the twelve and began to send them out two by two, and gave them authority over the unclean spirits." This is the general aspect of our text this morning, that Jesus would call His followers to Himself, send them out, and that they might learn in the process. However, in our text, we have specific instructions that He gives for the disciples. As they go out, there are things they need to take into mind and consideration, and then they need to do and they need to actually carry with them as they go about this and what they can expect as they do this task.

These instructions are actually helpful for us, too, as we continue to be sent as the church, and we'll see more of that as we work through these verses. But as we think about Jesus' ministry and how much preaching He's done, it's all been solo. It's by Himself. He has been on His own doing these things, and people have been following Him, but it's still been Jesus doing the work. It's been Jesus that's actually engaging in this practice of open preaching, preaching with parables, doing miracles, but now, in this part of His Galilean ministry, He shifts to send the message. He wants to send the message. And we get a little more of the picture of how this comes about in Matthew's gospel. In Matthew 9:36-37, at the end of chapter 9, we learn about Jesus' ministry in Galilee, everything He was doing all by Himself once again, and then there's this moment; "When he saw the crowds, he had compassion for them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. Then he said to his disciples, 'The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few...'" A crucial moment, a crucial moment where Jesus is in the thick of ministry, and He uses this opportunity to rise up, to look out over the region of Galilee, and say to His disciples we need more workers. We need more laborers. Look at all the work there is to be done. Look at all the souls that are out there that're harassed and helpless. They need to be led. They need a shepherd.

Jesus acknowledging that He is just one man, and there needs to be more laborers. So, He takes this moment to show His disciples this. And that is what they would do; they would learn, not only just learn and engage in a schooling of some sort and going out, learning by doing, but they would

actually participate in giving God glory as the message of the kingdom and repentance is continued throughout the region of Galilee and the nation of Israel. And when we think about it, when we come to our verses, it's not really a shock or a kind of surprise to us that we see, oh, wow! Jesus is now sending out the disciples. This is interesting, a weird play for Jesus. Is He kind of second guessing Himself? Is He changing His strategy because He's not so sure He can do it all? No. We knew this was His plan with the disciples all along. When we just go back to Mark chapter 3, we're reminded of what happened when He appointed the twelve. Notice that He called them apostles. Right? So, that's kind of a dead giveaway to begin with. An apostle is one who is sent out. So, the very fact that he called these men, and they were called apostles, indicates that they're going to go. They're going to be sent out to do something.

But even more so, Mark gave us more information; "And he appointed twelve (whom he also named apostles) so that they might be with him..." They've done a lot of that. They've been with Jesus and seen a lot. But the second part, "...and he might send them out to preach and have authority to cast out demons." This was the plan. This was the plan for the twelve. When Jesus called them to Himself, there was no intention for them to simply be amazed and oohing and awing at all of Jesus' ministry their whole life, and that's it. This was the intention, that they would actually, because of their time with Jesus, go and do something. They would be sent out. That was the plan. That was our identity, not just disciples, followers, but apostles, sent ones. And we learn a little bit more of the details of how Jesus now sends them out, back in verse 7 of our text - when it says in our text, He "...began to send them out two by two..." He "...began to send them out two by two..." Well, one reason that, clearly, this is a good strategy; "...send[ing] them out two by two..." is just for safety purposes. Someone all by themselves going somewhere, might be a little more dangerous.

But also, there's even kind of this legal issue, so to speak, that we get from the law and what Moses wrote, that any report about someone committing a crime, anyone doing something wrong - if that was going to be reported to the elders of the town, of the city, if that was actually going to actually be acted upon or judged - there needed to at least be two people as witnesses. Then the accusation would stand. So, "Only on the evidence of two witnesses or of three witnesses shall a charge be established." This is an interesting aspect of what Jesus is doing here. In sending out the twelve, He

is not just sending them to bring the message to more people that will hopefully respond. That definitely is the goal, that people will hear this message, respond and recognize how much they need it; but there's another aspect that in these kind of two-by-two groups going out, they are witnesses, and any town that does not respond, there is now an accusation that stands against them, and it's established because there's at least two of them, not just one person. It's not just been one person that went to that town and said they didn't listen, Jesus, sorry, but there's been two. And this kind of fits the legal requirements of their law, that there can be now this condemnation that will come because they rejected this message, and there's witnesses to testify to it.

This is kind of how the word of God always is though. If you think about it, whenever the word of God goes out, you always have these options before you, don't you? People that respond to the word, they have the soft heart of the good soil and they actually bear fruit, and there's a harvest because of them hearing the word and receiving the word, and then you have people that reject the word. And this is what we're going to find; more of that - people either receiving or rejecting the word in light of this message going forth as these men go two by two.

Notice also an interesting element here. It's kind of, maybe, might be easy to miss, but at the end of verse 7, it says, "...and gave them authority over the unclean spirits." This is another testimony to the deity of Christ. He's not just a miracle worker that comes and can do some cool things and kind of make people be surprised and entertained by what he does, but He's God. How do you know that? Because God alone could share His authority. It's only God that could actually delegate this out. There's absolutely no way that you could have some man that can say I have this ability; now you have this ability too. This is clearly Jesus being God, passing this authority, the right to cast out demons and the power to do so, to His disciples. This is the calling upon the lives of His disciples, called as we see in this verse, very simply, to not just follow Jesus, but to go and to be sent out by Jesus - very clear mission before them.

And this is the same thing for us. We have this same calling on our life. God has called us to Himself to save us, to save us from His wrath and to bring glory to Himself as we preach Christ our Savior who saved us from our sins, and not just to rejoice in our salvation and meet together and talk about that

and sing about it and how great it is, but to also tell others, to tell other people. By nature, this is who we are to be. This is our calling. You think of 1 Peter 2:9, and it states it pretty clearly. You have a statement about who you are, who we as the church are in Christ, and then what we are to do about it; “But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession...” Amazing. This is our amazing identity that we have; but why? “...that you may proclaim...” ... “...that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light.” There’s a purpose on your calling. God called you to Himself for a reason, and that is that you would actually open your mouth, that you would speak up, and you would say something. This is the case for the disciples here. It will be the case again at the end of Jesus’ life when He sends them out, and it continues to be the case for the church, for you and I. This is our calling.

We’re not like these kinds of cars that you see at car shows that are restored and, you know, made to look really nice, get a new paint job, new everything in it, and then they just sit them in a parking lot for people to look at. A car should drive. A car should actually do something. It actually should accomplish some purpose. And so, we are not this restored car to look at, but God wants to get mileage out of you. He wants to use you. He’s got a purpose and a plan for you to not just receive His blessings, but to pour them out on others and proclaim this message. It’s a simple concept that the disciples are now engaging in, and that you and I continue to recognize in our lives; this is who we are. A part of the identity of the church is that we are sent ones. We are sent with the message; we can’t ever forget that. Thus, we have this job to continue not only observing and watching and learning from what the Bible says about Christ our Savior and God our Lord and King, but to now actually learn by doing and speaking up and proclaiming His excellencies.

Jesus continues to instruct His disciples in our text in verses 8-9, and that is when they go out, how are they to go? They are to leave with little - leave with little. They are to go with not a lot as we see in our verses here in. In verse 8; “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.” ...the specific instructions for their belongings as they go. And this isn’t, like, you’re going to be gone for a long time. This is a vacation. No. It’s not easy. It’s going to be hard, but it’s not just this is a

journey so pack up, not even that. Yes, you are going to go, and you're going to travel a lot. You're going to go to different places, but I don't want you to take anything with you. I don't want you to take anything along with you - nothing extra, not even extra clothing so to speak, to have an extra jacket with you maybe? No. No bread, bag or money, no extra money.

You kind of think, why? This is so silly. Why this instruction? Why is Jesus telling His disciples to go about it in this way? Anybody that goes on a trip understands this; you've got to pack. That's what we do. We pack up before we go to camp. We pack up before we go out of town, especially if we're spending the night somewhere else. Jesus has His intention for them, these disciples, to be forced to completely rely upon God. Their dependence, their trust, has to be in God. He doesn't want their trust or dependence to be in anything else. He doesn't want them to go out thinking that they have abilities, thinking that they're set, and they're okay. He wants them to go out completely leaning on God every step of the way. It's as the Proverbs 3:5-6: "In all your ways acknowledge him..." And this is one way that Jesus's allowing them to do that. "In all your ways..." you're going to acknowledge Me because you don't have anything. You're just simply going out and trusting God to provide the food, the shelter, the clothing, as you go forward from here. Well, this is exactly what the apostles experienced as they went out in this mission and also in the book of Acts and later on. When they would go, they constantly were relying on people to actually house them so that they could remain on the mission in front of them. They could remain focused on this message they had to proclaim. They could remain focused on the task that was before them rather than getting caught up in all these other things of what to pack and what to bring and how to go about this. Instead, they just simply went with this mission, with this message, that God had given them. This is what Jesus's command is to do, to go forth with complete reliance, with complete trust in Him, in God alone.

At this point, we think, okay, I understand that we, too, are like these disciples because we've been sent with the message. So, I'm seeing the parallel, but does that mean that we're supposed to do this as well? Whenever we go somewhere, don't take anything extra? Don't pack? Is packing unbiblical? You know, what are we doing here? How do we reconcile this? Well, this is just, once again, a simple understanding of Biblical interpretation. When we approach Scripture, and look at it, we are finding that this is a specific command to a specific people for a specific

time. And that's what we find in our text. This command was, actually, something that was for a time - that Jesus actually changes it at the end of His life. When He's talking to His disciples, He said remember "When I sent you out with no moneybag or knapsack or sandals, did you lack anything? They said, 'Nothing.' " It worked. We trusted You, and You provided. And after this, Jesus says, okay, now bring things when you go. He changes it. He changes it.

So, to try and not read too much into it and say, oh, no, this is how we need to go. We just completely have nothing besides the clothes on our body, and we just kind of move forward. No. That's not the case. That would be bad understanding and interpretation of Scripture when this is a specific command to a specific people for a specific time. But is there something to be learned here? Is there a principle undergirding this that we need to attach ourselves to? Well, yeah, it's the very principle we've been talking about, their trust, their reliance, dependence; it was not on themselves. It was not on the possessions they had. That's what they relied on, the money that they had stored up for them. They had enough savings. I'm good to go. I'll be fine. I can at least fall back on that. That should never be our approach to life. We should always be trusting in God alone, knowing that He is the giver of all things. He is the One who supplies us our every need. What we ultimately need is to trust in God and have this contentment that Paul tells Timothy about in 1 Timothy 6:6-8; "But godliness with contentment is great gain, for we brought nothing into the world, and we cannot take anything out of the world. But if we have food and clothing, with these we will be content."

How easy it is, and how quickly it can become that people get wrapped up in these things, the accumulation of wealth and materials. And at first, it's just savings and kind of having a good fallback, and then there's more, and it's just one more dollar, one more thing, one more item, one more house, one more... and we continue to go down this path. And this is what Paul has to warn Christians about, to be warned of this temptation, and just simply recognize that you didn't bring anything into this world; do you really think you're going to take something out of it? We get so wrapped up in materials that we've lost the focus that Jesus is giving to these disciples as He sends them out. It's a simple mission before you. Let that dominate your thinking, otherwise you'll get swept away into the materials, the wealth, the possessions. Trust God. "Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and do not

lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge him...” Trust in God as you move forward. We, too, as we carry out the mission that God has put before us, we need to trust God. We can’t rely on ourselves. We can’t rely on our own understanding. We can’t rely on our own bank accounts and possessions and things we have because it all can be taken from us in a day. We simply are content. We thank God, and we move forward focused on the task at hand, bringing good news to people that need it - can’t forget that. This is why Jesus tells them these specific instructions of how to go and what they’re to take with them so that they trust in God in this task.

Jesus also gives them a heads-up of what they can expect. And that’s what we find in our next verses. What can they expect as they go? What kind of response will they get? Well, it’s simple, reception; people receiving them or rejection. It’s that simple. People will either receive or they will reject. In verses 10-11, “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.’” Jesus acknowledges, right out the gate, some people will receive this message. You will go to certain towns and villages, and they’ll be excited. They will respond. They will have faith. They will accept this good news and recognize the kingdom of God has come in the person of Jesus Christ, and they will recognize that they need to change, and they need to repent and change their lives because of the King that is now here.

That will happen, and when you go into these places, He gives us specific instructions; “...stay there.” ... “Whenever you enter a house, stay there until you depart from there.” What exactly does this mean? It simply saying that when you go into a town and they’re listening to you, the first place that they welcome you into that you stay, stay in that house. Don’t bounce around from house to house because, easily, this could become a temptation where you go into a city, you start to feel comfortable, and you stay at someone’s house the first night, and as you get to know some of the other people that are believing and responding to the message, you start to see bigger houses, better food and kind of more over there, and you go I’m going to stay with them tonight. And there’s this kind of bouncing around that happens until you’ve sucked everyone dry of all their resources that they have and overstayed your welcome. This is what some of the traveling

teachers and philosophers of the time would do, and Jesus says I don't want you to have any resemblance of that. I don't want you to look like any of those types of people that would do this to innocent people in these towns. You can go to a place; you stay in that one house the whole time you're there, and then when you leave the city, you leave from that house. It's that simple. This wasn't necessarily like they walked into the town, and the first house they saw, they stayed in. It wasn't that careless. Matthew 10:11 tells us a little bit more; "And whatever town or village you enter, find out who is worthy in it and stay there until you depart." So, clearly, staying with people that are responding to this message - do not jump from house to house, overstaying your welcome, taking all their resources and being tempted, once again, and enticed by the pleasures and the passions of the world.

Jesus, though, quickly shifts and says, well, those who will receive you, you must not abuse them as you preach to them. There'll be those that reject - those that reject in verse 11; "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." What an interesting picture. What a funny image. So, you go to a place; you preach. They don't listen to you. They don't like you. They're getting mad at you. Leave, but "...when you leave, shake off the dust that is on your feet..." Where is that coming from? Well, we live in a time, yes, where it's desert, but we have a lot of paved roads, and we're not walking as much, and we're not in sandals, and so we don't have dirty, stinky feet as much as they do in their time. This was, actually, a Jewish practice. This is what the Jewish people would do. As they did go from place to place, whenever they did enter into a Gentile region (a non-Jewish place that they viewed as unclean, not a part of the people of God) when they would exit and leave that Gentile city, this is what they would do. They would shake the dust off their feet - just showing, you are unclean - we are clean, the people of God - there is a separation between us - we reject you. And Jesus now tells these simple disciples to go and to do the same thing whenever they enter a Jewish town that rejects this message. It was a very loud symbol that would speak to them.

Kind of reminds me of a coach I had back in college - that when we talked about other teams in our league and certain colleges, there was one he hated more than others, and so whenever we mentioned this one college's name, he would always spit. You know, it's kind of, like, oh, that name, phew, and he spits on the ground - like, mention them, phew! He actually trained his

daughters, his little kids, that whenever they heard the name, they would do it, too. They would spit, these little girls spitting at the dinner table when they hear this college mentioned. It's just the idea that it's just, aw, it's shameful. Aw, I can't even believe you've just said that. That word actually came out of your mouth, right now. That's terrible!

In the same way, here this is how the Jews treated certain territories, certain cities. This is so shameful. Aw, it's unclean. Let me shake the dust off. Ehh! I don't want anything to do with this place. And now, Jesus is saying, for you twelve as you go into these Jewish places that know this practice and have done it themselves, you speak the message, you speak it boldly. If they don't like it, they don't listen to you, they reject you, as you leave, you do this very practice. How do you think the whole city would react to that? You think they'd be excited to see that? Oh, you're one of us, cool. No. They would be, your telling us... we're Gentiles? What are you trying to say to us? There's this clear separation being drawn, this clear distinction, this acknowledgement of what they've done. It's acknowledging that they've rejected the message of Christ. It's acknowledging that they've completely turned their back on the kingdom of God present in the King, of Jesus. Imagine the response of these towns. They would just be completely furious to see this take place in front of them.

Notice also, this is kind of a simple observation in our text. He says, "And if any place will not receive you and they will not listen to you, when you leave..." Leave. Don't stay there. You're going to places, and if you're speaking and they're rejecting you, don't stay there. Don't hang out. At some point, you need to withdraw and leave that city and move on to the next town - squares with some of Jesus' other teaching in the Sermon on the Mount in Matthew 7:6 when He says, "Do not give dogs what is holy, and do not throw your pearls before pigs, lest they trample them underfoot and turn to attack you." ...a simple concept. You're preaching the message (as He's talking to His disciples) and these people don't listen to you, then leave. In the same way, we encounter people. They're hostile, completely. They don't want to have anything to do with the Bible. They don't want to hear about this Jesus person, and they get upset. They get mad. They get angry. Okay, move on; there's other people, other people that need to hear this message, too.

Does that mean you stop praying for them? Absolutely not! You continue to pray. You continue to lift these people up before the Lord because God can take the hardest of hearts and He can break it and soften it and allow them to receive this message, but when we're in the moment, and we are preaching to people, and we're explaining the gospel, or we're talking about our Savior, and they don't want to hear it, that's fine. There's other people. We move on; "...do not throw your pearls before pigs..." as Jesus says. At some point, we will limit our efforts and even our resources in reaching these people, but it does not mean we stop praying for them. We continue to pray for them in the efforts to reach everyone. There are more people that God is calling to Himself. This is Jesus's instructions as they go from town to town encountering different types of people and how to do their ministry in such a way that they don't become a burden to people, but they actually represent God well in these towns.

Finally, we have the response of our disciples. How do the disciples respond to Jesus' sending and instructions? That's what we find in verses 12-13, preaching and performing - preaching and performing. We read in our text, "So they went out and proclaimed that people should repent. And they cast out many demons and anointed with oil many who were sick and healed them." They obeyed. Hallelujah! They responded. They actually went out with this message, and they proclaimed this message as we see in our text, a message of repentance, proclaiming that people should repent. And this is not new. This is totally consistent with what Mark has been telling us in his gospel. Just to remind you of two people that we've seen preaching so far, John the Baptist and Jesus Himself, both talking about similar things, repentance the need for repentance. This is what John said. Mark 1:4; "John appeared, baptizing in the wilderness and proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins." The summary of Jesus' message... we don't have a full sermon of Jesus necessarily in His ministry in Galilee, but Mark gives us this tiny little section here where Jesus is saying, "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand repent and believe in the gospel."

Repentance, this important concept that has to be linked in with the message that we give to people, that has to be linked in with the message that the disciples were giving, that we identify with. And it's at this point that it's worth making sure we understand and being reminded of what repentance really is. We need to fully understand and comprehend what this word is

because literally it means a change of mind, and some people will, actually, kind of, run with that definition and say if you just look at the definition, a change of mind; therefore, that's all that repentance is. You just kind of think differently about something, and they leave it at that. It has nothing to do with how you act, has nothing to do with what you now say and do. It's more just how you think. Well, unfortunately that's just not how the Bible talks about repentance, and that's what we need to understand - have a Biblical picture of this word and the message we're giving to people, a message of change in their life. So, to be sure and to be clear, it is something internal, and this is a picture we find in Joel where God acknowledges that people will mourn over their sin, and they'll even show it by tearing their clothes and doing these different signs to show how much they are grieved that they've offended God.

But God wants something more important. As He says in these verses, Joel 2:12-13; “ ‘Yet even now,’ declares the Lord, ‘return to me with all your heart [return to me with all your heart], with fasting, with weeping, and with mourning; and rend your hearts...’ ” Don't rip your clothes. Rip your hearts “...and not your garments.” “Return to the Lord your God...” This word is the synonymous word for repentance in the Old Testament, return. “Return to the Lord your God...” You are clearly on the wrong path, doing the wrong thing. “Return to the Lord your God...,” doing the right thing. And that is something that must be in your heart as well. It is not simply this outward action of, oh, I've sinned. I've done wrong. Let me do something right to make God happy with me again. That's not it. It must come from the heart as Scripture shows us, and there will be, in fact, even grief, this remorse idea. This is harder to find, but when there is true repentance there is Godly grief as Paul states. 2 Corinthians 7:10; “For godly grief produces a repentance that leads to salvation without regret, whereas worldly grief produces death.” So, just because there's grief and just because the Israelites were tearing their garments and weeping before the Lord, doesn't necessarily mean you have true repentance. That could be worldly grief as well. So, when there is a true rending of the heart, a deep-seated heart change that's taking place, then there will be a legitimate mourning over sin.

And not just that, not just a legitimate mourning and grieving over sin and how we've offended God, but the next step and the most kind of obvious one

that needs to be clear in this message is a changed life. It's not just an intellectual change in your mind and thinking. It's as John the Baptist preached in Luke 3:8-9; "Bear fruits in keeping with repentance." True, repentant people will bear fruit. And do not begin to say to yourselves, 'We have Abraham as our father.' For I tell you, God is able from these stones to raise up children for Abraham. Even now the axe is laid to the root of the trees. Every tree therefore that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire." So, even if someone says they're repentant, and they're thinking differently about something, or they've changed their mind about some issue, about what God says, about their identity before God, and their need for a Savior, if their life doesn't show it, it's like a tree that's not bearing any fruit. It will get chopped down. Repentance has to be seen in your life.

I have an extended quote here of someone that goes in depth on explaining this concept of repentance for us, and his name is Martin Lloyd-Jones. He says, "Repentance means that you realize that you are a guilty, vile sinner in the presence of God, that you deserve the wrath and punishment of God, that you are Hell bound. It means that you begin to realize that this thing called sin is in you, that you long to get rid of it, and that you turn your back on it in every shape and form. You renounce the world whatever the cost, the world in its mind and outlook as well as its practice, and you deny yourself, and take up the cross and go after Christ. Your nearest and dearest, and the whole world, many call you a fool, or say you have religious mania. You may have to suffer financially, but it makes no difference. That is repentance." ...a true all out change in your life, no matter the cost. It doesn't matter. There will be a visible manifestation in your life where you are bearing fruit for God.

That is the message that we bring. Is this a fun message that the world loves to hear? You're a sinful person, and you need to change. The world doesn't like that message. It's not enjoyable to tell people, but this is the message in regards to the kingdom of God. If the kingdom of God is real and that is coming in the person of Christ, then people need to be made aware of it, and they will either respond in repentance, getting right, changing their life, as they now understand correctly who they are before God, trusting in Christ alone or they will reject and ignore the message. It is not simply a different thinking, it is a different life. It's a different person that emerges in repentance. Another commentator stated it this way; "Where there is no

observable difference in conduct, there can be no confidence that repentance has taken place.” This should be observable, obvious, that change has taken place.

This message of repentance continues on. This is why I labor this point because we are still preaching it. This is not the specific thing that’s for the specific people for a specific time, but this is continuing on into the church age as Jesus told His disciples. We have (Luke 24:46-47), “Thus it is written, that the Christ should suffer and on the third day rise from the dead, and that repentance for the forgiveness of sins should be proclaimed in his name to all nations...” This is where we find ourselves in this time where we are proclaiming repentance, this message of turning and changing because of a holy God and sinful mankind and a perfect Savior Jesus Christ. We see that not only did they obey in preaching this message, but they exercised that authority and ability that Jesus gave them to “...cast out many demons and anointed with oil many who were sick and healed them.” Why? Because as miracles have continued to show over and over again, they validate what’s being said; that is the point. That is the purpose, as we continue to find it in Mark and in the early church, in Acts, and later on. We see that these miracles are for a purpose, to continue to undergird and uphold this message that people need to hear. The miracles don’t save people. All by themselves, they do nothing, but what they do is they verify and validate the very message that’s coming.

Why should you listen to these disciples? Why is Jesus a big deal? Because He’s doing the deeds that only God can do. You must listen to this message, and you must respond, and that is what they’re doing as they respond in obedience. This is what we find in our text, and we’ve seen that learning can take place in several different ways, just through watching, through listening, and today, we have this example of learning taking place in the form of doing - in the form of doing. And I would just like to encourage you; don’t get stuck in the lecture. Don’t get stuck in this place where you’re really good at listening, where you can do all the observation, and, maybe you have. Maybe you spent several minutes and hours and days and years of your life, your Christian life, watching, taking it in, listening and learning in the lecture sense. There’s a lab element to this. Christianity demands this lab practice element. You try. You do it. It’s your turn. You must get your feet wet. You must go out, and you must take up the mantle and recognize this mission is now one that you’ve inherited as a Christian, and it’s not for one

person, it's for all of us. Don't get stuck in the lecture, but emerge from that and get into the lab where we engage people. We find them, and we preach the message of truth. We talk about this hard message of repentance, and if they don't like it, and they hate us for it, that's okay. There's other people to talk to, and we move on, and we keep praying for these people. These are the reminders that Jesus gives to His apostles as they have their first commission, and these reminders continue for us as we're in this church age, and may we continue to be faithful to it until Christ comes back.