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Mark 6:1 - 6:29



Gospel of Mark - Steve Gregg

In this passage, Jesus returned to his hometown to preach, but was met with skepticism from the people who knew him and his family. He sends out his twelve apostles to preach repentance and cast out demons, while instructing them to rely on the hospitality of others and trust in God's provision. The chapter also includes the story of Herod beheading John the Baptist and the disciples placing his body in a tomb. The passage highlights the importance of faith, trust, and service in the ministry of God.

Transcript

OK, today we're turning to Mark chapter 6, beginning with verse 1. Then he went out from there and came to his own country and his disciples followed him. Now, his own country, it doesn't say his own town, but this was apparently his own town, Nazareth, because the people there knew him. The whole region was not really that large.

So to speak of his own country, I mean, he's been kind of in his own country. All along, he's been in Galilee. It's a very small area, but it apparently means the environs of his own hometown.

And this would probably be the second time that he came to Nazareth in his recorded ministry, because it appears that he had been to Nazareth earlier. We had not had record of it in the Gospel of Mark, but in Luke's Gospel in chapter 4, we read that Jesus, before he'd even been to Capernaum... Now, by the way, almost everything we've studied, most of his miracles have been done in Capernaum. But even before he came to Capernaum, he had, in fact, been to Nazareth and they had rejected him there.

And we won't look there now, but in Luke chapter 4, there's a record of his preaching there. And the people became so agitated by what he said that they almost threw him off a cliff. But he was able to walk through their midst and get away from them.

Also in Matthew's Gospel, chapter 4, at the very beginning of Jesus' Galilean ministry. It says in Matthew 4, 13, and leaving Nazareth, he came and dwelt in Capernaum. Now, this arrival in Capernaum was the original arrival in Capernaum.

This was the very beginning of Jesus' ministry, according to Matthew. His public ministry in Galilee. But it says, leaving Nazareth.

Now, Matthew doesn't tell us if anything Jesus did in Nazareth, but he apparently left Nazareth to go to Capernaum. Luke's the one who tells us something about that visit in Nazareth. And Mark has mentioned nothing about it at all.

He's just gone directly to the ministry in Capernaum and told us much about that. But now we have Jesus coming to, apparently, Nazareth, or at least the environs of Nazareth again. And this then would be the second time he's giving them a chance to hear him preach and to receive the kingdom.

It says in verse two, and when the Sabbath had come, he began to teach in the synagogue and many hearing him were astonished, saying, Where did this man get these things? And what wisdom is this which is given to him that such mighty works are performed by his hands? Is this not the carpenter, the son of Mary, the brother of James, Joseph, Judas and Simon, and are not his sisters here with us? And they were offended at him. That is, they were stumbled, they were not able to believe because he was too familiar to them, they had known him growing up, they knew his family. They weren't sure why he should be considered anything special when he had spent 30 years among them before anything special was ever claimed about him.

Now, of course, there were some pretty special things claimed about him around his birth with the angels and the shepherds and wise men and so forth. But that had happened in a different part of the country decades earlier. There had been nothing that would have, in their minds, associated him with any stories they could possibly have heard about those things in Bethlehem.

This was the other end of the country. It's very possible that the stories in Bethlehem had never been heard up in Galilee. And if they had, that was 30 something years earlier and they did not put it together that this was the same person.

All they knew is that Jesus had grown up as part of a fairly normal sized family with four brothers and some sisters. They knew the mother and father and so forth. And for 30 years, Jesus had worked in the carpenter shop among them.

We're not told very much in the Bible about the childhood of Jesus or what he did in the first 30 years. In fact, the only actual story we have of his childhood after the infancy narratives is that one brief occasion when he was in Jerusalem at age 12, where his parents lost track of him and then found him again in the temple. And he said, did you not know? I must be about my father's business or some translations say I must be in my father's house.

But that's the only that's the only story that interrupts a period of almost 30 years that is

passed over without comment in the life of Jesus. But during that time, we can see that they saw him as a carpenter. The people of his town.

Verse three, is this not the carpenter? Now, in some gospels, it talks about them saying, isn't this the carpenter's son referring to Joseph as the carpenter? But a carpenter's son becomes a carpenter, too. He's his father's apprentice. And so Jesus had come to be known not just as the son of a carpenter, but also himself a carpenter.

And Justin Martyr, an early church father, claims and we have no way of knowing if this is true or not, but Justin Martyr claims that when Jesus worked in carpentry in Nazareth, that it was customary for the tradesmen and the shopkeepers to have some kind of a shingle out in front of their business advertising what they do and sometimes having their each business had their own slogan. And according to Justin Martyr, Jesus carpenter shop specialized in making ox yokes and that Jesus had a sign out in front of his shop that said, my yokes fit well. And we have no idea where Justin Martyr got that information.

Justin Martyr lived in the second century, not very long after the time of the apostles, and it may be a true, you know, story that was passed down through the generations. But in his if that is true, it's rather interesting, because if his known slogan or his his company motto for his carpenter shop was my yokes fit well, obviously, it has a very close verbal connection to what he later said in Matthew 10. He said, my yoke is easy and my burden is light, but they knew him to have worked among them as a tradesman and only as a tradesman for 30 years.

He didn't go around. He didn't preach in the synagogues. He didn't do anything miraculous, certainly.

In fact, it's likely that he had made no suggestion to anybody that there's anything special about his mission on Earth. They just knew him as an ordinary guy. And now there's these alleged miracles being wrought by him in other parts of the land and very possibly in their midst as well.

It says, you know, in verse two, what wisdom is this which is given him that such mighty works are performed by his hands? Now, this may mean that they had actually observed the mighty works, but maybe not, because after all, we are going to read that in verse five, he could do no mighty work there. Except they laid his hands on a few sick people and healed them, so they may have just heard about his mighty works rather than seeing them done there. Possibly a few Nazarenes had been elsewhere when Jesus had done something.

But in the Gospel of Luke, when it records in chapter four, the earlier visit that Jesus had made to Nazareth and his sermon to them, he indicated that perhaps he would not. They would not be seeing with their own eyes his miracles in Nazareth. Because as he's preaching on the earlier occasion in Luke four, verse twenty three, and he's in the

synagogue in Nazareth, he said to them, you will surely say this proverb to me, physician, heal yourself.

Whatever we have heard done in Capernaum, do also here in your country. So. One thing I'd point out is in Luke four, 16, it says he had come to Nazareth, that's his hometown, and when he speaks in verse 23, he refers to it as his own country.

That's the same language Mark uses for when he came to his own country. Apparently, Nazareth, for some reason, referred to his own country, rather his own town. But what's more, he says that you, you Nazarenes will no doubt ask me to do the same kinds of miracles that you've heard of me doing in Capernaum.

And yet, he says, that's not going to happen. And in that on that occasion, he points out that Elijah lived at a day when there was a famine and many widows could have used assistance in Israel, but he didn't help any of them. But he was sent to a Gentile widow outside of Nazareth to help her.

And then in Elijah's day, there were many lepers in Israel, but Elijah didn't cure any of the Jewish lepers, but he cured a Gentile leper. And what Jesus seems to be implying is that, you know, the power of God working through his prophets isn't necessarily for the people closest to home. And the reason is, as he often said, and it's recorded in all the gospels, a prophet is not without honor, except in his own country.

We find that statement here in verse four, says, but Jesus said to them, a prophet is not without honor, except in his own country, among his own relatives and his own house. But this is a proverb, apparently of some sort, because Jesus gave it on various occasions, and it's essentially an ironic proverb. You would think that the people most receptive to a man's ministry would be those that are closest to him.

But it's often the opposite, because people, when you're too close to somebody, you know, they just become ordinary to you. And then if God does something exceptional through them, then, you know, it's kind of like, well, who are they that they should be so special? They're just one of us. And so a prophet, no prophets are prophesied when they're young children.

And that means that when they become prophets later in life, they have a history of just being children, just being youth, just being ordinary, not prophets. Obviously, someone becomes a prophet at some point later in life. And then those who had known him before he was a prophet are accustomed to him not being one and have a hard time accepting that he may be one.

Keith Green had a song that he wrote to his parents. It's on his first album for him that has ears to hear. And there's a little segment in there.

He doesn't say that this is his parents speaking. It's kind of this little bridge in the song.

It kind of transports back to Nazareth.

And it goes, isn't that Jesus? Isn't that Joseph and Mary's son? Well, didn't he grow up right here? He played with our children. What? He must be joking. He thinks he's a prophet.

But prophets don't grow up from little boys, do they? And obviously, this was directed toward his parents, that his parents were not they were not receiving from him his message. He tried to evangelize his parents and they were not Christians and they didn't become Christians. And he was basically saying the reason they won't listen is because they knew me as a little boy.

And just like the people in Nazareth didn't listen to Jesus because they knew him as a little boy. Prophets don't grow up from little boys, certainly. But they actually do.

I mean, if they're males or else they've grown up from little girls because there were female prophets in the Bible, too. So it says in verse five, he could do no mighty work there, except that he laid his hands on a few sick people and healed them. That sounds pretty mighty, but but that's nothing.

You know, that's chicken feed. That's that's just that's just small stuff. The mighty works that he did in some places.

And I don't know what they were. All of them, we read of some miracles, but laying hands on sick people sounds pretty mighty to me if they get healed. But he did a few of those things.

He didn't do real impressive, mighty works there. And he marveled because of their unbelief. Then he went about the villages in a circuit teaching, as he did from time to time.

He worked out of Capernaum, out of Peter's house, in all likelihood, as his headquarters. And then he would make a circuit in Galilee going to the various villages. And he did this numerous times in the course of about a year.

Now, for the first time, he actually sends out his apostles on a short term mission. The record of that is here told very briefly. It's a whole chapter is devoted to it in Matthew, although Matthew has a way of bringing together things that Jesus said on various occasions and recording them all in one place.

And that is true in Matthew chapter 10. Also, Matthew chapter 10 is the chapter that appears to be entirely about the sending out of the twelve, but it is not actually all spoken on that occasion. The first 15 verses of Matthew 10 appear to be parallel to Mark in the section we're about to But after that, verses 16 through 42 in Matthew 10 appears to be things Jesus said on other occasions that are not unlike or not unrelated to the

things he said to them when he sent them out like this.

And we know this because, for example, we will find when he sends them out on this occasion, he tells them specifically, don't go into any of the cities of the Gentiles or the towns of the Gentiles, because I'm sent to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. That's in verse five of chapter 10 of Matthew. So when he sends them out, he says, don't go into the way of the Gentiles and do not enter into the city of the Samaritans, but rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.

But in the latter part of chapter 10, he talks about, for example, in verse 18, you will be brought before governors and kings for my sake as a testimony to them and to the Gentiles. This is obviously telescoping material that he taught on another occasion about their later missions, not this mission on this short term mission. They certainly were going to go out to the Gentile nations and be brought before kings and princes and be imprisoned and things like that.

They would later in life. And there was there were other occasions when Jesus brought that up, for example, in the all of the discourse later on. He did say those things to the disciples.

But Matthew simply is known to combine similar things that Jesus said on various occasions and to put them together into collections like he does in Matthew 10. But so what I'm saying is that although we seem to have a much more full account in Matthew of this sending out of the twelve, it probably isn't really all relevant to that one occasion. And Mark gives us this story, which mostly parallels the first 15 verses of Matthew chapter 10, right here in Mark six, verses seven through 13.

He called the twelve to him and began to send them out two by two, and he gave them power over unclean spirits. He commanded them to take nothing for the journey except a staff, no bag, no bread, no copper in their money belts, but to wear sandals and not put on two tunics. Also, he said, then in whatever place you enter a house, stay there till you depart from that place.

And whoever will not receive you nor hear you when you depart from there, shake off the dust under your feet as a testimony against them. Assuredly, I say to you, it will be more tolerable for Sodom and Gomorrah in the day of judgment for them than for that city. So they went out and preached that people should repent and they cast out many demons and anointed with oil.

Many who were sick and healed them. A number of things here. One is that the account in Mark.

In verses seven through 11, where Jesus dispatches them, he doesn't make any reference to their preaching directly, and you might not know that that's what they're

sent out to do. He just mentions them going out two by two and casting out unclean spirits. And he tells them what to take and not to take and how to conduct themselves with their in terms of receiving hospitality and so forth in the places they go.

But there's not a direct reference to them preaching until you get to verse 12. It says they went out and preached that people should repent. So that's apparently what he sent them out to do is to preach, though that wasn't stated explicitly there.

And it says they preached that people should repent. Now, in the parallels in Matthew 10. And in Luke nine, we find it is stated more explicitly that they were sent out specifically to preach and that they were to preach the kingdom of God in Matthew 10, verse seven.

She said, and as you go, preach saying the kingdom of heaven is at hand. So their message was that the kingdom of heaven or the kingdom of God is at hand. And this is one of the many places where we can see that the kingdom of heaven and kingdom of God are the same thing, because in Luke's parallel in Luke chapter nine and verse two, we have the parallel to this.

Luke nine to says he sent them to preach the kingdom of God and to heal the sick. So in Matthew, as he told him, go out and preach that the kingdom of heaven is at hand. And Luke, he says he sent them to preach the kingdom of God in Mark.

It says they went out and preached that men should repent. There is no contradiction here. These were all part of their message.

After all, remember the first specimen of Jesus preaching that Mark has recorded in Mark one versus 14 and 15 was the time is fulfilled and the kingdom of God is at hand. Repent, therefore, and believe the gospel. So the announcement that the kingdom of God was at hand was followed by the imperative that people must repent.

And so different gospels tell different parts of what it was these people preached as they went out. But it's clear that they preach the same message Jesus did, that the kingdom was dawning. The kingdom had arrived, that they people needed to be prepared to enter the kingdom, and that required that they would repent.

And of course, it says elsewhere in Mark 115 and believe the gospel. So that's what they did. They went out there and they in verse 13.

Well, maybe I should say something more about these verses we just read over in Mark six, seven through 11. He gave them power over unclean spirits, which is interesting because, you know, they didn't just possess that all the time. They didn't always walk around with power over unclean spirits.

They were given that for this outreach. We were told back in chapter three, when he first

chose the twelve to be the apostles, that he chose them, it says in Mark 3, 14. And 14, he appointed 12 that they might be with him and they might he might send them out to preach and have power to heal sicknesses and to cast out demons.

And so here he sends them out to preach, gives them power to heal and cast out demons, but appears to be especially for this mission in this case, because they really did not. They were not filled with the Holy Spirit at this point, at least not permanently. The Holy Spirit had not yet been given because Jesus had not yet been glorified, it says in John chapter seven and verse 39.

But as in the Old Testament, the Holy Spirit did come temporarily upon men like the prophets and did empower them to do things prophesied primarily, but also at times to do miracles. Moses worked miracles. Elijah worked miracles.

Elisha worked miracles. These were prophets who upon whom the Holy Spirit came, but he did not reside in them permanently as he does with us today since Pentecost. And so here before Pentecost, apparently Jesus gives them the same kind of endowment, the same kind of authority that maybe the prophets had, maybe like Elijah had sort of a temporary endowment for this particular short term outreach.

And he tells them not to take provisions with them, not to take their, even their luggage. Don't take a bag or bread or copper in your money. That's why the copper is like pennies.

Copper is very cheap stuff. They usually had silver, you know, denarii and so forth. It was a day's wage was a silver coin, not a copper coin.

And copper coins are like our pennies. They're worth very little. Don't even take a little bit of money with you.

Just wear your sandals and don't even take an extra, don't even take an extra change of clothes. Don't take two tunics. Now it's not clear whether the reason for these restrictions was that they should travel light.

Obviously you can travel just about as efficiently with some of these things as without them. It doesn't seem like it's just that they need to travel light because they've got to move rapidly. After all, there's no reason to believe they didn't have to move particularly rapidly.

They could stay in a house for a while if the people were receptive or leave. If not, it would appear that the reason he didn't want them to take provisions for themselves. So they might begin to learn some lessons about living by faith, which would stand them in good stead later on after he was gone, because they would have to live by faith then.

And living by faith in this case would mean trusting God to provide that as you go

forward into the thing he is calling you to do, that he'll take care of all the details. You don't have to take care of them for yourself. You don't have to make provision for yourself.

If you're doing the will of God, you can take no thought for tomorrow. Tomorrow will take care of the things of itself, Jesus said. Now doing the will of God is not the same activity for all people.

Not all people have the same gifts or calling. We see here, not all of the people who follow Jesus were apostles. Not all of them were sent out on this occasion, and therefore, it should not be thought that everybody's necessarily called to go out and be missionaries.

But everyone has something that God has them to do, whether it's in the mission field or something what we might usually call more secular. Raising a family, living in a neighborhood and having a godly testimony, working in a job. These are the legitimate callings that God has on many people's lives.

The vocation of preaching is not the universal calling. In fact, it's probably a minority calling. For every preacher that has to be supported on the mission field, there's got to be a number of Christians who are working jobs.

Why? Well, because they support the preacher. That's why in Israel there were 11 tribes that worked regular income-producing jobs, and one tribe, the Levites, who were full-time. And they were supported by the tithe of the others.

It takes, unless you're going to heavily burden those who are working to support the ministry, it takes a lot of people working to support one minister. And so what I'm saying is that living by faith doesn't always mean that you're out preaching and living off of unpredictable income. Because living by faith simply means you're doing whatever God calls you to do, and you're not worried about how things are going to turn out.

You leave that to God. You figure that what God commands you to do, he can foresee what's going to be needed, or we'll see the needs as they come up, and he'll take care of it. So if he calls you to work in an ordinary kind of a job or live in an ordinary family life or whatever, so long as what you're doing is what God wants you to do, you don't have to worry about provision.

And if it's a job, of course, usually the provision will come through the job rather than checks in the mail from nowhere. But in this case, he was teaching them some lessons of ministry that they would have to know for the rest of their lives after he was gone. This outreach was helpful to Jesus' mission in that he could multiply his impact.

As an individual, he could make his rounds through various cities and villages of Galilee, but he couldn't spend very much time in each one. He really could just lightly brush the

area with his presence. But if he sends out the twelve and gives them the same message he's preaching, gives them the authority to work the wonders and so forth, then it's like twelve little Jesuses going out there, and it's multiplying his ministry and greatly expanding his work without expanding his work.

It was expanding his impact without expanding his labor. He's got a labor force here. And so it did benefit his program to send them out, and I'm sure that that's one reason he did so.

But he also used this as an opportunity to train them because they were novices at this stuff. They were not professional rabbis or ministers or missionaries. They were fishermen and tax collectors and peasants and people who had never done this kind of thing before and needed to learn.

They had always worked with their hands to make a living, and now they're sent out without Jesus with them to do something that he forbids them to provide for. They can't take money with them in anticipation of needs that arise. They have to go without any visible means of support in order to learn that God will provide for them.

And so he doesn't actually tell them here why it is that he wants them to not take these things. He just in Mark's gospel, it just records that he told them not to take them in the parallel in Matthew. There is some hint.

I think he actually gives them some indication of why he doesn't want them to take these things because in Matthew 10, verse 9 and 10, it says this is the parallel provide neither gold nor silver nor copper in your money belts, nor bag for your journey, nor two tunics or sandals, nor staffs for this is why for a worker is worthy of his food. A worker is worthy of his food means you're working. You will be paid.

You'll be provided for a servant is always provided for by his master, and you're out there doing my work. Now it's clear that he's not saying you are working for these people that you're preaching to, and they therefore will be obligated to pay you. He's not saying that because he just prior to that, just in the very sentence before what we just read at the end of verse eight, he says, freely, you've received freely.

So you're going out to these people. You're preaching, you're healing, you're casting out demons, you're serving them, but you're not charging them. You are not their employees.

You are my servants. Now, if you are a laborer worthy of your hire, it's me that you're laboring for. I'm your supervisor.

I'm the one who's sending you out. I'm the one who is your master, and therefore it is me. I who will provide for you.

You don't look to the people that you're preaching to, to be your providers. Sometimes they end up being that, and that's between them and God, not between them and the minister. The minister can't charge for what he's doing unless he's an employee of the people.

But you see, a minister is supposed to be a servant of God, not a servant of an organization or a servant of a man or whatever. As a servant of God, the minister serves people because that's what God wants done. It extends God.

He's, you know, an extension of God's personal outreach to people. But it's from his master, not from the people that he looks for his provision. Now, on the other side of that, the people who do receive are instructed in Scripture to take care of the minister.

But that's not the minister's concern. You know, different people have different obligations, like in marriage, where the husband's told to love his wife, and the wife's told to submit to her husband. A lot of times in marriages, husbands think it's their responsibility to get their wife to submit to them.

That's not the husband's responsibility. The husband isn't told, husbands, make sure your wife submits to you. The husband is just told to love his wife.

The wife is told to submit. Each one has their own instructions in the relationship, and each one answers to God directly for whether they do their part or not. If both do their part, things turn out well.

If one does their part and the other doesn't, then it's not so pretty. And likewise in the ministry of the preacher and the preached to. You know, they are told by God to help with the support of the minister, but the minister is not told to insist upon it.

The minister is not told to draw support from them. He's supposed to just give. And so this is how Jesus is teaching his disciples live.

They've been tradesmen and fishermen and so forth before, and they've been accustomed to doing service for people and getting paid for it. And Jesus says, no, that's not what you do when you're in the ministry, when you're preaching the kingdom of God, you don't sell the gospel. You don't sell the word of God.

You don't contract for a certain fee with the people. You are my slaves, my servants. And a master always takes care of his slaves.

The worker is worthy of his hire, but his hire will come from his master. It may come through the hands of people, and invariably it does in this in this kind of a case. It does come through people, but the minister goes out without making provision for himself, without having made secure arrangements for his future needs.

And he just trusts God that if he's laboring for God, Jesus said the labor is worthy of his hire. If you're laboring for God, he's not going to give you less than what you're worthy of. And by the way, I know that when I was young in the Jesus movement, there are lots of us who wanted to be in full-time ministry, just wanted to preach.

In some cases, it was because we enjoyed preaching more than we enjoyed working at regular jobs. And so there were a lot of guys who really wanted to be in full-time ministry so they didn't have to get a regular job. But the truth of the matter was, for most of us in the early days, there really wasn't a demand for our ministry full-time.

You know, we can go out and pass out tracts, or we can go preach or play music in a coffeehouse. We could do some kind of ministry, but it wasn't full-time. And yet there were some people who said, I'm in full-time ministry when they really weren't.

What that meant was I don't have a job and I expect God to send money to me. But really, their ministry for Christ was part-time. I mean, they weren't doing the kinds of things that God needed to support them in because they had time additional to the ministry.

They had time to actually hold a job. And I remember in the early days, one of the preachers at Calvary Chapel giving very good advice to such people. He said, you know, you want to be in full-time ministry, well, minister all that God gives you to minister.

But if it's not full-time, then work part-time or even full-time and minister on the side. Get a regular job, support yourself, and do as much ministry as God gives you to do. And if it happens that the amount of ministry God gives you to do increases so that it crowds out your job, then cut back the hours of your job.

And if it gets to a place where you have to minister all the time because there's just such demand for your ministry, well, then quit your job and trust God to provide. But you see, a lot of people just want to say, well, I'm in the ministry, so, you know, people should support me. I've never believed that.

And I mean, I am in the ministry, but for many years, I was not in full-time ministry. I was doing a lot of ministry. When I was in my early 20s, I was teaching nine times a week.

But I still worked a part-time job almost the whole time to support myself. But when the time came, when I went into, in 1983, when I was 30 and I went into, started the Great Commission School, that was full-time. And so I had to stop working.

And since that time, the ministry, the demands of ministry have been adequate that I really can't even consider getting a job unless my ministry changes. But I would, because I don't believe it's fair for a minister to say, God, you owe me a full-time wage when I'm not working a full-time day. If I'm not working full-time and I'm expecting God to fully support me, I mean, that sounds like you're cheating your employer in a way.

You're cheating your master, saying, I expect the same support as if I was working full-time at a job, but I'm not working full-time. I'm working, you know, much less than that. So the principle would be you do what God has you to do and you don't worry about the finances.

If God has you preaching so that you can't work, then you have to just trust God that he'll provide the finances some other way. But if it's possible to work and preach, then there's a good chance that God expects you to provide your own finances by working. At least some of them, some of them will be provided that way.

And anyone who is serving God, even if they have a full-time job in a bad economy, they still may have times they have to trust God to provide miraculously for them because the job itself in many cases doesn't cover them. Lots of people are underemployed, though they are willing to be full-time employed, but that's, God hasn't really, you know, hasn't given them the kind of income that they can really count on from their job. And so they really have to trust God too.

And I think I shared this, I know I've shared this before, I don't know if I shared it here or not, but I would clarify this too. And that is that when my ministry was interrupted for a year back in 19, or in 2001 and to the, toward the end of 2002, by personal circumstances in my life, I was quite against my wishes, pretty much thrust out of the ministry for a year, as far as I knew it was going to be permanent because it was a crisis in the family that seemed to me to disqualify me for the ministry, so I stepped out of ministry. And so I just expected God would not continue to support me as he had for the many years before that.

I had four kids I was raising alone and there were some expenses involved in that. I had a little bit of money left at the, I mean, at that time, at the beginning of that time. I just figured that, you know, when I ran out of money, I'm going to have to go out and get a regular job.

That was okay with me. I figured if I'm not in full-time ministry, I might as well be working full-time. But it never happened that way because I actually stayed home with my kids for almost that entire year.

And they were homeschooled and so forth, so they needed a parent. They only had one parent at this point, and that was me. So I actually wondered when I got in work, who's going to take care of the kids? But it turned out I never had to go out and work because God continued to supply money, even though I wasn't preaching.

And I had to learn a lesson that I had, I guess, forgotten. This had to happen a couple times with me. I mean, I've lived by faith for a long time, but sometimes God has to remind me of the basic lessons of it, one of which is that you're not supported by the ministry, you're supported by God.

And therefore, being in the ministry is not your guarantee of being supported. Being doing what God wants you to do is your guarantee of being supported. If you're doing what God wants you to do, then He'll support you.

That may mean getting a job, but if you're kept, as in my case, I was kept from ministry and also kept from working by my home responsibilities. The money just, God kept supplying. And I realized that, no, it's not my ministering that's bringing in the money.

It's just God. It's just doing what God wants me to do is what brings in the money. The same is true for everybody.

And I mentioned too, I love to tell these stories because they're pretty good illustrations of lessons associated with this here. What Jesus is trying to teach His disciples is that they are giving freely to others, but God supplies their needs. When I speak for YWAM, it's customary after a week of teaching that they give some kind of an honorarium.

It's never been a very large amount, but since my expenses are low, it's always been helpful. Usually if I teach for a week and they give me an honorarium, it used to be at least that it was a major portion of my income for that month, maybe for that year. And there was a time I was teaching in Honolulu for YWAM, and I'd done so many times before.

I've taught over 30 times in Honolulu for YWAM. And this was one of the times, probably the 10th time. And I was therefore accustomed to the idea that at the end of the week, I'd get an honorarium from them.

And at the end of the week, they had such a small school. They only had five students. In fact, the base was crowded with other schools.

I actually had to sleep in the dorms with the students. They usually have a hospitality room for the speaker, but they didn't even have that. So I slept in the bunk room with the students the whole week and taught them, did as much teaching as ever.

And at the end of that time, I was handed a YWAM coffee mug and two YWAM t-shirts. And I was told that's my honorarium. And I thought it was funny because I thought they were joking, but they weren't joking.

That was my honorarium. And I remember thinking, okay, that's a disappointment. But I also immediately thought, well, this is a good test for me because I become accustomed to teaching for YWAM and getting some money back so that in my mind, the teaching and the money are often associated as like cause and effect.

But it's not cause and effect. And I had to remember, which I've always, I mean, this has always been my philosophy of ministry. It's just you sometimes forget it until you're forced to remember it.

But I'm not working for YWAM. When I'm teaching for YWAM, I'm not working for them. I'm just teaching them like I teach anyone else.

I'm just, I'm just serving God. They don't owe me any money. God's the one who supports his servants.

And for me to actually teach for the whole week and get no honorarium at all was just fine as it turned out. I mean, God provided from other sources as he always does. But the lessons these disciples had to learn are lessons that need to be learned by any ministers in any generation.

That is that not so much that a minister should never have any savings or should never travel with a piece of luggage or never have any money in his pocket when he travels. But this was a training time for them as well as a time for them to be useful to him. It was also a time for them to learn things.

It was going to be useful to them because when he would be gone, they'd have to live by faith all the time. Because I'm quite convinced the disciples after Jesus left, the apostles didn't charge the church a salary. Jesus didn't live that way.

I'm sure they wouldn't. I'm sure they would have considered that to be a compromise of their motives. But they were no doubt supported by the church by, you know, unpredictable means, just like Jesus was.

And just like I think is normative. But they had never lived that way before. They had either been working and earning a wage before the time or else they were traveling with Jesus and living off the gifts that were given to him.

And it might be expected that there'd be gifts given to a person like Jesus. I mean, he was a big celebrity. He was well known.

And people were, you know, helping to support him in his ministry. But when they leave him and they're off on their own, they'd never they'd never trusted God without the visible, comforting presence of Jesus with them for for such tangible needs as daily bread. But he taught them to pray, give us this day our daily bread, not not the bread for a long time to come, but the bread for today.

And then when I ran out, what do I do? I pray it again. Have to trust God every day. And it's a wonderful lesson, I think, of all ministers believed in living this way, as I think Jesus basically gave this as the norm.

I think we'd have, in general, a more spiritual, you know, collection of ministers in the body of Christ today because there'd be no one doing it for the money. And everyone would everyone who's in the ministry would be trusting God day by day, which is a very helpful thing for one's own spiritual life. It's a valuable thing to need God every day.

Because it keeps you close to God, it keeps you on short accounts with God, it keeps your conscience clear, makes you want to keep your conscience clear. And, you know, when when ministry becomes a routine, it's like a machine. You put out this much hours of the day and you get this much paycheck at the end of the week and so forth.

You can still be an uncompromised Christian minister, but you don't necessarily have to be. The thing runs whether you're being close to God or not, as long as you can prepare the sermons and do the work that the church hired you to do. You can keep that up even if you're backsliding in your heart.

But if you're if it's all between you and God, then you don't have the luxury of backsliding. You don't have the luxury even of taking God casually. You have to be desperate for God all the time, and that's helpful.

That's a very helpful thing. I'd be helpful for more Christians than just those in ministry, but especially those in the ministry, if they're to be spiritual leaders, it helps that they're spiritual and having a life of dependency on God is one thing that helps. It helps encourage a maintenance of a of a true spiritual connection with God on a daily basis, because that's where that's where your food is going to come from.

Now, in verse 10, he said, also, in whatever place you enter a house, stay there till you depart from that place. In other words, don't go from house to house and stay in different places in the same town. You find a place that will receive you.

You stay there. In the other gospels, it says that you enter a place that receives you, offer your peace to that house, let your peace come on that house. If it's a worthy house, it will.

If it's not worthy, then your peace will return to you. And if they don't receive you, stamp the dust off your feet and go somewhere else. But that's all that's all compressed into this.

When you find a place to stay, the right place, they stay there the whole time you're in that town. Why? Well, probably for a number of reasons. One is if you're doing a series of if you're doing some regular preaching in that town over a period of days, then it's good for the people to know where to find you.

The people who want to hear the word of God, the people who have needs to bring to that, you know, they say, oh, he's staying in that house. But if you're moving around from house to house, it's unpredictable where they can locate you. Also, if you stay longer in one place rather than just hopping around, you can develop a relationship with your host and hostess in such a way as maybe even to somewhat disciple them so that they become the kind of people who become house church leaders at a later date just to

jump around from place to place and develop no relationships with the people that you're staying with is not preferable.

And he says in verse 11, whoever will not receive you nor hear you when you depart from there, shake off the dust under your feet as a testimony against them. Now, that's what the Jews actually did whenever they wanted to express. Graphically, they're they're disgust and aloofness from certain usually Gentile or Samaritan cities.

If they walk through a Gentile region or Samaritan region, when they got back in Israel, they'd shake the dust off their feet from the Gentile or the Samaritan region because they didn't symbolically, they didn't want to have anything attached to them from the unclean place. And so it was kind of obviously a self-righteous kind of an action that the Jews would do to show their disdain for other non-Jewish people. And now Jesus says, now these Jewish cities, if they don't receive you, shake the dust off their city from your feet.

And you're in a sense making a statement that just just as you Jews would do toward Gentiles. So we view you to be as unclean as the Gentiles, just because you're Jewish, that doesn't make you better. If you reject the gospel, you're just like the Gentiles and no better.

And he said, assuredly, I say to you, it will be more tolerable for Sodom and Gomorrah in that day and the day of judgment than for that city. More tolerable in the day of judgment, if this means the ultimate day of judgment, when Jesus comes back and judges all people, then Sodom and Gomorrah are going to rise up like everybody else and stand in judgment. And so will these cities.

But Jesus said on that occasion, when Sodom and Gomorrah are judged by God and given their just due, their judgment will be more tolerable. That is less severe than the judgment these cities will have received. Why? Sodom and Gomorrah were much more corrupt in all likelihood than these cities were.

But Sodom and Gomorrah, as Jesus points out elsewhere, they didn't they didn't see the sign. They didn't hear the gospel. They were just a pagan city living in a pagan world that didn't have a message of the gospel offered to them.

They should have sought God as all men ought to seek God. But although all people ought to seek God, let's face it, most people don't. It just doesn't cross their minds.

But if the gospel comes and is presented to their faces and miracles are shown to show that this is the divine message, this is God communicating to you, seeking to get your attention. And they ignore that. Well, then they're much more culpable.

They're rejecting light. Sodom and Gomorrah didn't have very much light. They had great sins, but they didn't have very much light.

These cities didn't have quite so many sins in all likelihood of Sodom and Gomorrah had, but they had lots more light. And if they rejected that light, then God will judge Sodom and Gomorrah more compassionately, less less severely. It'll be more tolerable in the day of judgment for Sodom and Gomorrah because they are not as culpable.

They have not sinned against knowledge, against things they knew they didn't know much. And therefore, and that's important for us to know, because this tells us and similar passages tell us, because Jesus said similar things about Capernaum and Chorazin, some other cities where many of his miracles were done. He said, you know, the queen of Sheba, who is a pagan queen, will rise up in judgment against this generation, will condemn it.

And he said, the men of Nineveh, which is the cities that Jonah preached against, they'll rise up in judgment against this generation and condemn it. Jesus pointed out that these Gentile nations will actually be in a better position in the judgment than these Jewish cities will, who reject Christ. And it tells us that on the day of judgment, God does take things into consideration.

It's not just he. He doesn't just condemn all sinners with the same broad brush. In fact, in other places, Jesus teaching makes it clear that he doesn't reward all righteous people with the same broad brush.

He takes into consideration every man's works. And apparently, as this statement of Jesus would suggest, also every man's level of responsibility based on how much he knew, how much he should have known, how much responsibility he bore by the advantages that he had received. There may be people that have never heard the gospel that receive a very light judgment because they couldn't be expected to know more than what they knew.

Other people who have been raised in America and have paid no attention to the gospel when it was near at hand, their judgment might be considerably more severe. So they went out and preached that people should repent. And they cast out many demons and anointed with oil many who were sick and healed them.

As far as I know, this is the only place in the gospels that actually refers to the anointing of oil being a means of administering healing in the lifetime of Jesus. We don't read of Jesus ever anointing sick with oil. And other than here, I don't think we read of anyone else doing so.

Now, of course, in James, Chapter five and verse 14, James says, Is any sick among you? Let him call for the elders of the church and let them anoint him in with oil in the name of the Lord. And the prayer of faith shall save the sick and the Lord shall raise him up. So the anointing of oil of the sick is recommended in James, Chapter five, but we don't see any of it modeled in the book of Acts or in the gospels, except here on this particular

outreach.

And I'm not sure why they anointed with oil on this occasion. And Jesus did not, as far as we know, ever do so. The oil, some people think the oil is a symbol of the Holy Spirit.

So it's just a symbolic gesture. But some feel that it's a reference to actually applying what medical treatments were available because oil was rubbed into wounds very often to encourage healing. Olive oil was, you know, oil oil was in some applications used to cure or to heal or to treat certain sicknesses.

And some have said that. These disciples were supposed to not only supernaturally heal the sick, but also treat sick people. If there was some treatment they could with the oil.

That's what some people think about James five. They think that what James five is saying, let the elders anoint with oil and pray over them. That it means let them, you know, apply whatever medical means they can and also pray.

Though I kind of have a hard time believing that that's what it means, because the elders would not be particularly more equipped to apply medical means than a doctor would be. And if this was a reference to medical means, then most people had access to doctors or for that matter, anyone could anoint someone with oil. Their family members could do that.

You wouldn't need special ministers come and do that. So I think the anointing of oil was associated with supernatural healing rather than mere treatment. Now, real quickly, I want to run through this story about John the Baptist.

Now, King Herod heard of him, that is of Jesus, for his name had become well known. This is recorded in the Gospels at this point, because it probably happened while the disciples were out doing this ministry that Jesus sent them out to do. Jesus name was being spread widely throughout Galilee, and Herod was the ruler of that region.

And so he couldn't help but hear of the many things that were being done by Jesus and through his disciples. And it says, he said, John the Baptist is risen from the dead, and therefore these powers are at work in him. Others said it's Elijah and others said it's the prophet or one like the prophets or like one of the prophets.

But when Herod heard, he said, this is John, whom I beheaded. He has been raised from the dead. Now Mark realizes that he has not yet told us about John being beheaded or how that came to pass.

And so he now takes the time to tell us that story. It doesn't happen at this point. Chronologically, what happens at this point is that Herod begins to feel haunted by the memory that he has and by the guilt that he has killed John the Baptist.

And when he hears about these miracles going on from some man that he doesn't know, he thinks that sounds like probably John the Baptist is back and he's got more powers than before. And others like I thought I could get rid of him, but I didn't. Now, eventually he came to the conclusion that it wasn't John and he actually looked forward to seeing Jesus.

He wanted to see Jesus do miracles. We read that in the trial of Jesus in Luke chapter, well, in the Luke's Passion narratives that Herod actually looked forward to seeing Jesus and seeing Jesus do a miracle. But Jesus was sent to Herod on trial and didn't do any miracles for him.

So Herod became disgusted with him. This is Herod Antipas, the one who succeeded his father, Herod the Great, at his death. So this man, Herod, had become the ruler up in Galilee just around the time Jesus was born.

And this is later, much later. But when he hears about this, he thinks John is back and he's haunted by the guilt, obviously, of having killed John. So we have the story now given of how this guilt came to be affixed to him.

For Herod himself had sent and laid hold of John at some earlier point than this and bound him in prison for the sake of Herodias, his brother Philip's wife, for he had married her. Now, Jesus public ministry in Galilee had begun when John was put in prison. So we're now connecting with that event, that time frame back when Jesus ministry first began was the same time that Herod had put John in prison because Herod had married, had seduced really his brother's wife Herodias and taken her to be his wife.

And John had said to Herod, it's not lawful for you to have your brother's wife. So John had been put in prison and apparently held in prison for some time. How long? We don't know.

Long enough to be too long for Herodias. She wanted him dead. It says.

Therefore, Herodias held, this is the wife, held it against him and wanted to kill him, but she could not. For Herod feared John, knowing that he was a just and holy man and he protected him. And when he heard him, he did many things and heard him gladly.

Now, what it means he did many things. I don't know. Apparently, John would be brought before Herod and he'd preach at Herod and Herod heard him gladly and did many things.

Perhaps it meant he complied with many of the things that John told him to do out of respect for him as a holy man. No doubt he probably would have liked to let John go, but Herod was very much under the control of his of his illegitimate wife. It was nobles, the high officers and the chief men of Galilee.

And when Herodias's daughter herself came in and danced and pleased Herod and those

who sat with him, the king said to the girl, ask me whatever you want. I will give it to you. He also swore to her.

Whatever you ask me, I will give you up to half my kingdom. So he made an oath. He was probably a little drunk.

You know, I mean, is a party. She's dancing. It's a Middle Eastern gala affair.

And he's he's a king and he's not very godly at all. So he's he's probably had a little too much drink and his tongue is a little too loose. He makes an oath that he'll give her whatever she wants, even up to half the kingdom.

It doesn't seem like a sober king would make such an offer to a young girl, his stepdaughter. So she went out and said to her mother, what shall I ask? And she said, the head of John the Baptist. Immediately she came in with haste to the king and asked, saying, I want you to give me at once the head of John the Baptist on a platter.

In other words, not just someday you made a promise you did someday. I don't want to delay about this right now while your guests are here. I want you to bring in the head of John.

And the king was exceedingly sorry. Yet, because of the oaths and because of those who sat with him, he did not want to refuse her. And immediately the king sent an executioner and commanded his head to be brought.

And he went and beheaded John in prison and brought his head on a platter and gave it to the girl. And the girl gave it to her mother. The lesson of this story would appear to be that you need to be careful what you promise and the oaths you make.

Because now, in this case, should he have kept this oath? I think he should have repented of the oath. But when you take an oath, it's understood you're going to keep it. And he had witnesses and he didn't want to seem like one in front of his witnesses who wouldn't keep his promises, especially since they would not sympathize with him breaking it over something like this.

As far as they were concerned, John was just a political prisoner. Why not kill him? Herod knew there was more to it than that. He was a prophet of God.

And therefore, Herod saw it as something that would be going against God. And though Herod was not a godly man, he had some fear of God and fear of John. And it's clear that even after beheaded John, he still was kind of afraid of him because he thought Jesus might be John come back anyway when John was killed, it says in verse twenty nine, when the disciples heard of it, that might be John's disciples.

They came and took away his corpse and laid it in a tomb. And so comes to the end of a

life. John the Baptist, one that Jesus said there's arisen none greater among the among the children of women than John, a great man and one who spent his last month, at least, if not years of life in prison for his testimony and died a martyr as as actually Jesus and the Apostles themselves would eventually do as well.

At this point, we'll take a break and we'll come back to this gospel next time.