

Living the Way of Jesus Week 7

'Opposition Mounts'

Bible Passage: Mark 6:1-29

The heart of Mark 6:1-29 is verses 6b-13, where we see Jesus sending out the Twelve. It is the beginning of their journey to live the way of Jesus in a practical way, doing the works that they have already seen him do.

In first century Judaism, a disciple stayed in the presence of their teacher, their rabbi, to learn to do things the way he did. There was a blessing that went, 'May you always be covered in the dust of your rabbi.' In other words, may you follow your rabbi, your teacher, so closely that 'the dust his feet kicks up is what cakes your clothing and lines your face'.



When we allow ourselves to be covered in the dust of Jesus, our teacher, we can be part of bringing the Good News of God's Kingdom to a needy world.

Mark 6:6b-13 is sandwiched between two other paragraphs that illustrate the challenge of 'living the way of Jesus', or what it means to 'be covered in the dust of your rabbi'.

Read Mark 6:6b-13

- What does Jesus ask of his disciples?
- How daunted do you think they would have felt about this?
- If you had been there, would you have felt daunted or enthusiastic? Or both? Why?
- What principles are there for us today?

Read Mark 6:1-6a

- What is the initial reaction here to what Jesus is doing?
- What is the difference between this event in the synagogue and previous visits by Jesus?
See (1:21-28) and (3:1-6).

- What is Jesus explanation for this? (6:3, 6:6)
- What is Mark's explanation? (6:5)
- Why do you think that Mark has placed this incident just before Jesus sends out the Twelve?

A man called Russ Parker once wrote a book called 'Free to Fail' as an encouragement for Christians.

- How do you think Mark 6:1-7 helps us to understand the truth of this statement?
- How does this passage demonstrate for us that fear of failure is no reason for not trying?
- How does 'failure' affect you?
- How risk averse are you? Why?
- If we are to 'live in the way of Jesus', do you think we should be more bold in what we aim to do?
- How do you define success and failure? (You might begin by thinking about how you feel at the end of a day. For instance, are you more concerned about what you have 'achieved today', or what you have 'learned today'?)
- How do you think success and failure are defined in the Kingdom of God?

The paragraph that follows Jesus sending out of the Twelve gives us a very different sort of challenge to our discipleship.

Read Mark 6:14-29

- How is the cost of following Jesus outlined in this story?
- Why was John imprisoned and put to death?
- Have you ever spoken out over an issue of truth and justice? Was there a price to be paid?
- Do you think that as Christians we should be more vocal in challenging the status quo?
- In what ways might we do this?
- How might we exercise love and grace as we stand up for 'the way of Jesus'?

Finally

To be 'covered in the dust of your rabbi', make this prayer by the thirteenth century bishop Richard of Chichester your prayer for the week.

Day by day, dear Lord, of Thee three things I pray:

To see Thee more clearly,

Love Thee more dearly,

Follow Thee more nearly,

Day by day. Amen.