

EXTRA, EXTRA!!! How John B be No More. Head served warm.

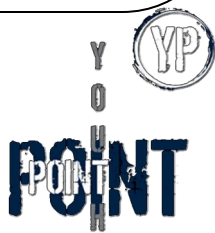
Mark puts this story in the middle of the apostles going and coming back. Seems like his apostles were making Him pretty well known, if this king had even caught word.

Mark 6:14-29

King Herod heard of it, for Jesus' name had become known. Some said, "John the Baptist has been raised from the dead. That is why these miraculous powers are at work in him." But others said, "He is Elijah." And others said, "He is a prophet, like one of the prophets of old." But when Herod heard of it, he said, "John, whom I beheaded, has been raised." For it was Herod who had sent and seized John and bound him in prison for the sake of Herodias, his brother Philip's wife, because he had married her. For John had been saying to Herod, "It is not lawful for you to have your brother's wife." And Herodias had a grudge against him and wanted to put him to death. But she could not, for Herod feared John, knowing that he was a righteous and holy man, and he kept him safe. When he heard him, he was greatly perplexed, and yet he heard him gladly.

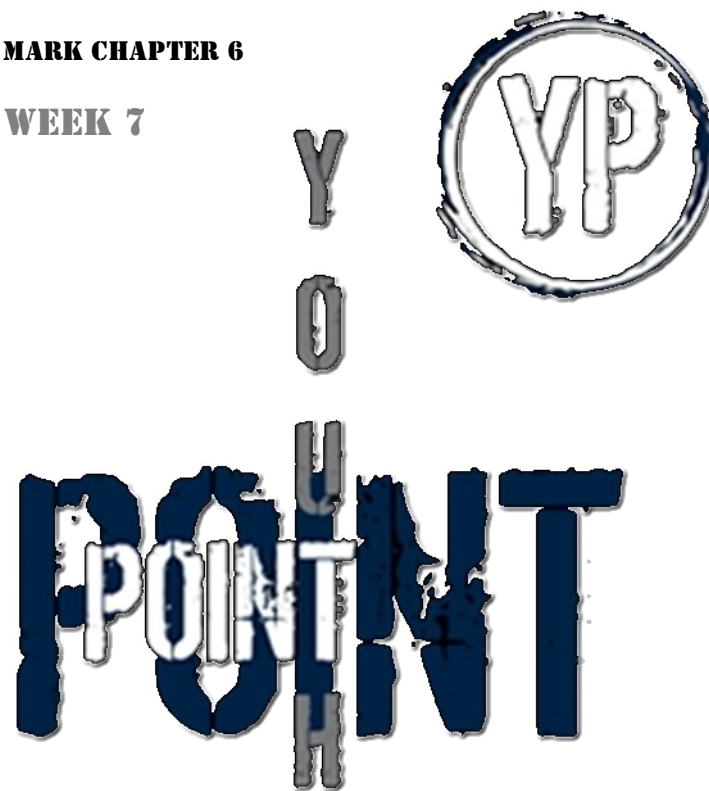
But an opportunity came when Herod on his birthday gave a banquet for his nobles and military commanders and the leading men of Galilee. For when Herodias's daughter came in and danced, she pleased Herod and his guests. And the king said to the girl, "Ask me for whatever you wish, and I will give it to you." And he vowed to her, "Whatever you ask me, I will give you, up to half of my kingdom." And she went out and said to her mother, "For what should I ask?" And she said, "The head of John the Baptist." And she came in immediately 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." And the king was exceedingly sorry, but because of his oaths and his guests he did not want to break his word to her. And immediately the king sent an executioner with orders to bring John's head. He went and beheaded him in the prison and brought his head on a platter and gave it to the girl, and the girl gave it to her mother. When his disciples heard of it, they came and took his body and laid it in a tomb.

This is a messed up story anyway you slice it. This is one of those where the Bible just tells it like it was, even if it was messed up. This guy (Herod) married his brother's wife (his brother was still alive). Then this lady (Herodias), didn't like to be told that she shouldn't be sleeping with her real husband's brother, so she wants John dead, since he is telling her the truth. Oh, and then you have this lady's daughter, this girl would probably have been a young teen and she's dancing for her uncle/stepdad and all his guy pals in a way that pleased them! So, he offered her whatever she wanted. Can we say messed up! Mind you, this king didn't really have any real power, he was a figurehead for Rome. He didn't really have any money or property or anything to give her, but he did have the power to have people killed. So, by asking for John's head, she asked for the one thing that he actually had power over. On a side note: the girl added on the bit about his head on a platter, her mother didn't ask for that. Truly a MESSED UP family!



MARK CHAPTER 6

WEEK 7



This is one of the longest chapters that we have come to thus far in Mark. Read the chapter (as many times as you think will be necessary) and see if you can answer the questions that follow without actually looking back at the chapter or looking forward to see what the questions are before you read. :-)

Mark 6

He went away from there and came to his hometown, and his disciples followed him. And on the Sabbath he began to teach in the synagogue, and many who heard him were astonished, saying, "Where did this man get these things? What is the wisdom given to him? How are such mighty works done by his hands? Is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary and brother of James and Joses and Judas and Simon? And are not his sisters here with us?" And they took offense at him. And Jesus said to them, "A prophet is not without honor, except in his hometown and among his relatives and in his own household." And he could do no mighty work there, except that he laid his hands on a few sick people and healed them. And he marveled because of their unbelief.

And he went about among the villages teaching.

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.

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But an opportunity came when Herod on his birthday gave a banquet for his nobles and military commanders and the leading men of Galilee. For when Herodias's daughter came in and danced, she pleased Herod and his guests. And the king said to the girl, "Ask me for whatever you wish, and I will give it to you." And he vowed to her, "Whatever you ask me, I will give you, up to half of my kingdom." And she went out and said to her mother, "For what should I ask?" And she said, "The head of John the Baptist." And she came in immediately 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." And the king was exceedingly sorry, but because of his oaths and his guests he did not want to break his word to her. And immediately the king sent an executioner with orders to bring John's head. He went and beheaded him in the prison and brought his head on a platter and gave it to the girl, and the girl gave it to her mother. When his disciples heard of it, they came and took his body and laid it in a tomb.

Walking on Water

Mark 6:45-52

Immediately he made his disciples get into the boat and go before him to the other side, to Bethsaida, while he dismissed the crowd. And after he had taken leave of them, he went up on the mountain to pray. And when evening came, the boat was out on the sea, and he was alone on the land. And he saw that they were making headway painfully, for the wind was against them. And about the fourth watch of the night he came to them, walking on the sea. He meant to pass by them, but when they saw him walking on the sea they thought it was a ghost, and cried out, for they all saw him and were terrified. But immediately he spoke to them and said, "Take heart; it is I. Do not be afraid." And he got into the boat with them, and the wind ceased. And they were utterly astounded, for they did not understand about the loaves, but their hearts were hardened.

Matthew 14:22-33

Immediately he made the disciples get into the boat and go before him to the other side, while he dismissed the crowds. And after he had dismissed the crowds, he went up on the mountain by himself to pray. When evening came, he was there alone, but the boat by this time was a long way from the land, beaten by the waves, for the wind was against them. And in the fourth watch of the night he came to them, walking on the sea. But when the disciples saw him walking on the sea, they were terrified, and said, "It is a ghost!" and they cried out in fear. But immediately Jesus spoke to them, saying, "Take heart; it is I. Do not be afraid."

And Peter answered him, "Lord, if it is you, command me to come to you on the water." He said, "Come." So Peter got out of the boat and walked on the water and came to Jesus. But when he saw the wind, he was afraid, and beginning to sink he cried out, "Lord, save me." Jesus immediately reached out his hand and took hold of him, saying to him, "O you of little faith, why did you doubt?" And when they got into the boat, the wind ceased. And those in the boat worshiped him, saying, "Truly you are the Son of God."

John 6:16-21

When evening came, his disciples went down to the sea, got into a boat, and started across the sea to Capernaum. It was now dark, and Jesus had not yet come to them. The sea became rough because a strong wind was blowing. When they had rowed about three or four miles, they saw Jesus walking on the sea and coming near the boat, and they were frightened. But he said to them, "It is I; do not be afraid." Then they were glad to take him into the boat, and immediately the boat was at the land to which they were going.

So much to explain, so little space.

So, again back to the sea - being beaten by the wind and sea. The apostles out there on their own, in the middle of the night (3a-6a), rowing and rowing and getting no where and Jesus shows up walking on the water! What's up with that?!? Then you let Him into the boat and the winds stop and you are on land. What?!? Oh, the mysteries. Wait, and why doesn't Mark tell us the story about Peter, isn't Mark writing Peter's account? Yes, yes he is, but I don't know. Maybe, Peter wanted the focus to be on Jesus as the Christ and not on Peter as Peter.

Luke 9:10-17

On their return the apostles told him all that they had done. And he took them and withdrew apart to a town called Bethsaida. When the crowds learned it, they followed him, and he welcomed them and spoke to them of the kingdom of God and cured those who had need of healing. Now the day began to wear away, and the twelve came and said to him, "Send the crowd away to go into the surrounding villages and countryside to find lodging and get provisions, for we are here in a desolate place." But he said to them, "You give them something to eat." They said, "We have no more than five loaves and two fish—unless we are to go and buy food for all these people." For there were about five thousand men. And he said to his disciples, "Have them sit down in groups of about fifty each." And they did so, and had them all sit down. And taking the five loaves and the two fish, he looked up to heaven and said a blessing over them. Then he broke the loaves and gave them to the disciples to set before the crowd. And they all ate and were satisfied. And what was left over was picked up, twelve baskets of broken pieces.

John 6:1-13

After this Jesus went away to the other side of the Sea of Galilee, which is the Sea of Tiberias. And a large crowd was following him, because they saw the signs that he was doing on the sick. Jesus went up on the mountain, and there he sat down with his disciples. Now the Passover, the feast of the Jews, was at hand. Lifting up his eyes, then, and seeing that a large crowd was coming toward him, Jesus said to Philip, "Where are we to buy bread, so that these people may eat?" He said this to test him, for he himself knew what he would do. Philip answered him, "Two hundred denarii worth of bread would not be enough for each of them to get a little." One of his disciples, Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, said to him, "There is a boy here who has five barley loaves and two fish, but what are they for so many?" Jesus said, "Have the people sit down." Now there was much grass in the place. So the men sat down, about five thousand in number. Jesus then took the loaves, and when he had given thanks, he distributed them to those who were seated. So also the fish, as much as they wanted. And when they had eaten their fill, he told his disciples, "Gather up the leftover fragments, that nothing may be lost." So they gathered them up and filled twelve baskets with fragments from the five barley loaves left by those who had eaten.

Okay, so now after reading this story four times, maybe you think I lost it somewhere. Each time it says 5,000, but I wrote 20,000. Yep, that's right. 20,000. No, I didn't multiply the 5,000 by 4 because the story is told four times. The Word tells us 5,000 men. It specifically states 'men' that means that it doesn't include the women and children. (Matthew tells us this) So, most commentators/scholars claim that there would have been between 20,000-25,000 people total. So, if 5,000 seemed incredible think about it being 20,000. That's a whole lot of people for one boy's lunch to feed.

The thing is that we don't believe it. We don't believe that they were all able to eat, we don't believe that they were all satisfied. We think well maybe: 'Jesus made them think that they had eaten' or 'Jesus used some really kewl knives to slice everything up into super tiny pieces, so everyone could have some' or etc. There are tons of possible explanations, but it takes a lot more faith to believe any of those than to believe the truth - that He did what He did.

The apostles returned to Jesus and told him all that they had done and taught. And he said to them, "Come away by yourselves to a desolate place and rest a while." For many were coming and going, and they had no leisure even to eat. And they went away in the boat to a desolate place by themselves. Now many saw them going and recognized them, and they ran there on foot from all the towns and got there ahead of them. When he went ashore he saw a great crowd, and he had compassion on them, because they were like sheep without a shepherd. And he began to teach them many things. And when it grew late, his disciples came to him and said, "This is a desolate place, and the hour is now late. Send them away to go into the surrounding countryside and villages and buy themselves something to eat." But he answered them, "You give them something to eat." And they said to him, "Shall we go and buy two hundred denarii worth of bread and give it to them to eat?" And he said to them, "How many loaves do you have? Go and see." And when they had found out, they said, "Five, and two fish." Then he commanded them all to sit down in groups on the green grass. So they sat down in groups, by hundreds and by fifties. And taking the five loaves and the two fish he looked up to heaven and said a blessing and broke the loaves and gave them to the disciples to set before the people. And he divided the two fish among them all. And they all ate and were satisfied. And they took up twelve baskets full of broken pieces and of the fish. And those who ate the loaves were five thousand men.

Immediately he made his disciples get into the boat and go before him to the other side, to Bethsaida, while he dismissed the crowd. And after he had taken leave of them, he went up on the mountain to pray. And when evening came, the boat was out on the sea, and he was alone on the land. And he saw that they were making headway painfully, for the wind was against them. And about the fourth watch of the night he came to them, walking on the sea. He meant to pass by them, but when they saw him walking on the sea they thought it was a ghost, and cried out, for they all saw him and were terrified. But immediately he spoke to them and said, "Take heart; it is I. Do not be afraid." And he got into the boat with them, and the wind ceased. And they were utterly astounded, for they did not understand about the loaves, but their hearts were hardened.

When they had crossed over, they came to land at Gennesaret and moored to the shore. And when they got out of the boat, the people immediately recognized him and ran about the whole region and began to bring the sick people on their beds to wherever they heard he was. And wherever he came, in villages, cities, or countryside, they laid the sick in the marketplaces and implored him that they might touch even the fringe of his garment. And as many as touched it were made well.



:-) Let's see how much you can retain from what you've read:

- ◆ What was Jesus' hometown?
- ◆ What is Jesus constantly astonished by?
- ◆ How did Jesus send the apostles out?
- ◆ Who did King Herod think that Jesus was? Why?
- ◆ Who wanted John the Baptist dead? Why?
- ◆ What did Jesus constantly feel/have for the crowd?
- ◆ What causes unbelief in the hearts of the apostles?
- ◆ How many times did you have to look back at the chapter to figure out the answers?

Five Crackers and Two Fish for 20,000

As you read this passage, keep in mind that the loaves that they were talking about weren't loaves of bread like we have in our day or even slices of bread or biscuits, they were equivalent to crackers—maybe Saltine, maybe Ritz, probably neither, but crackers nonetheless. Then the fish, these weren't like two 5 pound fishes or even two Tilapia filets, these would be similar to little sardines. You know those little fishes that come in a can, sometimes the can has 4 or 5 fishes, well just consider this to be half a can of sardines. This would have been considered to be a normal lunch for a young kid. It's not like his mom sent him out with a military sized backpack filled with bread and fish - this would have all fit into a little pouch. So, keep that in mind.

Mark 6:32-44

And they went away in the boat to a desolate place by themselves. Now many saw them going and recognized them, and they ran there on foot from all the towns and got there ahead of them. When he went ashore he saw a great crowd, and he had compassion on them, because they were like sheep without a shepherd. And he began to teach them many things. And when it grew late, his disciples came to him and said, "This is a desolate place, and the hour is now late. Send them away to go into the surrounding countryside and villages and buy themselves something to eat." But he answered them, "You give them something to eat." And they said to him, "Shall we go and buy two hundred denarii worth of bread and give it to them to eat?" And he said to them, "How many loaves do you have? Go and see." And when they had found out, they said, "Five, and two fish." Then he commanded them all to sit down in groups on the green grass. So they sat down in groups, by hundreds and by fifties. And taking the five loaves and the two fish he looked up to heaven and said a blessing and broke the loaves and gave them to the disciples to set before the people. And he divided the two fish among them all. And they all ate and were satisfied. And they took up twelve baskets full of broken pieces and of the fish. And those who ate the loaves were five thousand men.

Matthew 14:13-21

Now when Jesus heard this, he withdrew from there in a boat to a desolate place by himself. But when the crowds heard it, they followed him on foot from the towns. When he went ashore he saw a great crowd, and he had compassion on them and healed their sick. Now when it was evening, the disciples came to him and said, "This is a desolate place, and the day is now over; send the crowds away to go into the villages and buy food for themselves." But Jesus said, "They need not go away; you give them something to eat." They said to him, "We have only five loaves here and two fish." And he said, "Bring them here to me." Then he ordered the crowds to sit down on the grass, and taking the five loaves and the two fish, he looked up to heaven and said a blessing. Then he broke the loaves and gave them to the disciples, and the disciples gave them to the crowds. And they all ate and were satisfied. And they took up twelve baskets full of the broken pieces left over. And those who ate were about five thousand men, besides women and children.



We learn so much from reading the same story as it is presented in each gospel. Mark tells us nothing about where they are to go, but Matthew does. Then Mark doesn't tell us where they went to rest, but Luke does.

They were sent out among the Jews, among God's people, among the country of Israel. God gave the Jews the first chance to accept Him, to accept the gospel. He didn't want the apostles going to Gentile lands until the Jews had had a chance to accept or reject Him. With those that rejected them, they were to "shake the dust" off of their feet. Why? Because that's what they did when leaving Gentile areas before going back into Jewish areas. But, aren't they only allowed to go to Jewish areas? Ah, but that's the point - they were being proclaimed as bad as Gentiles, as unclean, because they wouldn't accept. Technically, worse, since for Sodom and Gomorrah - a Gentile area - it would be better than for those Jewish towns that rejected Him.

So, why no this or that, why couldn't they take extra stuff for their trip? One word: TRUST. This is like their first internship, the first time that they get to get their hands dirty, and God wanted them to trust Him. He would give them everything that they needed, He would provide for them, they just had to trust in Him. That's easier said than done. Way back when, in Exodus some of those same items were mentioned as they had to take off with what they had and travel light. Now the apostles are sent off without any of the things that one would normally pack for a trip. This doesn't mean that we ourselves are to go hop on a plane or bus with the clothes on our backs and nothing else, without any money or anything. No. This was for them, for the time that He had appointed for them to go out. For them to learn to trust in Him. Later on in Luke 22, He tells them to prepare:

Luke 22:35-36

And he said to them, "When I sent you out with no moneybag or knapsack or sandals, did you lack anything?" They said, "Nothing." He said to them, "But now let the one who has a moneybag take it, and likewise a knapsack. And let the one who has no sword sell his cloak and buy one.

But, for this occasion, He wanted them to see what it was like to Trust.

And Jesus cared for them. He cared for them while they were working and He cared for them when they got back. They came back and told Him all that had happened, everything that they had seen and everything they had done. They probably received tons of instruction from Him, but besides all of that He gave them rest. He sent them to a desolate place, so that they could rest. He knew everything that they had been through, He knew how exhausted they were. They hadn't even been able to eat there were so many people around. He created us. As God the Father, He needs no rest, but as Jesus, He needed rest, so He knew how they felt. He wanted them to rest.

Read Psalm 121 and see if you can see the story of His protection over us. How we can trust in Him and rest because He never sleeps and will always keep us.

UNBELIEF

How easy it is to go through life not believing in the One that created everything. How easy it is to block it all out to let everyone just believe what they want without caring about where they will end up. How easy it is to not believe.

In the section for today, think of how easy it was for those people to dismiss Jesus and how hard it must have been for Him to be dismissed.

Mark 6:1-6

He went away from there and came to his hometown, and his disciples followed him. And on the Sabbath he began to teach in the synagogue, and many who heard him were astonished, saying, "Where did this man get these things? What is the wisdom given to him? How are such mighty works done by his hands? Is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary and brother of James and Joses and Judas and Simon? And are not his sisters here with us?" And they took offense at him. And Jesus said to them, "A prophet is not without honor, except in his hometown and among his relatives and in his own household." And he could do no mighty work there, except that he laid his hands on a few sick people and healed them. And he marveled because of their unbelief.

And he went about among the villages teaching.

Matthew 13:53-58

And when Jesus had finished these parables, he went away from there, and coming to his hometown he taught them in their synagogue, so that they were astonished, and said, "Where did this man get this wisdom and these mighty works? Is not this the carpenter's son? Is not his mother called Mary? And are not his brothers James and Joseph and Simon and Judas? And are not all his sisters with us? Where then did this man get all these things?" And they took offense at him. But Jesus said to them, "A prophet is not without honor except in his hometown and in his own household." And he did not do many mighty works there, because of their unbelief.

This wasn't the only time that Jesus taught in Nazareth, remember back in Mark 3:21 is family thought that He was insane. About a year prior to this encounter Luke 4:16-30, goes into detail as to what Jesus was teaching at one point in Nazareth that the people even tried to throw Him off the cliff. So, now He's back home and they still don't believe. They insult His earthly father by calling Him the carpenter's son - not using Joseph's name would be an insult. As well as using His mother's name - it would be a question of His origin - questioning whether He was really Joseph's son. It was so much easier for these people to mock Him than it was for them to believe them, but is that really true? Sometimes, it takes more faith to not believe in something than to believe, but we'll save that for the fish and crackers.

It's a sad point because after Jesus leaves this His home - it is no longer His home. He doesn't come back to teach to them again because they have heard enough and seen enough and yet still rejected Him. This is by all accounts a small town, it's estimated that there were about 500 people. That's less people than go to most of your schools.



500 people - that means everyone practically knew everyone else. They might not have been best buds, but they would of seen Him about as He was growing up. They would of sold Him milk or cookies or whatever. They would of passed Him on the street or seen Him walking with His father. These would have been people who knew Him. That's what makes it worse. It makes it worse on both sides, for them they couldn't conceive of what He was saying and for Him it was astounding that they didn't believe.

Maybe you all don't have a parent that's an unbeliever or a best friend that's an unbeliever or a family member that you really love that's an unbeliever, but it hurts. It hurts to see those you love not believe. It hurts to want them to know, to want them to accept, to want them to be forgiven, but them be oblivious, to have their hearts hardened. The more you care for that person the more it hurts. So, take Jesus. Think about how much he loved these people, yes He's God, He loves us all, but think of how much closer to His heart all these people were, and yet they didn't believe. That had to be incredibly hard. Remember, He was also human - with all the human emotions we have.

Yet, sometimes we are like those people. Yes, we claim that we believe, but do we put it all down for Him? Are we willing to be let down for His sake?

Hmm..... How about I give you an example.

Are you willing to ask? Are you willing to believe that you'll get what you asked for? We don't get because we don't believe, yet sometimes we aren't willing to ask because we aren't willing to put down our guard and actually believe that we will get what's good for us, we're not willing to surrender. Say, you really want a car or you really want a date or you really want to get into an awesome college or maybe you just wish you knew what to do next, what to do with your life. . . all those things can be good depending, but to ask for them means that we get our hopes up, that we get our hopes up that maybe He will come through, that maybe . . . BUT maybe He won't. That 'but' that 'maybe' that thought of being disappointed is unbelief. Maybe your thinking 'what but how?' or 'wow' either way it is. It's unbelief because we don't think that He wants what's best for us, we think that He will give us a snake when we asked for a puppy, we think that we'll get a bus pass if we ask for a car. And yeah, maybe. But, it's all for our good. We have to believe that He wants the best for us, that He will work everything out for good - aka our sanctification. He wants us to trust in Him. COMPLETELY and ENTIRELY trust in Him.

He's not a genie in a bottle that we try to please. Oh, I prayed, so give me X, oh, I read my Bible, so give me Y, oh I talked to someone, so give me Z. NOOOO! He's God! It doesn't work that way! All those wishes anyone ever got from a genie in a movie always worked out in terrible ways, why? Because they weren't God. God isn't always going to give us what we want because a lot of the time its not for our good, but He will change your desires. He will change your wants and He will give you what is best and not what we think is best. We just have to trust in Him.

We just have to believe that He is whom He says He is.

TRUST and REST

Today, we get into a story that Mark has split, but we are going to join, its the first time that the apostles go out on their own without Jesus after being chosen and trained. Mark has a tendency to interject a story within a story, so we will go back to what he interjected into this story later. But, for today:

Mark 6:7-13, 30-32

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.

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The apostles returned to Jesus and told him all that they had done and taught. And he said to them, “Come away by yourselves to a desolate place and rest a while.” For many were coming and going, and they had no leisure even to eat. And they went away in the boat to a desolate place by themselves.

Matthew 10:5-15

These twelve Jesus sent out, instructing them, “Go nowhere among the Gentiles and enter no town of the Samaritans, but go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. And proclaim as you go, saying, ‘The kingdom of heaven is at hand.’ Heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse lepers, cast out demons. You received without paying; give without pay. Acquire no gold or silver or copper for your belts, no bag for your journey, or two tunics or sandals or a staff, for the laborer deserves his food. And whatever town or village you enter, find out who is worthy in it and stay there until you depart. As you enter the house, greet it. And if the house is worthy, let your peace come upon it, but if it is not worthy, let your peace return to you. And if anyone will not receive you or listen to your words, shake off the dust from your feet when you leave that house or town. Truly, I say to you, it will be more bearable on the day of judgment for the land of Sodom and Gomorrah than for that town.

Luke 9:1-6, 10

And he called the twelve together and gave them power and authority over all demons and to cure diseases, and he sent them out to proclaim the kingdom of God and to heal. And he said to them, “Take nothing for your journey, no staff, nor bag, nor bread, nor money; and do not have two tunics. And whatever house you enter, stay there, and from there depart. And wherever they do not receive you, when you leave that town shake off the dust from your feet as a testimony against them.” And they departed and went through the villages, preaching the gospel and healing everywhere.

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On their return the apostles told him all that they had done. And he took them and withdrew apart to a town called Bethsaida.

