

Mark 6:7-13

July 19, 2015 – 8th SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

Sent by the Savior

✦ with power (v.7)

✦ with trust (vv.8-10)

✦ with repentance (vv.11-13)

Dear fellow disciples of our Lord, *“God sends his love and his faithfulness.”* (Psalm 57:3 NIV84)

Summer vacation plans are underway. If we get to Yellowstone National Park with our grandsons, I wonder if they’ll be as disappointed as I was. Remember the world’s most famous geyser? “Old Faithful” isn’t even the biggest geyser in the mud pot. It’s actually not “faithful.” Eruptions 30-120 minutes apart. Wait in the hot sun with sweaty kids; you’ll want more faithfulness from the old geyser.

Is that why we have trouble trusting God, don’t know what “faithful” means? What if Jesus told the dying thief on the cross, *“Today you will be with me in paradise”* (Luke 23:43), but really meant, “Maybe tomorrow or the next day”? If *“the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanses us from all sin”* (1 John 1:7 – KJV), really means “some sin,” then we are guilty before God and subject to eternal damnation. Then there is absolutely no reason to be a Christian, much less a full-time servant of Christ. Since “Old Faithful” really isn’t, we’d best not look to nature when **Sent by the Savior**. We need His blessing...

✦ with power (v.7)

“Calling the Twelve to him, [Jesus] sent them out two by two and gave them authority over evil spirits.” What’s the difference between “**authority**” and **power**? Think of our Constitutional right to bear arms. Having that **power** with a conceal-carry permit, does not give you the right to use the weapon. One man said he’d rather be shot by an intruder, than have to go to court afterwards. Different story of your family is in danger. See the difference between the **power** of the gun and the “**authority**” to use it. Jesus had the **power**. He gave it to them. But He also gave them the “**authority**” to use His **power**.

Do Jesus’ disciples still need to go **with power** “*over evil spirits*”? One of our New Life elders told of the horrendous stench in a home where he and another elder at his former church tried to convince some Satanist parents to let their daughter go to Sunday School as she wanted. Then there was the Christian on a plane complimenting the man next to him for praying before his meal. “Oh, no,” objected the man, “I’m not a Christian. I’m a worshiper of Satan. Our leader told us to pray Satan to attack all Christian pastors and their families.” Yes, most certainly, we need Jesus’ **power** “*over evil spirits*.”

We are all **Sent by the Savior** – with **power**, His **power** and the “**authority**” to use it. Jesus tells us through James: *“Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.”* (4:7) Luke reports that other disciples *returned with joy and said, “Lord, even the demons submit to us in your name.” He replied, “I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven. I have given you authority to trample on snakes and scorpions and to overcome all the power of the enemy; nothing will harm you. However, do not rejoice that the spirits submit to you, but rejoice that your names are written in heaven.”* (Luke 10:17-20). Satan knows we are **Sent by the Savior** and Jesus is faithful. That’s why we press forward...

✦ with trust (vv.8-10)

Years ago Pastor Loren Steel asked me to give the devotion for Ger Yang to go to Thailand. That trip he lost his life under mysterious circumstances. Young Pheng Moua in his late teens kept having members ask, “Pheng, what shall we do?” He finally realized God was calling him to lead. Pheng studied

for the ministry and became the senior pastor of dozens of Hmong pastors. Today's *WELS Connection* shows us Hmong in Thailand. 316Now (CP) is getting requests for Hmong in China. Pheng stepped up with only God's promises. And dear Christians, that is all we need to go **with trust**.

Yet does this make sense? *"Take nothing for the journey except a staff – no bread, no bag, no money in your belts. Wear sandals but not an extra tunic. Whenever you enter a house, stay there until you leave that town."* Luke 22:35-37 shows that after Jesus' resurrection they would need to take more provisions along. Here Jesus is teaching His disciples to **trust** His promises, many of which are recorded in Matthew's parallel account (10:1-42). **Trust** *"the worker is worth his keep"* (10:10) as in support for called workers today. WELS increased synod code to what laymen knew fit graduate degrees and similar responsibilities in the workaday world. You go **with trust** along with those preachers.

Jesus promises not a single penny-sparrow *"will fall to the ground apart from the will of your Father....So don't be afraid; you are worth more than many sparrows"* (10:29f). Looking back at my financial records under the old synod code, our kids were small, but we were in debt thousands of dollars with very little in savings – in a parsonage with no mortgage! I spread it out before the Lord and prayed for Him to turn my finances right side up. Then I prayed to **trust** the Lord's promises with my offerings. God gave some special gifts, Synod code increased, New Life got healthy in finances. God turned things around for all of us and protected our jobs in the past decade of hard times. Jesus has proved trustworthy and faithful to His promises. He will sustain your family too, dear Christian. You can take that to the bank, the grocery store, the doctor, the pharmacy...because we are **Sent by the Savior**...

✠ with repentance (vv.11-13)

But does this sound like a blessing? *"And if any place will not welcome you or listen to you, shake the dust off your feet when you leave, as a testimony against them."* Doesn't the Lord Jehovah bless His Word so that it will *"not return...empty, but...accomplish [His] desire and achieve the purpose for which [He] sent it"* (Isaiah 55:11)? Yes, but our faithful God sometimes blesses His Word for the *"alien task"* (Isaiah 28:21) of hardening the hearts of unbelievers. He blesses His Word as He removes excuses from our unbelieving friends and neighbors. If they refuse to trust the merits and forgiveness of God's own Son, they damn themselves for Judgment Day. Don't let their *"dust"* stick to your feet. Tell them God's truth, plain and simple. Tell them again. Then trust God to bless His Word.

The Twelve were driving out demons and anointing the sick in Jesus' name with ("essential"?) oil medicine. Jesus gave His disciples healing power. He also said later: *"I tell you the truth, anyone who has faith in me will do what I have been doing. He will do even greater things than these, because I am going to the Father."* (John 14:12) Greater than healing the body is healing the soul when we proclaim *that people should repent*. The proclamation of God's kindness in Christ changes our mind about sin, self and Savior. As He says through His Apostle Paul: *"God's kindness leads you toward repentance."* (Romans 2:4 NIV84) It's a miracle how God's Word kindly convinces us we are wretched sinners, but God has credited Jesus' righteousness to us all. As my grandfather used to tell me, "God gives people the freedom to choose a million ways to hell, but there is only one Way to heaven – through Jesus Christ." He said, *"No one can come to me unless the Father has enabled him....No one comes to the Father except through me."* *"Come to me, all you who are weary...."* (John 6:65; 14:6; Matthew 11:28-30 NIV84).

This is our confidence, come death or Judgment Day, as we go boldly, **Sent by the Savior – with power, with trust, with repentance**. This is not the sporadic eruption of an old geyser. We could call Jesus, "New Faithful," because *"His promises are new every morning."* He doesn't just shoot up a few hundred feet and evaporate into thin air; His *"faithfulness reaches to the skies."* (Psalm 108:4) That's *"paradise... today."* That's Christ's *"blood cleansing us from all sin."* That's eternal salvation to all who **trust** now and forever in Jesus' blessed Name. Amen.