

Mark 6:6b-30 Final**6.3.18**

The Gospel of Mark

Sunday Morning

INTRO

If you've been to **Disneyland** (some of you haven't), chances you've ridden one of its most iconic rides: *Pirates of the Caribbean*.

If you've been on it you'll remember that after you've passed the **Blue Bayou café** on your right and ridden down the **waterfall**, you come to the **treasure rooms** with all the **abandoned riches and ships**. And after you pass through this, you hear these words being spoken out of the darkness:

Arrrgh... Properly warned ye be, says I. Who knows when that...curse will strike the greedy beholders of this...treasure?

*Perhaps ye knows too much... ye've seen the treasure, you know where it be hidden.
Now proceed at your own risk... Ye may not survive to pass this way again.*

Now those words: "**Proceed at your own risk...**" could be the motto of the Christian life.

If you're a Christian, Jesus has **given you a mission**. It's not a **choice**, he hasn't **extended** an **offer** that you can **accept** or **decline**. He's given you and I a mission to fulfill, and that is to take the **same gospel that changed** your **life** and proclaim it to the world **around you**.

But, as we'll see in our passage this morning, this **mission requires self-sacrifice** on our part because the **world around us doesn't** want to hear what we have to say. It is a **message** that pushes against the **fabric of the rules** and **freedoms** of this sinful world.

And you and I need to be **prepared** for certain amounts of **loss** as we go out on this mission into this world.

- It's perhaps a **loss of reputation**
- Or **the loss** of an **easy life**,
- The **loss** of certain **comforts**,
- The **loss** of certain **friendships or family relationships**,
- And perhaps for some of us even **the loss** of our **own lives**.

This is why I said that perhaps the motto of the Christian life should be "*proceed at your own risk*" because to be on mission for Jesus is to live a life of loss.

Two quick things about this before we read our text:

1. When I say “**on mission**” I simply mean what it sounds like, working each day to fulfill the **mission that Jesus** has given to us by proclaiming the gospel to those around us. I just don’t want there to be any misunderstanding, it can mean different things to different people.
2. I don’t want anyone to misunderstand that the problem isn’t with the message we proclaim. In fact, there is no better proclamation.
 - That Jesus has **defeated sin once for all**
 - And because of Him, **forgiveness** and **eternal joy** are available for those who **repent** and **trust** in Him
 - And that **anyone** can get in **on this**.

In fact, it’s pure joy to be able to proclaim it and tell others of the greatest news they will ever hear. The issue is that there is no neutral position in the response to the message. You either believe it’s true and trust Jesus, or you don’t and stand opposed to Him.

And what we’re going to see in the text this morning is that the response of the world to the message of Christ today isn’t any different from what it was in Mark 6. We just need to be prepared for it.

So, to that end, if there’s one thing that I’d want you to remember this morning:

Proceed at your own risk: to be on mission for Jesus is to live a life of loss.

So, here’s the plan for this morning, we’ll read the text together, spend some time discussing what’s happening, and then we’ll discuss a couple points of application.

This is the word is the Word of the Lord to us this morning...beginning in chapter 6 verse 7:

[7] And he called the twelve and began to send them out two by two, and gave them authority over the unclean spirits. [8] He charged them to take nothing for their journey except a staff—no bread, no bag, no money in their belts—[9] but to wear sandals and not put on two tunics. [10] And he said to them, “Whenever you enter a house, stay there until you depart from there. [11] And if any place will not receive you and they will not listen to you, when you leave, shake off the dust that is on your feet as a testimony against them.” [12] So they went out and proclaimed that people should repent. [13] And they cast out many demons and anointed with oil many who were sick and healed them.

The Death of John the Baptist

[14] 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.” [15]

But others said, "He is Elijah." And others said, "He is a prophet, like one of the prophets of old." [16] But when Herod heard of it, he said, "John, whom I beheaded, has been raised." [17] 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. [18] For John had been saying to Herod, "It is not lawful for you to have your brother's wife." [19] And Herodias had a grudge against him and wanted to put him to death. But she could not, [20] 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.

[21] But an opportunity came when Herod on his birthday gave a banquet for his nobles and military commanders and the leading men of Galilee. [22] 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." [23] And he vowed to her, "Whatever you ask me, I will give you, up to half of my kingdom." [24] And she went out and said to her mother, "For what should I ask?" And she said, "The head of John the Baptist." [25] 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." [26] And the king was exceedingly sorry, but because of his oaths and his guests he did not want to break his word to her. [27] And immediately the king sent an executioner with orders to bring John's head. He went and beheaded him in the prison [28] and brought his head on a platter and gave it to the girl, and the girl gave it to her mother. [29] When his disciples heard of it, they came and took his body and laid it in a tomb.

Jesus Feeds the Five Thousand

[30] The apostles returned to Jesus and told him all that they had done and taught.

Now, you may have thought that this is an odd text. But what we have here is another example of Mark's own literary device (Markan sandwich):

- The disciples are **sent out** in verses 7-13
- He **digresses** and goes to a seemingly unrelated topic in verse 14
- And the disciples **return** in verse 30

So we'll attack the outer sections first.

In the **Old Testament**, **God** sends **prophets** to the people to do **mighty works** and **preach repentance**. In our text, **God**, in the person of Jesus, **does the same** with the disciples.

He sends them out in **six groups** of **two** as an **extension** of his ministry. What Jesus was known for, **casting out demons**, **healing the sick**, and **preaching repentance** is now the disciple's **mission**.

But he sends them with instructions to bring no provisions with them except what they need to walk.

No **food**, no **bags**, and no **money**. And there are two good answers for this:

1. For **expediency** on the journey, like a **hiker** who doesn't carry around anything he can't carry on his back with the mobility and ease of being able to move around **whenever he wants**.
2. Because their mission will **require** total **trust** and **dependence** on God to provide in **their need**.

They will trust that God will provide homes for hospitality along their way, providing for their **loss** and **lack**.

And when God **does provide** a home for them, in **verse 10**, they are to stay there for an extended period, doing mighty works and **proclaiming** the gospel of repentance and the **Kingdom coming**.

Now notice in **verse 11** that along the way there **will be times** when they will experience the **loss** of reputation and hospitality as they aren't **welcomed** by the **people** of the **town or village**. What they are **preaching** the **people don't want to hear**.

And if that happens, Jesus tells them to **shake the dust from their feet** as a testimony against them.

Rabbis, in that day, would **shake the dust off their feet** as they entered into Palestine from gentile lands so that they wouldn't defile the land of Israel with **gentile dust**.

In this case, Jesus applies this same principle to these **Jewish towns** and **villages** who **didn't listen to** or **accept** God's **missionaries** and **their message**.

It was a **pronouncement** that those **villages** were to be held to **account** by God for not **listening to his emissaries**. **Very reminiscent of the Prophets of old**.

And so, the **disciples go on this mission**...and if we look all the way down to verse 30, we see that they return and **tell Jesus all that they have done and preached**.

So, we have a **recounting** of the **first time** that Jesus will send the disciples out on a mission where he **isn't there**.

Seems relatively straightforward if not for the **fifteen verses in between**. What we read in between is the **only story in Mark** that is not about Jesus.

And as we earlier, **Mark** often does this type of things.

Here, he **inserts this seemingly unrelated** section right in the middle of this account of the sending of the **disciples**.

And here's why – this is the world that the **disciples are going out into**. It's a world that here **claims the life of John the prophet**...and in a few **short chapters** we'll see that it's the world that will claim the **life of Jesus too**.

You see, the mission that Jesus sends the disciples out on is a dangerous one. **Loss** will be involved. Many **prophets of old** had been sent by God to proclaim his message to the world and **never made it back**. To use the *Pirates* phrase, "they did not survive to pass this way again...".

And here the disciples are **sent out on mission** from Jesus into this world. But here it's a **temporary** parting, but soon it won't be.

This isn't Mark getting his note cards in the wrong order as **he was writing**, the placement of the death of **John is intentional**.

Now, we don't have time to recount each event in this story but let me take a few brief minutes to sum it up.

This **Herod** is not **Herod the Great** from our **Christmas** stories. That Herod died in 4 BC. This is his son **Herod Antipas** who will also **interact with** Jesus and Pilate on night that Jesus died on the cross.

- It seems that **Herod hears of Jesus** for the first time as the disciples go throughout Galilee and believes him to be John the Baptist raised from the dead.
- As Mark tells us in **verse 14-15** it seems everyone had some guess as to who Jesus was: either **Elijah** returned, **John the Baptist** resurrected, or a new **Prophet** from **God**.
- But Herod has a **guilty conscience** and was convinced that **John has** risen to **haunt him**, because as we'll see as we read in **verse 17** he had him **imprisoned** and then again in **verse 27** had him **beheaded**.
- Also notice in **verse 19** that Herod's wife Herodias **had it in for John** because he had been **publicly opposed** to her **marriage** to Herod because it was **unlawful**. She divorced Herod's brother to marry him and John called them out on it.

And this didn't sit well with Herodias and set her on a **bloodthirsty** mission. **Notice that** Herod was afraid of him and was **perplexed** by him, though he heard him **gladly**.

Pause button here: This is reminiscent of **how Ahab** and **Jezebel** related to **Elijah** in 1 Kings. It's a very similar account, proving again that John was the

promised **Elijah** come to make way for the Lord. If you haven't read that account in **1 Kings** in a while perhaps you could spend some time this week doing so.

- Herodias gets her chance to kill John when Herod has a birthday party and invites all the **greatest men** in the surrounding areas to come. Herod has his **stepdaughter** come in and **dance** for the group and as **thank you** Herod **rashly** and **unwisely** (probably **drunkenly**) tells her that he'd like to give her whatever she asks for. And he makes a public oath and promise that he would give her up to half his kingdom (*a **figure** of speech that means that he vows an oath to do it*).
- And Herodias finally gets what she wants and tells her daughter to ask for John's head on a platter. Herod, being too proud in front of these guests to go back on his word, does her bidding and **kills John**.
- The account ends with **John's disciples** coming to pick up his body.

A couple things here to take note of:

1. John experienced the **loss of his life** for **preaching truth** as an emissary from **God to the world**. He had lived his life in **complete service** to God, he didn't see himself as his own man kind of obeying God. He was **God's man, God's servant**, on mission to do the will of God. And he **died for it**.
2. This whole account casts a shadow over the rest of Jesus' ministry because it's a foreshadow of **Jesus' own death**...which we'll find out was his **mission all along**.

The rejection and **oftentimes murder** of the **prophets** and servants of God has been a **symphony being playing** since **Moses** and the **Exodus**.

And John's part in that **symphony** is the **crescendo** leading to its **culmination** and **finale** in the death of the **Son of God**. John's death here is a foreshadow of Jesus' death.

Just a few things in the text to help us see this:

- John died for **confronting Herod** on his **physical** adultery against God.
- Jesus will die for **confronting Israel** on her **spiritual** adultery against himself.
- John died by the **bloodlust** of an angry **Herodias**.
- Jesus will die by the **bloodlust** of his **own angry people**.
- John **died** in part because of **Herod's cowardice**.
- Jesus will **die** in part because of **Pilate's cowardice**.

- John died as a **righteous** and **holy man** in innocence (verse 19).
- Jesus will die as a **sinless sacrifice**, perfectly **innocent**.

- John **lost his life** for the **mission God** had called him to.
- Jesus **lost his life fulfilling the mission of redemption for you and I**.

And this foreshadowing is key because the disciples are **walking** into this same danger. Their calling is the same calling as that of the **prophets** of old, of **John**, and of **Jesus**.

The **proclamation** of God to a sinful world will **lead to loss**.

And for most of them, **eventually, loss** will mean the **loss of their lives**.

Church, if the **prophets**, and **John**, and the **disciples**, and **Jesus** went into the world on a mission from God and **experienced loss**, why do we think it will be **any different for us**?

Listen, our calling is to do follow in the footsteps of these men, all that have gone before. Have you ever considered that you and I are simply the next **ones up to do what Prophets**, and **disciples** have been doing for thousands of years?

I mean, our calling is the same as theirs, flip left just a few pages to Matthew 28:18:

[18] And Jesus came and said to them, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. [19] Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, [20] teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age."

- Matthew 28:18-20

Our mission is to proclaim Christ, the gospel truth to a sinful and hostile world, but it's good to know he's still with us isn't it.

And yet, this **doesn't mean** we won't **experience** loss because being a **servant** of the Lord **necessarily** means **losing** parts of ourselves:

- Loss of **time**,
- Loss of **energy**,
- Loss of **freedoms**,
- Loss of **reputation**
- Loss of **friendships** or **family**
- Loss of an **easy life**
- Maybe loss of **actual life**...

This is what it means to be **on mission** for Christ. We trust the Lord, we know he'll provide like he does for the **disciples**, but it's still a **hard road**.

You and I need to **Proceed at our own risk: to be on mission for Jesus is to live a life of loss**.

Two quick thoughts to help us prepare for loss on the mission:

1. **Though our mission is the same our Gospel is better**

I say better because it's complete. We live after the **resurrection**, we live in the NT church age with a complete canon.

The **Prophet's calling** was to go out into Israel and tell them of their need for repentance to avoid judgment.

John's calling was to go out into Israel and tell them of their need for repentance and their need to look to Jesus.

The **disciple's calling** was to go out into the countryside of Galilee and tell the people of their need for repentance and turning to God, that the Kingdom of God had broken into this dark world.

But church, because Jesus **gave up his life**, our mission and message is better than the **prophets**, the **disciples**, and **John**. They pointed ahead to what they **didn't fully understand**, we point **back** to what we see in full:

That Jesus came to this world to take completely heal the **brokenness** of sin and wrongdoing for all who accept him as their savior.

Listen, our message is one of **hope** and **forgiveness** in Christ who lived a perfect life that we could not live, **nailed our sin** to the cross as he died in our place, rose from the dead conquering sin and death once for all, and is now seated on **High speaking for us**.

And we get to preach that to people who need to hear it.

And **maybe** you're here **this morning** and you have never had a moment to think about Jesus, and if you have you haven't truly considered the good news that the Bible teaches. **Friend**, if that's you this morning than let me let you in on something:

We're all idiots who are here because **Jesus** loves us and we realized we **need His forgiveness**.

None of us are **smarter** than you or better than you. We just love Jesus because he sacrificed his own life for us and my hope this morning is that there is something in you that wants to know more about that. Ask us please because He is all you need.

And Church, you and I stand in a long line of **prophets, disciples, godly men and women** who have been sent by God into the world to proclaim Him...our mission and story are linked with them.

Our work here is **continuation of their work**, we tell Jesus, it's our calling and mission and it's worth it **even it means loss**.

2. **If you aren't ready for loss on Mission, you probably will never be on Mission**

You and I need to be convinced that walking in obedience to Christ on this mission is worth the loss. And it is.

The world needs to hear it, and you and I are part of it.

In the end, any loss you experience on this earth will pale in comparison to the rewards and joys found in heaven.

I guarantee you that the Prophets, John, the disciples, and every Christian who as lost something for the sake of the gospel didn't get to Heaven and say it wasn't worth it. It is, but we need to be prepared for it.

Church, Proceed at our own risk: to be on mission for Jesus is to live a life of loss.

But proceed nonetheless.

Pray

BENEDICTION:

Hebrews 13:20-21

[20] Now may the God of peace who brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, the great shepherd of the sheep, by the blood of the eternal covenant, [21] equip you with everything good that you may do his will, working in us that which is pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory forever and ever. Amen.