

“Equipped For Our Calling in Life”

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2 Corinthians 12:2-10, Mark 6:1-13

“I can’t do it!”, said the little four-year-old girl as her daddy put her on the new bike she received for her birthday. “Don’t worry! The training wheels will keep you up,” her father said. “But I can’t steer,” she replied. “I’ll steer for you.” It was of no avail. No matter how hard the father tried, the girl just wasn’t ready to ride her bike yet. Ever been there? Either as a parent or a child, I’m sure you have. Whether it was trying a new food or riding a new bike or going out on a date for the first time - it’s always the most difficult to do it the first time. After that - it gets easier and easier. Why is the first time always the most difficult? Because we are afraid that we are going to mess up. We are not sure as to what we are doing. We are going beyond the known to the unknown - and we don’t know what to expect.

Imagine how difficult it would have been for the 12 disciples - then - to receive their first real call from Jesus! Here they had been following Jesus up to this point - watching him do the talking and the healing - soaking up His wisdom and knowledge like a bunch of sponges. But then - while they were still green recruits, Jesus turned to them and said, “Now it’s your turn!” You could imagine the hair stand up on the back of these uneducated fishermen’s heads - wondering, “how are we going to do it?” Jesus knew their reservations - their fears. And he knows ours as well. But He does not just send us out naked to the wolves.

Jesus Equips Us for Our Calls in Life

I. With sidekicks

The first thing God equips us with is companions or what is known as “sidekicks.” There have been some famous sidekicks throughout time - Batman always had Robin, Michael Jordan had Scottie Pippen, Sonny had Cher, - the list goes on - of people that worked well together. The Bible also has many examples of sidekicks - both good and bad. David had Jonathan. Moses had Aaron. King Ahab had Jezebel.

For some reason, God basically has “hard wired” us for a need of companionship. As Adam named all of the animals, “Mr. and Mrs. Bear, Mr. and Mrs. Giraffe,” he soon noticed that he had no suitable companion for himself. And even God Himself stated that out all the wonderfully good things about creation, it was “not good” that man was alone. Ecclesiastes 4:10-12 says, if one falls down, his friend can help him up. But pity the one who falls and has no one to help him up! We have a built-in need for companionship.

And so, when Jesus sent his 12 disciples out on their first mission - He knew not to send them out alone. Like the animals on the ark, He sent them out “two by two.” In this way, when they were rejected, they could stand by each other’s side. Together they could shake the dust off their feet. Together they could encourage one another not to give up. Jesus knew that especially at the beginning of their ministries they would need to feed off one another.

This is something that we still need to be aware of today. When we venture into new territory - when we face setbacks and difficulties - God gives us each other as gifts - to encourage each other through this life’s journey. We need each other! Your spouses need your companionship more than your money. If you know someone that has had to move into a nursing home or who has been living alone - don’t forget that they still need you to visit them! If you know someone who has recently lost a member of the family - they don’t just need a card. They need your companionship - someone to be there for them.

Jesus Also Equips Us for Our Calls in Life

II. With provisions

Imagine then, the call of the disciples. Jesus said, take nothing for the journey except a staff—no bread, no bag, no money in your belts. Wear sandals but not an extra tunic. so how would they survive? Whenever you enter a house, stay there until you leave that town.

Why did Jesus send them out this way? To teach them a lesson! What was the lesson? You’ll need to trust in God to provide for you! But how would God provide? Through the believers that were brought to the faith through the message! When they won converts to Christianity, those converts would then have an opportunity to provide the 12 apostles with all the food and bedding

they needed. And what happened? The 12 went forward, and God provided! None of them starved to death on their missions. None of them came back naked! God provided for them through fellow Christians - teaching the disciples the idea of a team concept - how the people had a role as well - they would provide for them in time of need.

How many of you have ever been in a situation such as that - where you had to rely on someone else? It is a lesson in humility. Many elderly are embarrassed to ask their children to take them into their homes. They had been self-sufficient their whole lives. They do not want to be a “burden” on anyone. The same goes for some on their view of the government. Many do not want to rely on the government for any help. When a hard-working person loses his job due to health problems - the last thing he wants to do is apply for welfare until he can find another one. God sometimes puts us through these situations to remind us that we are not the ones who are really providing for ourselves. God is! He has provided us with friends, family, spiritual leaders and a government to help us in times of need. It teaches us that we can't get by on our own! We need the help that God gives us through each other. When we allow others to help us in a time of real need - it then gives them an opportunity to share their Christian faith as well.

And Jesus Equips Us for Our Calls in Life

III. With power

If you think about it - Jesus couldn't have picked much worse people in the eyes of the world to carry on His ministry than what he did. He picked a bunch of fishermen - uneducated men who were not talented speakers. How in the world would these guys be able to carry on this ministry? It would be easy to be confident if Jesus was the spokesman - but now Jesus was putting the ball in their corner! How would they do it?

They would do it because Jesus gave them authority. He gave them the power to chase out demons - to raise the dead - to preach the Word of God to people to repent! It didn't matter if they weren't that educated or polished speakers. These uneducated green recruits went and “THEY DROVE OUT MANY DEMONS

AND ANOINTED MANY SICK PEOPLE WITH OIL AND HEALED THEM.” The Word of God did its job.

If you think about all that God gives us for OUR journeys - isn't it a miracle when you think about Jesus. He went through much of His public ministry with no place to lay his head. He had no place He could call home. And when He arrived at the height of his journey - to the cross - He didn't even have a garment to wear - the soldiers took it off him. All he had was a crown of thorns!

When He went through life - He had companions to help in His journey. Angels supported him after He fought the devil in the desert. The Father answered His prayer in the Garden of Gethsemane and encouraged Jesus at the Mount of Transfiguration. But when Jesus got to His most difficult part of the journey - to the cross - he had no one to lean on. He was all by Himself.

The only thing Jesus had to hold onto -was the Word of God. By clinging to that Word - Jesus trusted that His Father would raise Him after 3 days in the grave. With that Word of God - Jesus arose victorious - and left the sins of the world in the grave. It was with true faith in the Father, that Jesus finished His journey to the cross - and rose victorious as the Savior of the world. Without a friend, without a garment - but with the Word - Jesus fought the battle and won the salvation of the world. Without a friend, without a garment - but with the Word - Jesus saved us.

How fortunate we are, my friends to have such equipment from God. Every day is a new and scary journey in life. But He always gives us provisions - ability to work for our daily bread; extra money; clothing to wear; houses to live in; so many, many, material provisions. He gives us sidekicks. God gives us angels. He gives us each friends, children, parents, and pastors - to help and support each other in time of trouble. But most importantly - He gives us Himself in His Word and in His Sacraments. In God's Word, Jesus promises us, “NEVER WILL I LEAVE YOU! NEVER WILL I FORSAKE YOU.” With these provisions of daily bread, companionship, and our Savior - who of us can claim that we haven't been provided for? There is no way. We know and trust that Jesus equips us for our calls in life - whatever they may be. Amen.