

7/8/2018

“Healing Hands: Send Forth”

Scripture: Mark 6:1-13

Series: HEALING HANDS

Theme: Sending forth involves partnering with one another to share God’s love, trusting God’s provision plans, and embracing God’s power to drive out demons and bring healing.

Mark 6:1-13 (NIV)

Jesus left there and went to his hometown, accompanied by his disciples. ² When the Sabbath came, he began to teach in the synagogue, and many who heard him were amazed.

“Where did this man get these things?” they asked. “What’s this wisdom that has been given him? What are these remarkable miracles he is performing? ³ Isn’t this the carpenter? Isn’t this Mary’s son and the brother of James, Joseph, Judas and Simon? Aren’t his sisters here with us?” And they took offense at him.

⁴ Jesus said to them, “A prophet is not without honor except in his own town, among his relatives and in his own home.” ⁵ He could not do any miracles there, except lay his hands on a few sick people and heal them. ⁶ He was amazed at their lack of faith.

Jesus Sends Out the Twelve

Then Jesus went around teaching from village to village. ⁷ Calling the Twelve to him, he began to send them out two by two and gave them authority over impure spirits.

⁸ These were his instructions: “Take nothing for the journey except a staff—no bread, no bag, no money in your belts. ⁹ Wear sandals but not an extra shirt. ¹⁰ Whenever you enter a house, stay there until you leave that town. ¹¹ And if any place will not welcome you or listen to you, leave that place and shake the dust off your feet as a testimony against them.”

¹² They went out and preached that people should repent. ¹³ They drove out many demons and anointed many sick people with oil and healed them.

It’s summertime again. Perhaps, some of you have already been traveling, and many more have plans to do so this summer. I know that when I go traveling anywhere overnight for more than a day or two, I always carry a duffle bag or piece of luggage. And, even in my daily travels, I have a small black bag to carry some essentials and other possible items I might need, because I don’t like stuffing my pockets.

So, I’ve often pondered, and tried, to do as Jesus instructed his first apostles (which literally means those who are sent out). That is . . . to take nothing for the journey except a staff, which would have been used I would think, to deal with hills and perhaps some animals.

Why was it that Jesus instructed them to go from him? Well, as our series and today’s message title imply, it was to send them forth as God’s healing hands.

Let’s take a closer look at those instructions and see how we do, and can further use them even today to bring healing in our community and world.

† Partnering with one another to share God's love

First, we are sent forth by Jesus to share the good news of God's love. The "good news" or "gospel" of Jesus Christ is that even though we have wandered from God and God's way to a good, abundant, and happy life, God still loves and cares for us.

The good news is that even if we have hurt ourselves and others by disobeying God and living only for self-interest, God still wants to forgive and restore us and our relationships.

And, after we have decided to follow Jesus and his way, we, as those first apostles, are sent out, partnering with one another, in this case, to share that opportunity with even more people. It helps to do that in pairs, or as partners, because it can be an ongoing need and experience. Especially when we are out in the world, whether at school, work or other environments, we may find ourselves being challenged to keep the faith, let alone share it with others.

To have someone who is a "faith friend" or "partner in faith" is helpful. We can honestly share our struggles and sorrows, as well as our victories and joys. In that way as well, we not only know that God is always with us but have someone in faith we can learn from or learn on. And, we can also provide that same support and accountability for them, too. So, if you don't already have someone, I encourage you to pray about it and ask someone today or soon.

We also work together to invite people to know Jesus Christ, which is part of our mission in making disciples of him. We invite people to have that personal relationship with him for themselves.

At CCUMC, we do all those things in a variety of ways, especially through our Outreach and Missions. This month our focus is Back 2 School Supplies. Even though they won't be distributed until next month or later, you can pair up with someone or others who want to make a difference in the lives of children returning to school in the fall.

† Trusting God's provision plans

Another aspect of Jesus sending us out is trusting God's provision plan. God will provide what we need. But, as I mentioned earlier, it can be a challenge for us to trust and believe. We may not always know just how God will work, but he does. God often uses those whom we bless with his love and grace, to extend it in return or even before we share it.

I know that hospitality was always a part of my family life growing up, both at home and with extended family. For us, for friends and even for strangers, there was always a welcome and offer to share something to eat and drink.

And, I am grateful to say the same of the congregations I have served in many places.

I also know that when I first started out in ministry it was a step of faith. And for a number of years, especially with a young family, it was a challenge to get by. But, I know that God was with me, and by

his love and grace often working through others along with good stewardship of resources, we were able to make it.

So, let me offer words of encouragement to you of any age to trust God to provide as you step out in faith to share his love and healing with others.

And as a congregation, let us encourage one another to trust in God to provide what we need to continue to do the same. We are blessed with faithful leaders who share a vision and dreams of how we can and do make a difference for many lives around us. And, we have many who support our partnership with others in our community through the Chesapeake City Ecumenical Association, as well as through our United Methodist connections.

† **Embracing God's power**

Finally, we are sent forth to drive out demons and bring healing by embracing God's power.

Whether you believe in actual demons or not, our world is full of dark or evil influences around us. They seek our harm, illness, destruction, even death. What's more, they would keep us from knowing and experiencing the fullness of God's love and truth. They would keep us from the joy and fullness of life that God desires and intends for us.

I personally believe in spiritual beings, such as angels. And, I believe in those which have been cast down from heaven because of their false pride above God. I believe that they often use diseases -- including addictions -- to bring doubt, fear, self-loathing, blaming others, envy, excesses, and many other negative thoughts, feelings and actions to separate us from God and others.

I believe it can be demons or even influences from within us, which can breed greed, lust, avarice, hatred, and other harmful and painful conditions in our lives.

But, I also know from personal experience and those of many others that God is greater than all of those demons and influences!

Jesus has the power to cast them out. And, he has given the Holy Spirit, so that we can cast them out in his name, as well.

So, **embrace God's power today!** Call upon the Holy Spirit to cast them out of your life or the lives of others you know. Pray in Jesus' name to bring new and abundant life, peace, hope and joy.

(BLESSING OF HANDS)

I invite you now to bring your hands forward, palms up, for this blessing:

Bless, O Lord, these hands.

May the Holy Spirit be their guidance

That they might be your hands wherever they go.

That they might comfort and encourage.

That they might build up your kingdom.
In the Name of Jesus, go forth.
Amen.