

Trial Runs

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Preacher: Lee Roberts

[0 : 00] Amen. Tonight we'll cover Mark chapter 6 verses 7 through 13.

! Let's go ahead and read those verses. Speaking about Jesus, Mark 6, 7 through 13 say, ! 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 to 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. Here's the main idea for tonight's passage.

[1 : 08] Jesus expects the apostles to emulate him. Once again, Jesus expects the apostles to emulate him. One of the themes of Mark's gospel is Jesus' authority.

The authorities and rulers of the demonic realm are no match for Jesus as he comes and routes them. We see a different picture, though, when it comes to human authority.

Human authorities are blind to the identity of Jesus. His family rejects him as crazy. The scribes reject him as demon-possessed. And his hometown takes great offense at him.

However, a few people have believed in Jesus. Those people included his disciples. As early as Mark 1, verses 16-20, we saw Jesus pick his first disciples.

Here are Mark 1, verses 16-20. Passing alongside the Sea of Galilee, he saw Simon and Andrew, the brother of Simon, casting a net into the sea, for they were fishermen.

[2 : 08] And Jesus said to them, Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men. And immediately they left their nets and followed him. And going on a little further, he saw James the son of Zebedee and John his brother, who were in their boat mending the nets.

And immediately he called them, and they left their father Zebedee in the boat with the hired servants and followed him. Since then, we've seen Jesus' group of disciples slowly grow as we've studied the first few chapters in Mark.

In Mark 3, verses 13-19, Jesus selected 12 of his disciples to be apostles. Listen to Mark 3, verses 13-15.

And he went up on the mountain, that's Jesus, and called to him those whom he desired, and they came to him. And he appointed 12, whom he also named apostles, so that they might be with him, and he might send them out to preach and have authority to cast out demons.

We won't read verses 16-19, but verses 16-19 of Mark 3 gave us the names of those 12. We read in the New Testament about disciples and apostles, and we tend to think that the two words are synonyms.

[3 : 25] They really are different. A disciple is a learner or a student. An apostle is one who is commissioned by his master with the master's own authority. Then he's sent out in that master's name.

That distinction is very important. The New Testament tells us that the prophets and the apostles are the foundation of the church. We see that in Ephesians 2-20.

The apostles had what we call apostolic authority over the church of all ages, which authority they were given by the one who sent them. We rarely think of Jesus this way, but the first apostle in the New Testament was Jesus.

Listen to what Jesus said in John 12, verses 49 and 50. Again, these verses are John 12, 49 and 50. Jesus said, For I have not spoken on my own authority, but the Father who sent me has himself

given me a commandment, what to say and what to speak.

And I know that his commandment is eternal life. What I say, therefore, I say as the Father has told me. So we can see that our Lord himself is the supreme apostle of the Father.

[4 : 37] He carries in his ministry nothing less than the authority of the Father. The twelve, however, were Jesus' apostles, having been chosen from the much larger group of disciples who followed Jesus.

Jesus gave them his own authority. If you noticed in Mark 3, 14 and 15, those verses told us that the apostles would do three things.

It said they would be with Jesus, they would be sent out to preach, and they would be given authority to cast out demons. Until this point in Mark's gospel, the disciples have been doing the first thing that they were called to do.

They have been with Jesus. Jesus has been doing all the preaching and teaching. In tonight's verses, the disciples begin finding out how well they can preach and how well they can perform miracles.

They get to experience trial runs to see what life will be like when Jesus is physically absent. In Mark 6, 7 through 13, we see Jesus give authority to the apostles a second time.

[5 : 42] They are given authority again to preach, to cast out demons, and this time to heal. The goal of their missions is the same as the goal for their other missions that will come after Jesus' death and resurrection.

We'll break tonight's passage into four sections, starting with verses 7 through 9. And in verses 7 through 9, we see the messengers prepared. So the messengers prepared is your first section.

Look just at verse 7 again. Again, this is Jesus here, and it says, And he called the twelve and began to send them out two by two, and gave them authority over the unclean spirits.

The words called and send are the same terms used earlier when Jesus called the disciples and sent them. They're given identical authority to cast out demons or unclean spirits.

The new addition here is the detail that they were sent out two by two. Jesus gave these twelve men both the apostolic authority and the divine ability to do the job he sent them to do.

[6 : 50] They were not on their own. They represented Jesus in all that they did and said. The fact that Jesus sent the apostles out two by two had both a practical and legal significance.

We can see the practical wisdom of this strategy. Going in pairs would provide support for each other. It also would provide protection and camaraderie. But there's also something deeper happening here.

This whole narrative is about getting the word out that the kingdom has come and that it's time for people to repent. There's a judgment coming as in a court of law. Two by two would satisfy the biblical requirement that there be at least two witnesses in legal actions.

In Numbers 35 verse 30, God first set the requirement for at least two witnesses. Here is Numbers 35 verse 30. If anyone kills a person, the murderer shall be put to death on the evidence of witnesses, but no person shall be put to death on the testimony of one witness.

Interestingly, the first time God mentions the requirement for two witnesses was in a case where the earthly life of the accused was at stake. As the apostles were sent out in the New Testament, those apostles carried the message that affected their hearers' eternal lives.

[8 : 14] The apostles probably felt reasonably good about what Jesus said in Mark chapter 6 verse 7. Nearly every person likes to have authority, and the apostles just heard Jesus say that they would have authority over unclean spirit, another term for demons, just like Jesus did.

Jesus' next instructions likely introduce some questions in the apostles' minds. Those next instructions come in Mark chapter 6 verses 8 and 9. Here are Mark 6, 8 and 9 again.

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 to put on two tunics.

Before we talk about what the verses mean, let's deal with some controversy generated by the parallel accounts in Matthew and Luke. Listen to Matthew's version.

These verses are Matthew chapter 10, verses 5 through 15. So here are Matthew 10, 5 through 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.

[9 : 35] Heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse lepers, cast out demons. You receive 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. Now here's Luke's account.

These verses are Luke chapter 9, verses 1 through 5. Luke 9, 1 through 5 say, And he called the twelve together and gave them power and authority over all demons and to cure diseases.

[10 : 45] 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. Matthew's account seems to say that the apostles are to have no sandals and no staff. Luke 9, 4 also says, Take no staff. Mark reports that Jesus told them to wear sandals and to take nothing except a staff.

So let's deal with the comments about the staff first. There's a distinction between the words translated as staff in the different accounts. Think about Psalm 23, 4.

Psalm 23, 4 says, Your rod and your staff, they comfort me. The rod and staff were traditional implements of a shepherd. The staff was the shepherd's crook by which he could guide his sheep.

[11 : 55] That staff also served him as a walking stick. And that is what Mark is talking about. Matthew and Luke have the rod in view.

The rod was a shepherd's weapon against animals such as bears or lions or against thieves. There's no conflict between Mark and the rest of the Gospels. Jesus was telling them, You're not allowed to take powerful rods with you, but you can take a walking stick.

Matthew and Mark also use different Greek words for the footwear that Jesus referenced. Both of those words get translated into English as sandals.

According to Mark, Jesus permitted them to take light sandals, but Matthew notes that Jesus prohibited them from taking heavier shoes. So now that we've explained the variations in the different accounts, let's go back and look at the significance of what Jesus told the apostles to take. Here are Mark 6, verses 8 and 9 again. 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.

[13 : 07] The prohibitions against taking bread and against taking money are self-explanatory, but we need to understand what Jesus meant when he forbade them from taking a bag.

That Greek word can mean either a traveler's bag or a beggar's bag. So commentators are split about which bag Jesus meant. Based upon the context, Jesus likely meant both.

In other words, the apostles were prohibited from taking either a suitcase or a beggar's bag. In verse 9, the limitation of taking only one tunic would have provided some reassurance.

In the ancient world, travelers often had to sleep outdoors. The purpose of the second tunic was to serve as a covering against the elements, kind of a rudimentary sleeping bag.

So Jesus was telling his apostles that they would not need to worry about that because they would be indoors at night. Even with the reassurance that the apostles would only need one tunic, the question becomes, why would Jesus limit the provisions that the apostles could take?

[14 : 17] Jesus insisted on these instructions and restrictions to teach the twelve the vital importance of trusting in God's faithfulness and of seeing God provide. They needed to know from firsthand experience the truth of Jesus' words from the Sermon on the Mount.

Listen to those words in Matthew 6, verses 31 through 34. In Matthew 6, 31 through 34, Jesus said, Therefore do not be anxious, saying, What shall we eat?

Or what shall we drink? Or what shall we wear? For the Gentiles seek after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them all. But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you.

Therefore do not be anxious about tomorrow, for tomorrow will be anxious for itself. Sufficient for the day is its own trouble. As the apostles preached the message of the kingdom, they could

confidently depend on God to supply their needs.

The restrictions Jesus established before the first mission were temporary, however. Jesus later reminded the apostles of God's provision during this first mission.

[15:34] Listen to what Jesus said in the upper room on the night before his crucifixion. These verses are Luke chapter 22, verses 35 and 36.

And in Luke 22, 35 through 36, we see this. And he, talking about Jesus, said to them, When I sent you out with no money bag or knapsack or sandals, did you like anything?

They said, Nothing. He said to them, But now let the one who has a money bag take it, and likewise a knapsack. And let the one who has no sword sell his cloak and buy one.

In addition to seeing the reminder that God provided for the apostles on that first mission, we also can see from these verses how the instructions on the first mission were temporary. In the upper room, Jesus told the apostles to use the resources they have available to them to get the supplies that they will need in the future.

But in our Mark text tonight, Jesus clearly wanted to teach his apostles that they could trust God. He's telling them to take what they currently have and to take nothing else.

[16:46] The limitations on their supplies also demonstrated how serious their mission was. Listen to this quote from Jason Meyer. The urgency and haste of this mission has overtones of judgment.

God is about to act. He is going to reveal something every bit as important as the Exodus. But this time, the judgment will not fall on the Egyptians, but upon the Israelites if they do not repent.

Jesus likely intended for the apostles to think about the Exodus when they heard what supplies they were supposed to take. Turn over to Exodus chapter 12, verse 11.

Exodus 12, verse 11 is where God instructed the Israelites about what they were to take with them when they left Egypt. I'm sure you have this memorized from when Willard taught this a couple of years ago.

But here is Exodus 12, 11. The first part of the verse talks about eating the Passover lamb, but pay particular attention to how the Israelites were supposed to be dressed when they ate that lamb.

[17:56] In this manner you shall eat it, with your belt fastened, your sandals on your feet, and your staff in your hand. In the first sending of the apostles, Jesus similarly instructs the apostles to take only one staff, along with the clothes and sandals they already were wearing.

Their parallel with the Passover here may have been intended to demonstrate that a new era in redemptive history was about to begin, starting with an exodus of God's people from apostasy.

So we've seen the messengers prepared. Let's move on to the second section of the passage. In Mark chapter 6, verses 10 and 11, we see the method pronounced.

So the method pronounced is the second section. Listen to verse 10 again. And Jesus said to them, Whenever you enter a house, stay there until you depart from there.

In that day, ends were often dangerous. Travelers generally stayed in people's homes as they journeyed from one town to the next. The twelve were no exception.

[19:06] But Jesus added an important caveat in that regard. When they decided to stay at a house for lodging, they were to stay in that same house until they left town. Given their power to heal diseases and cast out demons, the apostles likely received invitations to upgrade their comfort by changing homes.

But they were to avoid moving from house to house. That resisted the temptation to receive money from more people. After they accepted one initial invitation, they were to decline all others.

Staying in one place also would distinguish the apostles from traveling false teachers who made a career of going house to house, seeking money and taking advantage of the resources of unsuspecting hosts.

False teachers used their hypocritical religious positions as a means for material gain. Does that paragraph sound like it could have been written about today? Some things never change.

We still see false teachers today who make a career out of seeking money and taking advantage of unsuspecting people. The lesson for the twelve was that they were to possess contentment.

[20:19] Once they settled in someone's house, they were not to seek nicer accommodations. According to Matthew chapter 10 verses 8 and 9 that we read earlier, Jesus also forbade them from using their ministry to make money.

The disciples were never to put a price on their ministry. In Mark chapter 6 verse 11, Jesus told the apostles what to do if a place failed to show them hospitality.

He said, 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.

Shaking the dust off your feet is a prophetic gesture that communicates a massive and tragic irony. Jews shook the dust from their feet when they returned to Israel from Gentile territory.

The tables are turned here with this gesture. When the apostles act out this gesture within the land of Israel, the apostles are saying that this place is not part of God's people.

[21 : 23] It's a pagan place and it will be cut off from God unless the people repent. Jesus' instruction in verse 11 also parallels the sermon on the mount.

Listen to what Jesus said in Matthew 7, verse 6. In Matthew 7, verse 6, Jesus said, Do not give dogs what is holy and do not throw your pearls before pigs lest they trample them underfoot and turn to attack you.

The Jews would rightly have been horrified at the thought of throwing to the dogs that which had been consecrated to God as holy. They would have been similarly disgusted at the notion of tossing valuable jewelry into the pen of unclean pigs.

Jesus used that as a shocking double analogy to describe those who rejected the gospel and treated it as common and worthless. As the twelve went throughout the region of Galilee, they would undoubtedly encounter those whom Christ described as spiritual dogs and pigs, hard-hearted Jewish hypocrites who smugly snubbed the sanctity and preciousness of the good news.

When they came across such people, the apostles were to exercise discernment by recognizing the need to leave and to go preach to those who were more receptive. Those of you with the King James or New King James version of the Bible may think that I keep omitting part of verse 11.

[22 : 54] Mark 6.11 in those versions includes another sentence that the English Standard Version lacks. Here's Mark 6.11 in the New King James. Jesus said, And whoever will not receive you nor hear you, when you depart from there, shake off the dust under your feet as a testimony against them.

And here comes the added sentence, Assuredly, I say to you, it will be more tolerable for Sodom and Gomorrah in the day of judgment than for that city. The ESV excludes the sentence about Sodom and Gomorrah because that sentence is missing from some older manuscripts of Mark's gospel.

However, in Matthew's longer version of what Jesus told the disciples, Matthew records that Jesus did reference Sodom and Gomorrah. We read the Matthew verses earlier, but here is the ESV's version of Matthew chapter 10 verses 14 and 15 again.

Jesus said in Matthew 10 14 and 15, 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. Jesus was saying that anyone who rejected the good news of the gospel from his representatives would incur a more severe judgment than the evil Old Testament cities of Sodom and Gomorrah, which of course God destroyed by fire.

[24 : 28] Listen to this hard-hitting quote from R.C. Sproul. He said, There is no such thing as indifference to Christ. You are for him or against him.

In the kingdom of God, there is no neutral ground. In the church today, when we do mass evangelism, the standard technique is to offer an invitation after the sermon.

We say, As many as would like to respond to Christ, come now. However, we do not usually add, As many as would not like to respond to Christ, go to hell. But the gospel is a two-edged sword.

If we receive it, the benefit is eternal life. If we reject it fully and finally, we do so to our everlasting peril. He continued, There are at least a couple of lessons for us in this chilling statement from our Lord.

First, Jesus was not hesitant to talk about a final judgment. He talked about it quite a lot. There will be a last judgment and every one of us will have to appear.

[25 : 34] Second, the last judgment will be a matter of degrees. There are degrees of sin. There are degrees of obedience. Though our works carry no intrinsic merit, Jesus often said that our reward in heaven will be according to the measure of obedience that we give in this life.

In the same way, there will be levels of punishment in hell. Paul warns the impenitent Romans against storing up wrath for yourself on the day of wrath when God's righteous judgment will be revealed.

That comes from Romans chapter 2, verse 5. And then he closes by saying, It should chill us to the bone to hear Jesus say that there will be greater judgment given to those people who rejected the apostles than even the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah, which symbolized the worst of human decadence in the Old Testament.

So far, we've seen the messengers prepared and the method pronounced. In verse 12, we see the message proclaimed. So the message proclaimed is your third set of blanks.

Check out verse 12 again. So they went out and proclaimed that people should repent. That message is straightforward. However, that message often is ignored.

[26 : 52] The word proclaimed refers to the authoritative public pronouncement of vital information by a herald or forerunner. In village after village, the twelve functioned as Christ's personal heralds, emulating his example by publicly preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God.

The good news that sinners could be reconciled to God and enter his kingdom of blessing, hope, and salvation. In the same way that both John the Baptist and Jesus emphasized repentance, the apostles declared that sinners must turn from sin and believe the gospel.

Only those who recognize the bankruptcy of their spiritual condition, penitently crying out to God for mercy and embracing his son in faith, would be saved.

If repentance was the first word out of the mouth of John the Baptist, Jesus, and the apostles, it must be an important component of the gospel and of the Christian life.

J.C. Ryle said, the necessity of repentance may seem at first sight a very simple and elementary truth, and yet volumes might be written to show the fullness of the doctrine and its suitability to every age and time and to every rank and class of mankind.

[28 : 12] It is inseparably connected with right views of God, of human nature, of sin, of Christ, of holiness, and of heaven. All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.

All need to be brought to a sense of their sins, to a sorrow for them, to a willingness to give them up, and to a hunger and thirst after pardon. All, in a word, need to be born again and flee to Christ. This is repentance unto life. Nothing less than this is required for anyone's salvation. Nothing less than this ought to be pressed on people by everyone who claims to teach Bible religion.

We must call people to repent if we want to walk in the steps of the apostles. And when people have repented, we must call them to repent more and more till their last day.

Thomas Watson, the English Puritan, wrote extensively on the doctrine of repentance. Watson identified six elements of repentance, and here's how Daniel Aiken summarized those elements.

[29 : 22] The first is sight of sin, where a person comes to themselves and clearly views their lifestyle as sinful. If a disciple fails to see their sin, they are rarely motivated to repent.

The second ingredient for true repentance is sorrow for that sin. repentance is sorrow and not just the consequences.

Repentance includes godly grief, a holy agony. The fruits of repentance will be expressed in genuine, anguishing sorrow over the offense itself and not just the consequences.

The sorrow for sin is more than just a worldly grief. It will be seen in the ongoing actions it produces. The third ingredient of repentance is confession of sin.

The humble sinner voluntarily passes judgment on himself as he sincerely admits to the specific sins of his heart. Fourth is shame for sin.

[30 : 29] Repentance causes a holy bashfulness. Ezra prayed in Ezra 9.6, O my God, I am ashamed and blushed to lift my face to you, my God, for our iniquities have risen higher than our heads and our guilt has mounted up to the heavens.

The fifth ingredient in repentance is hatred of sin. We must hate our sin to the core. We hate sin more deeply when we love Jesus more fully.

Repentance begins with the love of God and ends with the hatred of sin. Tolerating sin is a willful leap toward committing that sin. True repentance loathes sin deeply.

Finally, the sixth progressive ingredient of repentance is turning from sin and returning to the Lord with all your heart as Joel 2.12 says. Acts 26.20 reminds us that this turning from sin implies a notable change.

and Ezekiel records these words of God to the house of Israel. This verse is Ezekiel 14.6. He says, Repent and turn away from your idols and turn away your faces from all your abominations.

[31 : 48] The goal of repentance is not to manufacture peace among others with perfunctory repentance, but rather to turn to God wholly and fully. Most importantly, repentance is more than

just a turning away from sin.

It also is a turning of repentance toward God and a faith in our Lord Jesus. That comes from Acts chapter 20 verse 21. We should repent of our doubt by believing in the goodness, greatness, and graciousness of God and turning in faith to trust in the freedom Christ offers in the gospel.

Repentance is rooted in a hatred of sin and a joyful awareness of God's loving kindness which leads to joy. Romans 2:4 reminds us God's kindness is meant to lead you to repentance.

We should rejoice that Christ has done everything for us, all that we need to secure our salvation and our growth in holiness. So we've considered the messengers prepared, the method pronounced, and the message proclaimed.

We have one more verse to cover. In verse 13 we see the miracles performed. So the miracles performed is your last section. Here is verse 13 again.

[33 : 09] And they cast out many demons and anointed with oil many who were sick and healed them. John MacArthur said, by the nature of the miracles they performed, the authenticating supernatural power given to the apostles also demonstrated the compassion and loving kindness of God.

Jesus could have demonstrated his divine power in many ways that would not have relieved human suffering. But Jesus chose to do wonders that primarily delivered the sick and suffering, thereby reflecting God's compassion.

In contrast to the callous legalism of the Jewish religious leaders, Jesus was continually sympathetic, tender, and compassionate. The twelve were enabled to follow his example. people. As you look at Mark 6:13, you may have noticed that the apostles do one thing that we have never seen Jesus do, and that is anointing people with oil.

Olive oil was sometimes used for medicinal purposes, but that was not its purpose here. The apostles healed the sick miraculously without the use of medicine.

[34 : 22] But in the Old Testament, olive oil also was used to symbolize God's presence and authority, especially in the anointing of priests and kings. The apostles then anointed the sick with oil to symbolize the fact that their authority came from God and not from within themselves.

They were not the source of their power, but only the channels for God's power. By using a simple symbol familiar to first century Jews, the apostles passed the glory back to the Lord himself.

As God incarnate, Jesus needed no such symbol when he healed. Jesus needed no such symbol when he healed because he was and is God.

The preaching of the kingdom and the signs of the kingdom belong together. It's not enough to have the signs without the preaching, nor should the preaching be separated from the signs.

The signs confirm the authenticity of the message and take us deeper into it. For example, the gospel declares the victory of Jesus over Satan. Matthew, Mark, and Luke record numerous occasions when demons are cast out, which Jesus ultimately did at the cross.

[35 : 37] The miracles point forward to Jesus' ultimate victory. Similarly, Jesus purchased our healing at the cross. In heaven, there will be no souls with any sickness, and the resurrection body will never get sick.

The cross has purchased both. When God brings healing either in Jesus' time on earth or today, it's a preview of the greater healing to come.

Remember the main idea. Jesus expects the apostles to emulate him. Regardless of what false teachers say, no apostles exist today.

an apostle had to meet specific criteria that are impossible for anyone to meet today. For example, the apostle had to be an eyewitness to the resurrected Christ.

Given that no apostle exists today in the sense of the biblical apostles whom we see in tonight's text, you may be wondering why the main idea matters for you. Well, the answer is simple.

[36 : 43] Jesus still expects his followers today to emulate him. We too should proclaim the gospel and warn of God's judgment if people refuse to repent of their sins.

Though contemporary pastors, preachers, teachers, and all true believers have not been given miraculous power like that delegated to the apostles, the principles contained in this passage clearly are applicable to all who would seek to faithfully serve the Lord Jesus.

Believers serve the Lord knowing that like the twelve, they will have to appear before Christ to give an account. J.C. Ryle pointedly got to the heart of what everyone needs to consider.

Ryle said, let us never turn away from a passage like this without asking ourselves, what are we doing with the gospel? We live in a Christian country.

We have the Bible in our houses. We hear of the salvation of the gospel frequently every year. But have we received it into our hearts? Have we really obeyed it in our lives?

[37 : 48] Have we in short laid hold on the hope set before us, taken up the cross and followed Jesus? If not, we are far worse than the heathen that bowed down to woodworkings and stones.

We are far more guilty than the people of Sodom and Gomorrah. They never heard the gospel and therefore never rejected it. But as for us, we hear the gospel and yet will not believe, may we search our own hearts and take care that we do not ruin our own souls.

Then he says, have we ourselves repented? This, after all, is the question that concerns us most. It is good to know what the apostles taught.

It is good to be familiar with the whole system of Christian doctrine. But it is far better to know repentance by experience and to feel it inwardly in our hearts.

May we never rest till we know and feel that we have repented. There are no impenitent people in the kingdom of heaven. All who enter in there have felt, mourned over, forsaken, and sought pardon for sin.

[38 : 57] This must be our experience if we hope to be saved. for those of us who have repented, we should take the gospel message to others.

Remember what Paul said in 2 Corinthians chapter 5 verse 20. 2 Corinthians 5.20 says, Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, God making his appeal through us.

We implore you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. Let's pray. Father, we thank you for the reminder we see in Scripture tonight.

We thank you how you empowered the apostles initially to take your message to others. Let us emulate that as we take your message to others.

And let us never sugarcoat the gospel by leaving out the need for repentance. Let us also search our hearts and make sure that we truly have repented and that every time we sin, we repent again.

[40 : 02] Thank you, Lord, for what you have done for us. Let us be ever more willing to share your gospel with others. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.