

MARK 6:8-13

NO GUARANTEES

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 tunic. 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, shake the dust off your feet when you leave, 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.

Total dependence on God does not guarantee success; not even in your God-given task in this world. In the middle of Jesus' instruction to the Twelve, he tells them what do when they and their message are rejected. But, why would we expect any different reception than Jesus himself received? Jesus wanted his disciples to be prepared to depend upon him, not only in the practical matters of their mission, but also for the results of their ministry.

We have it all wrong when we devise elaborate programs and clever strategies for evangelism, with our focus on the number of souls saved. The strategy we are given by Jesus is one of relationship building rather than program development. Our attention is to be paid to individuals and not techniques. And that is where our problems arise. Built into a real meaningful relationship is the possibility of rejection. We don't like to be rejected, and we have enough experience to want to avoid the possibility. Yet, Jesus knows we will face rejection and gives us the tools to deal with it. We are not to take it personally. Rather, we are to move on and find someone who will listen. We are sowers and our responsibility is to scatter seed. We are not called to prepare the soil so that it will be receptive to the seed. We scatter the seed and the presence of the seed is the testimony that the kingdom of God has been announced to that person – and that they have rejected it.

Preach the Gospel indiscriminately, rejoice with those who receive it, mourn for those who reject it, but keep on broadcasting it as you walk through this life.

Dear God, protect me from having more concern for myself and how I am received, than with your Gospel and the people with whom I share. Help me to totally depend upon you for your message and its proclamation. Keep before me that I am not responsible for anyone's conversion. My job is to announce and demonstrate the Good News. Grow a love for people within me that I will not get hurt or angry when the message is rejected, but will continue to share your message with all I meet. Amen.