

# Co-mission: Jesus and Us

*Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.*

Date: 13 November 2011

Preacher: Jonny Grant

[ 0 : 00 ] Mark's Gospel, chapter 6, verses 60-30, and it's on page 1008.

Then Jesus went around teaching from village to village. Calling the twelve to him, he sent them out two by two and gave them authority over evil spirits.

These were his instructions. Take nothing for the journey except a staff. No bread, no bag, no money in your belt. Wear sandals but not an extra tunic.

Whenever you enter a house, stay there until you leave that town. 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.

They went out and preached that people should repent. They drove out many demons and anointed many sick people with oil and healed them. King Herod heard about this, for Jesus' name had become well known.

[ 1 : 05 ] Some were saying, John the Baptist has been raised from the dead and that is why miraculous powers are at work in him. Others said, he is Elijah. And still others claimed he is a prophet, like one of the prophets of long ago.

But when Herod heard this, he said, John the man I beheaded has been raised from the dead. For Herod himself had given orders to have John arrested and he had him bound and put in prison. He did this because of Herodias, his brother Philip's wife, whom he had married. For John had been saying to Herod, it is not lawful for you to have your brother's wife.

So Herod, Herod, nursed a grudge against John and wanted to kill him. But she was not able to because Herod feared John and protected him, knowing him to be a righteous and holy man. When Herod heard John, he was greatly puzzled, yet he liked to listen to him. Finally, the opportune time came. On his birthday, Herod gave a banquet for his high officials and military commanders and the leading men of Galilee.

[ 2 : 13 ] When the daughter of Herod came in and danced, she pleased Herod and his dinner guests. The king said to the girl, ask me for anything you want and I will give it to you.

And he promised her with an oath, whatever you ask, I will give you up to half my kingdom. She went out and said to her mother, what shall I ask for?

The head of John the Baptist, she answered. At once the girl hurried into the king with the request, I want you to give me right now the head of John the Baptist on a platter.

The king was greatly distressed, but because of his oaths and his dinner guests, he did not want to refuse her. So he immediately sent an executioner with orders to bring John's head.

The man went, beheaded John in the prison, and brought back his head on a platter. He presented it to the girl, and she gave it to her mother.

[ 3 : 10 ] On hearing of this, John's disciples came and took his body and laid it in a tomb. The apostles gathered round Jesus and reported to him all they had done and taught.

Thank you, Sarah.

Thank you, Sarah. Well, please follow in your Bibles this next section of Mark's Gospel. If any of you have been looking to listen to it on the web, we've had difficulty with the recording, so they haven't been there, but hopefully that will be rectified shortly.

And if you've got questions about any of what we look at this morning, please do talk to me afterwards. It's good to chat through these things together. Well, let's pray as we start.

Again, Father, we are thankful for our freedom to meet here. We are thankful that we have your word in our language.

[ 4 : 19 ] We're not having to listen to it secretly on an MP3, but we can talk about it publicly to one another. And we thank you that we have your word and we pray that your word would now transform us and change us by your spirit, causing us to have the priorities of Jesus, to live our lives

around his plan and his purpose.

That we would go forward together as your people, as your church, on board with what you are doing in this world. Encourage us all this morning and help us to be about your business and your work.

We pray it in Jesus' name. Amen. Well, have you got the vision? Maybe you're wondering, well, what is it?

Are you a part of the plan? Do you know what the plan is? Well, in case we are unsure what the vision is, Mark tells us very clearly at the middle of verse 6.

It says there that, Then Jesus went round teaching from village to village. It's a summary statement of all that Jesus was doing.

[ 5 : 41 ] This is his mission. This is what the vision is all about. Teaching from village to village, bringing the good news from place to place.

Now this tells us two things that were central to Jesus and to his ministry. And if they're central to Jesus, they should be central to us as individuals and to us as a church.

We can unpack that very short verse in two ways. First, that Jesus was word-centered. From the very beginning, we are told what Jesus came to do.

So, Mark chapter 1, verse 14. Mark chapter 1, verse 14.

Here we are told what Jesus came to do. So, after John was put in prison, Jesus went into Galilee proclaiming the good news of God.

[ 6 : 46 ] The time has come, he said. The kingdom of God is near. Repent and believe the good news. Jesus was God's kingdom. Jesus was God's king who has come to renew this broken world, to renew lives, to restore lives.

And the way to be part of this new kingdom that he was coming to establish was to repent and to believe the good news about Jesus Christ.

In fact, the only way he tells us that the kingdom is going to grow, the only way the kingdom is going to be established is by that same word. So, look at Mark chapter 4.

Mark chapter 4, which is the parable of the sower.

It's his first parable and it's all about the power of God's word. Chapter 4, verse 14 says, The farmer sows the word.

[ 7 : 51 ] So, it's all about the word. Verse 20. So, he says, Others like seeds sown on good soil hear the word. They accept the word.

And they produce a crop 30, 60 or even a hundred times what was sown. So, this word, the gospel, the good news about Jesus is what's going to change people and transform people.

Jesus did lots of miracles as he went around, but it's only the word that makes us part of the kingdom. And it's only the word that's going to grow the kingdom.

And the good news is a word. It's a message that's spoken. It's communicated to people through the things that we say. So, Mark reminds us in chapter 6, verse 6, that Jesus went around teaching. This was central to who he is and what he did. But second, Jesus was not only just word-centered, he was mission-centered.

[ 8 : 54 ] Again, from the very beginning, we're told that this word must be proclaimed. It must be spoken out. So, go back to chapter 1, verse 38 to 39.

This is following after many people have come to Jesus. One of the interesting things as you're reading through Mark is that Jesus doesn't go to people to heal. People come to him to be healed. But Jesus does go to people to teach. So, many people have been healed and they're coming again to Jesus looking for them. And he says in verse 38 of chapter 1, Jesus replied, Let us go somewhere else to nearby villages so that I can preach there also.

That is why I have come. So, he traveled throughout Galilee preaching in their synagogues and driving out demons. Jesus didn't stay in one location expecting that people were going to come to him and find out where he was.

No, he went to where the people were. But not only that, he actually sent people. Go to the very end of the Gospel of Mark. Chapter 16, verse 15.

[ 10 : 06 ] We get a little summary there of what he says to his disciples, his parting words. Chapter 16, verse 15. He said to them, Go into all the world and preach the good news to all creation.

All the world to all people, the good news must go. So, the good news is a word. It's something we say. It's something we communicate. It's something we speak. But it's a missionary word.

It's a good news message. It's offering hope and salvation and change and transformation. And because it's a missionary word, it's a sent word, it's got to be proclaimed.

It's got to be spoken out. And so, Mark reminds us in chapter 6, verse 6, that Jesus went around teaching from village to village.

And this is what the big vision is all about. Teaching from village to village. Bringing the good news from place to place. Whether it's here in this community of Karagaline.

[ 11 : 16 ] Or whether it's to the nation of North Korea. This is central to Jesus. This is primary for him.

And therefore, it must be central for us individually. And it's central for us as a church. So, first then, the call to mission.

He's word-centered. He's mission-centered. And this dictates to us how we should be as people. The call to mission. So far as we've been going through Mark's Gospel, the twelve are almost like bystanders.

They're watching Jesus all the time. They're listening to Jesus as he goes about doing what he's doing. They're following along. And they're there when he does miracles.

He's there when he's preaching and teaching. Now, all of a sudden, there's a change in focus.

There's a shift in their responsibility. So, he says to them in verse 7 of chapter 6, Calling the twelve to him, he sent them out two by two.

[ 12 : 20 ] Now, this shouldn't be a surprise for us because all along in Mark, he has been preparing them bit by bit. So, again, go back to chapter 1, verse 17.

That the first of the disciples that he called, he says to them, chapter 1, verse 17, Come, follow me, Jesus said, and I'm going to make you fishers of men.

Well, they were fishermen by trade. What does it mean that they were going to be fishermen of people? Well, look what it says in chapter 3, verse 13.

It just expands it a little bit more. Jesus went up on a mountainside. This is chapter 3, verse 13.

Jesus went up on a mountainside and he called to him those he wanted.

And they came to him. He appointed twelve, designating them apostles, that they might be with him and that he might send them out to preach. And now the time comes for them to actually head out on their own.

[ 13 : 26 ] Jesus has been preparing them and now they've got to go. So, he calls the twelve to him and he sends them out two by two. They need to grow up. They need to cut the apron strings.

It's no longer kind of hanging around Jesus, watching him. They're now to begin to do it. Because God was never, or Jesus was never in the business of calling people to salvation.

He calls people into mission. Christians are missionary people. That's who we are. And he calls people and he also sends people.

And Jesus realizes that in the beginnings of his ministry that there's going to come a time where he's going to return to his Father. And the work must continue and it's going to continue with his disciples as they establish the church.

But it continues on with us, people like you and me, until Jesus Christ returns again. So, there's this call to mission, to follow on in what Jesus was doing.

[ 14 : 31 ] But how are we going to go about this mission? Well, three things. First of all, we go by the authority of Jesus. Let's look at the rest of verse seven.

Calling the twelve to him, he sent them out two by two and he gave them authority over evil spirits. This whole idea of mission isn't just thought up in recent days by people who are just like, what are we going to do?

No, this is a call to mission by the authority of King Jesus. Again, through Mark, we've seen that Jesus is introduced to us as one with great power and with supreme authority.

Chapter one, verse 27. This is after he's just been dealing with an evil spirit. It says the people were all so amazed that they asked each other, what is this, a new teaching?

And I'm with authority. He even gives orders to evil spirits and they obey him. He has authority over evil.

[ 15 : 44 ] And then in chapter two, verse five, Jesus says to this man who's paralyzed, he saw their faith and he said to the paralytic, son, your sins are forgiven.

Verse 10. But that you may know that the son of man has authority on earth to forgive sins. He said to the paralytic, I tell you, get up, take your mat and go home.

And he got up and he went home forgiven. And as we continue to read on through the gospel, we see his authority over nature as he calmed the storms, his authority over the created order, over evil people who are demon possessed and the madman in the graveyard.

And his authority over sickness, being able to speak a word into somebody's life and immediately they are healed. His authority over death itself as he speaks to a little girl of 12 years old, he says to her, I tell you, get up.

And she gets up from death to life. Jesus Christ is presented to us as the supreme king, absolute power, absolute authority.

[16:56] And so we today as the church, as his people, go with his authority. We go as people of the king of the universe sent out into the world to continue on his work.

And primarily the authority that we go with is an authority to confront the work of Satan. Look at verse 7 of chapter 6.

Calling the 12, he sent them out two by two and he gave them authority over evil spirits. We've already learnt in Mark's gospel that Jesus talked about what he was going to do with Satan.

He was going to tie up the strong man, that's how he's referring to him, so that his prisoners could be released. Jesus was going to do this through his work on the cross. So as we go out with this gospel word, the simple message of the good news, we release people from his captivity.

The good news has authority to forgive sins. The good news has authority to set people free from their guilt and shame. It has authority to deal with God's wrath and his judgment.

[18:11] It's the means by which people enter the kingdom. It's the means by which the kingdom is going to grow. So we go not just because of our little ideas or our little plans.

We go because the creator of the universe, the king of kings, the Lord Jesus sends us by his authority. But we also go independent on Jesus.

Look at verse 8. These were his instructions. He says, take nothing for the journey except a staff, a stick, no bread, no bag, no money, no credit cards, no belts.

Wear sandals, not even an extra tunic. Travel lights. And whenever you enter a house, stay there until you leave that town. Sometimes we think that for mission to happen, we need to have lots and lots of money and lots and lots of resources, loads of it, before we can do anything.

But here, very simply, we are reminded that what is required for mission is dependent disciples. The principle here is one of trust, not must.

[19:32] In a time, and we're in this stage right now, where churches are struggling to survive because of money. Mission organizations aren't able to operate because they don't have enough money.

And I think that this has something to say to us today in our present economic struggles as we're trying to work out what can we do. We haven't got any money. And we've all got our must list before we can do anything.

We must have buildings. We must have better resources. We must have more full-time staff. We must have multimedia. We must have this. We must have that. We've got to buy all these lots of different things before we can do anything.

The early church didn't have any of these things. The early church was just about ordinary disciples, dependent on Jesus, bringing with them the word of life wherever they went.

At a time of the early church where there was great persecution, they were kicked out of their homes. They had to travel to other places. They did go very light, indeed, because they didn't have anything.

[20:46] But they brought with them the word of life. And we read through Acts and we keep getting this summary that everything grew and the church grew and it got bigger and bigger as the people went.

And somehow, and I'm not saying that we don't need money, of course we need these things, but we've somehow over-complicated mission when it is actually a very simple method.

It's a very easy thing. Our budgets are sometimes too big and too grand and we operate in ways that are unsustainable and we can't keep going the way that we're going and something has to change.

And I think here a message for us today that dependent disciples going with the word in very simple ways. And it has implications for us because the message calls people to trust and have faith in Jesus.

We say to people, trust in him. And they see us, the church, trusting in our possessions and in our wealth. There's a bit of contradiction. But this dependency goes beyond the material things to the spiritual.

[ 21 : 56 ] We're dependent on Jesus for spiritual life. Look at verse 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.

So they weren't trying to force people to become Christians. They knew they couldn't do it. And our job isn't to make Christians. I can't make anybody a Christian. You can't make anybody a Christian. Money can't do that. We just simply can't. That's God's job. That's his responsibility. Our job is simply to bring the word in very natural conversations with people.

We're dependent on the spirit of Jesus who is the greatest evangelist to change lives. We go in dependence on Jesus materially, but we go in dependence on Jesus spiritually.

He's the one who will change a person's life, not us. We can never convince anybody. It's God who does that work. So we go with the authority of the king.

[ 23 : 03 ] We go in dependence on Jesus. And third, we go with the compassion of Jesus. Look at verse 12. They went out and they preached that people should repent.

This is the heart of the gospel. It summarizes the message of Jesus in chapter 1, 14. Repent and believe the good news.

The good news of this great kingdom that Jesus had come to establish, to put all things right, to restore things and renew things. And Jesus was coming, as we see through Mark, to bring justice, to punish sin, to destroy evil.

But because we have all acted unjustly, because we have all sinned, because we are all born as children of the devil, we all need to repent. They went out and preached that people should repent, because sin is serious.

The consequences of it is hell. Eternal separation from God and his kingdom. Therefore, in compassion and in love, they went out and called people to repent.

[ 24 : 19 ] Those who are not yet in the kingdom, calling them to turn to Jesus and to put their trust in him. They went out with this compassion to see that people would be restored to the Lord Jesus.

But again, the compassion is not just with the material. It extends to our physical lives. Verse 13. They drove out many demons and anointed many sick people with oil and healed them.

As we watch Jesus through Mark's Gospel, he acted in word and deed. He taught, but he touched lives.

He called people, but he also cared for people. And his followers are called to do the same. To reach out to those who are suffering physically. To reach out to those who are struggling emotionally and mentally.

And people within our world are crushed under the weight of their suffering. And so I think we must learn to be able to pray for one another, for those who are sick.

[ 25 : 33 ] We pray according to God's will. God may heal people and we should pray because he is able to. But we should also be there to care for those in need.

If they are not healed. To support them in their weakness. To gather round and to help in every way that we can. And so we go with the compassion of Jesus.

Teaching them that they should repent. But loving and caring for them. In their physical and emotional needs. This is the grand big call to mission.

This is who we are. It's in our blood. It's our DNA. We say, Christian people are missionary people. He doesn't call us into salvation.

He calls us into a mission with Him in what He is doing. But while there is a call to mission, there is also a cost in mission.

[ 26 : 36 ] You see we could read from 12 and 13. Let's just read that there a minute. They went out and preached that people should repent. They drove out many demons and anointed many sick people with oil.

And healed them. Now jump straight to verse 30. The apostles gathered round Jesus and reported to Him all that they had done and taught. It's seamless, isn't it?

They went out from Jesus and now they report back to Jesus. But we've got this big long story about the death of John the Baptist stuck between. It's a story that's in a story to highlight something for us.

To highlight for us that there's a cost in mission. The last time that we heard about John the Baptist was way back in chapter 1. In chapter 1 verse 14 we're told that John was put in prison.

Now at some stage between chapter 1 and chapter 6, and all the historian buffs out there can go and do all the research and find out the exact time, but somewhere between chapter 1 and chapter 6, John has been killed.

[ 27 : 46 ] He's been beheaded. So in verse 14 we read that King Herod, the political ruler of the time, heard about this.

For Jesus' name had become well known. He had heard about this activity of the disciples going out and doing lots of different things. And some were saying that this was happening because John the Baptist has been raised from the dead.

And that's why miraculous powers are at work in him. Verse 16. But when Herod heard this, he said, John the man I beheaded has been raised from the dead.

So obviously John has already died. But Mark is only recording it now. In the middle of the disciples' mission.

To highlight that being a disciple, being a follower of Jesus is costly. First, we must be ready to lose our reputation as believers, as followers of Jesus.

[ 28 : 55 ] Look at verse 17. Herod himself had given orders to have John arrested. And he had him bound and put in prison.

He did this because of Herodias, his brother Philip's wife, whom he had married. So basically Herod had gone and nicked his brother's wife.

Now let's face it. We are all people who like to be liked, aren't we? None of us here likes to be unpopular.

We want people to be friends with us. We don't want to be the centre of attention, but we certainly don't want to be disliked. And the last thing that we want to do is say things that are going to cause people offence, or people are going to take offence through what we say.

And because of what we said, we're going to be on the outside. We don't want to say anything like that. But John wasn't concerned about his reputation. He was concerned about speaking the truth.

[ 30 : 00 ] So look at what he had to say in verse 18. The reason why he was put in prison, verse 18, For John had been saying to Herod, Herod, he's the political ruler of the day with real powers.

And he says, it's not lawful for you, Herod, to be nicking your brother's wife. You shouldn't have done that. You see, there's a design and an order of how we should live in God's world.

And these things were in place not to spoil our fun, but because it's good for us. And if we turn against it, it ruins us. It ruins us as people.

And in this context, in this situation, it's ruining families. It's breaking up families. And so when you speak the truth about these kinds of things, you lose your reputation.

Verse 19. So Herodias, the wife, nursed a grudge against John. She didn't like what he was saying. And she wanted to kill him.

[ 31 : 02 ] You see, if we speak up about God's design for marriage today, if we say that God's design for marriage is about a man and a woman living together all the time, and not about taking other people and all this sort of stuff, and that God has an order for his family.

And if we speak out to people about that, if we say this is God's design, people won't like it. And we'll risk losing our reputation.

Of course, there are many other things that we could speak about. But I think in this context, if God's creation, design, and order for his family is so central, so foundational, to speak out about it, we'll lose your reputation.

But second, we must also be ready to lose our life. You think John would have learnt his lesson, wouldn't you? John, just behave yourself, okay?

You're in prison, good behaviour, don't say anything anymore, and you'll be out in a year. Maybe you'll do a bit of community service. Just don't say anything more, and you'll be out. But no, he doesn't keep quiet.

[ 32 : 19 ] He doesn't learn his lesson. He keeps speaking the gospel, the good news to Herod. Look at verse 20. The end of verse 19.

Herodias was unable to because Herod feared John and protected him, knowing him to be a righteous and a holy man. And when Herod heard John, John was teaching the gospel as he heard him, he was greatly puzzled, yet he liked to listen to him.

This kind of tension of going on in Herod's life, that he liked the message, but it was going to mean drastic changes for his life. So he's puzzled. He likes it, but what's he going to do with it? But not everybody was keen to listen to Herod. Verse 21. Finally, the opportune time came. On his birthday, Herod gave a great banquet for his high officials and military commanders and all the leading men of Galilee.

The who's who was there. All well-known people. A chance for Herod to show off his great wealth and his influence and his power. And they're all invited to celebrate in this great big festival, his great big party.

[ 33 : 34 ] And as part of this party, the daughter of Herodias, from her previous marriage, has come in to dance. Now the translation doesn't say it there, but it's a very erotic dance.

And she pleased Herod and his dinner guests. And the king said to the girl, ask me for anything you want and I'll give it to you. Whatever you want in my kingdom.

Ask whatever you will. Up to half my kingdom and I will give it to you. It's all for you. Herod has been overcome by what he has seen.

And maybe he said a little bit too much than what he really meant to say. But he's surprised by what she says. She went out, verse 24, and said to her mother, what shall I ask for?

The head of John the Baptist, she answered. You see, I think John knew what the cost was in speaking the good news.

[ 34 : 38 ] He knew what would happen. If he kept quiet, he would have saved his life. But he knew if he spoke up for the truth, if he spoke the gospel, there was a real risk that he would lose his life.

Maybe it was because he knew what Jesus had perhaps said before. Look at chapter 8, verse 35. Chapter 8, verse 35. Chapter 8, verse 35. For whoever wants to save his life will lose it.

But whoever loses his life for me and for the gospel will save it. For John, there came a point of no return.

Well, he could shut up if he wanted to and get out of prison and go and live his life in peace and quiet. And nobody would bother him. But in some sense, he would lose his life for all eternity.

But there came a point where he stood for the gospel, he spoke for the truth, he lost his physical life, but he gained the kingdom eternal life.

[ 35 : 57 ] The cost is immense to be a disciple. And earlier we prayed for North Korea, didn't we? To preach the gospel in that country will mean certain death.

In fact, there are 50 countries highlighted as places of real persecution. Places like Pakistan, Iran, Burma, China, Turkey.

In each of those countries, people have lost their lives for preaching the good news as they've gone from place to place. In Eritrea this week, three more people were killed in a military prison because they loved Jesus.

It's estimated that 150,000, 150,000 Christians lose their life every year across the world because they've read Mark's gospel.

They've preached the good news. And they've lost their life to save their life and to see others come to Christ. Mission is costly.

[ 37 : 12 ] It's costly here in our own country. To lose our reputation. People mightn't like us. People, we might lose our friends.

What is it to lose our friends? To gain eternity. It's going to be costly overseas if people should go and live another place.

We've been called on this mission. And the invitation for us is to live this mission. But to know what the cost is. To live this mission together for us here today, this community, this family, this church here, that we would begin to live this mission, to keep on doing what we're doing.

And I'm so encouraged with what we do. And to keep encouraging each other and to keep supporting each other as we disperse and we go into our community, we go to our place of work, we go to be with our children, we go where our families are and our friends, and we're living as Christ.

Support each other, encourage each other as we do it. It's good. And let's keep this as the centre of our church. Let this be the vision of our church.

[ 38 : 29 ] That we are word-centred people, that we are mission-centred people. And it instructs everything that we do. And let's pray that God would equip us and enable us to be able to live for Him.

This is an amazing mission. It's a privilege, it's a responsibility, that we would be called for Him. And we can live it right now with our children, with our friends and with our neighbours, with our work colleagues, praying that God would give us opportunity to speak that good news to people's lives. Let's pray together. Our Father, we're reminded this morning that as we gather here, that your mission has taken effect.

We're more than 12 people here. And your disciples went out and that word is being spread. And across the nations and across the world, there are believers everywhere today, meeting like we are. And we're a result of that mission of people speaking to us. Maybe our parents, maybe somebody within a church youth group or somebody somewhere along the line has taught us the good news. [ 40 : 03 ] And we're your disciples, we're your followers today because of what they did and what they said. And we thank you for them. And we pray and we ask that you would encourage us to go on living this message, live this mission, to speak your truth, to live your truth.

Equip us as we go out into our place this week, wherever we are. Fill us with the power of your Holy Spirit, with your authority sent by the authority of the great King, sent with your compassion, dependent on you to change people's lives.

And I pray that you will raise up people within this church family, that you will send them to other nations. And should they lose their life, that they would gain it for all eternity.

Lord, help us in this task. Encourage us day by day. Build your church here in this community. Build your church on this land. And see your kingdom grow, we pray. In Jesus' name we all pray. Amen. Amen.