

Title: FULFILLING THE MISSION OF THE CHURCH, MARK 1:29 – 39
(Chatham, NJ; 2/4/18, AM) [Pc – Topical]

Theme: Jesus called the apostles to be fishers of men, and in this episode he begins to illustrate what that will entail by going to other towns in order to preach the Gospel.

Purpose: To remind the church that its mission is still to preach the Gospel, and to explore the various ways that we can still fulfill that.

Introduction:

1. Jesus builds a reputation as a teacher and healer.
2. The miracles were meant to demonstrate God's compassion and power over illnesses but also to point to the Gospel, Hebrews 2:3-4.
3. Jesus goes to other towns to preach, and in doing this he illustrates how the apostles, and in the long run the church, would continue the mission of preaching and teaching.
4. How can an established congregation carry out this same mission?
5. Just as Joshua renewed Israel's commitment to the covenant, so too must we from time to time renew our purpose to fulfill the role of the church to preach and model the Gospel.

Individuals in Community

- A. Lights, stones, living organs – how we think of ourselves is compelling
 1. You are the light of the world, Mt. 5:14
 2. You are also living stones, 1 Peter 2:5, built into a spiritual house
 3. Finally, you are living organs in a body, 1 Corinthians 12:14-27
 4. You are individually members of one body
 5. The body has a purpose and each organ satisfies that purpose by fulfilling its assigned role
- B. An "ecclesia" – an assembly of people called by God: a community, a brotherhood; we are individuals belonging to something involving others
 1. In 1 Timothy 3:15 Paul calls us God's household
 2. He insists there are certain ways of behaving in the household
 3. Furthermore, he call the church: "a pillar and buttress of the truth" (each is a form of support)
 4. Ephesians 3:10, the wisdom of God is manifested in the church
 5. We must think about how we adhere to and preach the truth and wisdom of the Gospel
 6. We are called to be a community of people who work together on this

The Message in Our Mouths

- A. Be ready with your witness
 1. Peter instructs us to be ready to express the reason for our hope, 1 Peter 3:15
 2. "Make a defense" – an explanation of why we believe
 3. Formal training is not required; we need only to have made Christ the Lord of our lives
 4. We approach this with "gentleness and respect" when we give our answer
- B. Destroying arguments, standing your ground
 1. 1 Corinthians 10:4-5, Paul uses appropriate facts (arguments) to poke holes in false knowledge
 2. Stand your ground: don't be tossed about, Ephesians 4:14-15
 3. Don't be intimidated – more often than not people use some form of mockery as way of dismissing your beliefs
 4. Recognize this as well as the lies in their own beliefs.
 5. Only in Christ can the truth about humanity and our world be found; don't be intimidated into thinking otherwise
 6. Your gentle firmness will make a difference to someone

Remember How You Thought as a Non-Christian

- A. Paul becomes one of them, 1 Corinthians 9:19-23
 - 1. We must not forget our experiences of coming to Christ; remember how you used to think and what it took to change your mind
 - 2. "I have become all things to all people," 22
 - 3. He put himself in the place of his audience
 - 4. He understood them, even lived like them, so that he might appeal to them
 - 5. He made himself a slave to them so he might win them to Christ
 - 6. In the same way that Christ became a human to save humanity

- B. Yet we don't become like them in the wrong ways
 - 1. 1 Peter 2:11-12, abstain from passions, do good so people can say nothing truthfully bad about you
 - 2. Paul could still criticize idolatry to his pagan audiences
 - 3. He would condemn circumcision if people thought that were the way to salvation
 - 4. We are in the world but not of the world

Conclusions:

- 1. Maintain your regular meeting together.
- 2. Remember Acts 2:42 – devotion to Apostles' teaching, fellowship, breaking of bread, prayer.
- 3. Devote yourselves to good works, Titus 3:8.
- 4. Sustain your hope in Christ and be prepared to talk about it when the opportunities arise.
- 5. Remember the mission of the church: to make disciples of all men and to teach them the whole counsel of God.