

# Connecting with the Sunday Readings

**Fifteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time**

**Gospel Word**  
Mark 6:7-13

In this week's Gospel reading, we hear about Jesus as he was beginning to share his preaching and healing with the Apostles. Their activities will be an extension of his ministry. In those days, preachers would walk from town to town. They were not wealthy and they depended on the hospitality of the people in the towns they visited. Jesus' instruction was to travel lightly; take nothing extra, no food, clothing, or money. The most important thing was not material comforts or concerns; it was the message of preaching God's Kingdom. Focus seems to be the message, and having too many things to worry about might cause the Twelve to lose focus. The work of spreading the Gospel could get mixed up with all sorts of peripheral activities.

Of course today's reader might wonder whether not having anything would only lead to more anxiety. That did not seem to be the case here. Maybe because there was trust in people's openness, and hospitality to traveling preachers. The phrase "shaking the dust" is a symbolic one. Not meant to be aggressive or cruel, it was probably meant to make the local people think about what they may be missing.

—by David Thomas, PhD, Co-Director, The Bethany Family Institute

## Living the Word

There is a simplicity that should accompany the work of Gospel spreading and Gospel-living! Go out into the world and bring nothing but yourself and your message. The Gospel is not based on one's power or standing. It's not fireworks. It stands on its own simplicity. The power of God is not built on anything from this world. It comes directly from God's Spirit, available to all. A popular magazine these days is dedicated to the simple life. We crave simplicity in an era where having a lot of stuff seems to be of great value. Storage sheds dot our landscape. Apparently, there's not enough room in our homes for all the stuff we have accumulated. The same can be said about our use of time. There's not enough. Simplify life and we have more time for the things that matter. The value of a simplified life is that we can do what's most important.

Besides the message of simplicity, this Gospel also preaches the message of community. There's something deeply communal about Christian faith. This is often forgotten in a culture that is rooted in individualism. We value accomplishments that are done by a solo performer. We like to applaud the most valuable player, the individual who is judged to be the best. Against this focus on the individual stands this Christian tradition of what might be called team play. It is the call to be with and for others on the journey of faith. We do not grow as Christians all by ourselves. We need the community and the community needs us.

### One-line Prayer

Dear Lord, help me to live simply in the company of others and witness to the coming of your Kingdom.  
Amen.