

“FOR THIS PURPOSE I HAVE COME”

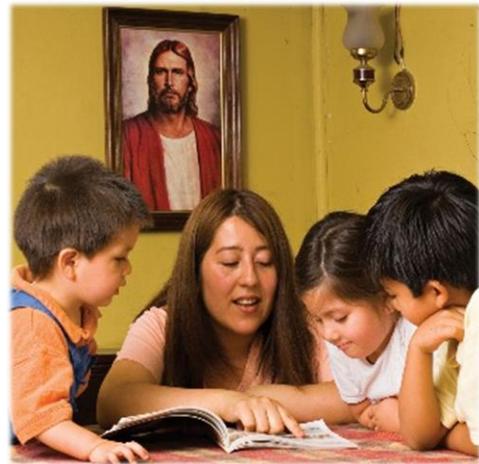
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The readings from Mark’s Gospel the last few weeks were about Jesus calling his disciples to him. This week’s Gospel (Mark 1:29-39) shows Jesus living the ministry he calls us all to follow – preaching the kingdom, healing the sick, even casting out demons! *And* praying. When Jesus goes off to pray, the disciples pursue him to tell him: “Everyone is looking for you!”

Indeed, everyone IS looking for Jesus. Everyone who is yearning to belong, to be understood, to love and to be loved. Every good we desire is fulfilled when we find and unite ourselves with Him. This is the path of our spiritual lives, the one Way. By Grace we discern what is Good and open our hearts to Jesus. The disciples were helping people meet Jesus by bringing him to them. *Unleash the Gospel* reminds us that we are called to be joyful disciples, to bring Jesus to our families, especially our children, and to our neighbors.

It takes some courage, even boldness, to be witnesses to the presence of Jesus in our lives, and we might be tempted to view our calling as a burden. Job did. In today’s first reading (Job 7:1-6; 6-7) he bemoans his life as drudgery. Yet he is filled with a restlessness and trusts that God has Good in store for him, even as he is trying to figure out what he will do for the Lord.

In the second reading, Paul embraces stewardship of the Gospel entrusted to him (1 Cor 9:16-19; 22-23). He views his call to bring Jesus to others not as a burden but an obligation. Paul willingly and freely gives himself to Christ, as though a slave, to preach the Gospel. “Woe to me if I do not preach it!” he cries, “woe” because not to do so would deny him his “recompense,” that is, the joy of sharing Jesus with others.



“For this purpose...” we, too, are called to be disciples and to preach the kingdom. Even though, like Job, we may not yet know how, let us pray, like Jesus, for the Holy Spirit to give us the gifts of courage and boldness we need, so that, like Paul, we can joyfully embrace our stewardship of the Gospel.

Remember, there are “No Bystanders.” With trust in God, and through prayer to the Holy Spirit, we can together make our homes and our parish places where everybody can find Jesus.

Go! Unleash the Gospel.