

**"EM DASH"**

**Date:** November 15, 2020

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**This morning I'm going to share with you a passage I believe best illustrates what is currently happening within our Church community.**

- Jesus Sends out The Twelve... (Vs) Luke Ch 9:1-6 ESV - *"And he called the twelve together and gave them power and authority..."*

**Consider: What being 'sent out' means practically for these people.**

- Sent out of the familiar.
- Sent out of one-on-one, day-to-day direction.
- Sent out into potential conflict and rejection.
- Sent out into the Unknown or Darkness.
- **Honestly:** I hated being sent out by God to plant Kessid. It was scary and sad!

**"In my experience, being sent out by God often means many an unknown trial and tribulation, but even with all those difficult possibilities, the ultimate potential is just too great to keep God from sending us anyways."**

*(Vs) Luke Ch 10-11 ESV - "On their return the apostles told him all that they had done..."*

**Jesus' potential for 'need meeting' is limitless!**

- When the Disciples returned, they needed assurance, so Jesus was an encourager. #needmet
- The Crowd needed guidance, so Jesus was a teacher. #needmet
- The People were hurting, so Jesus was a healer. #needmet

**"Jesus was illustrating, with the meeting of so many diverse needs, that He alone is humanity's single greatest resource."**

*(Vs) Luke 9:12 ESV - Now the day began to wear away, and the twelve came and said to Him, "Send the crowd away to go into the surrounding villages and countryside to find lodging and get provisions, for we are here in a desolate place."*

**Right in the midst of all this Encouragement, Teaching, and even Healing...**

- ... The core followers of Jesus came upon something all followers of Jesus will face eventually... "A Lack of Enough."

**My ability to meet either my own, or other's needs, will inevitably fail.**

- But, notice... That in spite of this, it appears I am still charged to participate in the "Need Meeting" available around me.

*(Vs) Luke 9:13-14a ESV – But He said to them, "You give them something to eat." They said, (Woah! Woah!) "We have no more than five loaves and two fish—unless we are to go and buy food for all these people. <sup>14</sup>For there were about five thousand men."*

**Look how the Disciples initially responded: "With typical human doubt."**

- *(Vs) Luke 9:13b ESV – "We have no more than five loaves and two fish—"*
- "We just told you what we have..."
- "Obviously the math doesn't add up..."
- "Clearly you are not paying attention to what we're dealing with here"

**It's here though something called an "Em dash" is present... You notice it?**

- **History:** The Em dash—so called because in traditional typesetting it was the length of a capital *M*—. In the bygone days of typewriters, the Em dash was rendered as two hyphens (--).
- **Def:** The Em dash is an expansive, attention-seeking dash. It supplies much stronger emphasis than the comma, colon or semicolon it often replaces.
- This moment may also be understood in the same way we as speakers and presenters use "Pregnant Pauses."
- **Def:** "Pregnant pause: A pause that gives the impression that it will be followed by something significant."

**During this Em Dash or Pregnant Pause... I envision lots of prolonged eye contact, raised eyebrows, maybe a few turned up hands, and so on...**

- Either way, it appears Jesus decides to wait them out.
- Perhaps Christ was hoping they would remember what they had excitedly shared with Him earlier about all they accomplished in God's name in the surrounding towns...Or perhaps He hoped they would recall some of His recent teachings, or even a few of the miracles they had witnessed just hours before.
- But, none of that is what Jesus received.

*(Vs) Luke 9:13c —unless we are to go and buy food for all these people.”*

**Responding: Not with doubt, but “With typical human independence.”**

- “Here’s how we can get it done.”
- “Let me tell you my plans.”
- “I’ll figure it out!”

**In my opinion... Doubt and Independence, are still the most common Human responses when facing overwhelming situations...**

- Basically... “It can’t be done.” or “I’ll do it my way.”
- But neither is what God’s looking for... And Jesus is about to teach them so!

*(Vs) Luke 9:14b – And He said to His disciples, “Have them sit down in groups of about fifty each.”*

**First Principle: “When you don’t know what to do, do what you can.”**

- I like this because I’ve found too often that when Christians don’t know exactly what God wants them to do next, they often decide to do absolutely nothing.

*(Vs) Luke 9:15 – “And they did so and had them all sit down.”*

**Second Principle: “Obey Anyways.”**

- Although their faces and words said, “We don’t get it”... They stepped out into the work anyways.
- **FYI:** Dividing 10,000 people into groups of 50 would take some time and effort... Especially if you didn’t know why you were doing it.

*(Vs) Luke 9:16 – And taking the five loaves and the two fish, He looked up to heaven and said a blessing over them. Then He broke the loaves and gave them to the disciples to set before the crowd. <sup>17</sup>And they all ate and were satisfied. And what was left over was picked up, twelve baskets of broken pieces.*

**Last Lesson: ‘Christ will always Multiply and Magnify our ‘Unknown’ and ‘Not Enough.’**

- Here’s why I believe this story illustrates so well where we find ourselves as a Church community today: **First: We have each been sent out.**
- Sent out of the familiar.
- Sent out of needed one on one day to day direction.
- Sent out into potential conflict and rejection.
- Sent out into the Unknown or Darkness.

**Also: Many of us are actively facing situations that cause us to feel like we don't have enough.**

- Enough answers, security, direction, resources, clarity, etc.

**I believe because of this: "We as a People/Church have entered into our own "Em Dash" Moment."**

- A Pregnant Pause declaring that something significant is about to happen, and that's exactly what occurred within our Church this week!
- It began with my team and I having some good honest conversation with each other, and then with some of our key volunteers. Many from both groups shared their hearts around serving and singing in the services with so few people wearing masks around them. We realized that without that diligent team in place, in-person services would be impossible to pull off.
- A decision was made that masks would be required.
- We were then hit, like every other church in our state, with the singing restrictions... Notice, no words.
- In the end it's an honest unknown how much the Pro-Mask / Anti-Mask, and singing debate will impact our overall church mission and community.

**We all have our own choice to make...**

- We can choose to be like the Disciples... "Doubtful and Independent"
- Or, we can remember all the ways God got us here today; the many blessings and stories of love that have built our church!

**Either way, the next steps are the same...**

- For, "Even though we may not know exactly what to do, we should still do all that we can."
- Attend (Online or in-person), Serve, Give, Pray, and so, "Obey Anyways," Stepping out into the work before us.

**In doing this...**

- We can trust that in the same way as Jesus, who within today's passage, looked up to heaven and gave what was in His hands to God, and so found all that was needed.
- We can surrender our "Unknown and Not Enough," in hopes of seeing it multiplied and magnified, forever Decorating the Darkness around us.