

A Message from Godfrey

And he said to them, "Come away by yourselves to a desolate place and rest a while." For many were coming and going, and they had no leisure even to eat."— Mark 6:31

Jesus sent the twelve apostles on a short-term mission trip to preach the word, heal the sick, and cast out demons (Mark 6:7-13). After some unspecified time, the disciples return to Jesus and report to him all they did and taught (Mark 6:30). The ministry of Jesus consisted of words and works. The apostles continued Jesus' ministry by proclaiming truth and performing miracles.

This is the ultimate basis of spiritual accountability. Each of us should regularly check in with Jesus and report our words, works, and ways to him. Paul writes, "For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may receive what is due for what he has done in the body, whether good or evil" (2 Corinthians 5:10). Live every day as one who will give account to Jesus for what you say and do.

How did Jesus respond to the apostles' report? Jesus said to them, "Come away by yourselves to a desolate place and rest awhile" (Mark 6:31). This is a wonderful picture of the concern, gentleness and wisdom of Jesus. After the disciples told him all they did and taught, Jesus did not dismiss their efforts. He did not use this as an opportunity to teach and train the disciples and Jesus did not immediately give them their next tasks. Jesus was most concerned about the toll their efforts had on them. So he bid them to get away from the crowd, retreat to a quiet place and rest from their labours. That is why clergy are encouraged to make an annual retreat, something that I am not very good at!

But Mark 6:31 is about more than taking holidays. Jesus called his disciples to rest after they wore themselves out doing kingdom business. This verse is not a call to take a break from your worldly pursuits. Paul exhorts us all: "Therefore, my beloved brothers, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that in the Lord your labour is not in vain" (1 Corinthians 15:58). May the Lord fill our congregations with saints who are so busy for the Lord that he bids us come apart and rest awhile.

Take note of one more thing. The apostles retreated from the crowd to a quiet place with Jesus. I would recommend that you take a holiday whenever you can but do not take a holiday from Jesus.

Thoughts and prayers

Godfrey

