

Jesus' extension lead.

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[0 : 00] Carrying on this thing, it reminded me this week that I was talking to somebody else who has the same problem that I do in our house. At our house, you might have this, we have a box of cables.

Most of them, I don't know what they do. But we've just amassed cables over years. Some of them we've got, and there's all sorts of different cables in there.

There's numerous extension cables, there's headphones, there's chargers that fit computers that we've thrown away. There's all sorts, but I don't want to get rid of any of the cables, because I'm always thinking, maybe one day, one of the cables will come in handy.

If it's not cables, then you'll have something else. But one of the important cables, as I mentioned, is the extension cable. We know, we've just heard from the kids.

You've only got so many plugs in your house. The idea, the extension cable, is that you can plug it in, and the power is extended to where you need it. And as I've said, you've heard me just say, the church is an extension of Jesus' ministry in the world.

[1 : 10] That is what the church is for. But therefore, because it is an extension, it's the same way with an extension cable. What happens to the power source also happens to what's plugged in at the end.

Which means what happens to Jesus happens to his followers. It happens to the church. What happens to Jesus happens to his followers. In this passage this morning, we're looking at two different episodes in Jesus' ministry.

We've got Jesus being rejected, that look quite different on the surface of things. We've got Jesus being rejected in his hometown. And then Jesus calling and sending out his 12 apostles.

Jesus does a few things as part of his ministry in what we see in these two passages. And what we see in the first bit that we're going to look at with Jesus in his hometown, is that there are two, many different, or two, particularly two, different reactions to Jesus.

What Jesus tells the disciples to do after that, which we're going to look at when he sends them out, is an extension of what he's already been doing. It is an extension of what he's already been doing.

[2 : 29] His instructions to the 12, therefore, are to help them understanding what ministry working for him requires. And there's three things that we're going to look at.

We're going to look at that Jesus is teaching and preaching. Jesus is healing and casting out demons. And then the last thing is that Jesus is being rejected.

And that because those three things happen to him, the source of power, the same things will happen to the apostles. They are going to be his extension in Israel, because they're going to go to places that he can't get to, because he's only one man.

In the same way with the church, I mentioned to the kids, Jesus ascended, he sent the spirit. The reason is because Jesus can do more, now he's in heaven, than he could have done if he'd have stayed.

So we're the extension of the source of spiritual power, is able to reach more places through the church. So the first thing I want us to know, what are the apostles called to do?

[3 : 41] What does Jesus do? We'll look at that first. Teaching and preaching. Verse 2, we read, When the Sabbath came, he began to teach in the synagogue, and many who heard him were amazed.

The second part of verse 6, just before he calls the 12, we read that Jesus went around teaching from village to village. Verse 12, then, what do we expect?

We read that the apostles, they're an extension of Jesus' ministry, they went out and preached that people should repent. Jesus himself, in verse 4, calls himself a prophet.

Now, we know we have Old Testament prophets that had a very distinctive ministry. That's not what he's saying. Because he's saying something quite different.

We don't have prophets in the same way today, do we? We don't have prophets in the same way today. Instead, our attention as a church, the focus is the word of God.

[4 : 43] That is probably the highlight, the central thing that we're about on a Sunday morning. And it's the central thing that we're about as we meet midweek. It's one of the central things that we do as Christians, as we open the word of God and we read it.

The focus is on the word of God, what Jesus says in the Bible. What does he say? It's all about the gospel of Jesus Christ, teaching about the kingdom of God and calling people to repentance and faith.

The primary way, the primary way, that Jesus calls people to new life is by speaking through his word. There is power in the word of God.

The reason there's power is because it is Jesus who is speaking through it. He is the source of spiritual power and he speaks through his word. Jesus speaks to us through his word.

And he speaks through us to other people through his word. Like the extension cable, we're connected to the source of power, Jesus Christ. If it was a key part of Jesus' ministry, we can see it was, that's brilliant, Angus.

[5 : 48] We can see it was a key aspect of the apostles' ministry. And if we want to be an extension of Jesus' ministry in the world, it has to be a key part of what we do as a church.

Teach the Bible. Call people to repentance and faith. Speak the word of God. To have spiritual conversations that draw from the word of God and what the gospel of Jesus Christ means for us and means for those in our world that need to know him.

So that's the first thing. Teaching and preaching. Second thing is healing and power over spiritual evil. That's the second thing I want us to notice, is the presence of healing and power over spiritual evil.

In both sections. After seeing Jesus heal the demon-possessed man, which we looked at, he's healed the demon-possessed man, he's calmed the storm, and then last week we saw he healed the two daughters.

The daughter of Jairus and the daughter, the woman who was bleeding. We notice that healing and casting out demons is a regular part of Jesus' ministry. And we see that it's quite a comic bit of irony in the passage.

[7 : 04] You look further down in verse 5, it says that Jesus couldn't do any miracles because of their lack of faith. And then just a little comment, just accept a few who were, a few sick people on the side, a few who were ill.

He couldn't do any miracles, but just a few on the side. And therefore, if that is Jesus' ministry, to heal the sick, to cast out demons, to be an extension of Jesus, it is part of the apostles' ministry. Verse 7, what do we see? He calls the twelve to them, he sends them out two by two, and he gave them authority over impure spirits.

We see in verse 13, alongside them preaching repentance, what do they do? They drove out demons and anointed many sick people with oil and healed them.

Now, we know, don't we? We know that physical healing and casting out demons, spiritual evil, as we read it in the Bible, and it's always a pointer towards the full restoration of what the kingdom of heaven is like.

[8 : 12] In the kingdom of heaven, there will be no sickness and there will be no demons. It shows us that when all the consequences of sin are destroyed, that the whole person will be restored.

Just to remind you, I have to pause here, this is a special calling he gives to the twelve. We have to remind us when we read these passages of Jesus calling the twelve, that we are not the twelve apostles.

He calls twelve. He calls twelve apostles. So, the instructions that he gives to the twelve are not directly applicable to us, because we're not the twelve.

He calls twelve. So, we shouldn't think that we are. These words, they're not directly applicable to us. Nevertheless, there are principles that we can learn from them.

And I think one principle, one important principle, that we see from this, is that the whole person matters. What people are going through matters, doesn't it?

[9 : 14] We are embodied souls. Now, I don't know if you've, I don't know which of you here has been, maybe some of you, I have been admitted to the hospital, and if you've ever been admitted to the hospital, they come round and they do their first sort of diagnosis, they ask you loads of questions, the medical team, about your health, and they get a full medical history.

But some of the questions and the bits of the body that they're interested in, you think, that's got nothing to do with what I'm actually going through. Because they know that the whole body is interconnected.

The reason that they can do that is because they know that actually, how much you pay is actually connected to your heart. Who else would know that apart from medical professionals?

That actually the whole, when they do this history, your whole body matters. It's not just the bit that you present with, they're saying, actually, your whole body matters. And so, we need to learn from the way that they do ministry, that the whole person matters.

Yes, of course, we want to see salvation, to see resurrection life. Of course we do. And you notice how teaching and preaching is the thing that is highlighted first in the passage each time.

[10 : 30] Preaching and teaching, which leads to salvation, is always of primary importance. But it's not left there. It's not left there. The whole person matters. Their lives matter.

And the things they've got going on in life matter. I said last week, and I'll say it again, the healing from emotional pain, or significant trauma, or post-traumatic stress, or grief, is no less miraculous. These two things, caring for the soul, and caring for the body, they don't come separate. Because people don't come separate to us. They come as one person.

Yes, these things are different, but they come together. And therefore, we should approach people, as Jesus did, as the apostles did, as people who need to know redemption from Jesus Christ, who need to know that their sins have been paid for by his blood, but who also need caring for the real things that they've got going on in life.

People matter as a whole entity. And so, we should care about people as a whole entity. Final thing, which is fairly obvious from these two passages, is rejection.

[11 : 46] It's the last thing I want to talk about. And it's actually what I think we see most clearly in not just these two passages, but what comes in the next bit as well, when it talks of John the Baptist being beheaded.

What is rejection of Jesus? Rejection of Jesus is unbelief in him. And it can look different. It's unbelief in who he is.

It can be unbelief in why he came, unbelief in what he did, or unbelief that you actually need him. And I'm sure there could be other reasons why people reject Jesus. First, in the first six verses, we see Jesus rejected himself.

And the reason behind his rejection seems to be that his hometown have known him since he was a child. They remember him because he's in his hometown.

He grew up, you just think of what, who Jesus is to this community. They would have seen him as a young boy doing an ordinary job. You know, being a carpenter is not a job of high prestige.

[12 : 51] Of course, they would have respected his craftsmanship. It would have been respected. But there wasn't anything special about Mary or Joseph. And just remember, he spent three decades in his hometown.

Nearly 30. We don't know exactly when he started his ministry, but there's estimates that he was around 30. 30 years where he didn't do any ministry. He was just, and we know, we know he would, we know he would have been a really good kid who would have grown into a fine young man.

But these people that he's speaking to, they would have seen him cry when he scraped his knee. They would have seen him when he was training to be a carpenter, hit his thumb with a hammer when he's being trained by his dad.

They would have seen him toil, work hard, have a manual job. But at the end of the day, however good a kid he was and however fine a young man he turned into, he was still just a Nazarene who had to respect the elders of the Nazarene village and community.

He was just an ordinary guy. And so, you can actually understand their reaction. When he comes back to the synagogue and he's teaching them, and everybody's amazed, the locals are thinking, hang about.

[14 : 05] Where's he got all this from? That's essentially what they're saying in verse 2, hang about. What's going on here? Jesus comes and teaches them and thinking, you're nothing.

We saw you as a young lad. You used to come around our house for a jam piece. You know, they know him. They're insulted, offended.

We, Jesus, coming in and telling us what's what? Jesus of Nazareth doing miracles. What miracles? He hasn't done any miracles here. His family are Mary and Joseph. They're nothing special. And so, we read in verse 5, he couldn't do any miracles there.

And verse 6, he's amazed. He's absolutely amazed by their lack of faith. Isn't it funny how all the way through Mark, most of the time when we see the word amazed, it's the people are amazed at Jesus.

They're amazed at everything he could do. It even says that here, the people were amazed. And here, it's Jesus that is amazed at their lack of faith. Their refusal to believe.

[15:11] Just to say, unbelief is different to doubt. Doubt is having trouble believing. Unbelief is refusing, obstinately, to believe.

So there is difference. The amazing thing, which I mentioned earlier, is he still actually does do some miracles on the hush-hush. He can't help himself.

But surely, what it must mean is it's not, it's not on the scale of other places where we've seen him do miracles. You remember Mark 1? He's in Peter's mother-in-law's house, and it says, everyone comes to his door and is healed.

Everyone comes to his door. Here, he just does a few on the side. Their lack, it must be that their lack of faith as a community is connected to his inability to heal.

Essentially, I think, what Jesus is saying by not healing is saying, I can't help you if you don't have faith in me. I can't help you if you won't have faith in me.

[16:14] And so he's rejected by them. What does that mean for us? It means to be an extension of Jesus in the world means to be rejected by him, by the world.

Because we know that because as he sends the apostles out, what does he say to them? Verse 11, and if any place will not welcome you or listen to you, leave that place, shake the dust off your feet as a testimony against them.

There is an idea there, an expectation that there will be people who will not welcome them or listen to them. And so they should respond to that.

We have to be very careful with what Jesus says here. I mentioned, particularly in our context, remember he is speaking to the twelve. He is not directly speaking to us.

And so we have to be careful with what he says. There is a particular reference here when he says, dust your feet off to Jewish culture. The context is that if a Jew ever left Israel, say they went to Egypt or somewhere, they left Israel.

[17:20] When they returned to Israel, on crossing the border, they were to dust off their feet. And it was, you know, dust off the Egyptian dust. And it was to say, as they dusted it, what's behind us is not Israel.

Dusting your feet at someone's house, you were saying, this house is not Israel. This house is not part of God's people. What they're saying is, and so what they're saying is, to reject the apostles' message is actually to reject God.

More clearly, what they're saying is, to reject our message about Jesus means you're not part of God's people. That's what they're saying when they dust their feet. So we've got to be careful how we think about putting that into practice.

I'd suggest that we probably don't. But there is a, but that doesn't mean that we can't take the principle from it. Jesus and the apostles were perplexed by unbelief.

But what it teaches us is that they weren't paralysed by it. They were perplexed, but they weren't paralysed. There was the freedom to move on.

[18:37] However, these are the apostles. They've got a lot of ground to cover. They have a particular role. There is a particular context to which they're ministering into. I'll say it again. We've got to be careful with how we respond to this.

And be careful that we don't use this to write people off. Because we could do, couldn't we? Quite easily. There is times when we have to stick with people and show them, perhaps over a long time, how Jesus is working and has worked and is working in our life.

It wouldn't be right when someone has doubts to just give up on them. It wouldn't be right. That's not loving and I don't think that's what Jesus intended us to do.

