



“Jesus summoned the twelve and began to send them out two by two and gave them authority over unclean spirits.”

In this week’s Gospel (Mk 6:7-13) we read: “Jesus summoned the twelve and began to send them out two by two and gave them authority over unclean spirits.” We may wonder, wouldn’t it be awesome to be summoned by Jesus and then sent out with authority over unclean spirits? Saint Paul in the Second Reading (Eph 1:3-14) reminds us that God did in fact choose us in Christ before the world began “to be holy and blameless in his sight, to be full of love.” St. Paul praises God and rejoices in this great mystery:

“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavens, as he chose us in him, before the foundation of the world, to be holy and without blemish before

him. In love he destined us for adoption to himself through Jesus Christ, in accord with the favor of his will, for the praise of the glory of his grace that he granted us in the beloved.” (Eph 1:3-6, NAB)

What does this mean? How does this apply to our everyday lives? In a word, we must remember who we are *in Christ* in order to become the people He has created us to be. In times of temptation, when we come face to face with “unclean spirits” we need to recall the authority we have *in Christ*; in Christ, we have been blessed with every spiritual blessing in the heavens in order to live a holy life before God. The fact is, “No trial has come to you but what is human. God is faithful and will not let you be tried beyond your strength; but with the trial he will also provide a way out, so that you may be able to bear it” (1 Corinthians 10:13, NAB). Ultimately, the “way out” God promises to provide is only found in Christ. The Letter to the Hebrews makes this point loud and clear:

“Because he himself was tested through what he suffered, he is able to help those who are being tested.” (Hebrews 2:18, NAB)

“For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who has similarly been tested in every way, yet without sin.” (Hebrews 4:15, NAB)

In conclusion, we might say that the action of Jesus summoning and sending out his disciples with authority over unclean spirits is not a one-time event in our lives as His disciples; rather, it is a continuous process. Jesus summons us to Himself many times a day through the working of the Holy Spirit: we experience His summons when He subtly touches our hearts with an inspiration to pray, or to volunteer, or to give money or time for others, or to repent of our sins. As often as we obey His invitations, as often as we chose to live *in Him*, we find ourselves exercising our God given authority over unclean spirits. St. Paul teaches us, “Walk by the Spirit and you will not carry out the lusts of the flesh.” Today, and in fact every day, if we are attentive to Jesus we will hear Him summoning us to Himself; if we accept the invitation we will find ourselves living as people touched by God – sent out into this world with authority over unclean spirits. And that, my friends, is awesome!

Your Servant in Christ,
Fr. Terry Staples