

Spiritual Seasons in Our Walk with Christ: A Season of Going
Mark 6:1-13

I. Introduction to the Series - The Role of Seasons in the Christian Walk with Christ

A. Definition of “season” -

1. a season is a defined period of time characterized by some general feature that lasts the duration of the time.
2. Example: MN has two seasons:
 - a. WINTER, characterized by cold, snow, and people building entire towns on frozen lakes, and
 - b. ROAD CONSTRUCTION season, characterized by slow traffic, the smell of asphalt, and the noise of jackhammers.
 - (1) Construction season lasts three months.
 - (2) Winter lasts at least nine, though it will sometimes start before construction season ends and other times will not end when construction season is ready to commence.

B. In the Bible, seasons in the natural world, like winter, spring, summer, fall are defined by God.

1. **Genesis 1:14** tells us God created lights in the expanse of the heavens not only to separate the day from the night, but also to be for signs and seasons.
2. **Psalms 104** exclaims that God made the moon to mark the seasons.
3. **Daniel 2:21**, describing the sovereignty of God over all creation, including human social and political experience says,
 - a. *He changes times and seasons; he removes kings and sets up kings; he gives wisdom to the wise and knowledge to those who have understanding.*
4. Jesus informs His disciples, when they ask Him about His schedule for the kingdom, that it is not for them to “know the times or seasons that the Father has fixed by His own authority.”
5. **The seasons we experience in the world, both natural and spiritual, are all set by God!**

C. Spiritual Seasons in Our Walk with Christ

1. Just as there are seasons in the natural world, and seasons in the spiritual world, **there are seasons in our walk with Jesus.**
 - a. There are defined periods of time when our lives of faith are characterized by a single general feature that lasts the duration of that time.
 - b. I asked my Facebook friends this week: If you were going to describe your walk with Christ as a series of seasons, what words would you use? How many seasons are there? What are they?
 - (1) The answers were as varied as the people who responded.
 - (a) Some highlighted the fact they could not control the seasons of their lives in Christ, though they could identify some of the outcomes of the various

- seasons.
- (b) Others attempted to answer the question in broad categories. One listed oblivion, revelation, repentance, faith, thankfulness, and knowledge as seasons in her life.
 - (c) Another listed pain, lethargy, and joy.
- (2) My friend, Kory, who is a pastor in southwest MN, wrote,
- (a) “I don't know the seasons. It seems there are more than I can name or count. But I might ask, ‘How is the way I'm facing this season, whatever it is, in my walk with Christ making me seasoning in the world?’”
 - (b) Leave it to a good pastor to jump quickly to the application.
2. The point is that **there are definable seasons in our experience with Christ, and I want to use that truth to help us understand Mark's message about Jesus in this next section of his gospel.**
- a. For the next five Sundays we want to consider Five Spiritual Seasons in Our Walk with Christ.
 - b. Like the answers to my Facebook question, there are more than five season in our life of faith.
 - c. But we can understand and apply what is happening in this gospel narrative by seeing each event as a season in our lives, a defined time in our walk with Jesus characterized by a unique feature that lasts throughout the time frame.

II. Introduction to Sermon - The Season of Going

A. This morning, as we consider Jesus' visit to Nazareth and His sending out of the Twelve by twos into street ministry, we're going to be looking at life when the season of gathering turns into the season of going.

- 1. The Season of Gathering
 - a. Jesus gathers disciples
 - (1) Simon, Andrew, James, John
 - (2) The rest of the 12
 - b. Jesus gathers followers
 - (1) Everyone is looking for you
 - (2) People came from everywhere to follow Jesus,
 - (3) All those who followed did not stay, but that will be another season . . .
 - c. Jesus gathers critics -
 - (1) Anytime we live boldly and fearlessly a counter-cultural Christian life, we are going to gather critics
 - (a) Healing of the paralytic
 - i) **Mark 2:6-7 (ESV)** *“Now some of the scribes were sitting there, questioning in their hearts, ⁷“Why does this man speak*

like that? He is blaspheming! Who can forgive sins but God alone?"

- (b) The man with the withered hand in the synagogue
 - i) **Mark 3:6 (ESV)** *The Pharisees went out and immediately held counsel with the Herodians against him, how to destroy him.*
- (c) Even His own family thought he'd lost his marbles
 - i) **Mark 3:21 (ESV)** *And when his family heard it, they went out to seize him, for they were saying, "He is out of his mind."*
- (2) The Nazareth incident (**Mark 6:1-6**)
 - (a) First they are amazed
 - (b) Then they are offended
 - (c) Finally, they are left behind.
- 2. But now, having been in a season of gathering, Jesus sends His disciples into a season of going. (**Mark 6:7-13**)
- 3. The church in America, Cornerstone included, has lived in a long season of gathering, but now we are faced, and I believe it to be under the sovereign plan of God, with a season of going.
- 4. **Pandemic isolation and separation call for a different sense of personal purpose - going rather than gathering as the primary gospel activity of our day.**
 - a. Biblical precedent for season of going after gathering
 - b. Examples
 - (1) Babel
 - (2) Early church (Witnesses in Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, ends of earth, therefore, a scattering persecution)

B. How does the account of the going of the twelve inform this season of going in our walk with Jesus?

- 1. The season of going is characterized by Christ's personal agenda.
 - a. Rationale
 - (1) On this occasion
 - (2) As an ultimate endeavor (**Mat. 28**)
 - (a) At the cross He sent us to the world
 - (b) In the upper room He sent us to the streets
 - (3) In Him we live and move and have our being
 - (4) **We are going to be and do what He is and does**
 - b. All the life of faith, the walk with Christ in the world, is lived by Christ's own agenda.
 - (1) He is not only the King of history and king of the cosmos
 - (2) He is King not only of our heart and affections and will
 - (3) He is King of our choices, our challenges, and our conduct.
- 2. The season of going is invested with Christ's authority, instruction, and mission.

- a. Christ's authority -
 - (1) He invests Himself in His disciples and their mission in the world.
 - (2) He does not petition the Father to supply something He lacks
 - (3) Jesus gives the Holy Spirit to the gathered to empower their going
- b. Christ's instruction -
 - (1) rely on the provision and promise of God rather than the provisions of the world.
 - (2) A key component of serving Christ in the world is trusting Christ in your life, right down to the details of daily bread
 - (3) Paul wrote,
 - (a) ¹⁹ *And my God will supply every need of yours according to his riches in glory in Christ Jesus.*
Philippians 4:19 (ESV)
 - (b) **1 Thessalonians 5:24 (ESV)** ²⁴ *He who calls you is faithful; he will surely do it.*
- c. Christ's mission
 - (1) Preach repentance as the key act of faith for entrance into the kingdom
 - (a) Identify sin for what it is
 - (b) Reveal wrath of God on sin
 - (c) Explain the grace of God in Christ toward sinners
 - (d) Invite faith in Christ for salvation
 - (2) Display the Person and Power of God in human to human ministry.
 - (a) Ministry is never about what you can do and is always about Who God is and what He can do!
 - (b) Examples
 - i) Casting out demons: little girl in Haiti
 - ii) Healing the sick: little boy with frozen knee
 - (c) Jesus said, "Without me, you can do nothing."
 - i) Go ahead and embrace that truth, but don't abuse it.
 - ii) Don't think that Jesus meant you don't have to do anything.
 - iii) Jesus meant that success will depend entirely on Him, His authority, His power, His Spirit.
 - iv) You can safely leave your ego at home.
 - (3) Example
 - (a) When I think a sermon is a failure but someone comments on its personal helpfulness to them.
 - (b) Three relational situations right now that I cannot

see my way forward, but I can trust Christ to make a way.

- (c) It isn't about what I can or cannot do, at this point.
- (d) It is about what He must do so I can move forward.
- (e) Take a step back here and ask Jesus what He wants to do through you in this season of going, then, get to it.

- 3. The season of going is characterized by the same responses to us that the world gave Jesus.
 - a. Some accepted Jesus with faith and joy
 - b. Others rejected Jesus through unbelief and anger
 - c. **You are not going to have a different experience presenting Jesus to the world than Jesus had when He presented Himself to the world!**
 - (1) Keep realistic expectations
 - (a) Be present where you are welcome
 - (b) Move on where your message is rejected
 - i) Leave a good testimony
 - ii) But don't lose your sense of well-being to someone else's immediate unbelief
 - (2) React in ways that continue to testify to the mercy and grace of Jesus and the responsibility of the world to respond to Him with faith.
 - (3) Example
 - (a) Gadarenes begged Him to leave, but He left one to testify.
 - (b) At the end of this chapter, those same people will throng Jesus and ask for His help.
 - d. In the season of going you will have both successes and setbacks, but fear not, Christ's kingdom comes!

III. Conclusion

A. A season of gathering is a time for coming to Christ

- 1. For forgiveness of sin
- 2. For new life and hope
- 3. For new purpose

B. A season of going

- 1. is not a punishment
- 2. as much as it is a divine provision to join God in His mission to fill the earth with the knowledge of His glory, empowered by His Spirit and trusting in His presence,