

Mark 6:9

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

But be shod with sandals; and not put on two coats.

Analysis

But be shod with sandals; and not put on two coats. Jesus continues practical instructions with balance between provision and simplicity. 'Be shod with sandals' (ὕποδεδεμένους σανδάλια, hypodedemenous sandalia) allows basic foot protection for travel—recognizing practical needs without excess. Ancient Palestinian terrain required footwear; barefoot travel would be impractical and harmful. Yet 'not put on two coats' (μὴ ἐνδύσῃσθε δύο χιτῶνας, mē endysēsthe dyo chitōnas) prohibits extra clothing—no backup tunic for comfort or security.

The principle: God provides necessities but prohibits excess that indicates self-reliance rather than faith-dependence. One coat suffices; two suggests planning for self-provision rather than trusting God and community hospitality. These instructions taught the Twelve to distinguish between legitimate need and unnecessary security-seeking. The mission's urgency didn't allow time for packing multiple outfits; the gospel's advance required immediate action with minimal preparation. This balance—sandals yes, extra coat no—shows Jesus wasn't advocating careless disregard for basic needs but rejecting anxiety-driven over-preparation that betrays unbelief (Matthew 6:25-34).

Historical Context

Sandals (sandalia) were simple leather soles attached with straps—basic footwear for daily life and travel. The wealthy might own multiple pairs or more elaborate shoes, but most had one pair. The 'coat' or 'tunic' (chitōn) was the basic inner garment worn next to skin, typically ankle-length. Travelers often carried spare

clothing for changing, but Jesus prohibited this luxury. The prohibition echoed Old Testament imagery: Elisha gave away his extra cloak when called to prophetic ministry (1 Kings 19:19), symbolizing abandoning worldly security for divine calling. Ancient travel was dangerous—robbers, weather, injury could leave travelers stranded without resources. Jesus' instructions required faith that God would provide through each day without backup plans. Matthew's parallel account (10:10) emphasizes workers deserve their food—the point isn't self-deprivation but faith that God provides through those who receive ministry. Early church debate (Acts 15:28-29) about which commands applied to Gentiles didn't include these travel instructions, recognizing their context-specific nature while preserving the underlying faith-dependence principle.

Related Passages

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Study Questions

1. How do you distinguish between wise preparation and faithless over-preparation that reveals distrust in God's provision?
2. What 'extra coats'—backup plans, security measures, or safety nets—might God be calling you to release in order to depend more fully on Him?

Interlinear Text

ἀλλ'	ὑποδεδεμένους	σανδάλια	καὶ	μὴ	ἐνδύσησθε	δύο
But	be shod	with sandals	and	not	put on	two
G235	G5265	G4547	G2532	G3361	G1746	G1417

χιτῶνας

coats

G5509

Additional Cross-References

Acts 12:8 (Parallel theme): And the angel said unto him, Gird thyself, and bind on thy sandals. And so he did. And he saith unto him, Cast thy garment about thee, and follow me.

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