

- I. Current Series: SENT. We're exploring the truth that as followers of Jesus, we are all "sent" people, but though we are all sent, our assignments can be very, very different.
 - A. Story: Air Force Veteran friend of mine; his assignment was guarding a missile silo.
 - 1. Assignments of his other Air Force comrades more exciting?
 - 2. But what if he had left his assignment for one that had been given to another?
 - B. In the mission of Jesus on this Earth, we are ALL sent out with the Gospel but we all have a mission field placement that is specific to God's will for us.
 - 1. Common but wrong mindset: two kinds of Christians: Those who GO and those who DON'T. There are missionaries who leave their homes and take the Gospel to another place in the world and then there are the rest of us.
 - 2. But we see in Scripture a different way: There is one kind of Christian: one who goes out with the Gospel.
 - 3. Thousands of destinations for all of these "going" Christians. From as close to next door to as far as a people group on the other side of the world.
- II. Our calling to **go** is identical but our **destination** is unique.
 - A. In John 20:21 after His death and resurrection, Jesus said to His apostles: "Peace be with you. **As the Father has sent Me, even so I am sending you.**"
 - 1. Powerful domino effect: God is the first initiator of sending.
 - 2. The Father sent Jesus and He went! Jesus sent the apostles and they went! The apostles sent out others and they went!
 - 3. Two millennia of this down to the very moment you heard the Gospel of Jesus and believed.
 - B. And now, in this unbroken line, King Jesus looks at us and says, "As the Father has sent Me, even so I am sending you."
 - 1. So we are all sent. And when our King Jesus says go, there's a natural next question: WHERE?
 - a. Some: as close as their next door neighbor. That is their mission field.
 - b. Some: as far as the most unreached provinces of India. That's their mission field.
 - 2. Ultimately, the destination of our "sentness" is in the hands of God.
 - a. There may be an urgency to bring the Gospel to places where people are dying every day without ever even hearing about Jesus. That IS urgent in the same way that getting food to starving nations is urgent.
 - b. And while we embrace the urgency of those people groups, we can simultaneously embrace the urgency of the one neighbor we have who does not know Jesus.
 - C. QUOTE: A missions author, Todd Ahrend, writes this: "'Which is more important—the rescuer who goes down into the well to save a life or the man at the top holding the rope?' The answer is obvious. Both are vital!" - *The Abrahamic Revolution*

1. And so we recognize the vital nature and holy mission it is both for the Christian who **stays** home to make disciples and for the one who **leaves** home to make disciples.
2. Citizens of Jesus' Kingdom are all assigned to go and send.
3. We are all called to make disciples who make disciples who make disciples who make disciples. We all go and we all send.

D. Full Circle

1. But what does it say? [in Deut. 30:14] *"The Word is near you, in your mouth and in your heart" (that is, the word of faith that we proclaim); because, if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For with the heart one believes and is justified, and with the mouth one confesses and is saved. (Romans 10:8-10)*
 - a. Later in v. 13, Paul summarizes salvation this way:
 - b. For *"everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved."* (Romans 10:13)
2. But then in v.14 Paul connects some very important dots with OUR involvement in God's mission of salvation.
 - a. He reverse-engineers the process from the last domino to fall back to the first: Someone being sent out with the Gospel.
 - b. *How then will they call on Him in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in Him of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without someone preaching? And how are they to preach unless they are sent? (Romans 10:14-15)*

III. Gospel Roadmap: Sending - Proclaiming - Hearing - Believing - Calling on Jesus

- A. Do you see how important this is? If no one is sent, no one is saved! If the sent person doesn't go, how will the lost person believe?
- B. Very important question (not a trick question): Does God deeply care for all of the people of this world to hear the good news of His Son, Jesus—that He died for our sins and was raised for our eternal life?
 1. More challenging question: "Is God's deep care for people to hear the Gospel enough reason for ME to deeply care and obediently act?"
 2. Do I need any better reason than the fact that the salvation of the world is so heavy on our Father's heart? No guilt trip here at all, just an invitation to look into your heart and see what motivates you.
- C. One of our struggles is insecurity and fear: "What if I don't do it right?"
 1. QUOTE: When Robert Morrison sailed to China to translate the Bible, the ship's captain asked sarcastically, "Mr. Morrison, do you really expect to make an impression on the idolatry of the great Chinese Empire?" "No, sir," Morrison replied. "I expect God will." (Todd Ahrend- *The Abrahamic Revolution*)
 2. I want to encourage your heart: God will not ignore your obedient heart. You offer a surrendered heart, He will supply a Gospel-filled mouth.

IV. Where we can GO: from Neighbor to Nations (and anywhere in between!)

- A. This is not about comfort on the one hand or being impressive on the other. This is about obedience to WHERE God is sending you.
 1. If God is sending me to Yemen and I don't go for the sake of comfort, I've disobeyed.

2. If God is sending me to my next door neighbor but I go to Yemen because it seems more important or impressive, I've disobeyed.
 - B. Story: 87-year-old who just joined the church. Lives in an assisted living home and isn't as mobile as she used to be. "I wish I could do more"... plays piano for the residents of a memory care facility across the way. She doesn't need to do more. She's exactly where she needs to be, doing exactly what she needs to do. She's faithfully accomplishing her assignment.
 - C. Whatever post God is assigning to you, don't abandon it. (Just like my Air Force friend)
- V. Ways we can SEND
- A. Prayer
 1. Let's renew our belief again in the power of talking to God. How could talking to the most powerful being in the universe ever be weak or wasted?
 2. There's a song called "More than Able," and the punchline of the chorus is this: "Who am I to deny what the Lord can do?"
 - B. Financial and Relational support
 1. People who are sent out don't send themselves.
 2. There are real physical, spiritual, and financial needs that these people who are going out into the unreached portions of our world have.
 - a. Maybe that need is more urgent than that extra latte I was going to buy? More urgent than that expensive vacation I was going to take? And that's not a judgment against coffee or Cancun. I personally don't have the right to tell you what to do with your money. But does God?
 - b. Before we substantially spend, do we ask GOD what assignment that money has?
 3. And we're not only called to send but to help sustain. It can be really lonely out there. Maybe God is asking you to spend one hour a month just FaceTiming with someone who has left home and family to bring the Gospel to people who don't have it?
 - C. Discipleship: Those who are being sent need to be disciplined. They need instruction in the Scriptures. They need accountability for holiness. They need life-wisdom that transcends the differences between cultures. They need people to help them discern the hard situations. They need encouragement. They need correction.
 - D. Hospitality:
 1. Those who LEAVE need a family when they RETURN and not just their immediate blood relatives.
 2. Don't underestimate the power of opening your home.
 3. Don't underestimate the power of just listening. They have stories. They've seen and heard and experienced things that need to be processed.
- VI. Ultimately, this is following the way of Jesus: He went and sent.
- A. Now, before I give you some questions to take with you into the presence of God, I want to first say something.
 1. I've lived my whole life at this church—46 years. What I'm saying isn't new. It isn't some novel idea that someone has just now discovered. It is the age-old truth that has been the engine for the church of Jesus since its inception.

2. You know what else isn't new? The people of this church obeying the call. In all these 46 years I've been in this church, I can't begin to name or number the people I've seen say yes to Jesus to take this Gospel of the Kingdom both near and far. They've obeyed with a full heart.
3. The message today is definitely instruction to us: to answer the call to go and to send. But in the same moment, I deeply desire for it to be affirmation of faithfulness to so many of you. So many of you have BEEN saying yes to Jesus and His mission and I just want to say WELL DONE. Keep going, don't lose heart. Keep being brave and keep taking this extraordinary message of Jesus' love and death and resurrection and salvation to those you know. God is pleased with your heart and He sees your faithfulness. WELL DONE!!

B. Two questions to consider in God's presence:

1. To whom am I assigned to go?
Who is my assignment right now? Is there a place in my neighborhood or even in the world that God wants me to be present in, to not only be available but intentional to share the Gospel of Jesus? Who at my work has God given me favor with and who might be open to the love of Jesus because of the love I'm showing them? Is there a segment of my community (single moms, refugees, schools, the elderly, business professionals, etc) that I am specially designed to have influence with?
2. Who and how am I being assigned to send?
If my assignment is here where I live, is there a way that God is calling me to put some time, effort, or resources in to support those whose assignment is NOT here? Could I make it a regular rhythm of my week to pray for Todd and Sarah in Slovenia? Would Vikki and Nelson benefit from my generosity as they serve in Costa Rica? Would Timothy Ith enjoy me spending a week with him in Cambodia encouraging the church there? What does Kingsley Hunnicut need as he sets his sights on heading back out to Slovenia? How can I invest in Allison and Dillon's discipleship as they try to discern where in the world God is sending them? What unmet needs do Brian and Jeleta and Nikki have as they do the hard work of bringing the Gospel to the unreached?
3. The assignment? Pray-Listen-Obey