

## **Sent Out**

**Text: John 20:19-23**

### **Jesus sent His disciples out into the world as Apostles**

This passage of scripture is known as the day the disciples became Apostles. The word, "Apostle" simply means, "Sent Out." For three and a half years the disciples followed Jesus and now they were ready to be sent out as Apostles. Their lives were about to get even more interesting than they already were. Each one of them would leave father and mother, brother and sister for far off lands to teach and preach the Gospel. James went to Spain. Andrew went to Europe. Peter went to Italy. Simon the Zealot went to Egypt and Libya. Thomas went to India. These fisherman were on the verge of hanging up their nets for good for the sake of the Gospel.

There was a time in church history where some theologians believed that Jesus only sent out the disciples; that the Great Commission was not intended for future generations of Christians, but only for those twelve men. This of course is a fraud. The commission to spread the Gospel is intended for every follower of Christ, no one is exempt from this command. They were Apostles with a capital A. We are apostles with a lower case A.

### **Jesus still sends messengers out into a lost and dying world**

Every generation of Christians carries the responsibility and privilege of mishearing Jesus. A follower of Christ who fails to share their faith with another is guilty of great sin. What greater sin is their than for a believer to be content with a family member or neighbor going to hell?! Maybe the problem is we don't really believe in eternal consequence.

Don't misunderstand me please. It is God who draws men to himself. It is God who saves. We cannot by our cunning, our persuasion ability, or our good intentions save anyone. But you see the beauty of the Gospel is that God has sovereignly chosen to use you and me to communicate the Gospel. We live in a lost and dying world that needs the Gospel and God has called upon you.

*This morning, I want remind you of your mission as a Christian*

I do not want you to leave here today feeling guilty. I don't want you to leave here feeling obligated. I want you to lead here excited and eager to share the Gospel.

### ***In this passage of scripture, God equips us with three provisions for our mission to share the Gospel***

#### **#1 Peace that comes from the Resurrected Christ (v.19-21)**

These disciples of Jesus were behind locked doors afraid to set foot outside. At this point in their lives you couldn't get them to talk about Jesus to someone even if you held a gun to them. They were in such a state of fear that they were reduced to nothing.

Doesn't this resemble us sometimes? Too afraid to leave our places of comfort?

When I was in elementary school I remember selling candy bars for a school fundraiser. I remember going door to door in my neighborhood selling those overpriced candy bars no one wanted. Making money was a big incentive for me.

Not that I recommend this or believe this godly, but if we incentivized sharing the Gospel with money, would we be more outgoing in our witness? Probably a lot more. Why isn't that fact that we are redeemed by the precious blood of Jesus motivate us more?

Look at verse 19c...

Jesus appeared inside the small locked room. This verse leads us to believe that the resurrected body of Jesus had the supernatural ability to pass through solid objects like doors. The first word out of Jesus' mouth was SHALOM. Peace be with you.

Then He showed them his hands and feet. This is important to take note of... the resurrected body of Jesus was not simply spiritual, it was also physical, literal. During the time of the early church there was a group of people who preached gnosticism which taught that Jesus only resurrected spiritually, not physically. The Apostle John makes it a point to include in his Gospel verse 20... We believe that Jesus literally came back from the dead.

The disciples' reaction was rejoicing. I'm sure they remembered days earlier in the upper room when Jesus promised them peace... and now they had it. The resurrected Christ provided a peace in their hearts that everything was going to be okay.

And I think, in order for them to become the mighty Apostles they were they were going to need peace that could withstand the coming persecution, peace in the face of a lynch mob; peace in the midst of beatings; peace in the midst of crucifixion.

This is the nature of peace that comes from Christ. It's not the absence of danger, but the presence of God in your life.

It reminds me of an art contest in Paris France. The theme was, "A Peaceful scene." For months, artists everywhere competed in the contest sending their paintings in. Finally the great day of revelation arrived. The judges uncovered one peaceful scene after another, while the viewers clapped and cheered. After more than a dozen were revealed tensions grew. Only two pictures remained veiled. As a judge pulled the cover from one, a hush fell over the crowd. A mirror-smooth lake reflected lacy, green birch trees under the soft blush of the evening sky. Along the grassy shore, a flock of sheep grazed undisturbed. Surely this was the winner. Then the judges uncovered the last painting. The crowd gasped in surprise. A tumultuous waterfall cascaded down a rocky precipice; the crowd could almost feel its cold, penetrating spray. Stormy-gray clouds threatened to explode with lightning, wind and rain. In the midst of the thundering noises and bitter chill, a spindly tree clung to the rocks at the edge of the falls. One of its branches reached out in front of the torrential waters as if foolishly seeking to experience its full power. A little bird had built a nest in the elbow of that branch. Content and undisturbed in her stormy surroundings, she rested on her eggs. With her eyes closed and her wings ready to cover her little ones, she manifested peace that transcends all earthly turmoil.

That is the kind of peace that Jesus provides. Not absence of problems, but his presence in the midst of storms.

The situation for the disciples was precarious. They were behind locked doors. They were wanted men, but Jesus was there and all was well. Jesus showed them the holes in his hands and feet proving that he had endured the cross, endured death, and was alive again. The resurrected Christ provided them a heart full of peace.

In the upper room the night before the crucifixion Jesus said...  
Peace I leave with you; My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Do not let your heart be troubled, nor let it be fearful.  
Jesus made good on his promise for the disciples.

But He says the same thing to us today. Do not let your heart be troubled. Why? Because I have overcome the world!  
Get this, this is real important... If you want to share your faith to a lost and dying world you will need a personal peace that only Jesus gives. Because if you are fully of anxiety and worry you will be reduced to nothing, just like the disciples in the upper room were.

**#1 The first provision God gives us for our mission is a heart at peace. He also equips us with...#2**

## **#2 Power that comes from the presence of the Holy Spirit (v.21b-22)**

So just imagine what the disciples are thinking. I wonder if they realized what Jesus was saying at all. If I were there in that room I probably wouldn't be over the fact that Jesus was alive! But Jesus wastes no time in giving the disciple orders to follow. He said, "As the Father sent me, I send you." In other words, "You are to continue my work after I'm gone. You are now my official representative as I was of my Father." Then the Bible says Jesus breathed on them and said, "receive the Holy Spirit."

The way I understand this is that Jesus was aligning himself with the HS as if to say, "As the Father sent me, I send you in the power of the HS to forgive sins. Jesus did not call the HS down upon the disciples at this point yet. We know that happened in Acts 2 at Pentecost. This here was sort of an announcement of the soon coming HS. Here Jesus tells them to receive the Spirit when he comes. Jesus promised the coming Spirit multiple times before. In...

John 14:26 But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all that I said to you. John 16:13 But when He, the Spirit of truth, comes, He will guide you into all the truth; for He will not speak on His own initiative, but whatever He hears, He will speak; and He will disclose to you what is to come.

Part of God's redemptive plan includes the pouring out of the HS upon believers. This pouring out of the Spirit is what motivated the early disciples to do what they did with such courage! Part of God's redemptive plan includes you. If you are a believer in Christ then you have the HS living inside you. The HS is that still small voice urging you, pleading with you, pushing you to tell others about Jesus. The HS is the fuel that drives you to share Christ with others.

One New Year's Day, in the Tournament of Roses parade, a beautiful float suddenly sputtered and quit. It was out of gas. The whole parade was held up until someone could get a can of gas. The amusing thing was this float represented the Standard Oil Company. With its vast oil resources, its truck was out of gas.

Often, Christians neglect their spiritual maintenance, and though they are "clothed with power" (Luke 24:49) find themselves out of gas.

The HS is the fuel for the Christian. His presence in our lives is what motivates us to go, to speak, to love, to minister to a lost and dying world.

Here's a question for you, "*Can you be a Christian, and not share your faith?*" *Can you be a believer and not have any burden for the lost?*"

-To that, I would say yes, you can be a believer and not have a burden for the lost.

But how's that possible?-years of neglect. Years of sitting on the sidelines. Years of always coming up with excuses not to tell that person at work about the Lord or that relative or neighbor. You can grow cold in your evangelistic zeal.

But some say, "I don't know how to tell someone about Jesus."

-Let me ask you husbands, "Do you need a ten week course teaching you how to tell others how much you love your wives?!" I sure hope not! Sharing your faith should be as easy as talking about the one you love. If it's not easy to talk about God, maybe you're not in love with God.

Sharing your faith is as easy as a three minute testimony. One minute sharing about your life before Christ.

One minute sharing how Christ saved you. One minute sharing what your life has been since it all happened.

You can do that! We are helped by the power of the presence of the HS in our lives. He will give us the words to speak when we do not know what to say.

**#1 Christ equips us with a peace that comes from knowing the resurrected Christ. Power that comes from the presence of the HS and #3...**

**#3 Purpose that comes from being the Father's instrument of salvation**

The reason God doesn't hoist us up into heaven after we receive salvation, is because He has a divine purpose for your life. The is you are His chosen instrument for other's salvation. God uses you and me to communicate His message to the lost. God has chosen you to do His will on earth.

Now, let's look at the last verse here...

This verse may seem odd at first. The Roman Catholics interpret this verse to mean that priests have the power to forgive sins. They say that Jesus gave the power to the disciples and the disciples past down that power to future people in church leadership i.e. the priests. Now, that's foolish. That's taking this verse way too far to suit their purpose.

This verse does not mean we have the power to forgive sins. Look at it again...

Jesus says, "When you forgive someone of their sins (which means preaching the Gospel message) when they repent of their sins, they HAVE ALREADY BEEN forgiven.

Do you see this? God has already forgiven them prior to their conversion. This verse is a great example of divine election.

There are other verses that say basically the same thing...

*Matthew 16:19*

*"I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven; and whatever you bind on earth shall have been bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall have been loosed in heaven."*

*Matthew 18:18*

*Truly I say to you, whatever you bind on earth shall have been bound in heaven; and whatever you loose on earth shall have been loosed in heaven.*

Messengers of the Gospel are not tasked with saving those we talk to. All we do is deliver the message. If they receive it by faith and believe then they had already been forgiven by God.

Now, the Apostle Paul when He taught about election knew that some people would think that it wasn't fair for God to forgive some and others and others not....so he wrote Romans 9...

Romans 9:14-23...

Maybe this is the first time you read Romans 9. Maybe you have questions about election in the Bible. All you really need to know is that our purpose today is to know God and to make Him known. God has chosen to use the foolishness of preaching as the means by which he brings people to him. We do not know who will receive our message and who won't. We leave that up to God. Our purpose is just tell.

You know, God could easily, instantaneously save all people he wants to save in a split second based upon the merits of Christ. God is sovereign. He could do that. But instead, it pleases God to use Christians as instruments in his divine plan.

So here's the question. Who have you told lately?

In closing,

I know whenever we talk about evangelism many different emotions come out. When we think about those we love who don't know Jesus who are bound for hell it makes us shudder. I have close family who I know have not received Jesus. It starts with prayer. Pray for the lost.

This morning I challenge you to receive the peace of God through the resurrected Christ first, then use the power of His Spirit, and last realize your purpose as God's chosen instrument of salvation.