

Vision Series Slide

Alex lived in a trailer park with his little brother and mom. He was 18 years old and working as a handy man to raise money for college. His only hobby was playing a video game.

Luke lived on a farm with his aunt and uncle after the death of his parents. He was a young man who felt like his life was going nowhere. He desperately wanted to enlist in the military just to keep up with his friends who had left him behind.

Tom was a computer programmer unsatisfied with his life, feeling like something was off-something wrong with the world, but he didn't know what to do about it.

Frank was a short young man with large feet, who lived in a small town in the country, and admired his uncle, who traveled a lot, but generally was content with his small town living.

Kate lived in the Appalachian mountains in a little coal-mining town with her mom and sister. She liked to hunt...and was good at it, but it sure would be nice if she could do it for sport instead of necessity.

What do all these people have in common?

They each saved the world.

At least in the books or movies they're from.

Kate (Katniss) from the Hunger Games.
Frank (Frodo) the Hobbit from Lord of the Rings
Thomas Anderson or NEO from The Matrix.
Luke Skywalker from Star Wars

...and the least familiar of all, but one of my favorites as a kid...Alex Rogan- from the Last Straighter.

Alex plays an arcade game called "Starfighter" in which he sets the high score. Turns out, the video game was placed there by an intergalactic Army to recruit pilots in a war to save the galaxy. So shortly after Alex sets the high score- he's whisked away in a space ship for his pilot training.

I loved the Last Straighter because it seemed relatable to my life at the time. I loved playing arcade games- and the thought that one could be secretly training me for an intergalactic mission in a real straighter? SIGN ME UP.

In fact, it was after watching this movie that I started riding around my neighborhood in Killeen, TX on my bicycle pretending I was Super Trevor. Audibly humming Micheal Jackson's Beat It as I pedaled as fast as I could.

I would pull over into empty lots in the neighborhood and beat up the bad guys.

When Jesus says, "Unless you come to me like a little child- you can't enter the kingdom of God"..

Yes- that means dependence and humility and joy...

...but I wonder...

maybe it also points to having a childlike imagination that we are called up into something intergalactic...cosmic...world saving.

One of my all time favorite pictures of a childlike imagination is...

DUNAHOO with SANTA PIC

I feel like these are the two basic responses to a calling that seems bigger than us.

Close up faces pic

Mason- Joy Excitement Following the finger- HES CALLED UP INTO SOMETHING>
Meg- Fear- Not interested in going anywhere.

Raising up humble leaders with joy.

Unafraid. Overflowing. Sent.

Today- we're going to focus on what it means to be SENT-
SENT- is likely to be a lot of our least favorite of these 3 words.

Especially for people who so deeply value freedom. National Anthem LAND OF THE FREEEEEEEEEEE!

Sent- someone else has control.

Title Slide- "Made for More: Why Being Sent is a Gift"- John 20:19-23

Today, I want to show you why being sent is MORE than an obligation- and I want to hype you up for WHAT GOD IS SENDING YOU TO DO!

With Jesus- you are living into all those movies. Frodo, Neo, Luke, Katniss, and Alex.

To be Saved by Jesus is to be SENT by Jesus...there will be fear....there will be a temptation to an attitude of scarcity- focusing on what you stand to lose....

...but there is something better. than status quo. There's something better than the American Dream...or your dreams. You are made for more than just holding onto a lifestyle. You are made to be SENT by God. For GOD.... and most importantly WITH GOD.

John 20:19-23

19 When it was evening on that first day of the week, the disciples were gathered together with the doors locked because they feared the Jews. Jesus came, stood among them, and said to them, "Peace be with you."

20 Having said this, he showed them his hands and his side. So the disciples rejoiced when they saw the Lord.

21 Jesus said to them again, "Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, I also send you." 22 After saying this, he breathed on them and said, "Receive the Holy Spirit. 23 If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained."

Transition: From this passage I want to show you why being Sent is something to celebrate... not fear...and like just like Luke got a lightsaber. Alex got a space ship, and Neo got the ability to make bullets freeze in mid air- I want to show you the cool stuff that Jesus equips you with for his mission.

1) When Jesus sends you, he gives you the gift of Purpose.

One of the great sicknesses of our world today is a lack of purpose.

60 or so years ago, we began to believe that purpose is something you define for yourself rather than a calling that comes from outside of you.

Notice in all those stories I mentioned at the first, there was an external call- something that a community or society or family...or GALAXY needed...and an ordinary person was transformed and called up into a cause.

Those are people that laid down their INDIVIDUAL RIGHTS and answered their RESPONSIBILITY to their community.

Today, largely, we reject responsibility to a community, and exalt our individual rights.

In other words, we don't answer to a calling from outside of us...if we have any responsibility at all- it is to answer the calling that comes from inside of us.

BE TRUE TO YOU.

BE YOUR AUTHENTIC SELF.

DON'T LET OTHERS DICTATE WHO YOU ARE OR WHAT YOU DO.

YOU HAVE A RIGHT TO BE YOU.

YOU AREN'T RESPONSIBLE FOR ANYONE BUT YOURSELF.

YOU BELONG TO YOURSELF AND NO ONE ELSE.

This is all done in the name of freedom.

See, We have exalted a false idea of freedom.

We have reduced freedom to only being FREED FROM SOMETHING.

to Not have the restraints of external responsibilities. Or expectations.

This hasn't made us stronger or better..largely...its made us late for work all the time.

EXPLAIN

A Calling form outside of us has become an impediment to happiness...because its an obligation...and if we don't feel like fulfilling an obligation...then we aren't be are true self-defined authentic selves.

But freedom FROM something is not really freedom at all. REAL FREEDOM is the ability to DO WHAT YOU ARE CREATED TO DO.

That can only be defined by a creator.

In the Creation story in Scripture- Unlike any other creation stories in the ancient world- YHWH creates humanity NOT as obligated slaves to serve him. But as image bearers to REPRESENT HIM and to COOPERATE with in creation.

Having Children and making the world LIKE the garden.
Be fruitful and multiply.
Bring Flourishing for the world.
Live not for yourself- but for your creator and for others.

And he makes them free. He gives them everything they need. And yet...they self-define their purpose. Life becomes not about working WITH GOD to bring flourishing to others..it becomes about competing against GOD...and against each other.

Life becomes about breaking free FROM GOD and his laborious obligations.
and so the world breaks. Death enters. Sin and despair take over.

In the Exodus- God's people are enslaved in Egypt. They cry out for freedom FROM something- God says "I'm going to set you free FROM EGYPT...and make you free TO WORSHIP ME BY taking you to another land...where you will have all you need to get back to my original plan.

But once they have their freedom- they HATE the obligation...complain...and dream of going back to slavery.

This is a picture of the cycle of sin and what happens when we self-define our purpose based on our inward desires...instead of listening to a call to fulfill the responsibilities we have been given by our creator.

v 19-20

In our text today, even after the resurrection, the disciples are locked in a room in fear...afraid to act.

The Resurrected Jesus comes to them and says "Peace". Then he shows them his scars from the cross.

And then you start to see the crack in the fear. The light in the darkness. The melting away of the anxiety and grief.

Peace. Shalom. Jesus comes to them and says the word that represents the world as GOD intends it to be. Everything working in perfect freedom- fulfilling its responsibilities. Answering its call. Doing what its created to do. Thats what the word "PEACE" means.

When they see that this is Jesus, not a ghost... they know that Jesus is happy to see them. JOY. He's not angry at their abandonment of him, he's not coming to shame them for their fear... he's come to let them know they were made for more.

More than cowering in a room licking their wounds.
Made for more than feeling sorry for themselves.
Made for more than anxiety over not being safe.

Jesus has come to let them know that though he finished the work of SAVING THEM FROM THEIR SIN on the cross...he has just started the work of SAVING THEM TO SOMETHING. He's coming to give the blessing of purpose. A Calling from outside of themselves to live into. He's come to call Alex, Neo, Luke, Frodo, Katniss, Peter, James and John...to call them UP into something much bigger than their own lives.

And it all comes from the joy of knowing that Christ died and resurrected. It all comes from knowing that Jesus is the one who took away the shame and penalty of our sin.. and gave us a new identity..not of sinner...not of rebel... now- safe with Jesus as a Child of GOD....they are ready to be sent out as missionaries.

Centarui: Alex! Alex! You're walking away from history. History! Did Chris Columbus say he wanted to stay home? NO! What if the Wright Brothers thought that only birds could fly?

Alex: Listen- I'm not any of those guys. I'm a kid from a trailer park.

Centauri: If thats what you think, then thats all you'll ever be!

Song- "Made for More"

**I know who I am 'cause I know who You are
The cross of salvation was only the start
Now I am chosen, free and forgiven
I have a future and it's worth the living**

what is the future? What is the More? The purpose?

v 21

Send or sent is used 32 times in the gospel of John.

There are 21 chapters. Thats 1.5 times per chapter.

In ALL 4 gospels- Jesus says Follow Me about 21 times total.

Emphasis on Following Jesus- which is good. YES!

But there is often a de-emphasis that we put on being SENT.

We are sent out to be WITNESSES. TO who Jesus is and what he has done. To show signs of his love and his kingdom and to TELL people. This is some random obligation. Notice- this is part of the TRINITARIAN GOD'S OVERFLOW.

2) When Jesus sends you, He gives you the gift of His Presence.

The very next thing Jesus does is really strange.

v 22

This is a call back- again- to our created purpose.

Holy Spirit- Look where he is at work. Follow him into risk. Prayer
Trinitarian OVERFLOW.

Matthew 28:18-20

Jesus came near and said to them, "All authority has been given to me in heaven and on earth. 19 Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, 20 teaching them to observe everything I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age."

Notice- I AM WITH YOU.

NOTICE- The trinitarian overflow. You are BAPTIZED. SUBMERGED IN this new identity...and you come up out of the water SENT- with purpose. and RELATIONSHIP.

Jesus is near to them. WITH THEM. They are IN the Father Son and HOLY SPIRIT.

If you want to experience Jesus' WITH-NESS- Go be his WITNESS.

Holy Spirit gives you power, yes, but also presence.

Here's ways you will experience this.

Listen for WHOM he's Sent you.

Pray for this person. Help this person. Share with this person.

Look at WHERE he's Sent you.

Acts 17:26-27

26 From one man he has made every nationality to live over the whole earth and has determined their appointed times and the boundaries of where they live. 27 He did this so that they might seek God, and perhaps they might reach out and find him, though he is not far from each one of us

Keep your eyes open

Be Curious with the Holy Spirit.

Back to 2)

Jesus calls us farmers casting seed.
Fishermen fishing for people
Ambassadors of his Kingdom.

He is present with us as we are living into this calling and responsibility. PEACE. Im with you to the end of the age. GO AND MAKE DISCIPLES.

This is not a burdensome obligation- You know who you are with JESUS.. NOW LOOK WHAT YOU GET TO DO WITH HIM!

3) When Jesus sends you, he gives you the gift of His Power.

Really confusing verse that ended this little section we read.

v 23

If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you WITHOLD forgiveness, It is withheld.

This can be a difficult verse because it almost makes it sound like Jesus is giving US the authority to forgive sins. But that can't be true. Interpret Scripture with Scripture.

the Bible say that only God can forgive sins.

Think about it this way: If anybody in history would ever have had the authority to forgive sins, it would have been Peter. He was standing in that original group that heard these words and he was recognized as one of the main leaders of the church. And some today do indeed claim that Peter and his successors have the authority to forgive sin

But not one time in the Bible do you ever find Peter taking upon himself the authority to grant forgiveness. Not once. In fact, in Acts 10, when Peter preaches the gospel to a group of Gentiles, he says to them--notice this—

Acts 10:42-43

He commanded us to preach to the people and to testify that he is the one appointed by God to be the judge of the living and the dead. 43 All the prophets testify about him that through his name everyone who believes in him receives forgiveness of sins."

Peter didn't say, "I forgive your sins," he said, "The Bible says if you believe in Jesus you will receive forgiveness of sins and I'm just here to tell you about it."

v 23

So, if this phrase doesn't mean that we have the authority to forgive sins, what does it mean?

(23) the expression “if you forgive someone’s sins, THEY ARE FORGIVEN” is in the perfect-tense verbs in Greek, which means you could translate that phrase as: “they HAVE BEEN forgiven.”

You could really read that statement as, “If you forgive any one’s sins they have (already) been forgiven.”

In other words, Jesus was saying that Peter and the Apostles were given the ability to recognize when God had saved someone, and the authority to validate their acceptance of it, assuring those new Gentile believers, when they believed, that they were indeed fully included in the family of God. The Apostles could recognize when someone’s sins were forgiven, and make it official.

Even more importantly, it was through the Apostles preaching that others heard the message and believed. God will forgive the sins of anyone who believes, but, it’s like Paul said to the Romans “How can they believe on him of whom they have not heard? And how can they hear unless we preach to them?” We hold in our hands the power to share the only message by which people can be forgiven.

Jesus died to forgive the sins of everybody, but that death doesn’t do any good unless they hear about it. I

Martin Luther said, “it wouldn’t matter if Jesus died 1000x if nobody ever heard about it!”
Or the theologian

“The gospel means ‘good news’ but it is only good new form somebody if it gets to them in time.” - Carl F. H. Henry

You haven’t just been given the Purpose and the Presence- you have been given the POWER- the authority to go out and participate in what God is already doing in the lives of people and with joy tell people that CHRIST has forgiven them. That its real. That though it seems unbelievable... They are welcomed in to the Kingdom of God. THAT IS A GREAT PRIVILEGE. AN incredible amount of authority...to be taken seriously...and with great joy.

Acts 1:8

Think about this: Of all the things that Jesus could have said here--he could have said: “You will be my worshippers;” or, “you will be my prayer warriors;” “my Bible-studiers,” my “justice-advocates”--all those would have been true, but he chose to say, “You will be my WITNESSES.”

“Witness”--sent one; that’s your primary identity, and that means in everything else we do, that’s who we are; that’s our identity- we must see our purpose, his presence, and the power he gives us to accomplish the mission.

We have a joyful responsibility- he raised up from the grave to raise us up with JOY.

Unafraid. Overflowing. Sent.

Are you taking this call seriously? Are you taking it joyously?

Personal Witness.

Do you turn God off on the weekdays?

Is your relationship a personal thing that you don't share?
You are made for more.

Lords Supper

As purpose, presence, and power.