

Sending on Mission

Isaiah 6:1-8

Rev. Brian Bill

June 7-8, 2025

“This is holy ground because I’m looking at the Bride of Christ. You are part of the most multilingual, multicultural, diverse, and sacrificial entity in the world, and you’ve been sent to the little, the least, the left out, and the lost.”

This is how one speaker began his message to 4,000 pastors and church leaders at the Colson Center National Conference in Louisville last weekend. Beth and I are grateful to the deacons for allowing us to attend.

Speaker after speaker sounded the same message: *“What the world needs most is for the church to be the church!”* We were challenged to be convictional, clear, courageous, confident, and compassionate in the proclamation of the gospel.

For our main idea today, I’m going to borrow a phrase from another speaker and add to it: *Jesus didn’t come to take us from good to great, but to take us from depraved to saved, surrendered, and sent.*

Our normal preaching practice is to go verse-by-verse through books of the Bible, but this weekend we’ll journey through several passages to help us see how God sends His people to accomplish His purposes.

Let’s begin with some foundational truth from Isaiah 6:1-8. I’m going to use the same outline I used several years ago when preaching this passage.

1. Encounter the Lord’s majesty. Listen to verses 1-4: *“In the year that King Uzziah died I saw the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up; and the train of his robe filled the temple. Above him stood the seraphim. Each had six wings: with two he covered his face, and with two he covered his feet, and with two he flew. And one called to another and said: ‘Holy, holy, holy is the LORD of hosts; the whole earth is full of his glory!’ And the foundations of the thresholds shook at the voice of him who called, and the house was filled with smoke.”*

Isaiah is saying something like this: *“In the year that we lost our human king, I saw the real King.”* The word **“seraph”** means, *“to burn.”* These seraphim shielded their faces because they were in the presence of holiness. Covered feet denotes their humility and flying indicates their ongoing obedience to go wherever

God sends them. When they exclaimed, **“holy, holy, holy,”** they were emphasizing the breathtaking splendor of God’s holiness!

The word **“glory”** in verse 3 refers to God’s weightiness. Verse 4 tells us the entire temple started to tremble, like an erupting volcano. Smoke indicates the purifying presence of God, much like the shekinah glory cloud in the wilderness.

2. Confess your own misery. We see this in verse 5: **“And I said: ‘Woe is me! For I am lost; for I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips; for my eyes have seen the King, the LORD of hosts!’”** On the lips of a prophet, the word woe is a warning of coming judgment, a declaration of doom. Isaiah didn’t point to someone else and say, **“Woe is he!”** but rather pointed to himself and declared, **“Woe is me!”** After experiencing the holiness of God, he couldn’t help but express his own unholiness.

3. Receive the Lord’s mercy. After recognizing his sinfulness, God forgave Isaiah and set him free in verses 6-7: **“Then one of the seraphim flew to me, having in his hand a burning coal that he had taken with tongs from the altar. And he touched my mouth and said: ‘Behold, this has touched your lips; your guilt is taken away, and your sin atoned for.’”**

4. Surrender to the Lord’s mission. Now, Isaiah was ready to hear and heed God’s call in verse 8: **“And I heard the voice of the Lord saying, ‘Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?’ Then I said, ‘Here I am! Send me.’”** Isaiah had just declared woe and now he is ready to go!

Notice how his response was immediate: **“Here I am. Send me.”** The word **“send”** has the idea of **“sending forth”** or **“driving out.”** Isaiah made himself available as an ambassador of the Almighty. God is still looking for people who have been moved by His majesty, have experienced His mercy, and are ready to join in His mission.

Jesus didn’t come to take us from good to great, but to take us from depraved to saved, surrendered, and sent.

Now, let’s turn to the words of Jesus in Matthew 9:36-38: **“When He saw the crowds, He had compassion for them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. Then He said to his disciples, ‘The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few; therefore pray earnestly to the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into His harvest.’”**

- Treat the harassed and helpless with compassion.
- See people as sheep turning to their own ways because they don't have a shepherd.
- The harvest is plentiful, which refers to a large multitude.
- Those who are willing to work hard are few.
- The harvest is His. We get the privilege of joining God in what He is doing.
- We must pray earnestly, which means to "beseech" the Lord to send more laborers. At our Unreached Prayer Night on Monday, we prayed that God would send out some of us during our services this weekend and that He would raise up more senders.

On the table in lobby, you'll find "A Bold Prayer Guide for Missions" and a bookmark with a printed prayer. Let's pray that prayer now: *"Father, you are the God of the nations. You made them, they have turned from you, and you are drawing them back to yourself. Raise up missionaries from our church and other churches to take the good news of Jesus Christ to the lost and unreached who have never heard and help us to send well. In Jesus' name, Amen."*

I'm challenged by what David Brainerd said, *"I cared not where or how I lived, or what hardships I went through, so I could but gain souls to Christ."*

On the same day Jesus rose from the dead, He appeared to His frightened followers while they were cowering in a locked room. He offered them proof that He was alive, and He gave them peace so they would live out His purpose for their lives. In John 20:21, Jesus gave them confirmation *and* a commission: ***"Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, even so I am sending you."***

Jesus gives us His peace so we will be about His purposes. We are saved so we can be sent out, but we must first be surrendered, or we won't even consider going. The disciples were given a message that could not be kept behind closed doors. Likewise, we can't get too comfortable within the walls of this building or our own homes.

Many churches are celebrating Pentecost this weekend to commemorate what we read in Acts 2, when the Holy Spirit came upon believers. This event allowed people from the nations of the world to hear the gospel in their own language.

In Acts 13:2-3, we see the church's pivotal role in sending missionaries: ***“While they were worshipping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, ‘Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them.’ So after they had fasted and prayed, they placed their hands on them and sent them off.”*** Among the various members of the First Church of Antioch, the Holy Spirit set aside Barnabas and Saul for a special work the church was sending them to do. The church sent their very best as missionaries. Some are sent and the rest of us need to be involved in the sending. We either go or we give, so others can go.

God still calls people today and He uses the church to confirm and send His sent ones. I wonder who the Holy Spirit is setting apart right now for us to send? Could it be you? Could it be me?

- Missions begins in the gathered church.
- The Holy Spirit leads the sending.
- Sending is always sacrificial but necessary.
- Every church must be a sending church.

Since the launch of Edgewood in 1905, we have been committed to the spread of the gospel to our neighbors and the nations. We believe the Great Commission isn't optional—it's a command to obey as we're called to make disciples of every tribe, tongue, and nation.

We are committed to be a sending church, raising up disciple-makers and church planters, and equipping them to go where Christ is not yet known as Paul said in Romans 15:20: ***“I make it my ambition to preach the gospel, not where Christ has already been named.”*** That means living on mission here in the Quad Cities while also being intentional about reaching the unreached nations.

We currently allocate 12% of our total church budget to 76 Go Team Partners. Our local partners include Child Evangelism Fellowship, Fishers of Men, Safe Families, Pregnancy Resources (Baby Bottles are due next weekend), One Eighty, Youth Hope, Fellowship of Christian Athletes, and InterVarsity at Augie and Blackhawk.

We also support national missionaries and ministries like Pacific Garden Ministry, Life in Messiah, Chosen People, Baptist Bible College, Moody Bible Institute, Keep Believing Ministries, Wycliffe Bible Translators, Voice of the Martyrs, Manuel and Kim Contreras in Fresno, Dave and Wednesday Bennett at Timber

Bay, and Norm and Allison Hoyt at Camp Forest Springs (their son Peter died suddenly this past week).

In addition, 21 (28%) of our Go Team partners serve in the 10/40 window (a rectangular region of the world located between 10- and 40-degrees north latitude, stretching from North Africa across the Middle East to Asia).

Special thanks to Maddie Hart, our new Missions Intern, for compiling this information.

I often repeat this quote from Mike Stachura, *“The mark of a great church is not its seating capacity, but its sending capacity.”*

In 1792, William Carey, known as the “father of the modern missionary movement,” challenged his Baptist brethren to obey their responsibility to take the Gospel to unreached lands. He told a group of churches that he was willing to go into the pit [of India] but only if they would hold the rope. This rope analogy expresses a biblical truth: New Testament missions was designed by God to be a team effort. For every missionary that goes on the field there must be churches at home holding the rope.

Let’s go to one more passage. Please turn to Romans 10:13-15: ***“For everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved. 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? As it is written, ‘How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the good news!’”***

The chain of logic in Paul’s mind is straightforward:

1. The only way to be saved is to call on the name of the Lord Jesus Christ.
2. The only way to call on Christ’s name is to believe the gospel.
3. The only way to believe the gospel is to hear the gospel.
4. The only way to hear the gospel is for someone to proclaim the gospel.
5. The only way preachers can go with the gospel is for us to send them.

Perhaps it will be clearer if we reverse the order:

1. The church sends out proclaimers who go with the gospel.
2. The sent ones preach the good news.

3. Sinners hear and believe the gospel.
4. Those who believe call on the Lord.
5. Those who call on Him are saved.

I'm challenged by the words of Oswald Smith: *"The church that does not evangelize will fossilize. If God wills the evangelization of the world, and you refuse to support missions, then you are opposed to the will of God."*

Are you aware there are more than 1,600 verses in the Bible which mention God's plan for all nations to come to know Him? Sadly, there are still 3.2 *billion* people with little or no access to the gospel. That's 40% of the world's population who will end up in Hell unless we go, or give, so others can go with the gospel. Ralph Winter puts it like this: *"The Bible is not the basis of missions; missions is the basis of the Bible."*

Those who are not called to go out for the sake of the name are called to stay for the sake of the name, to be salt and light right where God has placed them, and to join others in sending those who are called to be cross-cultural missionaries. In God's eyes both the goers and the givers are crucial. Because we are partakers of grace, we are called to be partners in the gospel by going or giving. These are our only two options.

Jesus didn't come to take us from good to great, but to take us from depraved to saved, surrendered, and sent.

Action Steps

1. **Be willing to go wherever God calls you to go.** Let's continue asking God to revitalize and mobilize us for His glory.
2. **Be willing to give whatever God calls you to give.** Every goer needs a sender, and goers need a whole team of partners behind them who will send them well by holding the rope. One pastor writes, *"All the money needed to send and support an army of self-sacrificing, joy-spreading ambassadors is already in the church."* Would you consider helping to send the Langworthy family so they can leave for Uganda this fall? They're at 60% right now with three churches partnering with them, including Edgewood. Six more churches are considering support for them. Listen to 3 John 7-8: ***"For they have gone out for the sake of the name...therefore we ought to support people like these, that we may be fellow workers for the truth."***

3. **Be committed to pray for more workers to be sent.** Pick up a bookmark, put it in your Bible, and pray the suggested prayer every day.
4. **Become a global believer so your heart beats with God's heart for the nations.** A few suggestions would be to regularly read Revelation 4-5, listen to the Voice of the Martyrs Radio Podcast, view the Edge Missions monitors in the north lobby, visit the displays of Lynell and the Langworthy's, pick up a Go Team Directory, and attend the Unreached Prayer Night the first Monday night of the month.

On this week's 4G podcast, I had the joy of interviewing Edgewood Go Team partner Lynell Smith. She said something so compelling that I texted her later and asked her to type it out for us: *"If you think God is calling you to be a missionary, then plan to go until God calls you to stay. If God calls you to stay, then be a sender. If you don't go, then you get the joy of sending others."*

William Booth, the founder of the Salvation Army, once shared these powerful words: *"'Not called!' did you say? 'Not heard the call,' I think you should say. Put your ear down to the Bible and hear Him bid you go and pull sinners out of the fire of sin. Put your ear down to the burdened, agonized heart of humanity, and listen to its pitiful wail for help. Go stand by the gates of Hell and hear the damned entreat you to go to their father's house and bid their brothers and sisters and servants and masters not to come there. Then look Christ in the face — whose mercy you have professed to obey — and tell Him whether you will join heart and soul and body and circumstances in the march to publish His mercy to the world."*

Our Almighty God, who is holy, holy, holy, has a heart for the nations. He is still asking this very probing and personal question to every person, right here and right now: ***"Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?"***

Indeed, this *is* holy ground! God is waiting for an answer. Are you ready to say, ***"Here I am! Send me."***

Prayer

- To be saved.
- To be surrendered.
- To be sent.

I'd like to invite a few people with beautiful feet to come up now...

State of Missions