

# You Are Sent On A Mission

John 17:15-18

## Intro

Have you ever heard of the 2nd Law of Thermodynamics? It's a basic Scientific Law – right up there with the Law of Gravity. It's also called entropy. It means that everything tends to wear out, run down, or stop working.

According to an author named Mark Mittelberg, there is also a 2nd Law of Spiritual-dynamics. This Law says: If left to themselves, Christians move toward self-centeredness. If that is true, then we have to work against the gravitational pull of selfishness. There's no way a self-centered Christian will be motivated to spread the Good News of Christ to a dying world.

Pastor Rick Warren put out a survey about the Purpose of the Church that shows why some Christians aren't motivated for Evangelism.

- In the survey, 89% of the church members said the Church's Purpose is to *"take care of my needs and those of my family."*
- Only 11% said, *"The purpose of the church is to win the world for Jesus Christ."* (The Purpose-Driven Church, Page 82)

I believe that one of the major problems facing the church today is that many Christians tend to be selfish, insular and have a consumer mentality. If we continue this way we will lose the true purpose of why we are on this earth.

According to Jesus Christ, spreading the Good News is our main purpose. Some people think of evangelizing, sharing our faith as a heavy burden. It's just one more thing to feel guilty about. But that's not the way we should be looking at it, because evangelism is actually a heavenly honour.

Last week we looked at Romans 10:14 where the Apostle Paul talked about the need to be sent to proclaim the Good News so that people can hear, believe and call on the name of the Lord in order to be saved. *"How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news!"*

## Sent-Sentness

40 times in the Gospel of John, Jesus refers to himself as being **sent** by the Father. It was clear that Jesus had a strong sense of purpose and mission. He knew he had divine backing. He was sent by the Father.

**Sentness** is a term that carries the notion of anointing and appointment by God for a mission, but in Jesus' case—more, since it was the incarnation of God in human form. Jesus operated in ministry with a sense of strong divine purpose because he knew he was **sent** by the Father. The word **sent** permeates the Gospel of John.

The term **sent** is used throughout the book of John. We find the first occurrence—referring to John the Baptist's official mission to introduce Jesus. In John 1:6 we read, *"There came a man who was sent from God; his name was John."*

When Jesus first called his disciples to follow Him, Mark 3:14-15 says that Jesus named the disciples *"apostles"* (APOSTELLO: a word that means *"to be sent on service"*) and that he was

“*sending them out to preach and have authority.*” In John 20:21, Jesus tells his disciples following his resurrection: “*As the Father sent me, so I’m sending you.*”

### **Difference between Called and Sent**

Some believe that you have to have a special call of God to enter into missions or evangelism. But let me clarify something here, there is a difference between being “**called**” and being “**sent**.” Throughout the New Testament the call of God is often used in relation to salvation. For example in Romans 8:30 we read, “*And those he predestined, he also called; those he called, he also justified; those he justified, he also glorified.*”

Also in 2 Thessalonians 2:13-14 we read, “*...God chose you to be saved through the sanctifying work of the Spirit and through belief in the truth. He called you to this through the gospel, that you might share in the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.*”

To be “**called**” by God is to be invited or summoned to partake of the blessings of salvation and redemption.

Also to be called is to bid to come. In Matthew 10:1 it says that Jesus “*called his twelve to him and gave them authority to drive out evil spirits and to heal every disease and sickness.*”

But primarily the concept of ‘*calling*’ is linked with salvation, while the concept of ‘*sending*’ is linked with service.

The church, every single believer, is sent in to the world by their Lord. As Jesus prayed to the Father he said, “*as you sent me into the world, I have sent them into the world*” (John 17:18).

We are in that world to be his witnesses and to make him known (Acts 1:8, Romans 10:13-15), and with the goal that others will believe in Jesus through our message (John 17:20). Also note that as Jesus was praying in John 17 concerning the **sentness** of his followers, He was also praying for future believers. Jesus prays in John 17: 20, “*My prayer is not for them alone. I pray also for those who will believe in me through their message...*”

**That’s you and me! Jesus was praying for you and me to be sent into the world to witness for Him. Wow!**

The **sentness** of which Jesus speaks applies to us all, and in the book of Acts we see this sentness in action as it is exercised in and through the corporate body of believers. It means that sentness becomes a part of the nature and life of the whole church, you and me as believers.

As amazing as this sounds, you and I have been sent. As Christ-followers, we have been sent to represent Jesus in words and works. If Jesus and the early disciples possessed such a clear “*sense of sentness,*” maybe that’s what we need as well. What a privilege to have a personal mandate from our Lord. Folks, we have been sent personally by our Lord Jesus Christ.

### **John 20:21, “As the Father has sent me, I am sending you”**

Let’s look at the context of John 20. It was a Sunday evening. But it wasn’t just any Sunday. Jesus rose from the dead early that morning. The Disciples heard this amazing news from Mary Magdalene but they didn’t believe her. Far from spreading the Good News, they went into hiding. Verse 19 says they were huddled together, with the doors locked for fear of the Jewish leaders.

The reason they were hiding is the same reason a lot of Christians hide behind Church doors instead of reaching out. That reason is fear. Look at how Jesus ended their fear, “*Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you!"*” (John 20:19). Jesus showed them his wounded hands and feet so they could know the truth. Then the text says that they were overjoyed because they had seen the Lord.

But they hardly had time to soak it all in before Jesus made this amazing statement: “*As the Father has sent me, I am sending you*” (John 20: 21). Here they were, cowering behind closed doors. They had only believed the truth for a few minutes. And already Jesus is telling them to go and spread the Word. It’s as if he tossed them the keys and said, “What are you waiting for, guys? Get going!”

How many of you remember the first time your parents gave you the keys to the car? That’s when you really feel like you’ve grown up. And for those of you who have had that “exhilarating” experience of tossing the keys to your child for the first time, you know what kind of trust you were putting in them.

The point is, giving someone the keys to the car means you have put a lot of trust in them. When Jesus said *As the Father has sent me, I am sending you*. He was entrusting us with something very valuable. We should see it as an honour not a burden.

### **The Reality of Eternity**

Why are we being sent? Why is it so important that Jesus is sending out believers? Because eternity is in the balance.

I’ve noticed that most people like to talk about Heaven. But it’s not “politically correct” to bring up the other “H” word. Whether we like it or not, though, hell is a major theme in the New Testament. In fact, Jesus explained more about Hell than any other teacher.

The reality of hell should motivate us to share with the lost how to get saved. A Baptist preacher named Vance Havner once said, “*It’s been a long time since I’ve heard people speak of an unsaved boy or girl as being lost. That old word has departed from our Christian vocabulary.*”

In a recent movie called “*Super-Size Me*”, which is about the fast-food industry a group of children were shown a picture of Mickey Mouse. The majority of the children were able to recognize the most prominent Walt Disney cartoon character.

Then they were shown a picture of Ronald McDonald. All the children knew who he was. Last, they were shown the typical picture of “Jesus” that hangs in most Sunday school rooms. None of them recognized Him.

I’m telling you, my friends, hamburgers and a cartoon mouse will not save anyone!

**To most Christians the world has become a playground rather than a harvest field.** We need to change our attitude and our approach. We need to see it through Christ’s eyes. We need to feel what Paul felt *great sorrow and unceasing anguish* in our hearts to see precious lost souls saved.

Jesus came to seek and save the lost. He died for them. He is their only hope for salvation. There is something wrong when we say we believe that ... but act as though it doesn’t really matter.

### **Power to be His Witnesses**

Do you feel overwhelmed by the importance of the task Jesus gave us? Join the club. No one is really up to such an important task. But Jesus didn't ask us to do the job on our own. In John 20:22, Jesus said, "*As the Father has sent me, I am sending you.*" But look at what he did immediately after that: "*With that he breathed on them and said, 'Receive the Holy Spirit.'*"

If you have received Jesus as your Saviour, the Holy Spirit lives and breathes in you. The Holy Spirit helps you pray for your friends. He gives you the words to say when the time is right. He helps you live the life that "backs up" your witness. And best of all, the Holy Spirit works in the heart of the person you are talking to.

### **Conclusion**

It's a great feeling to know someone will be in Heaven because of your prayers and words. When you experience that kind of joy, you won't want to stop with just one. But don't expect to see results every time you share the Gospel. Billy Graham once said that it takes 40 people to lead someone to Christ ... the first one thinks they did nothing and the last one thinks they did it all. Just remember that any time you speak out for Jesus, His Spirit will use your words to bring that person closer to Christ.

An evangelist named Dr. J. Wilbur Chapman stated that the New Testament records tell about 40 different people who were healed by Jesus. Of this number, 34 were brought to Jesus by friends. Only 6 out of those 40 came to Jesus without the help of a friend. What was true in the First Century is still true today. Most people who come to Jesus will be brought by a friend.

Every one of us has friends, co-workers, and neighbours who need to hear about Christ. We have a part to play in God's eternal plan. Folks, we are on a mission, everyone who is a believer in Jesus Christ is on a mission.

I have two questions for you:

- Who sent you?
- What were you sent to do?

GO!!