**Missional Living: Being Sent by God**

Mission is rooted in the very identity of God. Since the fall of man, trust and intimate fellowship with God was broken. Way back at the mist of the garden, God immediately goes into mission. First Gospel, the protoevangelium #Gen 3:15 is “to seek and save that which was lost.” #Luke 19:10

A primary attribute of God is that **He is One who sends**. This is seen time and time again. He sends prophets. He sends wise men & wise women to call people back to Himself. #Matt 23:34
Down through the ages, He sends servants of all sundry stripes. ;-) “How odd of God to chose…”

Finally, He sends Jesus. Jesus identifies Himself as being sent by His Father more than 40x times in the Gospel of John. Then, toward the end of his earthly ministry, in John 20:21, Jesus says: **“As the Father has sent me, even so I am sending you.”**

Now there’s a shocker! How can he even draw that parallel? To say “it seems a bit of a stretch” is a major understatement. But there it is: **“As the Father has sent me, even so I am sending you.”**

Who is He talking about sending? It must be the twelve - the apostles, the “sent ones”, right?

No, the truth is the entire New Testament makes it crystal clear who He’s sending -- he’s talking about each and every one into whom God has breathed and gifted with His Spirit. #Matt 3:11

It started post-Easter. It came as a BIG surprise. Caught everyone totally off guard. Something totally unprecedented. It had not been seen in centuries of God’s working and interacting with mankind.

First, the Father sends Jesus Incarnate teaching/healing, crucifixion/resurrection. Then, just
after Easter, He is sending again. He sends the Spirit of the Resurrected Jesus. #Rom 8:9. He sends the Spirit of Jesus into the hearts of **ordinary, everyday people** - ordinary people like you and me.

**#** Rom. 5:5. Reflect & share. Also #Gal 4:6.

“I will pour out my Spirit upon *all flesh*.” The Spirit is given to whom? Sons, daughters, old men and women, orthodox Jews, bond slaves, even those formerly nasty pagan Gentiles -- who’d have thought God would ever lower the bar so far? #Acts 2:17, 18

So who is a Christian? That’s simple -- someone with the Spirit Inside. Think Intel inside. When God sees His Spirit inside a person, that person belongs to Him. #Rom 8:9b. If not… too bad, too sad Charlie - it’s as simple as that. Every Christian, without exception, is sealed with the Spirit.

**#**Eph 1:13. Read & share. #2 Cor 1:22**.** Mark of having the Spirit Inside is that we love Jesus deeply.

Once we are clear on this, it’s important to see the other side of the coin. The corollary simple truth this: everyone who is given the Spirit of Jesus is called by God to Join Jesus on His Mission.

At the heart of all Jesus’ teaching -- of the entire New Testament -- is the assumption that to
follow Jesus is to become a participant in His Mission.If we miss this, we miss half the NT.

Early Christians did not, first & foremost, become church members and then sit passively in pews. First & foremost, they received God’s Spirit and were called to Join Jesus on mission “to seeking and saving that which is lost.” Passive pew sitting is much more a modern day church phenomena.

Being Spirit-led means being swept up into Jesus mission. God created a community of faith-filled believers to worship God and support and to encourage one another as they’re going [on-going action verb] on their way Joining Jesus on His mission.

As servants of God, we’re called to participate in Jesus’ mission wherever we find ourselves - to be the fragrance of Jesus’ presence in the world. We are not to just take up space and certainly not to smell up the place - but be a jasmine-like fragrance that reminds people, even non-Christian people, that Jesus is very much alive and, though He may be out of sight, He is very near. #2 Cor 2:15

Jesus is at work in your neighborhood right now. #John 5:17. Whether people are aware of it or not,
He is at work in their lives every day. So He’s at work in the lives of all those who cross your path.

Although it may sound strange, strictly speaking,the church does not have a mission. Rather the mission that flows from the heart of God has a church. **#**What’s the diff? Semantics or does it matter?

God always remains the Creator Sender Initiator. Those with His Spirit Inside are His sent ones.

First, God calls us into fellowship with Himself #1 John 1: 3,4. Then He calls us to partner in mission.
# Pause & reflect on what that means. When it sinks in, it can take your breath away. You, little ones, are invited to partner with the eternal God in matters that have eternal consequences & significance.

#1 Peter 1:18. We’re rescued from futility and invited to engage with matters of eternal significance.

What if we screw things up? It’s Jesus’ mission. Jesus embodies the eternal wisdom of God. He has a specialty in redeeming really messed up messes. From the beginning, Jesus has and always will do all the heavy lifting. That frees us up to simply 1) enjoy people, 2) do good with Jesus, 3) become like Jesus, 4) walk together. The Spirit want to teach us to see Jesus and be on the lookout for what He’s doing. So just relax and rest knowing the Spirit is at work in a quiet, gentle ways behind the scenes.

Each Christian with Jesus’ Inside is called to play her or his small yet highly significant role. Our calling is our purpose in life: Know Jesus. Reflect Jesus. Join Jesus on His Mission.

Sometimes that means **Showing the Good News** through acts of service. As Bob Doff says: **Loves Does.**

Sometimes that means **Sharing the Good News** by bearing witness to the truth that Jesus is the Way, the Truth, the Life -- the Living Water for which all souls desperately thirst. #Is 55:1. Jn 7:37.

Missional Living. It’s about God “sending” those who have His Spirit into the river of humanity - the River He loves -- the River of people He bled to death for and rose from the dead for.

Missional Living. What does it mean? Simply this, recognizing and embracing your “sentness.”

It’s all about living, in a quiet and humble way, Jesus’ words in John 20:21.

**“As the Father has sent me, even so I am sending you.”**

Clint Souligny 3/2016