

Adventures in Missing the Point

"Sent" Message series

October 2, 2011

Review

We wrap up the SENT message series today and I want to spend a minute or two at the beginning to review so we can stitch together what we've been learning. And for those who have not been a part, this can be a bit of catch up so we can go together on this journey today

We talk often about our mission which is: Helping people find their way back to God and become "like Jesus". This month we've been using the word "SENT" to describe what it means to be like Jesus.

Show SENT logo

There is a tug of war between living for self and living sent. We could even call it the ultimate tug of war in life because it speaks about our motivation for living.

The self directed life says *it is all about me*" and a life that is SENT says *it's not about me*. We all feel the tension between pursuing selfish desires and altruistic motives.

It feels backwards to deny self and yet in reality that is the way God engineered life to work. Jesus said, *If you try to hang on to your life, you will lose it. But if you give up your life for my sake, you will save it.* Luke 9:24

The life that is lived SENT is the Jesus life. Those who are modern day disciples follow His example.

Jesus said to His disciples, *As the Father has sent me, so I am sending you.* John 20:21

Perhaps a picture will help.

Show three circles

A way to remember how to live Sent is to think about these three outcomes, we want to love God, love people and we want to live out. The place where these three overlap is the place where we are the most like Jesus. This is what we are calling the SENT life.

But even the strongest disciple and in the best church we struggle with the inborn

motive to create a life that is ego-centric instead of living SENT.

Today we are going to take a quick look back through history in a message I've titled, *Adventures in missing the Point*. We read these stories in the scriptures, several are well known, and we think we understand them. But because we tend to make ourselves the center of the story we miss the point.

Let's start with a song we all know.

"Jesus loves me this I know"

First song we learn as a child

Don't know any child who doesn't love to hear that Don't know any church that doesn't love to teach that One of the first and foundational truths

Let's sing it together.

We are drawn to it because we all want to be loved by God. It is a comforting thought. We might as well sing it with our arms wrapped around us like this (wrap arms around your heart) Jesus loves me easily turns into...*it is all about me*.

It's true that Jesus loves us but it is elementary. It is foundational. We can start there but we must not end there.

He's a truth to chew on, with God it IS all about you--that is why He sent Jesus die on the cross--to pay for your sin.

But when you follow Him--it is about OTHERS. Trust Him to meet your needs as you serve. When you live the life that is SENT there is a divine return cycle that is better than any you could create on your own.

You become your brother's keeper. And He (God) becomes your keeper.

Go with me to **Genesis 4:1-10**

Summarize the story

Cain and Abel bring gifts. God is pleased w Abel's gift but not Cain's. You can be sure that God gave prior instructions about the kind of sacrifice that He wanted. No doubt He wanted a blood sacrifice because it was substitutionary like the death of Jesus. The exercise wasn't about Cain and Able it was about God telling the story of redemption; that was the motive with God. He is always working in redemptive patterns.

The tendency we have is to think the reason why we do anything is because it is

all about me.

Cain thought he got to decide because it was his offering even though, I'm sure, God clearly communicated what He wanted. Cain treated the will of God as optional. He believed he could pick and choose what he wanted to obey. The grain cost him little to nothing. He was a farmer and I'm sure he was proud of it. But God wasn't pleased with the offering because Cain did his own thing when God asked him to obey.

In Abel's case, Abel's lamb lost his life. Why? Because that is the true price for sin. The Bible says the wage of sin is death. God told Adam and Eve if they ate the fruit from the tree of life they would die. God was looking for an offering that would be a substitute for Abel's sin and a foreshadowing of Jesus substitutionary death for the sin of the world.

Cain missed the point of what God had in mind which was to create a picture of redemption. This was a teaching moment to foreshadow Christ. Cain made it a competition to see who could look the best before God. He was proud of what he could do. And when he realized God wasn't pleased he eliminated the competition. He killed his brother Abel. Because--gaining God's approval, after all, was all about him.

God said to Cain: *Where is your brother?* Cain to God: *Am I my brother's keeper?* The implied answer was "I don't think so." but with God the implied answer was, *It's always about your brother. God is always moving in the direction of redemption.*

Cain thought this exercise was about meeting the minimum. He thought he could create his own kind of worship and could give offerings at whatever level he wanted to give. It was his life. It was his offering. He could do it his way and no one better get in his way or tell him how to do it.

He didn't think his brother had anything to do with it. *However in the eyes of God the reason you worship, the reason you love God, love people and live out is all about your brother. The reason for redemption is that God wants everyone to know His love.*

We are often satisfied if we know. God wants everyone to know.

360 Prayer Card

At the beginning of this Sent series we passed out a 360 Prayer Card. We asked you to name three friends you would pray for 6 times a week and miss zero opportunities to share the love of God.

Direct them to the card

On the card is a motivational phrase I want us to learn today. We are going to

repeat it several times.

I am sent on a mission to share the light and love of Jesus until the whole world knows.

If Cain would have understood this he would have understood the redemptive purpose behind the offering.

Repeat it

This next series which starts next week is called Crucial Conversations. It is about how to talk when the stakes are high. It will be a great inviting series. Invite one or more of the friends you are praying for.

Here is my concern for us. We could come into Indian Creek Community Church today and think the church is here for me. I need this, this and this, delivered in this particular way and if I don't get it I'm outta here. It is all about me. And if we think that way we treat God like consumers.

We could think I get to choose my offerings to God. I choose what I will give and when and how. God may be saying x but it is my prerogative to substitute y because after all it is all about me. It's my life. It is my choice. God should be happy with whatever I give Him.

But with God it is always about redemption.

God is moving in this world in the direction of redemption and if you don't move w Him you get left behind. He still loves you. But He is moving and You have a choice. You can go with God or you can stay stuck right where you are.

His love is unconditional. His blessings are totally conditional.

We need to memorize this statement: **I am sent on a mission to share the light and love of Jesus until the whole world knows.**

We are going to move on now to another adventure in Missing the Point. We see this next in the story of Israel as they escape from Egypt.

The book of Exodus

The Hebrews loved it that they were God's chosen people It was awesome the way He rescued them from the slavery of Egypt There were ten plagues that brought Egypt to it's knees.

God split the Red Sea for them and they went through on dry ground Then He let the waters return and it drowned their enemies--talk about eliminating the competition!

God guided them with a pillar of fire at night and a cloud by day He gave Moses the 10 Commandments and the Elders got to eat a meal in the presence of God He gave them manna to eat and brought water from a rock They began to think, *this is all about me*. Jesus loves me...

What they missed was that yes God did love them but His work in them was a means to an end not just an end in itself. They were blessed to be a blessing.

They got to thinking, I want a God that is all about making me happy and meeting my needs. And when God didn't meet their needs the way they wanted they wanted a new God.

When they got to the Jordan River they sent in spies The spies came back and said, There are giants there and someone might die.

They thought they had the option of telling God *No, thanks, but no thanks. I'll follow you if it is good for me*.

They forgot who they were and why they were here on earth. They lost their identity.

If they were escaped slaves then they should avoid conflict. If they were wandering nomads they should live in the desert.

But they were *the people of God Sent on a mission to share the Light and Love of Jesus until the whole world knows*. They should do for others, pave the way for deliverance, like God had done for them.

You will never find your identity from looking to others around you to see what they say. You will never find your identity by looking in the mirror. You will never find your identity by looking in your past. You will only find your identity by looking into the eyes of Your Creator.

They missed the point. God wanted them to be His chosen people so they could display His glory, His truth, and His love. And he would use them as His instrument to reach the world. But they refused to obey Him.

So they wandered 40 years in the desert until the whole faithless generation died off and finally after a lot of hardship He had a people He could use.

This is a warning for any church that would think, *we need this building for us, we need this program, this staff, this budget for us*. We need to take care of ourselves first. And whatever is leftover we might consider sharing. This is a “me first” mentality and it sickens God.

The truth is--everything we have is given for us to use, not only for our needs, but for redemption's plan. Our needs get met along the way as we live the life that is Sent.

Seek the kingdom of God above all else, and live righteously, and he will give you everything you need. Matthew 6:33

They missed the point and they missed the Promise Land.

40 years later they came back. They asked God what He wanted and they said we know who we are, *We are the people of God sent on a mission to bring light and love to the world until the whole world knows.*

When they got that straight--they claimed their promised land

For some reason there are times in our lives where we feel free to tell God No. We play deaf. Or we give God what Jon DeWitt calls the Heisman (strike the pose).

Quick story about God dealing with me to minister to the Hispanics.

The next story we find is in **Mark 11:15-17**

It is the story of Jesus cleansing the temple He went to the temple to worship and He found that the religious leaders had set up a marketplace inside the temple. He was livid! He made a whip of several ropes and he drove the animals and the vendor out.

Do you remember what He said when he did it?
My house shall be a house of prayer
We usually stop there. But if we do we miss the point.

This was not about selling things in the church
It was not even about prayer
It was about the mission of redemption.

What Jesus said was, *My house shall be a house of prayer for ALL nations.*

The Jews set up the market in the only place **the Gentiles** could pray, in the court of the Gentiles. They could still have church but they excluded anyone who wasn't

like them.

Again, they missed the point of God's work. It wasn't about them. They were to be light and love until the whole world knows.

This could happen to us if we don't keep it straight why we are here. *We are the people of God sent on a mission to share His Light and Love until the whole world knows.*

Here is the application for us, it is possible for us to do church in a way that makes it just for the insiders. We could make it for us four and no more.

God wants us to be internally strong AND externally focused. He wants us to become ALL He made us to be. This happens best when we live the life that is SENT.

One last story, Even the first church had this problem.

You will be my witnesses Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria and to the ends of the earth.
Acts 1:8

Acts 2 The Spirit fell and 3000 were saved in one service.
They rejoiced and STAYED in Jerusalem

Acts 2:47 *God added to the church every day*

Chapter 3 came and they stayed in Jerusalem

Chapter 4 came and they stayed in Jerusalem

Acts 5:14 *more and more disciples believed* and they stayed in Jerusalem

Acts 6:1 *the believers rapidly multiplied* and they stayed in Jerusalem

Acts 6:7 *the number of believers greatly increased* and they stayed in Jerusalem

Chapter 7 came and they stayed in Jerusalem

Acts 8:1 A great wave of persecution rose, the believers were scattered to Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria and eventually to the ends of the earth and they preached the Gospel wherever they went. They finally did it but it was born more out of desperation than inspiration.

They loved receiving the Holy Spirit but they didn't obey Acts 1:8 and they didn't live as a Sent people. So God allowed persecution and sent them out running for their lives--then they lived Sent lives.

Q. What will it take in your life and in mine for us to live Sent lives?

How many adventures will we have in missing the point? It is not about self. It is about living sent.

Say it w me: *I am sent on a mission to share the Light and Love of Jesus until the whole world knows.*

He will turn earth and heaven upside down and backwards until we get it. He even sent his one and only Son to die on a cross so we will get it.

Ultimately He will only work with churches and individuals who choose to live Sent. If you choose self, if you substitute what you want to give up, instead of unconditionally surrendering He will let you live like you want to live He just won't be a part of it.

He gave these people what they wanted and with it lean-ness in their souls. He gave them what they wanted and when they got it they were sick in their soul.

Maybe part of the problem is that we've only learned one song. There is another song we should learn along the way. Sing it with me if you know it.

Jesus Loves the Little children

Conclusion

Indian Creek, Let's settle this once and for all, right now about who we are and why we are here.

We are the people of God sent on a mission to share His Light and Love until the whole world knows.

Prayer to cement the decision

Instructions on writing the names on the board. This is an exercise in remembering this message, this series, this church is not about me. God will take care of us and even bless us if we remember we are blessed to be a blessing.

After people write on the board come back up and pray. Encourage people to spend an hour in prayer this next week committing to living Sent and praying for their three friends to say yes to the invitation to Crucial Conversations.