



## 4: Send | Pastor Joe Wittwer | October 11, 2009

### A. Fellowship Time (10-15 minutes)

1. Chitchat. Perhaps offer coffee, tea, or a cold drink with some snacks.
2. Pray (or invite someone to pray) to open the discussion.

### B. Review Time (Read the summary below to the group: 5-10 minutes)

**Introduction:** For the past several weeks, we've been talking about what it means to be *A Different Kind of Christian*. If we, as individuals, live out the four guiding purposes of our church – **Love** God and people, **Win** our friends to Christ, **Grow** into all God wants us to be, and **Send** all of us to do God's work in a broken world – we will be a different kind of Christian. In this final week, we're talking about "send." When we hear the word "send," we usually think of missionaries. Missionaries are the heroes of the Christian faith who move far away from the comforts of home and family. They bravely do God's work in a foreign land, often in very difficult, dangerous, and impoverished circumstances. Missionaries are heroes and deserve our respect and admiration; and we need more of them. But we are wrong to think that only missionaries are sent. All of us are sent by God to do His work in a broken world—right where we live. The Great Commission—to make disciples of all nations—is for every Christian. If we believe this and live this, we will be a different kind of Christian, one who is engaging a broken world. After His resurrection, Jesus told His followers *"As the Father has sent Me, I am sending you."* (**John 20:21**) Let's take a closer look at what this means.

#### 1. God is the Sender.

All through the Bible, when God wants to do something on earth, He calls and sends someone. For example, Moses had fled Egypt and been a shepherd for 40 years when God called him. God said, "I have seen the misery of the Israelites, and I have heard their cries for help. I am concerned, and I am coming down to rescue them." This sounds good so far, but then God says, "So now go, I am sending you to Pharaoh." The culmination of God's concern was to send Moses. God also kept sending prophets, even though they were rejected, persecuted, and killed. Jesus referred to this in the parable of the tenants. [Read **Mark 12:1-6** together] In this example, the vineyard owner is God. The tenants are the Jewish people. The servants He sent are the prophets, and the son is Jesus. Notice that God sent a prophet, and when the prophet was rejected, God sent another, and another and many others, and finally, sent His son. God's love was so persistent that He kept sending and sending and sending. As the story illustrates, God's supreme act of love was the sending of His son. But it doesn't stop there, Jesus then sends us. Every Christian is sent by God to do His work. In **John 17:18** Jesus prayed, *"As you sent me into the world, I have sent them into the world."* Later, after His resurrection, Jesus commissioned them by saying, **John 20:21** *"Peace be with you! As the Father has sent me, I am sending you."* We represent God. Jesus says this repeatedly, in **Matthew 10:40** *"He who receives you receives me, and he who receives me receives the one who sent me."* And in **Luke 10:16** *"He who listens to you listens to me; he who rejects you rejects me; but he who rejects me rejects him who sent me."* And **John 13:20** says, *"I tell you the truth, whoever accepts anyone I send accepts me; and whoever accepts me accepts the one who sent me."* People respond from us to Jesus to God. It is important that we represent God well. Every Christian is a missionary, sent by God into the world to do His work. So, where does He send us?

#### 2. God sends us here.

We start right where we are. In **Acts 1:8** Jesus said to His disciples, *"But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth."* The Holy Spirit would empower His disciples to be His witnesses in Jerusalem, in all of Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth. Jerusalem was the city where they were. Judea was the region surrounding Jerusalem, and

Samaria was the nearest foreign region. And from there, they were to go the ends of the earth. But they started where they were. God is sending us as His representatives' right where we are: in our home, neighborhood, workplace, school, gym, grocery store, coffee shop, or the place where we volunteer. God is sending us to our community. Right here, we can do acts of compassion for the poor and needy, and right here, we can share the good news of Jesus.

### **3. God sends us to the world.**

We start here, but we can't end here. We need to move out from here to our region, to other nations, to the ends of the earth. In Acts 1:8 Jesus told His disciples to start in Jerusalem, then Judea and Samaria and to the ends of the earth. And in **Matthew 28:18-20** Jesus said, "*All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations*"...Jesus commissioned them (and us) to make disciples of all nations. We need to become "world Christians"—believers who are aware and care about what's going on in the world around us, and are doing something about it. God sends us to the world. And God is sending the world to us! We don't have to leave town to make disciples of all nations! There are refugees in Spokane, many who are Christians escaping persecution in their countries, and many others are not Christians. But they are very open when they arrive here. All of them need help. We have a wonderful opportunity right in front of us to "make disciples" of all nations.

### **4. God called us to send out church plants.**

We are the sent ones...and we are a sending church. We have a lot of people to reach, and to reach those people, we need new churches. It takes different kinds of churches to reach different people. Send: God sends all of us into our world to do His work. And together, we send out new churches. But it starts with God sending all of us to do His work in the world.

### **C. Life Group Questions** (select, revise, and add as desired: 20-40 minutes)

1. Many young people today see Christians as too sheltered and out of touch with what is happening in the world. How can we contribute to changing people's poor perception of Christians? Why do you think that God chose to send us into the world? Why is it important that we represent Him well?
2. What thoughts enter your mind when you hear the term "missionary"? In what ways do you find it difficult to think of yourself as a "missionary"? Read **Matthew 28:18-20** together. What has Jesus commissioned us all to do?
3. Describe some things that might prevent you from engaging in God's work? What are you currently doing to join in God's work of loving people here in Spokane and within your community?
4. Does it seem overwhelming to "make disciples of all nations"? How can you practically expand your influence outside of Spokane without leaving Spokane? Take a moment to brainstorm some practical ideas. What are the gifts God has given you that will help you as He "sends" you?

### **D. Personal Application** (1-3 Minutes)

- This week purposefully put God's love into action. Create an action plan for engaging in your community or the world.(For example, to help refugees in Spokane, contact World Relief at 232-2814 or 484-9901.)
- Continue reading *The Hole in Our Gospel*—refer to the reading plan in this week's bulletin, read chapters 1-7 to be ready for next Sunday.

### **E. Prayer Time** (As a whole group or subgroups of 3-4: 10-15 Minutes)

- Thank God for sending His Son, the manifestation of His love for the world, and for the people God used to reach you.
- Continue to pray for the "pre-Christians" who are on your mind. Pray that God will present opportunities for you to serve them or others you may not know yet.
- Bring other praises or requests to God that came up during the discussion.