

## **The Great Sending – Studies 8/13 - Mark 1:1-8; Luke 3:3-6; John 1:6-28; 3:1-8; 22-36**

John the Baptizer proclaimed that Jesus would baptize with the Holy Spirit and fire. John knew that only the Holy Spirit could bring people to faith in Christ. Apart from that faith all that is left is an impending fiery judgment. As those sent, we, too, must come to rely on the presence and power of the Holy Spirit as we point others to Christ.

1. John's parents no doubt told John of the special circumstance of his birth and the word concerning his ministry (Please read Luke 1:11-17). Neither John nor Jesus for that matter ever cite the nature and promises told by their parents during their ministry.
  - a. How did John know Jesus to be the Christ? John 1:32-33
  - b. Who do you suppose told John to baptize with water and the identity of the Christ? The angel Gabriel told Zechariah how John would know what to do as the forerunner of the Christ. Luke 1:14-17.
  - c. To "be filled with the Holy Spirit even from birth" was virtually unheard of in John's day. When do most Lutherans receive the Holy Spirit? Do we raise our children with as keen an awareness of the Spirit's presence in our lives as Zechariah and Elizabeth may have with John? What Helper do parents need to bring their children up in the way of the Lord?
  - d. What means does the Holy Spirit use to enable all people to come to recognize Jesus as their Savior and grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord? Romans 10:8-11
2. John indeed testified that Jesus is the Christ. What did John the Gospel writer expect to happen as a result of John the Baptizer's testimony? John 1:7 (In NASV "him" at the end of the verse is lower, not upper case.)
  - a. Do we carry that same lively expectation as we testify to Christ? Why or why not?
  - b. How and how soon did John expect Jesus to remove the sin of the world? Luke 3:7-9; 16-18

John ends up in prison as a result of warning even Herod to repent of his marriage to Herodias, Herod's brother, Phillip's wife.

- a. The longer John waits in prison for the impending judgment, for the fire to fall on "the chaff" and the "fruitless trees cut down" what did he do? Matthew 11:1-2

Indeed, the preponderance of the Messianic prophecies expected the Christ to come in judgment rather than as a servant of Yahweh much less a suffering servant. John had, if you will, prophetic cataracts.

- a. What corrective word does Jesus give to keep John from stumbling in his myopic vision? Matthew 11:4-6.
  - b. What is the ministry that those sent continue to carry forward in the way of Christ and the power of the Spirit? Isaiah 61:1-3. What are ways we do this?
3. As noted, John proclaimed “the day of vengeance” overlooking “the year of the Lord’s favor.” Nonetheless, people responded. Note how the people responded? Luke 3:10-14
- a. Does repentance always produce fruit? Colossian 1:3-6; 2 Corinthians 5:15, 2 Corinthians 7:11
  - b. What are reasons in John’s day and ours people might respond to a message of fiery judgement?
  - c. What might we say at best a fear of a fiery hell does for us? Proverbs 9:10. Will trying harder to do better save us from an impending judgment? Isaiah 64:6
  - d. What finally leads people to a true godly sorrow and sincere repentance? 2 Corinthians 7:8-10; Romans 2:4

Does a message of repentance make sense in a world that dismisses all moral categories that do not allow people to do what is right in their eyes and sin is passe? Philipians 3:18-19

- a. What is the threefold work of the Holy Spirit according to Jesus? John 16:7-10. Whose work is it to convict people of sin and their need for a Savior?

Pastor Kieschnick writes: “*John’s audiences endeavored to figure out who John the Baptist really was. The Christ? Elijah? The Prophet? John’s answer: Nope. Just the one crying out in the wilderness: ‘Make straight the way of the Lord.’*” (p. 78)

John testified that Jesus is the Light of the world.

4. Read Luke 11:33-36. How has God enlightened us?
  - a. Does the experience of our conversion from a self-centered focus to a Christ-centered focus happen in a flash or is it a process of becoming and being? Romans 8:5-11; Romans 12:1-2; 1 John 3:1-3
  - b. How do you “see to it that the light within you is not darkness?” Hebrews 12:2; 2 Corinthians 10:5

- c. Who must work this work in us? 1 Peter 1:1-2
- d. Who will bring the work of conforming us to the image of Christ to completion and when? Philippians 1:3-6
- e. Does this shed any light on kingdom of God people being “the light of the world?” Matthew 5:14-16
- f. Being light not doing light. Yet as the light of the world we do good works in such a way that people will do what?

In conclusion, who will those sent by Jesus trust to bring about God-glorifying results?

**The Great Sending – Studies 9/10 – The Calling and Sending of the Disciples Matthew 4:12-22; 9:9-13; Mark 1:14-20; 2:13-17; Luke 5:1-11; 27-32; 6:12-13; John 1:35-51; Matthew 10:1-42; Mark 6:7-12; Luke 9:1-9; 10:1-24**

“As the Father sent me so I send you.” Jesus gives us two examples of what that looks like in the sending of the twelve and the seventy-two throughout Galilee. As we study the calling and sending of the disciples during Jesus’ earthly ministry, we gain a great deal of insight applicable to our own sending.

- a. Dr. Sons writes, “In naming the disciples “apostles,” Christ makes it clear that discipleship is apostolic.” He follows that a sentence later with a quote from, Follow Me, by Martin Franzmann. “The apostolate does not differ essentially from that of discipleship.” (*The Great Sending*, p. 82)

This sounds as if the apostolic ministry of the twelve disciples Jesus named “apostles” is no different than any other disciple Jesus sends. It is critical to the success of our sending, however, that we appreciate the distinct nature of the apostolic ministry of those first disciples.

1. The Gospels record Jesus’ calling his first disciples: Peter, James, John, Matthew, Andrew, Philip and Nathanael (Matt. 4:18-22; 9:9-13; John 1:40, 43,45). We know crowds followed Jesus during the days he selected his disciples (Matthew 5:1; Luke 5:15). Presumably Jesus had a large pool of candidates from whom he might choose the twelve.
  - a. What did Jesus do before he named twelve of his disciples, apostles? Luke 6:12-16 (And note 17 in conjunction with the pool of candidates).
2. How did Jesus see these disciples and what indicates an apostolic distinction unique to these disciples? John 17:5-12
3. Read Matthew 16:15-20. On what do we understand Jesus meaning when he tells Peter, “Upon this rock I will build my Church?”
  - a. Is it possible that Jesus’ word of preface, “You are Peter” repeating a name already long given to Peter (and the name Peter means “rock”) might indicate something not of the papacy but of the unique apostolic ministry of these disciples? Discuss.
4. What authority does Jesus give the Church in his instruction to Peter? v. 19
5. What authority does Jesus give the eleven (and later Saul/Paul) on the mount of ascension? Matthew 28:18-20; see Acts 26:14-18.
6. What does the Apostle Paul say is the foundation of the Church? Ephesians 2:19-21

7. Under whose authority do all other disciples exercise their “apostolic” ministry? John 17:13-21; 2 Timothy 1:13-14.
8. What happens when those sent forget or fail to realize this today? 2 Timothy 4:3-5.
  - a. Jesus sends out the 12 disciples and then later 72 others to blanket Galilee with good news. We will highlight some of the similarities on these two occasions seeking to find application to our own sending. We will work from Matthew 10 for the sending of the 12 and the sending of the 72 is unique to Luke 10.
9. To whom does Jesus send each of the groups? Matt. 10:5; Luke 10:13-15 (You need to know where these villages/towns are located.)
  - a. Why does Jesus send these disciples first to the Jews? John 1:10
  - b. What does Jesus say regarding his rejection by those God had prepared for thousands of years to receive Messiah when he came? Matthew 23:37-39
  - c. Jesus describes the harvest as plentiful when sending the 72. How come he viewed the field as ripe for picking? Matthew 9:36
  - d. Discuss whether a field ripe for harvest in our day is among people who may still identify as Christian but no longer maintain a connection with the body of Christ. Is Hebrews 6:4-6 relevant to this discussion?
10. What is the good news the disciples are to proclaim and what is the evidence that what they proclaim is true? Matt. 10:7-8; Luke 10:9
  - a. Today we preach the crucified Christ is risen. What did the Holy Spirit make clear was the purpose of Jesus’ death and resurrection in the 1<sup>st</sup> century Church? Acts 2:36
  - b. Jesus is Lord. Reconciled to the Father through Christ, we now live under the gracious rule of our Lord in anticipation of reigning with him on the new earth (Revelation 5:9-10). Discuss whether we’ve given God’s people a sufficiently robust vision of kingdom life that we might serve this world by giving them a glimpse of what life on the new earth will look like? Discuss.
  - c. In a world that has eschewed all moral authority other than that which allows people to do what is right in his/her own eyes and dismisses sin, is it possible that Lordship/Leadership may prove a better starting point in opening spiritual conversations than salvation? Discuss.

- d. Read Luke 10:18-20. "I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven." Given the context does this refer to the day Lucifer was cast from heaven, or that those once held in bondage by and to Satan now have authority over him? How does this figure into our being sent as citizens of the kingdom of heaven living under the gracious rule of our Lord, Jesus? Ephesians 6:10-20

Jesus sends them out like sheep among wolves. Matt.10:16; Luke 10:3.

11. How does Jesus anticipate the people will respond? Luke 10:13-14 (The extended instruction to the 12 [Matt.10.17-42] seems to anticipate the apostolic sending after Pentecost. Discuss if you wish.)
12. Does this appear to be the reception the 72 received? Luke 10:17.
13. Given what impressed the 72, what most likely impressed the people to whom they were sent and may have accounted for a positive reception?
14. What corrective does Jesus give the 72?
  - a. Discuss if Jesus' words are still applicable to us. "I am sending you out like lambs among wolves." If so, how? 1 Corinthians 1:22-23
  - b. Is there a danger that the kingdom message of the Church gets lost in our effort to connect with the community through social ministry initiatives?
  - c. Why is the message of Christ crucified absolutely central to the good news of the kingdom of God established on earth as in the heavenlies? Colossians 2:13-15; 1 Corinthians 15:1, 12-14
  - d. Discuss what it means to be "shrewd as snakes and as innocent as doves" (Matt. 10:16b) in our context.
15. Why does Jesus tell them not to take anything along with them? Matt. 10:10; Luke 10:7
16. What other reason fits the instruction for the kingdom citizens sent today? Matthew 6:31-34. How would this give credibility to our witness and the proclamation of the kingdom?

**The Great Sending – Studies 11/12 – Sending Parables – Matthew 22:1-14; Luke 14:15-24; Revelation 19:6-9; Matthew 20:1-16**

We might call the two parable before us today, “Sending Parables.” Here Jesus reveals God’s will to fill the wedding hall, the banquet feast, and to bring a full complement of workers into the vineyard. Yet those with ears to hear will hear Jesus directing their attention to the proper orientation of those who gladly respond to God’s invitation to participate in the kingdom life under the gracious rule of our Lord, Jesus.

1. Compare/contrast Luke 14:15-24 with Matthew 22:1-14.  
Note:
  - a. What prompted Jesus to tell each parable? Luke 14:15; Matthew 21:45-46
  - b. How many servants does the master send to invite people to the banquet?
  - c. How many servants does the king send out to invite guests to the wedding?
  - d. Who do you think Jesus had in mind as to the identity of these servant(s) in each parable?
  - e. How well does the servant know the master of the banquet? Luke 14:21-22
  - f. Given the identity of the servants, discuss the reference point in time as to whether the parable speaks to the present moment or to the future.
2. In both accounts people excuse themselves from the banquet.

To better appreciate both the master’s and the king’s anger in each account, it is helpful to know something of the social customs of the 1<sup>st</sup> century. When invited to any affair such as a party or wedding those invited needed to consider if they could: reciprocate the invitation and more importantly if it is to their social benefit to participate. The master and king’s anger result from the recognition that those making excuses simply did not want to honor them or even be seen associating with them. (Neyrey, Jerome H., Editor. The Social World of Luke-Acts pp. 137-149).

3. Beyond the excuses, in Matthew’s account other invitees “seized his slaves and mistreated them and killed them.”
  - a. Who does Jesus clearly have in mind? Acts 7:52
  - b. Is this applicable to the disciples and those sent under their apostolic authority?  
Matthew 10:16-23; John 17:13-21

Matthew’s account ends with Jesus directing our attention to the wedding feast of the Lamb John witnesses in Revelation 19:6-9. Once again to understand the king’s anger over a man not wearing wedding clothes those listening to Jesus would have known that those invited to the feast are given the proper attire.

4. What is the attire of those who will sit at the marriage feast of the Lamb? Isaiah 61:10; Revelation 19:8 (note the attire given manifests in action much like the “living stones” God uses to build his temple 1 Peter 2:4-5.)

As those sent, we do well to come to a much deeper appreciation of Jesus’ vision for the relationship of Christ and his bride, the Church. We tend to treat this as a simple metaphor. Behind the metaphor, however, are profound spiritual realities to which we do well to pay attention as to a light shining in a dark place.

In Matthew’s account shortly after Jesus tells this parable of the wedding banquet enraged religious leaders look for ways to trap Jesus into saying something they might use against him. In Matthew 22:23-32 they ask Jesus about marriage in the resurrection. In verse 30 Jesus says, “At the resurrection people will neither marry nor be given in marriage; they will be like angels in heaven.”

5. What are the reasons usually given we will not be married on the new earth?
6. Consider the following:
  - a. A. For what does Jesus pray in John 17:20-23?
  - b. B. Compare Jesus’ language here with Paul’s description of marriage in Ephesians 5:21-32. In terms of “two becoming one” of what profound mystery is Paul speaking? Is Jesus using marriage language in his prayer recorded by John? In asking that believers might be one as Jesus and the Father are one, is Jesus speaking metaphorically or literally?
  - c. As those sent, what does Jesus say will demonstrate unequivocally that the Father sent him? John 17:23
  - d. What is the ultimate goal of our sanctification? Romans 8:29; 1 John 3:1-3.
  - e. In what way will be like Christ?

Jesus loved his heavenly Father with all his emotional energy, physical strength, and mental capacity. Nothing brought Jesus greater pleasure or more delight than doing the will of his Father on earth as in the heavenlies as the only begotten Son of the Father. He only did the works of his Father and spoke what the Father gave him. For the joy of doing the Father’s will Jesus endured the shame of the cross. Jesus shared such unity with the Father that he told Philip, “If you have seen me you have seen the Father” John 14:9.

7. What does this indicate about the unity we will experience as believers on the new earth? John 17:21

8. As the Holy Spirit conforms us to the image of Christ to what extent might we say, "If you have seen me you have seen Jesus?" Galatians 2:20; 1 Corinthians 4:16, 11:1; Philippians 3:17-21.
9. When will God bring this work started to us to completion? 1 John 3:2; Philippians 1:3-6.

On the new earth we will not be able to love another person any more or less than God is able to love one person more or less than another. God's love will consume us. As Christ-centered people we will love God with all our emotional energy, physical strength, and mental capacity. We will find all our joy and delight in expressing that love in service to one another. To the extent that the Church becomes the Church for which Jesus prays, to the extent that we manifest God's love poured into hearts first to one another as those who reciprocate that love, Jesus says the world will find his assertion to be sent by the Father credible.

What would change if our Church body, bodies in the pew, took to heart this vision for the unity of Christ and his bride the Church and by extension the unity manifested in the manner we love one another? Would the world benefit from a living witness to true love?

Before leaving these studies, we do well to look at the parable of the wedding banquet and the laborers in the vineyard together. The study questions on lesson 12 focus the reader on our being workers in the vineyard. What, however, is the greater truth that these parables share? (And by way of emphasis we will include two other parables.)

10. Considering our study of the wedding banquet (Matthew 22:1-14), the king wants the wedding hall filled because of what he thought of his son, the bridegroom? What did he think of the son? (We aren't told specifically but what is clear.) In the Great Banquet of Luke 14:15-24, the master also wants his hall filled with guests, with no seats. When you think of Jesus as the teller of the parable, what obviously stands behind the desire for every place being filled?
  - a. In a similar way, why do you suppose the owner of the vineyard kept compelling people to come work in the vineyard? What is the owner's thought about working in his vineyard? Matthew 20:1-16.
  - b. Why did those who had worked longest in the vineyard grumble? Matthew 20:12
  - c. What was the owner's response? Matthew 20:13-15
  - d. Apparently for all the time they spent in the vineyard they failed to do one thing. What was that? In answering consider: What was the ultimate problem of both sons in the parable of the Forgiving Father? Luke 15:11-32. What was the problem of the servant given one talent? Matthew 25:24-26.

How well do people know our heavenly Father? In our context, most people know something about Jesus. Why don't we ask them, "Who do you say Jesus is?" To what extent do God's people relish the reality they are becoming like Christ? To what extent does Church count it as much of a privilege to work in the Owner's vineyard as the Owner does? Is it possible as those sent, if we don't have these orientations, it might be better if we just stayed put?

**The Great Sending – Study 14 – The Great Sending: Matthew 28:5-10; Mark 16:6-8; Luke 24:9-12; John 20:2, 17-18**

We sing to the “Rock of Ages, Cleft for Me,” “nothing in my hand I bring; Simply to the cross I cling.” Paul laid the foundation for the lyric when he determined to “know nothing except Christ and him crucified” while ministering among the Corinthians. Yet Christ crucified may stand merely as a grim historical tragedy unless the Holy Spirit opens the eyes of our hearts to see that “God has made him both Lord and Christ – this Jesus whom you crucified” Acts 2:36. Are we casting the same compelling vision for the establishment of Jesus’ Lordship of the cosmos as Jesus and the Apostles did?

1. Why does Jesus show himself to the women first? Matthew 28:1; Mark 16:1-2; Luke 24:1-2.
2. They were seeking Christ crucified. What do they find and hear? Matthew 28:5-7; Mark 16:5-7; Luke 24:4-7
3. What did the Holy Spirit do for the women in that moment? Luke 24:8; John 14:26
4. What then did the women do? Luke 24:9; Matthew 28:8
5. How did Jesus honor their faith-filled response? Matthew 28:9-10
6. How did the disciples respond to the women’s message? Luke 24:10-11; John 20:18-19, 24-24-29; Matthew 28:17
7. John provides us with more details concerning Mary Magdalene the first to arrive at the tomb. What is Mary’s initial conclusion? John 20:2

She went back and reported this to the disciples. Peter and presumably John came to investigate. They went home; Mary lingered. She tells the angels (who must have toned down the appearance quite a bit from their confrontation with the guards) why she is weeping. When she turns around, she sees a man (discuss possibilities why she did not recognize Jesus) who asks her the same question as the angels. “Woman, why are you weeping? Whom are you seeking?”

8. When does the Holy Spirit open Mary’s eyes to recognize Jesus? 20:16
  - a. What significance do you see in this?
  - b. How does Mary refer to Jesus?
  - c. What does Mary’s address to Jesus reveal about the Jesus to whom she clings?
9. Why does Jesus tell Mary not to cling to him? 20:17

10. Who is the Jesus the Holy Spirit will give us eyes to recognize and to whom we must cling? Ephesians 1:18-23.
11. What does John remember and believe that the other disciples did not yet understand? John 20:8-9
12. Nonetheless, where do we find the disciples? John 20:19
13. Do you think the disciples including John understood Jesus' commission after they all saw and believed? John 20:21-23; John 20:24-29
14. What would indicate Peter and the others didn't really get it yet? John 21:1-3

Some say Peter jumped out of the boat (John 21:4-6) so the other disciples would not hear if Jesus brought up Peter's denials. This doesn't fit in that Jesus has already been with Peter on at least two other occasions.

15. Compare and discuss Jesus' reinstatement of Peter with Jesus' original call to Peter to "follow me." John 21:15-17; Luke 5:1-11 After three years do you think Peter understood his commission any better? How might Jesus' comments to Peter in John 21:19,22,24 help us sense what an ongoing challenge for all of us might be?
16. What did the disciples need in order to go as those sent as by the Father through Jesus? John 16:12-15
17. What is the ultimate goal of Christ's mission and the Apostolic message? 1 Corinthians 15:20-28.
18. How might God's people see themselves as citizens in the kingdom of God currently living under the gracious rule of their Lord, Jesus?
  - a. How might God's people seek the kingdom of God and his righteousness?
  - b. Do God's people rejoice that the Holy Spirit is conforming us to the image of Christ that when brought to completion in the day we see Jesus face to face we will be united with Christ as he is with the Father, the Bridegroom and the Bride, two flesh, become one?
  - c. Do God's people manifest the kingdom life, life as we will know it on the new earth, in such a way to show a world that is passing away not only the resurrection life (Romans 6:1-4 baptism) but also life in the world to come as a living invitation to participate in this kingdom life?

"How will they hear without a preacher? How will they preach unless they are sent?" (Romans 10:14-15)

"Peace be with you; as the Father has sent Me, I also send you." John 20:21