



Small Group
Discussion Questions

SENT by the sent one

Welcome to our four week series on being **Sent**. As Jesus' disciples we are sent by Jesus, with His authority, in the power of the Holy Spirit, for blessing.

We pray this series would be a reminder of truths already embraced, and a catalyst to live even more fully in our identity as sent ones.

Let's begin

Talk of being sent and of being missional in every sphere of our lives can cause different reactions in us at times. Sometimes the very thought can excite us and we are ready, yearning for more and more ways to live this out. At other times being missional can feel like another thing to add to an already overly busy life, like it is a duty more than a joy. At other times it can potentially raise within us feelings of inadequacy (not feeling equipped or eloquent enough) or frustration at a perceived lack of missional opportunities.

- Share how you feel about being sent in your current season of life.

Jesus, the Sent One

The Incarnation of Jesus is undoubtedly one of the greatest acts of sending in all salvation history. Read together John 1:1-18 and consider:

- Since God the Father is the One who sent Jesus into the world, what does this reveal to us about the nature of God the Father?

Throughout his life Jesus had a very clear and strong self-understanding of being sent (for some examples see John 4:34, 8:29, 8:42, 12:44-45, 12:49 & 17:8).

- How can we learn from the ways Jesus lived as a 'sent' person?

Tim Dearborn from World Vision shares his observation that a:

"lack of interest in mission is not remedied by more shocking statistics, more gruesome stories or more emotionally manipulative commands to obedience. It is best remedied by intensifying people's passion for Christ, so that the passions of his heart become the passions that propel our hearts"¹

¹ Tim Dearborn, "Beyond Duty," in *Perspectives on the World Christian Movement: A reader*. William Carey Library. 2009, p70.

It might seem unexpected to get a spiritual health check question on a study on being sent, yet it is quite likely one of the most important questions of all:

- How is your relationship with Jesus at the moment?

Thinking back over your Christian life, how have you seen your passion for Jesus propel you into mission at different times?

Jesus' followers, the Sent Ones

Having powerfully taught and lived as a sent one Jesus (after his death and resurrection) then commissions his followers with these challenging words: "as the Father has sent me, I am sending you" (John 20:21).

- What does he mean by this? What are the ways in which our being sent into the world is the same as Jesus being sent into the world?

There is an all-important shift from seeing mission as something we do (and therefore something we need to add to our lives) to seeing ourselves as sent ones (and therefore as our constant identity).

- How do you feel you are going in making this self-perception shift?
- What are some of the challenges or hindrances you face that keep you from fully embracing your identity as one of Jesus' sent people?
- What have you found helpful in keeping that idea of 'sentness' at the front of your mind in day-to-day living?

If Jesus has sent us and that is who we now are, then wherever we find ourselves and wherever we go become our sent places.

- Brainstorm a list all of the places, communities, spheres of your life where God has placed you this year.
- What do you hope and pray would be the outcome of your presence among those places and peoples?
- What would shift for you in the way you approached those places if you fully embraced your identity as a sent one there?

SENT with authority

Welcome to our second week in our **Sent** series. Last week we looked at how each of us is sent by Jesus into every sphere of our everyday lives. This week we look at how Jesus sends us into those places with His authority.

Let's begin

Since last study, has anything change in the way you view yourself as 'sent' into the places and communities you identified last week? If so, how?

Sent with authority

Read together Matthew 28:18-20. Jesus' commission of his followers here starts with the declaration that 'all authority in heaven and on earth has been given' to Him and concludes with the promise that He is with His followers always.

- What is your understanding of how the authority, power and presence of Jesus interacts with us and our world?
- How do you think that should shape the way we live as His sent ones?

The earliest disciples of Jesus (first the 12, then the 72, then the early church in Acts) had a three-fold dimension to their witness. They witnessed in *word* (sharing of Gospel truth), *deed* (consistent loving witness & distinctly Christian lifestyles) and *sign* (miraculous answers to prayer).

- Was one or more of those instrumental in your coming to faith in Jesus?
- How are all three necessary for a full picture of the Kingdom of God?
- When you think of your own life and witness, is there one of those that you feel is a particular strength and passion of yours?

As humans (and maybe especially as Western citizens) we often default to being self-reliant and doing things in our own strength. Read Luke 9:1-2 (*when Jesus sent out the 12*), John 14:12 (*when Jesus prepares his disciples for his departure*) and Acts 1:4-8 (*when Jesus tells them to wait to be empowered by the Holy Spirit*).

- What is the nature of the authority and power we carry as Christians?
- Can you share an example or two from your own life about how you have seen Christ's authority and power work through you as His ambassador?

Do you feel that there seems to be a powerlessness to the Western church's witness in our society? If so, why do you think that is and what might be needed for us to really take hold of Christ's authority in our witness?

Case study: Acts 3 and authority

Read the record of the healing of a lame beggar in Acts 3:1-16.

Note that this story happens in the context of everyday life. This was the normal practice of Peter and Paul and it was the normal practice of the beggar.

- Do you find it easy to look for the ways God might be at work in your everyday life, or do you find yourself limiting God to particular times, places or circumstances?
- How might you be 'more open' to how God can use you as His sent one?

Peter and John encounter the beggar and see beyond his ask to the real need, and then have the courage and faith to seek God's healing for the man (v6-7).

- If acting like Peter here is something you would find hard to do, how might you start growing your faith for "signs" bit by bit in coming weeks?

Peter's response to the commotion this miracle caused is found in v12-16. Peter gives personal testimony, proclaims Gospel truth, gives all glory for the miracle to Jesus, and highlights the importance of faith.

- How might we do likewise in our everyday conversations as opportunities arise?

Sent in the power of the Holy Spirit

Welcome to our third week in our **Sent** series. This week we celebrate that we are not sent alone, but are sent with and in the power of the Holy Spirit.

Let's begin

How has the past two weeks looking at being sent stretched your faith and brought greater meaning to your day-to-day living so far?

Not sent alone

Towards the end of his life, Jesus spent time teaching his disciples about and preparing them to receive the Holy Spirit. Read together John 14:15-20, 25-27; John 15:26-27; John 16:7-15 and Acts 1:8.

- What particularly stands out to you about the person and work of the Holy Spirit from those passages?
- How have you seen evidence of Jesus' teaching being fulfilled in your own experience of the Holy Spirit?

Jesus promises that the Holy Spirit will be a helper with us forever (John 14:15), and Paul then later reminds the early church that they are temples of the Holy Spirit (1 Corinthians 6:19) taking Him with them wherever they go.

- How do you experience and interact with the Holy Spirit on a day-to-day basis in your Christian walk.
- How does knowing we are sent with the presence of the Holy Spirit give us cause for courage and confidence as we are sent into our everyday lives?

One of the key roles Jesus highlighted that the Holy Spirit will play in our world will be to convict (or convince/prove) the world concerning sin, judgement and righteous (John 14:8-11). It is an important reminder for us that the Holy Spirit is at work in our world and in the lives of those we seek to witness to.

- How might this shape the way we pray for the not-yet-believing people placed in our lives?
- Are you someone who finds yourself feeling like the pressure and responsibility is all on you when it comes to witness?

- How might shifting your perspective to being someone who seeks to join in with what the Holy Spirit is already doing change your experience of being sent?

Promptings, leading and empowering

At PBC our vision statement includes our desire to be a people “led by God’s Spirit”. This language comes from Romans 8:14 and Galatians 5:18 where Paul reminds his readers that the children of God are led by the Spirit of God.

- Can you share an example from your life where you felt the Spirit lead you to do/say/pray something in your witness and mission?

Jesus specifically mentioned ‘power’ as a reason for the early disciples to wait until they received the promised Holy Spirit before embarking on mission (Acts 1:4-8).

- How does the Holy Spirit bring ‘power’ to the life and witness of a believer?
- How are you currently seeking the Holy Spirit’s power as you witness in the spheres of life God has sent you?

To finish this study, take a moment to pray that God would speak to you through His Holy Spirit about the places God has sent you and the people he has placed around you there that don’t yet know Him. Ask the Holy Spirit to direct your thoughts and prayers and then spend time just listening.

Afterwards, share with the group if there was anything about a specific person or sent place that He specifically laid on your heart.

Sent for blessing

Welcome to our final week in our **Sent** series. So far we have looked at how Jesus' disciples are sent by Jesus, with His authority, in the power of the Holy Spirit. This week we close out our series by considering how we, as the sent ones of Jesus, are sent in order to bless and to be a blessing.

Let's begin

How did you find yourself being more open to listening to the leading of the Holy Spirit in your sent places this past week?

Sent for blessing

It has been observed in the past, that Christians are sometimes better known for what they are against rather than being known for what they are for.

- How do you think has this affected the receptiveness of those outside the faith in engaging with the Gospel message?
- Instead, what do you think some of the things are that Christians should be known as "being for"? (*meaning things we are passionate about, speak up about and work towards as Christians in our world*)

In exile the people of God found themselves living among a people whose values, morals and religious affection were not their own (feel familiar?). In this context, God instructs His people to '*seek the welfare of the city where I have sent you*' (Jeremiah 29:7)

- What did it mean for God's people in exile to seek the welfare of the city they were sent to?
- What would it mean for us to seek the welfare of our city?
- Is there any social issue or need you feel called to do something about?

Jesus is the one who restores us and our broken world by bringing the Kingdom of God to our lives and to our world. We eagerly look forward to the day when He returns and brings in the Kingdom in completeness. In the meantime, Jesus' followers are to join with Him in the ongoing restorative work, as those who are called to be salt and light in their communities (Matthew 5:13-16).

- In what ways do you see yourself as one of God's agents of blessing in the places He has placed you?

- Can you think of an example of someone you look up to who embodies this?

Sent as blessers

Read together Galatians 6:9-10. Here Paul urges us to not grow weary in doing good, but to do good to all people as we have opportunity

- Can you identify some of the opportunities to do good that you are aware of within your sent places?
- Have you ever become weary of seeking to do good for others? Why did you think you got to that place and how did you move beyond weariness?
- How are you feeling about doing good to others (being a blessing) in this season of life?
- What is the harvest we reap if we do not give up on doing good?

While Paul calls the Galatians to especially do good to those who belong to the family of believers, his instruction is all-inclusive and also directed at those who aren't.

- Can you share an example of a time when you felt led to bless someone who was outside of the family of believers?
- What impact did that have on them – did it give rise to a conversation as to why you would do that for them?

Being a blessing can be as simple as blessing someone through an act of kindness, sharing words of affirmation and encouragement, or a through a gift. As we finish, pause to consider and commit to the following:

This coming week I will seek to:

- Bless a neighbour by _____
- Bless a work colleague by _____
- Bless a friend by _____
- Bless a stranger by _____

Thanks for being a part of series looking at what it means to be Sent. We pray this series has been a reminder of truths already embraced, and has further catalysed you to live even more fully in your identity as a sent one.

If you missed any weeks of our Sent series, or would like to revisit the sermons at any time, you can listen anytime online on our website:
www.parramatabaptist.com/resources/listen-online

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