



Series: The Way of Jesus

Sermon: Part 4 | You were made for this.

Passage: Luke 10.1-22

Date: March 31, 2019

Hey we've got good work to do today so let's get to it. By way of introduction I want to read the first verse from our passage today. We are going to be in **Luke 10**. Starting in verse 1.

Gonna seem kind of obscure at first but I'll put it in context.

1 After this, the Lord appointed seventy-two others, and he sent them ahead of him in pairs to every town and place where he himself was about to go.

OK. Here's what is happening: This is the moment where the first group of non-apostle-disciples were commissioned and sent out by Jesus. Chapter 9 – Jesus had sent out the 12 apostles. If you remember back in chapter 5...week 1. Jesus said to Peter, James, & John "Follow me and I will make you fishers of men." That was the calling. And so they followed. They watched him teach, watched him heal. Watched him bring dead people back to life and then explain this is what God does. Chapter 9 he sends them out.

And NOW, chapter 10 he is sending out more followers and we get to see what it looks like. And most theologians point to this and say this was a confirming word from Jesus that the normal posture of the church is SENT. In other words...**His Followers are made to fish**. So for the past 2000 years people have encountered the love and forgiveness of Christ, received that love, and then they shared that love with others. All over the Mediterranean, then all over Africa & Europe, then here to North America and down here to the South and to here we are in a church today.

So where we find ourselves today is looking in at what it meant to be sent by Jesus to...fish. And here's the thing that gets me:

Nobody comes to Jesus because they want to go tell others about him. We don't come to Jesus because we want to do something for other people. We come to Jesus because of what he did for us. I saw my predicament, that I was a sinner in need of saving. That forgiveness was a gift extended to me by God and I was promised eternal life and I said YES. I need that. Jesus met me as a 12 year old at summer camp right where I was. And I was focused on the sins of **my life** & the reality of eternity I was facing. And so I received Christ's salvation for MY sins. And I received that gift and yielded control of my life to him. I heard the good news from a guy preaching and I responded.

When Peter, James, John...when they followed Jesus. Why did they follow him? If you remember the story from Luke 5 a few weeks ago it was because of what they SAW. Right? It was a

response to what Jesus did. Those guys were out fishing all night. They didn't catch anything. Jesus says put your nets down over there. Now they are hesitant cause what does this carpenter know. but they are willing. And they haul in huge amount fish. So he says follow me and they follow him. Because of what they saw.

But Jesus says...to follow is to fish. I'm going to make you into fishers of men. And what happens is we get to this commissioning Jesus gives the church and we don't see ourselves as good candidates for being fisherman.

So here's what happens so often. People come to church and hear a sermon about talking to others about Jesus. And if there is this internal tug of war that goes on. If you are a Christian you think "Yes, that seems good" and maybe... "I don't think I can." You are like: Spence YOU Can. You are the professional. And I look at you and I think...You are way better positioned than me to do this. Because the second they hear I'm a pastor the walls go up. We all have our reasons why we think we won't be good at it. I'm too young, too old, bad with words, I don't like people, I'm an enneagram 5. My past is too wrinkle free...my past is too messed up...whatever it is. And we can say that all day long all the while Jesus is saying "to follow is to fish." He has made us & sent us...to fish. And Jesus said...and this is so good...I will MAKE you fishers of men. YOU AREN'T THERE YET. You'll stumble & mess up. Look at the disciples...they were always messing up. But you keep at it...keep fishing and I will make you into a fisherman or fisher-woman.

You guys ever heard that famous mark twain saying? The two most important days in your life:

*** The day that you are born. & the day you figure out why.* -**

See today isn't about what Jesus is calling you to do, its about discovering you he has created you to be. And that's everything.

Millenials...we love a cause. Today is about our cause as a church...but more deeply it's the cause you were made for.. THIS IS THE CAUSE YOU WERE MADE FOR.

So here's what I want to do. I want to show you what he told this 72 to do. What it meant to "fish." And as we go through I want to show you why you are absolutely, 100% ready, to be sent out fishing. So I'm going to show you several marks of sent people and then show you why you are ALREADY ready. Why you were made for this.

1 After this, the Lord appointed seventy-two others, and he sent them ahead of him in pairs to every town and place where he himself was about to go.

Bringing this back for two reasons. First, he sent them in pairs. **First mark: Sent people don't go alone.** Listen, the mission of the church is not for the individual, it's for the church. It's not designed to be solo. It's scary sometimes and I just don't believe you should be doing it if you aren't connected to the local church. LIFE IS A COMMUNITY PROJECT. If you are excited about God's mission but NOT about God's church, something is off. This is why we tell you to get plugged in here. It's because God has created you for this. And he created you to carry out his mission WITH others!

Also I want you to see that he sent them where he was about to go. Which is big because it sets a pattern...Jesus isn't sending them off on a rogue mission. He's sending them to prepare people to receive Jesus. And that's what he is sending us to do. We aren't the ones that can save people. That's Jesus' job. He's sending us out to fish. His job to catch.

2 He told them, "The harvest is abundant, but the workers are few. Therefore, pray to the Lord of the harvest to send out workers into his harvest."

Actually nothing but good news here. He introduces a new metaphor. This work that he is sending us out to do...It's like going to harvest which means going to collect all the great veggies and fruits that have been growing. In short...there is a lot out there! And Jesus says pray for more workers. He doesn't say "pray for the right words so you can be winsome & articulate." No he commissions the ones he's sending to pray for more. Why? Because the PROBLEM IS NOT A HARVEST PROBLEM!! There aren't a LACK of people in Charlotte who don't know Christ. ACTUALLY IT'S THE OPPOSITE...THERE are an ABUNDANCE of people who don't know Christ. A local missions director here who we consult regularly with told me the other day he thinks a conservative estimate is that 800 of the 1.25 million don't go to church. That's 64%.

And what Jesus is saying is that they aren't just THERE...they are READY for harvest. Their life experiences and the way they are thinking & feeling about what has happened has made them READY to receive the hope Christ offers. The PROBLEM ISN'T A HARVEST SHORTAGE. IT'S A WORKER SHORTAGE. So

Sent people get out there in the harvest, and they see what God is doing and they think...oh man more people need to get out here. Need to experience what they were made for.

Second mark: Sent people pray for help. Help in form of more laborers & help from holy spirit.

TO THIS END: DAY OF PRAYER & FASTING April 9th.

I LONG for some of you to experience the joy of God using you to bring someone else to him. There is nothing like it. And the reason there is nothing like it, is because you were made for this!! All of the experiences you've had in your life, all of your personality, all of those prayers you've prayed that were answered & the ones that weren't...ALL OF THAT wasn't just about your life. God says he created you & guided you to fish. And this is why you are 100% ready right now. We'll come back to that.

3 Now go; I'm sending you out like lambs among wolves.

This is the simple command. Now go. Go. Listen, the best fishing there is, is the kind that happens. We can talk about it all day but it isn't a theory thing, it's a doing thing. And from Matthew 28...where he says make disciples as you are going...what I see is this is normative for the church. Making disciples is not some exceptional task for the overzealous wierdos. And when we go, we go as lambs among wolves. Which means we are to be pure & harmless. But we will encounter hostility to our faith. One guy said "Do not be a danger to others, but expect dangerous opposition to your

message.”¹ **Third mark: Sent people expect opposition.** Jesus isn’t trying to sugar coat things. He never does. The effect of sin on the world means people will try to stop you. Try to attack you for spreading the gospel. This is the story of the church throughout history. Persecuted for the proclamation of the gospel. We expect it. That’s why we pray.

4 Don’t carry a money-bag, traveling bag, or sandals; don’t greet anyone along the road.

This one is a little surprising right? Like, come on Jesus let me get my missionary starter bag: cavu bag, chacos, & wallet... But Jesus makes this instruction for a reason. He isn’t promoting poverty, although a good portion of church history is followers living in poverty. But he IS making sure they travel light. And wealth has a way of slowing us down.. **Sent People are dependent on Christ.**

This mirrors his call to the rich young ruler in Luke 18. The guy says Jesus I have obeyed the law entirely. What else should I do to be saved? Jesus says sell all you have, give it to the poor. You have treasure in heaven so you don’t need that stuff. And THEN follow me. Luke says the guy went away sad. Because he was very rich. The point is not that wealth is bad. The point is that its very easy to let wealth be an obstacle to keep you from following Jesus. So let me ask you: Are YOU TOO TIED DOWN TO OBEY Jesus’ call to go fish?

YOU WERE MADE FOR THIS. You are like...yeah I got kids and a job now...no time to fish. No, everywhere you and your kids go and live are places you can fish. God loves and designs family. Don’t hide behind your family. Dads especially here. Teach your family! Lead them to fish. One of the greatest blessings

will be when you together as a family get to help others meet Jesus.

I’m sure you may have heard this before, but Luke 16 Jesus is going to say you cannot serve two masters since you will either hate one and love the other, or be devoted to one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and money. And the LOVE of, the DEVOTION to, building wealth...becomes a rick flair figure-four leg lock that won’t let you go anywhere. So that’s something for you to talk with God about. In this world, are you traveling lightly? Are you dependent on CHRIST to provide for you to accomplish his mission, or are you trusting in yourself?

He also said in verse 4 “don’t greet anyone along the road.” Which to me seems like the opposite of what they were supposed to be doing. Aren’t they supposed to talk with people? Like....hey there guy on the road..want to hear about Jesus?

Well, He’s not saying don’t tell people about him. It’s the opposite He’s saying don’t waste time. Who knows how much time you have & who knows how much time those I’m sending you to have. You have a mission to go where I’m sending you and to tell them about me. Time is valuable because today could be the day. **Sent People live with urgency.** Pastor Scott, our MPR campus pastor, actually taught me something really valuable about this. He said you have to remember there is a point of no return in evangelism. Which means: it’s good for us to build friendships. But as we are building those friendships there should probably be a

¹ Joe Thorn, Mission of the 72, Redeemer City Fellowship, July 1, 2018.

time, fairly early on, where we talk about Jesus. Because if we wait for like 2 years...thinking we are building a close friendship...THEN outta nowhere you go spiritual on them, it's like a blindside elbow drop from The Rock. And now things are weird. So live with urgency which means make the good news...front page news in your friendships. We have some great conversation training on our website by the way if you need help with this.

5 Whatever house you enter, first say, 'Peace to this household.' 6 If a person of peace is there, your peace will rest on him; but if not, it will return to you. 7 Remain in the same house, eating and drinking what they offer, for the worker is worthy of his wages. Don't move from house to house. 8 When you enter any town, and they welcome you, eat the things set before you.

This word right here, person of peace, is something missionaries talk about a good bit. I'm going to give you the short version of what Person of Peace is ok. Remember Jesus has sent out these 36 advance teams. To prepare for his arrival. A person of peace would be the person who offers them hospitality. Which in a small town here the homes are all right near each other...everybody would know that this person was hosting a couple of outside visitors. And how that person of peace talked about them would determine their first impression in the community.

Lydia was a small business owner in Acts 16 who Paul met and the Lord opened her heart to the gospel. She was influential in her whole family coming to Christ. There are others, the point is the person of peace is someone who is receptive to the work, even if they are not believers. YET ANOTHER REASON

TO PRAY! Here's the way I'll say it: **Sent people expect God to be working wherever they go.** So, we always are ready to step into what God is doing. Peace be with you...let's see what God is doing here.

7 Remain in the same house, eating and drinking what they offer, for the worker is worthy of his wages. Don't move from house to house. 8 When you enter any town, and they welcome you, eat the things set before you.

And listen this means **Sent people practice humility.** These guys had no idea the living rooms they were going to end up in. They were told to embrace and receive hospitality. They were told by Christ to accept help from the very people they were to reach. Which is reinforcing dependence on Christ, and also showing those people that they came in humility & weakness. They were told to EAT whatever is put in front of them. And a little cross cultural training for all of us – when somebody invites you to dinner...ESPECIALLY to their house...you eat what is put in front of you. Don't tell Jesus you'll go reach people...as long as it is in a strict low-carb context. On your own...that's fine. But Jesus is telling you...TWICE...don't push back food. Because in doing so you push back the person who gave it to you. I've eaten Pig Brain, Chicken Feet, fish head, mystery meat, mountains of oily rice, chili crab, spam, spices so hot they numbed my face, and on one occasion: boiled Goat testicle. None of that is in my regular rotation.

And listen, a handful of times I know they served me that to see if I would eat it. And in choking it down, my hosts laughed

at me. And a bond was formed. And more than once that friendship led to me getting to lead them to Jesus. So whether its chicken feet in a foreign country, or white castle sliders and mr. pibb in this one, practice humility and thankfulness. *I'm not sure if I just did more harm or good to mission trip sign-ups right there.*

Ok verse 9 is pretty big because he tells them what their ministry is going to entail.

9 Heal the sick who are there, and tell them, 'The kingdom of God has come near you.'

Simple way to put this: Jesus ties these two together...Heal & Proclaim. Here's what happened for the 72:

17 The seventy-two returned with joy, saying "Lord, even the demons submit to us in your name."

They went out and in the power of Christ they healed people and even cast out demons. And said "The kingdom of God has come." Remember – This is before Jesus comes. So Jesus is going to come to these places and teach them about himself.

So the question of course is...what do we do with this? Well, here's what I'll say: The previous two marks are really important to understand how we approach this. Wherever we go...we EXPECT God to be working and we practice humility.

When it comes to healing...The thing you have to see is there is a compassionate power that comes **from** God **for** people that the CHURCH is charged with delivering. And every miracle

you see Jesus perform is seen as a SIGN pointing to the more important miracle: his saving power. So our work, as sent people, becomes looking for opportunities to demonstrate the power of the gospel and explain it with our words.

Sent people practice & preach the redeeming power of Christ.

That means we use all the tools in the toolbelt. We pray for people to be healed. And when we pray, we pray with humility and expectancy. Which means I know God has the power to heal, but I'm not going to let my trust in him be determined by his answer to THIS. Because I also know he's good. And you need to know he's bigger than your circumstance too. And I know some of you are skeptical of that kind of prayer that says "God please heal this person right now." But the church serves a God big enough to do that & who tells us to pray for that. And we've seen him do that here at Mercy.

BUT, the church also has been given resources by God. Finances, skills, etc. More tools in this toolbelt. to demonstrate the redeeming power of God. So we pray for healing & we bring our resources to help redeem any situation. And always doing it as a SIGN pointing to Jesus.

WE ALSO PREACH. We **say**... we give our lives away for others. We sacrifice our time, talent, treasure...we do it joyfully because Jesus did it for us first.

For those who say Man I just want to serve I don't want to preach. Well, fishing means we do both! There's this old line by St. Francis of Assisi – Preach the gospel, if necessary use words. My old pastor used to say that's like saying "give me

your phone number, if necessary use digits.” Phone numbers ARE digits. The gospel is WORDS. We must proclaim it! It’s both!

BECAUSE RIGHT AFTER THE 72 says that...Jesus says in verse 20 “However, don’t rejoice that the spirits submit to you, but rejoice that your names are written in heaven.”

In other words...the GREATER miracle is salvation, not healings & casting out demons. So we gotta be about the greater miracle.

What we MUST NOT do: Is preach a love we don’t practice. OR practice a love we don’t preach. Sent people practice and preach the redeeming power of Christ.

10 When you enter any town, and they don’t welcome you, go out into its streets and say, 11 ‘We are wiping off even the dust of your town that clings to our feet as a witness against you. Know this for certain: The kingdom of God has come near.’ 12 I tell you, on that day it will be more tolerable for Sodom than for that town.

Last thing sent people do is the hardest. But **Sent people warn people that eternity is at stake.** I know this is offensive but if we believe that heaven and hell are real and eternity is real...then when someone rejects the gospel...we warn them that apart from Christ we believe they will spend eternity separated from God in hell. We do it with love. But we do it.

A word to our non-christian friends: Here’s how we think about it: If you went to the doc because you were feeling bad, and the doc discovered you had a terminally ill disease...the

most compassionate thing the Doc can do is tell you you are going to die. In fact he’s BOUND by his own oath to tell you. And if the prescription to save you is a simple medicine he has in the cabinet...wouldn’t you want him to offer it? Now its up to you to take it or not. To believe him or not. But you wouldn’t accuse him of being unloving.

This is how we Christians are TRYING...never perfectly but TRYING to approach being sent. That we aren’t better people we are just better off than before we met Jesus. We aren’t the doctor. We are one of his patients who had the same illness you had & found the cure. So we think you should go see him!

Now let me take ALL of this and show you how you are MADE for this calling to go fish. And RIGHT NOW...right where you sit...you have everything you need to go fishing. We can equip you to use the tools God has given you...certainly that’s my job. BUT...God has ALREADY perfectly positioned you in someone’s life...through some set of circumstances, some set of experiences you’ve been through...God has positioned you to speak this message of hope and love. Here’s how I know. Think about the circumstances, Christian, that surrounded you coming to faith.

Most likely there were 3 things that all came together.

1. **The Message** – The gospel. Maybe it was the first time you had ever heard it, but maybe not. Often times people have to hear the gospel a few times before it sinks in. And here’s what happens when it sinks in. It’s the message....

2. **The Messenger** – Someone God put in your life. If you were a kid think about the person or maybe if you’ve ever run away

think about the person that brought you back. Something about that person, about their personality, their past,

3. The Circumstance – Something about your situation made you pay attention. There were a unique set of circumstances that made you ready to come back to God.

Just like that person...YOU ARE PERFECTLY POSITIONED...through the unique set of circumstances & experiences...to carry this message of love to impact someone for eternity.

Application for this week: Send a letter to the person who led you to Christ, or helped you find your way back to Christ. I wrote mine this week. Don't have to send it. Maybe you can't if they aren't alive anymore. Man it was powerful to reflect on that. None of them are in ministry now, they weren't amazing teachers...they just went fishing & God used them. And I am so THANKFUL! Man, doing this exercise will remind you that you were once a fish. And it will remind you of the gratitude you have for those people. Somebody was bold enough to FISH. Somebody took a risk. Somebody's life experience combined with this message came into your life at just the right time. And where would you be without them.

Letter to Chuck, John, John, Chris: The Fellas of Basnight Lane, I came to UNC disappointed by the church and looking forward to trying out new things like sewing those wild oats I'd heard mentioned in stories about "college days." But then you came and knocked. Which couldn't have been all that easy. You brought me in as a friend though I didn't bring

anything to the table that would justify you hanging with me. And I am so thankful. The four of you did your best to make sure this college freshman knew Jesus & walked with him. And The Lord used YOU! He used you to reel me in when I was drifting. 17 years later and here I sit as a pastor marveling at God's grace through you. Telling others they are perfectly positioned by God to change someone's eternity...If they will just trust God... like the fellas of Basnight Lane.

Don't miss this. Out on this. Don't miss out on what God can do through you.