“Appointed, Anointed and Sent!”


After this the Lord appointed seventy-two others and sent them on ahead of him, two by two, into every town and place where he himself was about to go. And he said to them, “The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few. Therefore pray earnestly to the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest. Go your way; behold, I am sending you out as lambs in the midst of wolves..... 16 “Whoever listens to you listens to me; whoever rejects you rejects me; but whoever rejects me rejects him who sent me.” 17 The seventy-two returned with joy and said, “Lord, even the demons submit to us in your name.” (Luke 10:1–3, 16-17).

Christ is Risen, He is Risen Indeed, and in Him is the power, the purpose and the privilege of living eternal lives for others as ones sent out in His Name. Amen.

Yesterday I talked with you about an attitude, the attitude that comes with knowing that you are God’s people sent on His mission for others.

How do I know that we are on His mission? He put His Name on us in baptism. He called us by the Gospel, gave us His Word, His Message as our own (Ambassadors), He literally holds us and molds us as His community by the power of His Supper in our lives!

Do you believe in Jesus Christ? Then you are His people, sent by Him, the One who came for all as their Savior. Wow!

First thing for sent ones; do you know what you have? Do you know the joy of being His? Are you reveling in His revelation that you are sons and daughters of God by grace through faith in Jesus?

Are you awed by your salvation? It reminds me of this story. It was the year 1953, two mountain climbers, for the first time, conquered Mount Everest, the world’s highest peak. Overnight they became famous. Three years earlier two men had climbed the Himalayan Mountain called Annapurna. At that time it was the first 26,000 foot peak to be scaled right to the summit. When Frenchman Maurice Hertzog and his companion, after terrible struggle, finally reached the top of Annapurna, they felt emotions which afterwards they tried to describe, but were virtually unable to do so. Hertzog said, "Our hearts overflowed with an unspeakable
happiness and we found ourselves saying, "If only the others could know. If only the others could
know."

That’s just a glimpse of the emotion of Easter Sunday. That’s just a tiny example of the joy
of the Savior in the manger. When God comes for the world, when He scales the eternal
mountains of sin, guilt, and death to find us, rescue us; bring us home, there is nothing like His
accomplishments for us, nothing like being found in Him by faith.

Well, today, we are here to celebrate another side to that joy. The joy of being found in Him
empowers the joy of being sent by Him.

Listen to Luke, chapter ten: After this the Lord appointed seventy-two others and sent them
on ahead of him, two by two, into every town and place where he himself was about to go.”

There was joy in Jesus being sent for us. Read Hebrews 12. There is great joy in being sent
by Him for others.

I would love for the church to advertise itself this way, “Come here, in joy repent. Come
here, in Christ, get sent.

Come here, get sent. That line works for certain organizations: travel agencies, auto clubs,
the Army, Navy, Air Force, and Marines. I especially like the latter because there is a mission
involved with being sent.

“Come here and we’ll send you away,” and it will be the toughest job you’ll ever love. I’ve
said before, “For ministry and mission today” we need “Special Ops Pastors” and “Special Ops
Parishioners,” Navy Seals for Christ Pastors and Ninja Parishioners ready to engage the world,
not for the world’s defeat, but for their salvation.

In our text for today, Jesus sends out 72 witnesses ahead of him, people who were sent out
to testify about Him, about His message to anyone who would listen. Yes, it was sheep among
wolves, but there was also joy and success.

72 sent out one day with not just marching orders, but with a message of life and salvation in
Jesus Christ for all, with capacity, with power.

They were appointed by grace. They were anointed with a sacramental Word. They were
sent by One who went before, with them and after them.
I know that there are struggles to being sent. I know that there are disappointments; there are punitive aspects to being a Christian today. There are even times when those you love actually are the ones that make you pay a price of being God’s people for them.

But faith for mission becomes faith in mission; an attitude that God is there for you no matter what; at work through all things to strengthen you and to empower you to be His witness for others.

Are you ready to be God’s sent witness when He makes the time right? Are you ready to let all of your life experiences be used to His glory, for another’s good? The world needs people like that now more than ever.

This is true even for temporal peace. The world has always needed leaders when things matter the most. Unfortunately, many shrink from that challenge, but others rise to it.

Winston Churchill, great statesmen during WWII, but did you know that heartache and the pain that prepared him for leadership?

Winston Churchill is remembered as perhaps the greatest prime minister in the history of Great Britain. By the steel of his will, he led his island nation to stand against Hitler and eventually triumph in World War II. But years before that victorious moment for the ages, Churchill found himself plunging through a succession of devastating trapdoors – each one worse than the one before.

In August 1929, Churchill had managed to bring in approximately $70,000 into the family coffers. That’s a lot of money even today. In 1929, he invested nearly all of it into the American stock market. He then jotted a note to his wife saying how pleased he was to finally reach a place of financial independence. But, in less than 90 days, the U.S. stock market crashed and Churchill lost virtually everything.

That setback alone would be enough to send most any man into the dungeon of depression. But there were two more difficulties that waited quietly and patiently for Churchill to arrive. In 1931, after serving his entire adult life as a central figure in the British government, he was not invited to serve in the cabinet. Politically banished; amidst the rise of Hitler, he was put out to political pasture.
And then in the same year, while he was trying to hold things together financially and fight off depression of political defeat, he decided to take a tour of Canada and the United States. In New York City he looked the wrong way while crossing a street and was hit by a taxi traveling at thirty-five miles per hour. The accident sent him to the hospital, clinging to life by a thread.

In less than three years he had suffered three shattering transitions that had devastated him financially, politically, and even physically, nearly costing him his life. In a letter to their son from the hospital, his wife wrote: “Last night he was very sad and said he had now in the last two years had received three very heavy blows….He said he did not think he would ever recover completely from the three events.”

At that point, as he recovered in that New York hospital room, Churchill was fifty-seven years old. Nine years later, at the right moment in history, the government that had ignored him would turn to him in desperation for his leadership that had been tempered, tried, and tested through fire. But he could not see the future from the hospital bed. In fact, his prospects looked so bad that at that moment one of his enemies was emboldened enough to pronounce a political eulogy: “Churchill is finished!” History proved that statement to be just a bit premature.

(Adapted from Steve Farrar – Tempered Steel)

I don’t know what circumstances surround you today. It might look hopeless, but know this, your sending is even more important than Churchill’s leadership. To be sent by God isn’t merely for political solutions or private sector leadership, it’s even more. It’s bringing a kingdom that lasts to all who believe.

So, by the fact of the cross and resurrection of Jesus, don’t let your circumstances define you, depress you, or dissuade you.

• Even in sickness, we are saved, sent as His witness.
• In success, we are saved, we are sent as His witness.
• In disappointment, we are saved, we are sent as His witness.
• In all things, nothing can separate us from the love of God in Jesus Christ and to that end, every moment, every experience; every success or failure can be a bridge of the Gospel for another.
In Luke 10, they, and we gathered here now, are His people, appointed by grace, anointed with His sacramental Word, sent by One who went before them, now goes with them, and will follow after them.

That’s the way it has always been. If you know Jesus Christ as your Savior today, someone was sent to share that Good News with you. Someone brought you the power of God for your salvation, through the spirit-filled, anointing gifts of the Word of God and the sacraments.

- It might be as simple as being a friend, helping someone through a rough time so that they might know that God still cares for them because you care enough to share Him! Believer sent, message received.

- Or it could be the fact that you had wonderful, believing and caring parents who made sure that you had what needed most of all in this life, faith in the Lord who loved you and died for you that you might live abundant lives now and forever. Believer sent, message received.

What’s always true is that someone was willing to go where they were sent so that others might know this Savior for themselves.

What’s always true, you are sent today in all your vocations, in all life’s ups and downs, as His people for others. Come here and be sent!

The life of faith is about being sent? This isn’t a Nike ad. It’s not just do it; it’s “be it for others.” God’s people are sent out; as forgiven forgivers, gracious grace givers, enlivened life sharers, appointed, anointed, and sent.

Jesus said to them, but also to us; with Me, in Me, by Me, “Go your way; behold, I am sending you out as lambs in the midst of wolves” (Luke 10:3).

Go your way. I love that, don’t you? Be yourself in Me, be who I created and redeemed you to be.

(Lutheran Hour exists to be a partner who will help you be the best that you can be so that others might come to know Jesus just because they go to know you.)

Jesus said, “Go your way; behold, I am sending you out as lambs in the midst of wolves” (Luke 10:3). Okay, we get it. It’s tough out there, Lord. It’s tough in here; but we will go about
living our life, but with our eyes wide open to the grace of God in Jesus for us and for others. All
Jesus is reminding us is that this most important message; truth has a cost. But He paid the cost
for the message. We get to pay the delivery costs for others; but real love always has that
delivery cost, hasn’t it? Being sent involves risk.

Your nervousness is normal. You may be scared as you are sent to share the most important
gift anyone could ever receive. But Christ makes promises even in the midst of such realities.
Peace in the midst of fears; His promise in the midst of struggle.

Jesus emphasized that in Luke 10:5-6. He said, “Whatever house you enter, first say,
‘Peace be to this house!’ And if a son of peace is there, your peace will rest upon him. But if not,
it will return to you.” You see, you bring the peace of Jesus to people’s lives; so many of our
modern problems exist today because people don’t know of any place to go for real peace. With
families blown apart by divorce, with relationships built only on selfish love and need, with
job/career security more a myth today than ever before, there’s a real scarcity of places and
people that you can truly count on. As Christians, our homes can be those places of peace; not
because we are so special, but because Jesus Himself is the center of who we are and who we can
be others.

So go about living your life, with your eyes wide open to the grace of God in Jesus for you
but also for others. Jesus promises that we will indeed have what we need to accomplish His
gracious mission for others. But here is the best part; God’s in the transforming life business
through the witness of people like you and me.

He will use you, as sharers of His grace to transform people’s lives. I say this all the time,
“There are going to be people in heaven just because they got to know Jesus because they got to
know you!” That’s ultimately what this life this side of heaven is all about.

I know it’s a challenge. Yes, it can be difficult; but, no disrespect to the Marines, this is the
“greatest job you’ll ever love!”

We’re in this together. Everyone has a part. Every story in grace is a potential bridge to
another. I learned that this past fall. I was privileged to lead a great group of people in a half-
marathon run in St. Louis. We called it “Run with the Rev, or REVRUN for short.” But it really
was a run together, men and women with Christ. For 12 weeks we listened to His word together,
we trained weekly together as members of His Team, and then we gathered as a group and ran a race as a team to “Make Him Known” to others. Some of us had our best times, others of us were glad to see that finish line.

But, of all the races I’ve ever run, it was most fun to run because of our common faith, because we love the Lord who finished the most important race for us, the eternal one through His cross and resurrection, because we want others to know Him too; so we ran, amidst troubles and successes to make His victory known.

We’re being sent in that spirit today and every Sunday. We’re gathered as graced ones, in training for the race of our lives; to be sent, to run the race of faith for others. We get about the business of living lives of grace so that others might know Him too.

To that end, appointed, anointed, and graciously sent; may God grant us all joy-filled success. Amen.