

# Every Saint Sent

## Objectives (Part 1)

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### Introduction

#### The Text

<sup>1</sup> And he called the twelve together and gave them power and authority over all demons and to cure diseases, <sup>2</sup> and he sent them out to proclaim the kingdom of God and to heal. <sup>3</sup> And he said to them, “Take nothing for your journey, no staff, nor bag, nor bread, nor money; and do not have two tunics. <sup>4</sup> And whatever house you enter, stay there, and from there depart. <sup>5</sup> And wherever they do not receive you, when you leave that town shake off the dust from your feet as a testimony against them.” <sup>6</sup> And they departed and went through the villages, preaching the gospel and healing everywhere. (Luke 9:1–6)

#### A Missionary’s Objectives

- A. We talked last week about how we have now really turned a corner in Luke’s gospel. Two significant things emerge in [ch. 9](#) here for the very first time:
1. For one thing, this is the chapter where Jesus first reveals to His disciples that He is going to die, that He’s not going to be around much longer.
  2. And secondly, this is the chapter where Jesus first officially starts to include His disciples in His ministry and mission (He sends out the 12 here, and, later, the 72 in [ch. 10](#)).
    - a. And the correlation between these two developments is plain: Because Jesus is not going to be physically on the earth for much longer, He is raising up His disciples, the church, so that He might send them out to continue His mission in the world.
- B. And this is where we get the title of this sermon mini-series: Every Saint Sent. We are missionaries, sent ones of God.
1. Last time we looked at what I called Preparatives, those things Jesus does with His disciples to prepare them to be His missionaries.
  2. This time, as we move into the second half of [v. 2](#), we come now to what I am calling Objectives. In other words, now we will focus on those things that Jesus is actually sending His missionaries, us, out to do.
- C. We’re given two here in our text. Did you notice? “[A]nd he sent them out to proclaim the kingdom of God and to heal.
1. Ministry of word and ministry of deed. Declare the gospel and give demonstration of it. Explain the gospel and give evidence of it. Share The Story and show The Story. Proclaim and heal.

D. This morning and next we're really only going to look at the first of these.

1. What does it mean to “proclaim the kingdom of God” (v. 2b) or, as it's put in v. 6: to “preach . . . the gospel”? What does it mean to share The Story with others? If you and I are God's missionaries, God's sent ones, and if this is our prime objective . . . how do we do it?

## Awkward and Artificial?

A. It seems to me that, when it comes to evangelism, too often Christians are known for pushing in and talking over other people. We memorize a presentation or method and then we can be so concerned with getting that out that we let our own agenda trump the honest questions and concerns of the very people we are trying to reach.

1. The result is that the whole evangelistic enterprise feels a bit awkward and artificial to a lot of us. And we kind of don't want to do it.

B. But this is not the sort of thing we see in the gospel proclamation, the evangelism, of Jesus and His disciples. It seems to me that there are dimensions to the way they share The Story that are often lost on us. And I don't want that to be the case.

1. If, in fact, we are carrying on Jesus' mission, don't you think our gospel proclamation should take its cues from His?!

## Always and Never

A. Let me first give you a bit of background to my thinking here—an observation that really has shaken and recast my understanding of evangelism a bit.

B. Upon reading the Scriptures closely it occurred to me that though Jesus, Paul, Peter, and others are always preaching the same gospel, they never preach it in exactly the same way. Let that sink in.

1. Their presentation, it seems, is always tailor-made for the person or people they are trying to share the gospel with. They do not merely recite the same gospel outline again and again. Their presentation is deeply engaging and intriguingly flexible—always getting at the same truths, but getting there in so many different ways!

### (1) Jesus

A. Consider a few examples from Jesus in John's gospel:

1. For the woman at the well, Jesus speaks of Himself as the giver of “living water” (John 4:10). The things she is really thirsty for, He is able to satisfy by His grace and Spirit.
2. For the hungry crowds in the wilderness, Jesus speaks of Himself as “the bread of life” (John 6:35). The things that they are really hungry for, He will provide through His death and resurrection: “[T]he bread that I will give for the life of the world is my flesh” (v. 51).

3. For the man born blind, Jesus speaks of Himself as “the light of the world” (John 9:5). This man is not only blind in his eyes, he is blind at the deepest level, in his heart. And Jesus has come to shine light and give sight there!
  4. To those in front of Lazarus’ tomb, Jesus speaks of Himself as “the resurrection and the life” (John 11:25). The veil of death that hangs over all humanity because of our sin, Jesus has come to remove. And in Him we have everlasting life, hope beyond the grave.
- B. Did you notice? Though He is always preaching the same gospel, He never preaches it in exactly the same way!
1. He doesn’t talk about Himself as the bread of life when He’s standing outside of Lazarus’ tomb. He doesn’t talk about Himself as the light of the world, when He’s talking to a thirsty woman.
- C. He tailors His message to His audience. The way He proclaims the kingdom and shares the gospel is always influenced and shaped by the surrounding context and pressing needs of His listeners.
1. And, because of this, the gospel He preaches is shown again and again to be profoundly relevant to what these people are really facing in that very moment in time.
    - a. The gospel He presents is not merely relevant, say, to the person’s “afterlife”. It is an invitation into His abundant life in the here and now. It touches things they are really concerned with. It answers questions they are really asking. And it shows how He is the solution to it all!

## (2) The Early Church

- A. And it is not just this way with Jesus. The Apostles and other disciples in the early church follow their Lord. They are always adapting their gospel proclamation to reach their particular context.
1. Jesus Himself when preparing them for this sort of ministry, says: “Listen. When I’m gone and things get dicey, don’t worry about what you will say. ‘[F]or the Holy Spirit will teach you in that very hour what you ought to say’ (Luke 12:12).”
    - a. In other words, He doesn’t give them a gospel outline to recite, He gives them His Spirit on which to rely. And the Spirit, will teach them to communicate the gospel in a way that is right for the moment they are in and the people they are talking to.
  2. We might think of Stephen in Acts 7 who, when addressing his fellow Jews, quotes at length from the OT to make the case from their own Scriptures that Jesus, whom they’ve rejected, is in fact the Christ.
  3. We might think of Paul in Acts 17 who, when addressing Gentiles in Athens, tells the story of the OT but does not quote from it. Instead, he quotes from their own philosophers and poets. He talks about the idols of their culture and how Jesus provides the answers they are looking for.

4. On an individual level, we might think of Philip and the Ethiopian Eunuch. When the Eunuch is seated in his chariot reading from *Isa 53*, Philip doesn't interrupt this man's train of thought so that he can recite his memorized outline. No! He meets this man right where he is and preaches the gospel from there: "Then Philip opened his mouth, and beginning with this Scripture he told him the good news about Jesus" (*Acts 8:35*).
- B. So, again, though these men are always preaching the same gospel, they never preach it in exactly the same way.
1. The cultural context and pressing concerns of those they are trying to reach are always taken into heartfelt consideration in such a way that the resulting proclamation of the gospel is shown to be profoundly relevant to them right where they're at!

### (3) Our Text

- A. And, of course, this same kind of thing is actually hinted at right here in our text. I see three hints, but I'll show you two:
- B. When Jesus puts proclamation of the gospel alongside healing He is getting at this very point.
1. We don't just hit and run with words, we meet people where they are. We touch things they are really facing in the moment and show how Christ as King and Savior is relevant to that. We know what this person is dealing with physically, emotionally, socially in the grime of life. And we care.
    - a. The gospel is proclaimed in the context of authentic curiosity and compassion. There is listening and learning even in our proclamation. We proclaim and heal.
- C. A second hint is found in Christ's instruction there in *v. 4*. When the Apostles come into a village He says, "whatever house you enter, stay there . . ." Don't go moving around.
1. Why? Because, in your staying there, you will actually get to know people. You will set up a relational context into which you can meaningfully minister the gospel.

### So How Do We Do This?

- A. All of this means, therefore, that we need an approach to evangelism that can scale and flex and shift depending on the person or people we are talking to. We too want to always be preaching the same gospel and yet never in quite the same way.
- B. It might be helpful to see the gospel as a diamond. There is at the core just one diamond, one eternal message of salvation, but this diamond has countless facets, countless ways of viewing it, of looking at it, of approaching it.
1. And so, in our evangelistic encounters, we may approach the diamond from this facet or that facet, whatever seems most relevant to the person at the time. But whatever facet we choose, it is always with a concern of bringing them to see the gospel as a whole.

- C. So how do we grow in this kind of dynamic, flexible, contextualized way of sharing the gospel, sharing The Story?
  - 1. Three things I'll give us over the course of this week and next: (1) We need to Know The Story; (2) We need to Know How The Story Touches Our Own Story; and (3) We need to Know How The Story And Our Own Story Touch Their Story.

## (1) Know The Story

### Practicing Our Scales

- A. It's a bit ironic but, in order to really flex and contextualize in our sharing of The Story, we have to first know the whole thing by heart.
  - 1. It's a lot like learning an instrument, a guitar or something. At first you learn notes and chords and scales. It's all very technical.
    - a. But once you really start to get it, what emerges is more freedom for artistic expression. Suddenly you can jam with your guys on a Friday night. Because you know the scales and things, you can highlight this or that note, whatever's right for the song in the moment.
- B. So we start with the scales. We start with making sure we actually know and understand The Story, the one unchanging gospel.

### Two Presuppositions

- A. Before I give you a simple outline, let me first identify two presuppositions that must be settled in our hearts before we ever begin to evangelize.

#### (1) We're All in God's World

- A. Because this is the case, Christianity will actually provide the most compelling worldview and make the most sense of the experiences and facts of life.
  - 1. Everyone has some dominant storyline that they live in, a worldview you might call it. But we know that there is only one true story, and it is the one God shares with us in the Scriptures.
    - a. Therefore, we can move into the culture with total confidence that His word will bring clarity and coherence to all that people face.

#### (2) We're All in God's Image

- A. Because this is the case, though people are in rebellion against God as sinners, something of His truth will still resonate within their nature, there remains a vague awareness of God, Eden still echoes somewhere in their soul, whether they let onto such things or not.

1. As Solomon puts it in [Eccl 3:11](#): “He has put eternity into man’s heart.”
- B. They know that this is God’s world. They know that they are God’s creatures. They know that their life isn’t going the way it should. They know that something doesn’t line up with the story they tell themselves. But they aren’t willing to turn and come back home.
1. As Paul writes of unbelievers in [Rom 1:21](#): “[A]lthough they knew God, they did not honor him as God or give thanks to him, but they became futile in their thinking, and their foolish hearts were darkened.”
    - a. Make no mistake, they know God. They just don’t like Him!

## Four Chapters

- A. There are many ways that people sum up the gospel, or The Story, but I have found it most helpful to break The Story down into four chapters: Creation, Fall, Redemption, and Consummation. Most every gospel outline I know incorporates these four chapters in one way or another.
- B. I don’t have time to flesh these out here in full, but I will provide a brief sense of them. For the sake of time, I just want to read my notes to you at this point. Close your eyes if you want. Listen and let your heart be captured afresh by The Story.
1. Chapter 1: Creation—In an overflow of love, God created all things. And He made humanity in His image and put us over all that He had made. And He saw that it was very good.
  2. Chapter 2: Fall—We had God, we had each other, and we had the world, but it wasn’t enough for us. Being with God wasn’t enough. We wanted to replace Him. Adam and Eve chose to rebel and we all have followed suit. Because of this God has put us and the world under a curse. We no longer have access to His presence; we no longer enjoy deep fellowship with each other, but instead our relationships are characterized by selfishness and strife; our work, our labor is hard, stressful, and vain; and, in the end, we die . . . eternally.
  3. Chapter 3: Redemption—But in the midst of the curses, God, in undeserved grace, makes a promise. A Child will come who will overturn the curse and redeem us. The whole Bible is given over to tracing the line of this child, until He comes in Jesus Christ—God’s own Son. Jesus lives the life we should’ve lived, and yet, on that cross, He dies the death we should’ve died. He takes the full weight of the wrath of God, He becomes a curse for us. And when He rises on the third day we know the curse has been overturned by grace, we know the grave has been overwhelmed by life. In Him, we can be forgiven, restored, and made new.
  4. Chapter 4: Consummation—And through Him God will make all things new in the end—a new heavens and new earth. But He’s postponing this last act to make time for people to come to Him. You see, His work on the cross isn’t automatically applied to us. It must be received, like a free gift, by faith. We must own up to our rebellion, our mess, turn from our sin (it never delivered on its promises anyways), and trust in His work on our behalf. And, when once we do, we are united with Him, born again by His Spirit, our hearts of stone

made soft and alive. And He starts to put our broken lives back together one piece at a time, until, at last, we see God again face to face in paradise.

- C. Now, that's it! We've got our gospel outline. You memorize that and you're ready to head out and start reaching the lost, right?
  - 1. Not so fast. Remember, we are after a method that flexes and scales. We hold to the one true gospel, we share the one true Story, but we get to it in different ways depending upon those we are talking with. We want to learn how to take this and contextualize.

## (2) Know How The Story Touches Our Own Story

### Afterlife or Abundant Life?

- A. Now, interestingly, I think the key to ministering the gospel in a meaningful way to others is first learning to minister it in a meaningful way to ourselves. We need to Know How The Story Touches Our Own Story.
  - 1. And, mark this: I'm not talking about how the gospel touched your life at your conversion. I'm talking about how it touches your life today, right now, in the very things you are facing.
- B. Maybe even as I've been talking you've been so distracted with something else, something really dogging you in your life right now. I'm saying we need to know how this Story touches that.
  - 1. If we cannot bring the gospel with relevance into the everyday stuff of our own lives, we will never be able to do it for an unbeliever!
    - a. The gospel will remain a series of propositions we subscribe to but not a story we live in. It has relevance for our afterlife but it seems relatively irrelevant in the here and now.
      - i. And if that's how it is for us then we will never be able to bring it with relevance into the everyday lives of unbelievers so that they're captured by it. Because, quite honestly, it hasn't yet captured us.
- C. So what is it for you? What's the thirst you're facing right now for which Jesus is the Living Water? What's the hunger you're facing right now for which Jesus is the Bread from heaven? What's the darkness you're facing right now for which Jesus is the Light of the world? What's the shadow of death you are facing right now for which Jesus is the Resurrection and the Life?
  - 1. How does The Story touch your own story right now, in this room, today?!
    - a. Cravings—bring back into The Story.
    - b. Fears—bring back into The Story.

- D. When you start to make these relevant connections from the gospel to your own life, you will find that you will also start to be able to do the same for others, even unbelievers, in your neighborhood, in your workplace, in our city, in our world!