

Ready to Share

Message 04 of the series, "Sent"

A. We are sent people.

1. Paul was sent.

Now there was a believer in Damascus named Ananias. The Lord spoke to him in a vision, calling, "Ananias!" "Yes, Lord!" he replied. The Lord said, "Go over to Straight Street, to the house of Judas. When you get there, ask for a man from Tarsus named Saul. He is praying to me right now. I have shown him a vision of a man named Ananias coming in and laying hands on him so he can see again." "But Lord," exclaimed Ananias, "I've heard many people talk about the terrible things this man has done to the believers in Jerusalem! And he is authorized by the leading priests to arrest everyone who calls upon your name." But the Lord said, "Go, for Saul is my chosen instrument to take my message to the Gentiles and to kings, as well as to the people of Israel. And I will show him how much he must suffer for my name's sake." So Ananias went and found Saul. He laid his hands on him and said, "Brother Saul, the Lord Jesus, who appeared to you on the road, has sent me so that you might regain your sight and be filled with the Holy Spirit." Instantly something like scales fell from Saul's eyes, and he regained his sight. Then he got up and was baptized. Acts 9:10-18 (NLT)

2. Name is sent.

"...Go into all the world and preach the Good News to everyone." Mark 16:15 (NLT)

"For we are God's masterpiece. He has created us anew in Christ Jesus, so we can do the good things he planned for us long ago." Ephesians 2:10 (NLT)

B. Sent people have a burden for lost people.

"While Paul was waiting for them in Athens, he was deeply troubled by all the idols he saw everywhere in the city. He went to the synagogue to reason with the Jews and the God-fearing Gentiles, and he spoke daily in the public square to all who happened to be there." Acts 17:16-17 (NLT)

Life Application: We must turn troubled feelings into positive actions.

"If we are out of our mind, it is for the sake of God; if we are in our right mind, it is for you. For Christ's love compels us ...if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come! All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation: that God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting men's sins against them... We are therefore Christ's ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us. We implore you on Christ's behalf: Be reconciled to God." 2 Corinthians 5:13-14,17 (NIV)

C. Sent people are ready to share.

He also had a debate with some of the Epicurean and Stoic philosophers. When he told them about Jesus and his resurrection, they said, "What's this babbler trying to say with these strange ideas he's picked up?" Others said, "He seems to be preaching about some foreign gods." Then they took him to the high council of the city. "Come and tell us about this new teaching," they said. "You are saying some rather strange things, and we want to know what it's all about." (It should be explained that all the Athenians as well as the foreigners in Athens seemed to spend all their time discussing the latest ideas.) Acts 17:18-21 (NLT)

Note: The Epicureans saw seeking pleasure and happiness as the primary goal of life. The Stoics valued logic and reason above pleasure and sought to live disciplined lives in harmony with nature.

So Paul, standing before the council, addressed them as follows: "Men of Athens, I notice that you are very religious in every way, for as I was walking along I saw your many shrines. And one of your altars had this inscription on it: 'To an Unknown God.' This God, whom you worship without knowing, is the one I'm telling you about. He is the God who made the world and everything in it. Since he is Lord of heaven and earth, he doesn't live in man-made temples, and human hands can't serve his needs—for he has no needs. He himself gives life and breath to everything, and he satisfies every need. From one man he created all the nations throughout the whole earth. He decided beforehand when they should rise and fall, and he determined their boundaries. His purpose was for the nations to seek after God and perhaps feel their way toward him and find him—though he is not far from any one of us. For in him we live and move and exist. As some of your own poets have said, 'We are his offspring.' And since this is true, we shouldn't think of God as an idol designed by craftsmen from gold or silver or stone. God overlooked people's ignorance about

these things in earlier times, but now he commands everyone everywhere to repent of their sins and turn to him. For he has set a day for judging the world with justice by the man he has appointed, and he proved to everyone who this is by raising him from the dead. When they heard Paul speak about the resurrection of the dead, some laughed in contempt, but others said, 'We want to hear more about this later.' That ended Paul's discussion with them, but some joined him and became believers. Among them were Dionysius, a member of the council, a woman named Damaris, and others with them." Acts 17:22-31 (NLT)

Four helpful faith-sharing tips modeled by the Apostle Paul in Athens.

1. Be ready to share the Good News.

"...if someone asks about your Christian hope, always be ready to explain it." 1 Peter 3:15 (NLT)

- I must be ready to explain the gospel message and why it's good news.
- I must be ready to share how and why I became a Christian and what difference a relationship with Jesus has made in my life.
- I must be ready to pray with someone who wants to receive Christ.
- I must be ready to help someone take first steps as a Christian.
- I must pray for awareness of the needs of others and opportunities to help them.

2. Find common ground.

"I try to find common ground with everyone, doing everything I can to save some." 1 Cor. 9:22 (NLT)

3. Show respect.

"But do this in a gentle and respectful way. Keep your conscience clear. Then if people speak against you, they will be ashamed when they see what a good life you live because you belong to Christ."

1 Peter 3:16 (NLT)

4. Leave the results to God.

"Preach the word of God. Be prepared, whether the time is favorable or not. Patiently correct, rebuke, and encourage your people with good teaching. For a time is coming when people will no longer listen to sound and wholesome teaching. They will follow their own desires and will look for teachers who will tell them whatever their itching ears want to hear. They will reject the truth and chase after myths. But you should keep a clear mind in every situation. Don't be afraid of suffering for the Lord. Work at telling others the Good News, and fully carry out the ministry God has given you." 2 Timothy 4:2-5 (NLT)

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Connect Group Discussion Questions

1. What would your friends say is the most important element of your life based on what you talk about? (Examples: football team, career, family, politics, food, weather, etc...)
2. Read Acts 9:1-19. Much like Paul, when we believe in Jesus there is a change in our lives. Share a difference that Jesus has made in your life.
3. Of the four faith-sharing tips modeled by Paul, which one comes naturally to you, and which one is the most difficult for you?
 - Be ready to share the Good News—1 Peter 3:15
 - Find Common Ground—1 Corinthians 9:22
 - Show Respect—1 Peter 3:16
 - Leave the Results to God—2 Timothy 4:2-5
4. Read Acts 13:4-5, 13-14. Why do you think John Mark left the journey with Paul & Silas? Can you relate to John Mark?
5. Read Galatians 5:16-26. We know that as a follower of Christ there is a battle raging within us between our sinful nature and the life God desires for us to live. We also know that following the Holy Spirit's leading in our lives results in us producing love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. How would you describe what it looks like to follow the Holy Spirit's leading?
6. Read 2 Timothy 1:5-9. The thought of sharing the Good News of Jesus can dredge up emotions of fear. Which of these do you struggle with the most:
The fear of not knowing enough to share. What if they ask a question that I don't know?
OR
The fear of not being good enough. What if my life does not meet their expectations of a believer?
How can we overcome these fears?
7. Who is someone you are aware of that is not a believer? Are you praying for them to believe in the Gospel? What is a way you can show you care for them? Are you prepared to share your faith in Jesus with them?

Quotations To Consider:

"People don't care how much you know until they know how much you care." Teddy Roosevelt

"If you had the cure to cancer wouldn't you share it? You have the cure to death. Get out there and share it!" Kirk Cameron

"Any method of evangelism will work if God is in it." Leonard Ravenhill

"Sympathy is no substitute for action." David Livingstone

"Work hard so you can present yourself to God and receive his approval. Be a good worker, one who does not need to be ashamed and who correctly explains the word of truth." 2 Timothy 2:15 (NLT)