

It's All About Relationships

Message 06 of the series, "Sent"

I. We've been sent to tell the world the Good News that through Jesus we can have a personal relationship with God.

"God showed his great love for us by sending Christ to die for us while we were still sinners. And since we have been made right in God's sight by the blood of Christ, he will certainly save us from God's condemnation. For since our friendship with God was restored by the death of his Son while we were still his enemies, we will certainly be saved through the life of his Son. So now we can rejoice in our wonderful new relationship with God because our Lord Jesus Christ has made us friends of God." Romans 5:8-11 (NLT)

"For God was in Christ, reconciling the world to himself, no longer counting people's sins against them. And he gave us this wonderful message of reconciliation. So we are Christ's ambassadors; God is making his appeal through us. We speak for Christ when we plead, 'Come back to God!'" 2 Corinthians 5:19-20 (NLT)

Life Application: Telling others the Good News of Jesus is the kindest thing we can do for them.

"He brought them into his house and set a meal before them, and he and his entire household rejoiced because they all believed in God." Acts 16:34 (NLT)

II. Sent people focus on a relationship with God more than rules about religion.

"While Paul and Barnabas were at Antioch of Syria, some men from Judea arrived and began to teach the believers: 'Unless you are circumcised as required by the law of Moses, you cannot be saved.' Paul and Barnabas disagreed with them, arguing vehemently. Finally, the church decided to send Paul and Barnabas to Jerusalem, accompanied by some local believers, to talk to the apostles and elders about this question... When they arrived in Jerusalem, Barnabas and Paul were welcomed by the whole church, including the apostles and elders. They reported everything God had done through them. But then some of the believers who belonged to the sect of the Pharisees stood up and insisted, 'The Gentile converts must be circumcised and required to follow the law of Moses.' So the apostles and elders met together to resolve this issue."

Acts 15:1-6 (NLT)

Note: Jesus focused on relationships more than rules.

One of (the Pharisees), an expert in religious law, tried to trap him with this question: "Teacher, which is the most important commandment in the law of Moses?" Jesus replied, "'You must love the LORD your God with all your heart, all your soul, and all your mind.' This is the first and greatest commandment. A second is equally important: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' The entire law and all the demands of the prophets are based on these two commandments." Matthew 22:34-40 (NLT)

a. The Gospel is good news because a relationship with God is available to everyone.

At the meeting, after a long discussion, Peter stood and addressed them as follows: "Brothers, you all know that God chose me from among you some time ago to preach to the Gentiles so that they could hear the Good News and believe. God knows people's hearts, and he confirmed that he accepts Gentiles by giving them the Holy Spirit, just as he did to us. He made no distinction between us and them, for he cleansed their hearts through faith." Acts 15:7-9 (NLT)

"I am not ashamed of this Good News about Christ. It is the power of God at work, saving everyone who believes—the Jew first and also the Gentile." Romans 1:16 (NLT)

Life Application: We must NEVER allow preconceived opinions to keep us from reaching out.

"What sorrow awaits you teachers of religious law and you Pharisees. Hypocrites! For you shut the door of the Kingdom of Heaven in people's faces. You won't go in yourselves, and you don't let others enter either." Matthew 23:13 (NLT)

b. The Gospel is good news because we are saved by grace, NOT performance.

"So why are you now challenging God by burdening the Gentile believers with a yoke that neither we nor our ancestors were able to bear? We believe that we are all saved the same way, by the undeserved grace of the Lord Jesus." Acts 15:10-11 (NLT)

"God saved you by his grace when you believed. And you can't take credit for this; it is a gift from God. Salvation is not a reward for the good things we have done, so none of us can boast about it."

Ephesians 2:8-9 (NLT)

Life Application: We must NEVER become prideful/self-righteous about our faith.

Then Jesus told this story to some who had great confidence in their own righteousness and scorned everyone else: “Two men went to the Temple to pray. One was a Pharisee, and the other was a despised tax collector. The Pharisee stood by himself and prayed this prayer: ‘I thank you, God, that I am not a sinner like everyone else. For I don’t cheat, I don’t sin, and I don’t commit adultery. I’m certainly not like that tax collector! I fast twice a week, and I give you a tenth of my income.’ “But the tax collector stood at a distance and dared not even lift his eyes to heaven as he prayed. Instead, he beat his chest in sorrow, saying, ‘O God, be merciful to me, for I am a sinner.’ I tell you, this sinner, not the Pharisee, returned home justified before God. For those who exalt themselves will be humbled, and those who humble themselves will be exalted.” Luke 18:9-14 (NLT)

III. Sent people care about relationships with others.

- a. We shouldn’t make it difficult for people to come to Jesus.

Everyone listened quietly as Barnabas and Paul told about the miraculous signs and wonders God had done through them among the Gentiles. When they had finished, James stood and said, “Brothers, listen to me. Peter has told you about the time God first visited the Gentiles to take from them a people for himself. And this conversion of Gentiles is exactly what the prophets predicted... ‘Afterward I will return and restore the fallen house of David. I will rebuild its ruins and restore it, so that the rest of humanity might seek the LORD, including the Gentiles— all those I have called to be mine’...so my judgment is that we should not make it difficult for the Gentiles who are turning to God.” Acts 15:12-19 (NLT) (See also Amos 9:11-12)

- b. We shouldn’t use our freedom in Christ to indulge in sin or cause other believers to stumble.

“Instead, we should write and tell them to abstain from eating food offered to idols, from sexual immorality, from eating the meat of strangled animals, and from consuming blood. For these laws of Moses have been preached in Jewish synagogues in every city on every Sabbath for many generations.’ Then the apostles and elders together with the whole church in Jerusalem chose delegates, and they sent them to Antioch of Syria with Paul and Barnabas to report on this decision. The men chosen were two of the church leaders—Judas (also called Barsabbas) and Silas ...The messengers went at once to Antioch, where they called a general meeting of the believers and delivered the letter. And there was great joy throughout the church that day as they read this encouraging message.” Acts 15:20-22, 30-31 (NLT)

“So whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God. Do not cause anyone to stumble, whether Jews, Greeks or the church of God-- even as I try to please everybody in every way. For I am not seeking my own good but the good of many, so that they may be saved.”

1 Corinthians 10:31-33 (NIV)

John Schmidt • 05-13-18 • john@centeringlives.com

Connect Group Discussion Questions

1. List areas/places you believe that God "sends" people to share the Good News of Jesus Christ? What are some ways to share the Good News in those areas/places?
2. Why do you think Centerpoint makes the statement, "It's all about relationships"?
3. Read Galatians 2:11-13. Do you know anyone who has ever felt like Peter in this passage in terms of doing or not doing something based on what others might think? How could this make them feel, and what would be the impact on their walk with Christ?
4. Read Galatians 2:14-21. Why do you think it is so difficult for some believers to fully embrace the fact that it is their faith in Jesus that makes them right before God, not their religious acts, works, or good deeds?
5. Read Galatians 3:1-5. Have you ever felt like the Galatians in this passage trying to become 'perfect' by your own efforts? What might be a reason some believers naturally look for religious rules to follow? How could you help someone who struggles with this?
6. Read John 13:34-35 and Galatians 3:26-29. When Christ said we should love each other the way He loves us, what did He mean? How does our relationship with other believers impact our ability to share the Good News of Jesus?
7. Read 1 Corinthians 9:19-27. Paul intentionally looked for any way to share the Good News of Jesus. Are there limits to how, when, and where you are willing to be "sent"? What are some possibilities in your life right now where you could intentionally develop a relationship with someone on their level, so you could have the opportunity to share the amazing gift of salvation?