

Sent to Go
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Our Savior is Way Lutheran Church

Pastor John Scott

I loved Ray's children's message today because it reminded me of how excited kids get to go and do things. And yet today, when he said get up and go, they were like, "I do not know. I am still a little bit tired." Now you remember when I was a kid, coming to church for me was much like for them, similar things. I went to Sunday school, and in summer when there was not Sunday school, I sat with my parents and did the same thing that is happening here, and I always remember that I always held out hope. Do you know what I hoped for during church? I hope that whoever was getting snacks got donuts for the day. That is what I hoped for because I knew at the end of church, I could go out and there would be donuts. Sometimes we just need a little encouragement. We know what we are supposed to do. We know the way that we have been called. We know where we are sent to. But, we just need a little bit, a little bit of encouragement. I hope today that you receive that encouragement.

We are ending the series called *Loved & Sent*. I hope that through this series, you have learned and been really encouraged that you are loved, that no matter what is happening around you, no matter what messages you are getting from people around you or whatever it is, you at your core are greatly and dearly loved, that God loves you simply because He has made you, you; not because of what you have done or what you could do, or even in spite of what you have done, He simply loves you because you are His creation. When life gets tough, you can build that and build upon that as your foundation, and know that He is always on your side, that He is always loving you.

In addition to that, because you are loved in that love, you are sent to the world to show others the same thing, to tell them that they are truly and dearly loved. We struggle with so many things today, so many things that

take our minds off of who God is. We struggle with so many things that tear away our identity, that tell us who we are, that tell us we are not enough, that tell us we will never be loved, that tell us that we could never possibly be who we are supposed to be.

And yet God comes to us, and He says, “You are who I have made you to be. You are my masterpiece. I have loved you in Jesus, and I am calling you in Jesus to go into this world and be who I have called you to be. That is your purpose. That is what I have given you to do. And I will give you all the tools. I will give you everything that you need because you are mine.”

You are loved, and you are sent. This is who we are. The answer to these two questions we have been going through is identity and purpose. And I hope that you have seen, and I hope that this encourages you to know that at your core, you have been worth it, that Jesus died for you, that you were worth His blood, that He gave this sacrifice to bring you back to God.

But not just you, right? But for all people, for everyone, for all of God’s creation. And you matter. What God has gifted you with, the skills, the gifts, the talents, the unique ways that He has knit you together, it matters because He calls you to work as part of His kingdom to be a part of His kingdom, to help share others the same thing that you too have learned.

And so the key today, the key today in our scripture was a simple word. I am not giving you permission to leave right now, but when we go from here, I hope that you take this with you that what God is calling you to do is not to be introspective for the rest of your life. He is not calling you to be somebody who only has kind of this small little bubble of people around them.

And that is kind of where we are comfortable and that is where we stay. No, God is calling us to very much get out of our comfort zones and go to be where people are. In our Gospel reading today, Jesus came and told His disciples—and I just want to be clear, who does this include? Was this just like the 11 or is this all of His disciples? What do you think? Who is it for?

It is for all. It is for everyone. It is for you. If you are raising your hand, yes, it is for you. Jesus tells us that He has been given all authority in heaven and on earth. So, what does that mean that Jesus is the king of? He is the king of everything. You cannot imagine something that Jesus is not the king of. He has authority and power over all things. That is what it means.

So, what does He do with this power? What is His purpose? Well with this power, He encourages you. He empowers you. He says I am going to work through you. He says therefore in my name with this power go, go, go and make disciples of all nations by baptizing them and teaching them. I want you to pause for just a moment and remember this: your journey of faith, the reason why you are here today, is because of other people; because other people have been loved and sent by Jesus to know who He is, to know that they can share His goodness and His hope with others, and they have brought you here. And there may be some people in your life who you could point to directly who have mentored you in your spiritual journey and your journey in following Jesus.

You may think it is just kind of a general thing. It is not a general thing at all. It is Jesus working through people like you throughout all of the world, throughout all the centuries, to help people see that they are loved and that they are given a purpose in Jesus. Jesus works through people so when He says, “I am going to, with all of my authority, work through my disciples, those who follow me, and I want them to go,” He means it. He means He wants us to go and be present with others.

“Go and make disciples of all nations” ...and all nations—again, let us be clear—means go to “all” nations, “all” people. “All” does not matter whatever. There are no divisions in this. Help people understand how much God loves them. This is the impetus for someone like Lutheran Bible Translators, an organization that is dedicated to translating scripture into the native languages of every single person on this earth and of every language that you can find that we can understand, that we can figure out how do we translate scripture into that native language so that the people

with their heart language that they speak can hear the goodness of God and how much they are loved in that language.

This is part of “Going”, making disciples of all nations. Now how are we going to make disciples? By “Baptizing and Teaching.” And here as Lutherans, we baptize. We know that baptism is a gift of God. It starts off our journey of faith and the rest of our life is meant to be taught, to follow Jesus more closely each and every day. So, we bring others alongside us; we show them; we model; we mentor; we coach; and as more are brought alongside us, then they too learn how to model, mentor, coach, and make disciples. And this happens throughout every generation.

But what Jesus does here, I think, is key for all of us. He says, “I am going to give you all this power and all this authority to go into all the nations and make disciples by baptizing and teaching.” Here is what He does not say. He does not say, “...and based on how well you do, you will be judged.” Did you hear that? I did not hear that anywhere. That is not what He said at all. Sometimes we feel like that. We feel like, “Well, gosh. I am just not cutting it anymore. I am just not right where I am supposed to be.” That is not what He says. You are not going to be judged on that. And so what He says by saying, “I am going to be with you,” is that as you struggle through all this, as you try to figure it out, as you have great successes and great failures, “I am going to be with you.” In all of the times of your life, He will be with you.

This Jesus who loves us so much promises us that there will not be a time of our lives that He is not present with us. Think about that for a moment. There have probably been times, and there have been in my life, where it is been very difficult to feel the presence of God. And yet, I know that He is with me. I know that He is there. His promise is true. And when we look back on those times afterward, we see it sometimes ways that His hand has worked to make things happen that we could have never, ever imagined. This promise is key. And in making disciples, in going out into all the world, He will not leave us. We will not be alone. He will be with us.

So, here is the question. How do we do this? If Jesus says we need to go, how do we go? One of the things that is easiest for us is to send money to help other people go. That is an easy thing. And it is a good thing. Let me say that again right now. It is a good thing to encourage, enable, and empower other people with specific gifts and talents to go into all the world. It is a very, very good thing. Here is also another easier thing to do, sometimes with the people that you are closest with, such as your family, your friends, and even sometimes your neighbors—showing them who Jesus is through your actions, by being kind to them, by sharing with them, by walking through life together with them, by being that person who can listen to them and they can go to—That is a good thing as well. And so we do that, but there is one key piece that sometimes makes us a little bit uncomfortable, and it is the piece of when we go, how we are going to people, how will people know who Jesus is? And like I said earlier, you are all here because somebody has shown you who Jesus is. Somebody has told you about Jesus. And as we go, we are going also to have opportunities to tell people about Jesus, to use our words in 1 Peter 3. It says this, “If someone asks you about your hope as a believer in Jesus, be ready to explain it. Do this in a gentle and respectful way. Keep your conscience clear.” As someone, explain your hope as a believer, be ready for this because as you walk alongside people, and you have seen these people go through so many things, they need to hear where hope is—hope that is not going to fail them, hope that is not going to leave them. That hope is Jesus. How do we speak about that?

All right. I want you to think right now of the last time that you talked to somebody, physically talked, used words, spoke about Jesus to another person. Some of us are ready for this. And some of us have not had this opportunity, have not been something we have sought out. So, I want to help you as we get ready to go, to prepare you, to encourage you to go into the world where you are going to have the opportunity to share who Jesus is with people around you.

Four things to think about. Four things that you can think through right now that will help you speak about who Jesus is. The first thing is. As you are walking alongside people, the questions might come like, “Why do you believe in this scripture thing? What is the Bible?” That is a question that I have gotten many times. What is the Bible all about? How would you answer this? The way we have talked about it around here, the way I would answer that is the Bible is about God trying to bring his people back to Him. It is God trying to reconnect His people back with Him because we have messed up. That is a story of the whole Bible. Eventually, Jesus comes and does that. But the Bible is about God wanting to connect His creation and His people back together with Him. And if we take that stance, if we talk about it that way, it takes a lot of people’s ideas of God off on a different path. Sometimes we feel like God is against us, that God is maybe out to get us, or that we are not worthy to be in God’s presence. But saying that the Bible is about God bringing His people back to Him really speaks about God who loves us and cares for us.

The second question, “Who is Jesus?” How would you explain this? What would you say? Think about this for just a second. Somebody asks you, who is Jesus? What words do you use? Well, Jesus was a real person. He walked on this earth. He was a teacher. He healed people. We also know that He was something more than that. He was the Son of God Himself. If you do not have a handle on the Jesus story, like who He was and what He did, during the summer, we would love for you to get a handle on that a little more. There is a book on the round table on the way out, it is called *God With Us*. It is basically the first four Gospels all smooshed together and put in chronological order so that like a narrative, like a story, you can read through who Jesus is, and learn that and build that up within yourself. Take one of those on your way out and read that over the summer with us. There is a bookmark there that will help you read through it weekly.

Who is Jesus? Now, here is the key. Why do you care about Jesus? Why is He so important in your life? This person might know that you come to church like Our Savior’s Way. Why do you do that? Why is He important?

What do you say to this? This is really at the heart of the matter. I would say Jesus died on the cross, that symbol you see everywhere. It is important because He died there. Because that was the only way that we could be returned back to God. It was the only way that we could be connected. I cannot do it. I am not good enough. This is your pastor saying that. I am not good enough. I am like Isaiah in a place of unclean lips. Jesus had to do this, and because He rose, I have been given a new life. It is a gift. It is just a gift. I am incredibly blessed to receive this gift. That is why Jesus is important.

The last question is really the key because all these things are just about factual things. But what this person really wants to know is, “Why do you believe?” Why do you believe? Have you thought about what you would say to that? Why do you believe? How would you explain the hope that you have to someone else? What I say is that I believe because I need someone to save me, and Jesus has done that. He has changed my life. He has changed my outlook. He has changed my perspective. He has made me into somebody who knows that when I am weak, He is strong, and somebody who knows that I do not need to worry about what’s happening to me after this earthly life ends because He has taken care of that. And He gives me freedom today just to live as He has called me to, to love the people around me in His name, to do good things in His name, to when I screw up, which is daily, to know that I will be forgiven—that is why I believe.

Why do you believe? Can you speak about that in a way that speaks of God’s hope that would help others understand that you are just like them, and in the quest for understanding our identity and our purpose, how we are loved and we are sent, that Jesus has loved us, that He has given us a purpose and that we are called just to go and live it out? The key thing in all this is remembering that as we struggle with this, as we take on the opportunities that come, as we get out of our comfort zones, which is always going to happen when we go, He is going to be with us. You will not be alone in this. Not only will Jesus be with you, but He works through

people. He works through us. We will be with you. If you need doughnuts to get you to do that stuff, we will give you some great doughnuts. Maybe the best doughnuts you have ever had.

Because whatever it takes to take down those obstacles that are keeping you from going and being and sharing the goodness of God with others, we are right there with you, walking alongside you, helping you, encouraging you—just as Jesus does with each and every one of us—so, in the end, the mission of the church, our mission, your mission, is to go, to make disciples of all nations, to help other people know that they are loved by Jesus more dearly than they could ever imagine, that they are sent with a purpose greater than they could ever perceive, and to do this with everyone. May we, as a community here, constantly keep our eyes focused on this, so that we might help disciples of all nations come and be a part of His kingdom.

Let us close with a word of prayer. Heavenly father. We thank you for being with us today. We ask that You would allow us to get out of our comfort zones, to know that, Lord, You have placed people around us who need to hear Your word of hope, who need to know there is someone there with them, just need to know that, Lord, in the midst of their struggles and their sufferings, there will be somebody who walks alongside them and brings them great hope and great peace.

Lord, send us. Send us. Let us be those people that we might speak of a hope that transcends just this single episode and brings peace and joy and hope throughout our entire lives, all the way through eternity. Send us Lord. Let us be people who of all nations, share your hope with our words, with our actions, with our entire lives. Send us Lord, send us.

We pray it all in Jesus' name. Amen.