

# Every Saint Sent

## Ready for Departure

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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)

#### Preparatives, Objectives, Directives, and Departure

- A. This is going to be the last message dealing with this text. In these verses we’ve discovered the surprising fact that Jesus is sending out, not only the Twelve, but the church in general—you and I—to live on mission for Him in the world. Every Christian is a missionary, or, as we’ve been saying it here: Every Saint (is) Sent.
1. In [vv. 1-2a](#) we saw what I called Preparatives—the prerequisites involved in the making of such missionaries: namely, we must be (1) Called; (2) Given; and (3) Sent.
  2. Then in [v. 2b](#) we spent a good deal of time looking at what I called Objectives—the stuff that Jesus actually sends us out as missionaries to do: namely, (1) To proclaim the kingdom of God; and (2) To heal—or, as we’ve been putting it: (1) To share The Story (ministry of word); and (2) To show The Story (ministry of deed).
  3. Last time, in [vv. 3-5](#) we looked at what I called Directives—the particular instructions Christ gives the twelve Apostles concerning their upcoming mission: (1) Take Nothing; (2) Stay There; and (3) Shake Off. And we extrapolated principles from these and applied them to our own mission.
- B. And now you think: “There just can’t possibly be anything else to say about all this. Nick, you’ve wrung this text dry.”
1. Well, now hold on. If you noticed we never really camped out on [v. 6](#). And, even today, we’re not going to camp there, but we are going to launch out from there.
- C. So why don’t we read [v. 6](#) again: “[And they departed and went through the villages, preaching the gospel and healing everywhere.](#)”
1. Now, at first glance, this verse really seems to add nothing to the overall thrust of the passage. In [v. 2](#) we’re told that Jesus sent them to proclaim the kingdom and heal, and then

here in v. 6 we're told that they went out and proclaimed and healed. So what's new to talk about here?

a. Well, didn't you see it? I mean, this is huge! In my own life there is often a massive disconnect between v. 2 and v. 6.

i. What I mean is, these guys don't just sit and have a good Bible study with Jesus about what the mission is, what they need, what they should say and do, etc.. They actually go out and do it. They obey. They walk this out.

D. Anyone else never feel quite ready to go share the gospel? I just need to read another book. I just need to learn one more technique. I just need to memorize a few more verses. I just need to fast and pray a little more until I'm really in the Spirit. What if they ask me about evolution or something? I should probably go back to college, get another degree or two . . . then maybe I'll be ready.

1. And we never get around to actually doing it—to “[departing] and [going] through the villages, preaching the gospel and healing everywhere.”

a. Every saint is sent . . . but how many of us saints are actually going?!

## The Three Basic Steps of a Missionary Lifestyle

A. So all I want to do today is give us just one final push here in an effort to help us actually walk this out together.

1. I want you to come away from this able to truly picture how this missional living stuff could look in the details of your life today, this week, this new year. I want to challenge us to actually depart, go out, and do it.

B. So I'm going to give us what I would call the three basic steps of a missionary lifestyle (I've actually used these before—though it's been long enough I doubt anyone remembers—but I'm going to flesh them out further for us here this morning): (1) Presence; (2) Opportunism; and (3) Courage.

### (1) Presence

#### Blurring the Lines

A. The church, and human nature in general, loves to go insular. We love to find our people, define our comfort zones, hunker down, and stay safe. We find the people that look like us, think like us, talk like us, have similar backgrounds to us, and we gravitate towards them. Everyone else is kept at arm's length. We've got our crew.

B. This same sort of thing was the impulse of the scribes and the Pharisees back in Jesus' day. “Let's define who's in and who's out. And then let's make sure we stay in and we keep them out.”

1. And this is what just drove people so crazy about Jesus. He was always blurring the lines. This is white, that's black. But He's always in the gray. That's why their chief accusation

against Him was what? “Look at him! A glutton and a drunkard, a friend of tax collectors and sinners!” (Luke 7:34b).

- a. “The guy’s just always kicking it with outsiders, lowlifes, sinners. Surely, He must be one if He’s always out there with them.”
- C. But don’t you see? This is because a critical part of the missionary lifestyle involves Presence—being with the people we are trying to reach. Not waiting for them to come to us but going to them.
  1. What good is salt if it’s left in the container? What good is light if it’s kept under a basket? No. Get those things out into the decay and the darkness. That’s what they’re for. That’s what the church is for.
- D. We just celebrated Christmas, right? Well, what in the world is Christmas if not this? Presence. “Immanuel . . . God with us” (Matt 1:23). “I’m here. I’m in the mess of a fallen world with you. I’m entering into your story so that I might pull you back into Mine.”

## Are We Present?

- A. So how are we doing with this? Are we getting into the mess of everyday life with others? Are we present in our home, neighborhood, workplace, city? This is step one.
  1. I’ve found that being a pastor makes this piece a bit difficult. I don’t have a job that naturally thrusts me into relationships with unbelievers. I’m hanging out with church folk all day long. And that could easily take all of my time. So how am I going to get Presence? I’ve got to get creative with this.
- B. This is one of the reasons why we decided to put Chloe in a hybrid parent-participation school. (Although we’ll pray about what’s best for her year by year—I don’t want my child to be a casualty to the mission. She’s my first mission field. But right now this seems to be pretty awesome.) We get to be involved. We get to meet other parents. We get to be present in the lives of other families. We get to invite them into ours.
  1. So one of the things I’m trying to do is, when I drop off or pick up Chloe, I want to be available to linger with the other parents if I can. Just get to know little bits of their stories, who their kids are, where they work, how I can be praying, etc. I just want to be present.
- C. Let me just rattle off a few more ideas for you so you can start to pray and dream for your own situation:
  1. Become a regular—go to the same restaurant, the same grocery store, the same hairdresser, etc. Get to know the people who work there. Give yourself margin to linger. Tip well.
  2. Pursue a hobby—maybe you like sports, or birds, or poetry, or cooking. Whatever it is, get in the mix and enjoy it with non-Christians.
  3. Join a gym—I know this is what one pastor, Matt Chandler, does to try to interface more with the unbelievers in his community. Sweat and stink next to them. Throw down Gatorade over conversation about life.

4. Volunteer—at your kids’ school, or for a non-profit, or something out in the community.
5. Go for walks around your block, not with the purpose of burning calories, or getting from point A to B, but to just be out and around, bumping into people, talking about the weather, hearing how they’re doing, etc. Just a neighborhood priest walking the streets looking for ways to lean in towards those whom God has placed near.

## The Allure of “Efficiency”

- A. Can I just say one last thing here? We’ve got to understand that our culture is moving against this sort of personal presence in all sorts of ways now. Think of all the ways this sort of thing is being removed from our society.
1. We can shop online without seeing another person.
  2. We can check ourselves out at the grocery store without interacting with the clerk.
  3. We can get our coffee and our fast food by driving thru, minimizing personal contact—just crack my window wide enough to fit a burger, fries, and a shake through there and I’m out.
  4. You can even order your food and pay at some bigger restaurants with these little computers at your table so that you barely interact with your server at all.
- B. All of this is for the sake of efficiency but it ends up distancing us from other people. As tempting as it is to go for efficiency, to protect our comfort zones, to stay insular, we need to push against this.
1. People are not a problem or a nuisance, they are the point! They are the mission: [“Go therefore and make disciples of all nations \[ethnos = peoples\]” \(Matt 28:19\)](#).
    - a. If we go out of way to avoid people, then we abort the very mission we have been put on by God. He is sending us to people.
- C. So, again, how are we doing with this? Are we present? If Jesus was a friend of tax collectors and sinners, how many friends do have outside the church? How blurred are your lines?

## (2) Opportunism

### Mere Presence vs. True Presence

- A. But presence is not enough in itself, right? There’s a lot more to this. In fact, if I could put it this way: There’s a massive difference between being merely present and being truly present. Do you know what I mean?
1. If you want an illustration of this these days, all you have to do is go out to dinner and look around at the tables next to you. I guarantee you will see a table, probably many tables, like the one I did when my family went to CPK the other night. A family of four—mom, dad, two kids—all of them glued to their devices. Screens glowing, fingers tapping, eyes glazing. And this went on for the entire meal. I just looked at Megan and I said: “I never want to be that kind of family. Where we’re all present and yet no one is present.”
- B. Now I’m not opposed to using smartphones wisely, but do you see what I’m getting at? Just being present in your home, in your neighborhood, in your workplace, in your city, doesn’t mean you’re

actually there in the way that God intends for you to be there—as a missionary, a sent one, commissioned by almighty God to be His ambassador, a royal priest, salt and light.

1. With this we step from Presence to Opportunism.

## Ministry along the Way

- A. We can start to understand what I'm after with this idea of Opportunism when we look at the life of Jesus. He wasn't just present with people, He was on the lookout for opportunities to meaningfully minister the gospel to people in word and deed.
- B. So much of Jesus' ministry just seems to kind of happen along the way. Have you noticed that?
  1. While He's teaching in a synagogue a demon-possessed man makes a run on Him and Jesus is like: "Yeah, okay. Let's do this now. Come on out" (Luke 4:31-37).
  2. As He's on His way to heal Jairus' daughter, the woman with the flow of blood touches Him, so He stops to minister grace to her (Luke 8:40-48).
  3. When Jesus pulls His disciples away for a little R and R, the crowds find Him in the wilderness, so He takes that as an opportunity to teach them, heal them, and feed the 5000 from a couple loaves (Luke 9:10-17).
  4. As He's heading towards Jerusalem, and drawing near to Jericho, a blind man yells out: "Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!" (Luke 18:38). So Jesus takes the opportunity to restore this brother's sight.
  5. And as He continues into Jericho, He comes to a tree where Zacchaeus the chief tax collector had scrambled up for a view. And Jesus calls him down, asks if he can stay the night at his place, and brings salvation to that sinner's house (Luke 19:1-10). And on and on we could go!
    - a. It would seem as if, in one sense, He's not exactly planning any of this. He is just doing life with eyes open, on mission along the way. He is an opportunist in the best sense of the word.
- C. I remember reading this little biography of an old English pastor named RC Chapman. In it there's this story recounted where Chapman got lost on the streets of Spain and didn't know his way back to the hotel. So he grabbed his traveling companion and they prayed for two things: (1) Lead us back to our hotel; and (2) Give us an opportunity to speak with someone about their soul.
  1. Did you hear that? Along the way, let us also be on mission. "We need to get back to the hotel, but we believe you also have something for us as we go about our day."
- D. Is that what we pray in our car before walking into the office? Is that what we pray in the morning before taking the kids to school and running errands. Are our eyes open to the opportunities that will emerge as we are present in our city?
  1. We may be present but are we truly present?

## An Explosion of Opportunities

- A. As we start to move towards people with eyes open, opportunities start exploding all around us. You just see them everywhere.
  
- B. My family gets an opportunity for this almost every day of the week at around 3:00 or so. That's when almost without fail, the little neighbor boy rings the doorbell. He wants to come in and play. It sometimes feels inconvenient, we're tempted to think man we've got other things going on, and sometimes we do say no, but what an opportunity?!
  1. We're present in the neighborhood and an opportunity arises to open our doors and go deeper with a family. So we try to take it as often as we can. And you know what starts to happen, more stuff opens up. So the Grandma (who's also this boy's nanny) is now asking us for prayer for her mom who's got cancer and the doctors say it's terminal. And our neighbors are shaken by it.
    - a. And because we're here, and because we open the door, we get to talk with them about it and, God willing, bring more of the hope of Christ to them in a way that meaningfully touches their story.
  
- C. What opportunities are you seeing these days? Again, let me just rattle off a few ideas to get you dreaming:
  1. Holidays are opportunities. That's what we were doing with the Christmas Eve breakfast. We are present in this city. We know sometimes people are more willing to come to church around Christmas, so we saw it as an opportunity to reach out.
    - a. But it's the same with other holidays, right? It's New Year's Eve tonight. Maybe instead of laying low in your house, watching TV, and maybe making it to like 10:00, dust off the old board games, get some sparklers (if those are legal?), buy some good champagne or something, and invite over a few neighbors.
  2. Birthdays are opportunities. So Chloe just turned 6. It's December. It's a crazy time of year already. The last thing we want to do is throw some big party. But you know what? What an opportunity. Let's invite her whole class and kids from church and let our worlds collide. We want to show the school community that we care about them and want to serve them.
    - a. It was awesome, in the aftermath of this Chloe's teacher pulled Megan aside to say that there was something really "unique" about our family. God willing, we'll get to tell her more about why that is the case. And we had another mom approach us wanting to come check out the church at some point.
  3. Lunchtime is an opportunity. Every weekday around 12:00, God gives you an opportunity to move towards your coworkers. Everybody's got to eat. I know a lot of people just eat at their computers these days, but invite people out. Offer to buy their meal. Get to know them on a personal level.

4. Even the Starbucks barista asking you how you're doing as they make your latte or whatever is a missional opportunity. I love this. One pastor I appreciate, CJ Mahaney, makes a regular habit of responding to that standard question "How are you?" with the answer: "Better than I deserve."
  - a. When they look at him confused. He gets to explain what he means. "Well, you see, I'm a sinner, I deserve the wrath of God, but instead God placed that wrath on His Son, and I get to know Him, be cared for by Him, and be with Him forever. So, yeah. However else I'm doing, one thing is sure: I'm doing so much better than I deserve."

### (3) Courage

#### Not Every Opportunity Is a Calling

- A. Before I unpack this third step, let me just say that, if in fact you're eyes are truly opening to all the opportunities around you, you're simply not going to be able to move on all of them.
- B. Believe it or not this even was the case for Jesus when He took on the limitations of human flesh. And because of this, we get the sense that there was this constant dialogue with the Father to help Him not only see the opportunities but identify which of the countless opportunities His Father wanted Him to pursue.
  1. That's why we read things like what Jesus says as He's nearing the end of His ministry in [John 17:4](#): "I glorified you on earth, having accomplished the work that you gave me to do."
    - a. "I didn't do everything—I didn't share a meal with everyone, I didn't heal everyone, I didn't disciple everyone—but I did the work You gave Me to do."
- C. Even for Paul we read that while he was on some of his missionary journeys, certain cities the Spirit wouldn't let him enter ([Acts 16:6-7](#)). "That's not the work I'm giving you to do right now."
- D. We might summarize it like this: Not every opportunity is a calling.

#### Every Calling Requires Courage

- A. But those opportunities to which we get a sense God is calling us, it takes a lot of Courage to move on them, does it not?
- B. It's one thing to see the opportunity for a Christmas Eve breakfast, or a birthday party, or a coworker we want to share the good news with. And it's another thing to actually go for it.
  1. That's where it starts to cost you personally right? What if we do this and it fails? What if we reach out and people reject? How much is this going to set us back financially? Do we really have time in our schedules?
    - a. It takes courage to move in word and deed for the gospel. You feel like you're going out on a limb here and it might all blow up in your face.

## Hung on a Tree

- A. But that's when we remember: Jesus didn't just go out on a limb for us, He was hung on a tree. As He was present with us, as He saw opportunity, and as He sensed God's call and stepped out in courage to minister in word and deed, He knew it was going to claim His life.
  - 1. Every time He opened His mouth, every time He stretched out His hand to heal, He knew He was doing it in the face of opposition. He knew He was doing it under the shadow of the cross.
    - a. Last week I talked about that time when Jesus saw the man with a withered hand and He healed it. But because it was the Sabbath, the Pharisees watching this were not rejoicing, they were seething with anger. And we're told in [Matt 12:14](#) that they "went out and conspired against him, how to destroy him."
- B. Every opportunity He took, required a lot of courage. But He was willing to do it to reach us.
- C. And now, as we saw back at the beginning of this mini-series in [John 20:21-22](#), He gives us His Spirit, and He sends us out to go and do likewise: "<sup>21</sup> 'As the Father has sent me, even so I am sending you.'<sup>22</sup> And when he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, 'Receive the Holy Spirit'."