

A String of Pearls

Sourcesheet 8: Sending Out

As the service comes to an end we have passed through at least 4 different kinds of prayer, a range of praises and thanksgivings, personal engagement and sacramental experience.

The service ends with a blessing and a dismissal, the blessing may use some words from Philippians:

And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

(*Philippians 4: 7*)

The blessing is a confirmation of God's grace, like a summary of all that has gone before in the service. There are a number of other blessings in the Bible, we have already seen Jesus blessing bread and wine, and fish!

A blessing is not only something that we receive but something that we give, even to God

Because your steadfast love is better than life,
my lips will praise you.

So I will bless you as long as I live;
I will lift up my hands and call on your name.

(*Psalm 63: 3-4*)

So, the blessing is not just an ending, it is also a beginning and does not just stand on its own. It is linked to the final words – the dismissal.

Go in peace to love and serve the Lord.

All In the name of Christ. Amen.

The dismissal returns us to our starting point. We came into worship from our 'worldly' lives and to some extent worship has been a separate place. The opening and closing of the service link worship to our worldly lives and it is important to remember that God made the world as a good place for us to dwell. The dismissal is not just sending us *out* of a special place but *into* a special place.

The dismissal instructs us to love and serve – this is what our worship becomes in our workplaces, in our homes in our weeks. To fully appreciate this, we return to the commandments. Not just the commandments of Exodus or Deuteronomy nor Jesus' summary of the law but the commandments of Jesus ...

I give you a new commandment, that you love one another. Just as I have loved you, you also should love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another."

(John 13: 34-35)

... Jesus came and said to them, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age."

(Matthew 28: 18-20)

What worship leaves us with (or perhaps what we leave worship with) are the promises of Jesus and our response as disciples as these words from Hebrews suggest:

Through Jesus, therefore, let us continually offer to God a sacrifice of praise – the fruit of lips that openly profess his name. And do not forget to do good and to share with others, for with such sacrifices God is pleased.

(Hebrews 13: 15-16)

The dismissal is a form of commissioning to 'do good and share with others'. Simple!

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Talksheet 8—Sending Out

Luke 10:1-24

WELCOME – Breaking the ice (Aim for 10 mins)

To start the session read Psalm 100 together...

Make a joyful noise to the Lord, all the earth.

Worship the Lord with gladness;
come into his presence with singing.

Know that the Lord is God.

It is he that made us, and we are his;^[a]
we are his people, and the sheep of his pasture.

Enter his gates with thanksgiving,
and his courts with praise.

Give thanks to him, bless his name.

After a moments' stillness read it again and think especially of the line -

'his faithfulness to all generations'

What comes into your mind when you read this line?

WORD – Applying the truth (Aim for 45 mins)

The word evangelism summons many colourful images for people today. Some think immediately of the street-corner character, preaching and pounding his Bible as folks quickly walk by. Some picture the television preachers who haunt obscure cable TV channels. Others think about a citywide crusade, with the converted pouring down the aisles as the "invitation" music plays. For still others, the word evangelism inspires feelings of vague uneasiness or guilt.

Few associate evangelism with community activity. In the New Testament, however, it is almost always a pair or group of believers who share their faith. Even Paul travelled with partners. Luke's gospel gives an account of Jesus commissioning his community to spread their faith. **Read Luke 10:1-24.**

1. For what kind of mission has Jesus recruited the seventy-two?
2. Why do you think he sends them out in pairs?
3. How do the two comparisons Jesus uses for his workers in vv.2-3 apply to the work of the disciples?
4. How do you account for Jesus' two cautionary requests in verse 4?
5. In what ways does Jesus delineate the seriousness of our work?
6. How should we be encouraged by the responsibility given to us in verse 16?
How should we be humbled?

7. How did Jesus and the community of 72 feel about their work (vv. 17, 21)?

8. How does Jesus characterise the nature of their mission (vv.18-19)?

9. Jesus cautions against an attitude of spiritual arrogance in verse 20.
How might this happen to a Christian?

How does he provide a better model in verse 21?

10. What motivation for evangelism do we find in verses 22-24?

11. How can your community of believers better work together this week to perform the work of evangelism?

12. How is the spiritual practice of mission similar to or different from the ways of the world?

13. How can we use the spiritual practice of mission in our ordinary everyday, Monday to Saturday lives?

WITNESS – Reaching out to others

(Aim for 20 – 30 minutes)

Giving Thanks to God

Thank God for the person who first brought you to church.

Praying for one another

Ask everyone to share something they would like prayer for.

Then go round the room and pray for the person to your right,

Praying for those who don't yet know God

How have your conversations with your five been going?

Which events in the life of the church would be suitable for which members of your five?