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Lord, Send Me!



“Lord, Send Me”

By Dr. Robert A. Cook



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Have you discovered this fact?

There is a special sense of satisfaction whenever, as a child of God, you truly pray ...

Lord, SEND Me

What an amazing realization this is!

Almighty God-absolutely perfect. .. and holy . . . and omnipotent. .. and omniscient ... and eternal ... and upholding all things by the word of His power-actually deigns to use for His great glory the weak and bungling creatures that we are!

Has this truth taken hold of you? Has it shaken you and shaped your life in any practical way?

I invite you to think with me for a few moments on this mind-boggling theme. Most of our study will center in the Gospel of John, with two introductory illustrations from other portions of the Word.

Consider, then, if you will, some instances of divine commissioning. Study the individuals involved. We shall see that they were Sent to REVEAL or Sent to REAP, or Sent to BEAR WITNESS.

Isaiah, the prophet, was sent to reveal the awfulness of sin and the efficacy of divine cleansing.

The disciples were sent to evangelize and to enter into the ministry of others.

The forerunner of Christ, John the Baptist, was sent to call attention to Jesus, the inexhaustible Light that has come into the world.

Let us look at these instances.

Sent To Reveal

I saw ... the Lord ... also I heard ... and I said, Here am I Send me. (Isa 6:1-8).

Who was Isaiah, and with what message was he sent?

The answer is spelled out in what happened *"in the year that King Uzziah died."* The words are familiar, but please consider them again:

"In the year that King Uzziah died I saw also the Lord, sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and his train filled the temple. Above it stood the seraphim . . . and one cried unto another, and said, Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord of hosts: the whole earth is full of his glory ... Then said I, Woe is me! ... because I am a man of unclean lips ... mine eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts. Then flew one of the seraphim unto me, having a coal in his hand ... And he laid it upon my mouth, and said, La, this hath touched thy lips: and thine iniquity is taken away, and the sin purged. And I heard the voice of the Lord, saying, Whom shall I send, and who will go for us? Then said I, Here am I, Send me" (Isa. 6:1-8).

Israel was in a sad state spiritually. Sin was rampant. Rebellion, idolatry and indifference to the commands of God were everywhere manifested.

In His love and in His pity God would send warning. But the bearer of such news must be one who had seen the awfulness of sin within his own heart.

Isaiah became such a person: enlightened, cleansed, commissioned. The moment that he "saw the Lord" he viewed himself also, in all his fearful inadequacy to do anything for Him. I wonder: Have I "seen" myself in that light? Have you?

Perhaps the reason we are not being sent more often on assignments at our Saviour's command is that we do not recognize our desperate need for daily cleansing and empowering.

Each of us can quote passages like Romans 3:10: *"There is none righteous, no not one"* without fully realizing that we are part of that number. In our materialistic age we are prone to view ourselves in the same way that the Laodiceans thought of themselves: *"I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing."* Our Lord says to us, as to them:

"Thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked" (Rev. 3:17).

Oh, how we need "the live coal from off the altar"- God's instrument of conviction and cleansing! Only when it is applied-and this must be a daily process -- can we be sent by God to make Him known to others.

God's grace revealed through us can come about only when it has been revealed to us in our own lives.

How Does God Send Me?

First, God starts with facts that pertain to the present. He brings to mind questions like these: Is there some one in my home, or in my community who needs encouragement? Can I help by my presence, or by a letter, or by a phone call or by definite, intercessory prayer for that person? Are there people I know, or could know, who are suffering? Are there situations about which I have been given insight and therefore have some logical reason to intervene?

Start there. God wants to send you to be a blessing, and He will always begin on the basis of things and people that you know.

Second, God waits for my prayers for guidance. It is not enough to pray simply, *“God lead me today”*-although that is a good place to start. We must remember the truth of Proverbs 3:6: *“In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths.”*

Notice: *“ALL”* That means individual petitions, earnest prayer for specific areas.

Third, God relates present facts to His eternal Word. What is it that God wants to accomplish, through us his children, here on earth? He wants to see lost men and women, boys and girls, redeemed, saved eternally.

“The Lord ... is longsuffering to usward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance” (2 Pet. 3:9).

“Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth” (1 Tim. 2:4).

What is the passion of God’s heart? It is to see people saved. He doesn’t want anybody to be lost.

In His creative wisdom He has built into the human nature a capacity for individual choice: the ability to say *“no”* to divine grace, or the ability to accept it.

The redemption the Lord Jesus accomplished on the cross was sufficient for the whole human race.

“He died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him

who died for them, and rose again” (2 Cor. 5:15).

God longs to bring people to Himself, and He sends you and me to do that work. He must first of all- and all the time- be revealed in us, so that He will be wanted and accepted by those to whom He sends us.

We turn now, to another aspect of God’s sending.

Sent To Reap

“I sent you to reap” (John 4:38).

You know the story recorded in John 4. Jesus, troubled by the pharisees, left Judea for Galilee and *“must needs go through Samaria.”* There at a well side a conversation took place between a Samaritan woman and the Savior, with dramatic results.

In the meantime the disciples went into the city to buy food for themselves and the Lord. Maybe it happened this way:

Because it was mid-day siesta time, most of the shops were closed. It took a good deal of walking and searching to find a little deli open where they could buy some corned beef and rye, or whatever.

Returning to Jesus they said jubilantly, “All right, Master, here you are! Here’s lunch.”

But Jesus replied, “I have meat to eat that ye know not of.”

His followers were annoyed. “What’s happened?” they wanted to know. “Did somebody feed Him while we were gone?”

With infinite patience Jesus must have explained in language something like this.

“Fellows,” I think He told them, “you have missed the point altogether. I sent you to REAP. Instead, you were busy buying groceries.”

Can you hear Him ask these questions?

“While you were gone, did you speak to anybody about Me? Did you tell anybody that I am

the Savior? Did you point out that I can-and do -- change lives?"

Reading their minds Jesus said to His followers:

"Say not ye, There are yet four months, and then cometh harvest? Behold, I say unto you, Lift up your eyes, and look on the fields; for they are white already to harvest" (John 4: 35).

Even as He spoke, townspeople came tumbling out of the city, eager to find the One of whom the lady from Samaria (who was no lady) had urged them:

"Come, see a man who told me al/ things that ever I did" (v. 29).

What happened?

"Many more believed ... and said unto the women, Now we believe, not because of thy saying: for we have heard him ourselves, and know that this is indeed the Christ, the Savior of the world" (vs. 41, 42).

Jesus said, "THERE is your harvest. "I sent you to reap that whereon you bestowed no labor: other men labored, and ye are entered into their labors" (v. 38).

Maybe you need to ask yourself, as I do: "Am I too missing the point? Am I concerned about "groceries" when a spiritual harvest is crying to be reaped?"

Sent To Share

That verse (John 4: 38) became a turning point in my life some forty years ago. At that time, Torrey Johnson and I were co-pastors of a church in Chicago. Both of us were deeply involved in the work of Youth for Christ- busy, happy, occupied with the things of the Lord.

I began to sense, vaguely at first, that God might be leading to a change in the direction of my life, a shift in emphasis, but I had no idea what it might be.

About that time I became a member of a YFC team that went from town to town in the Mid-west, singing and giving the gospel and raising money to take the team to the Philippine Islands and Japan and ultimately to China and India and around the world.

Since our stay at one place was brief, only one night, we usually sought accommodations

at what were called “tourist homes.” These were private dwellings whose owners would rent a room or two to transients like us.

On the night that I am remembering now my room was a little narrow bedroom in a tourist home. It was equipped with a single cot, a dresser and a chair-that was it. This is where God sent me to seek His will.

On my knees, over the Word of God, I prayed earnestly, “O God, tell me something that will show me the direction I am to take.”

I prayed, and read the Word, and prayed again. Finally I came to this passage in John’s Gospel where our Savior said to His disciples, “I sent you to Reap.”

Immediately it dawned on me that the ministry in which I was engaged was not the standard missionary activity so much as it was a reaping procedure which would capitalize on the dedicated work of dear missionaries who had been on the field for decades, sowing the seed. That concept colored my whole approach during that year and other years to follow. It was as though the Lord Himself had told me, “You are not to supplant the work- of the missionary or work of the church. You are to supplement it, complement it, help the local ministry in every way you can.”

Together, we were to Reap.

Sent To Obey, Without Question

We have seen that God does indeed send people on errands of His own choosing. One of the great illustrations of that fact is God’s dealing with Philip, and his response. You remember the account.

“Then Philip went down to the city of Samaria, and preached Christ unto them. And the people with one accord gave heed unto those things which Philip spoke ... Unclean spirits came out of many ... and many taken with palsies, and that were lame, were healed. And there was great joy in that city” (Acts 8: 5-8).

Under Philip’s leadership a great city-wide revival was in progress in Samaria. In the midst of the soul-winning and the rejoicing God indicated to His servant that He had other plans for him.

“The angel of the Lord spoke unto Philip, saying, Arise and go ... down to the desert.

And he arose and went” (Vs. 26, 27).

Philip was never given an explanation of why he was to leave the scene of great triumph for a one-man encounter in the desert. God does not always tell us why His directions are to be followed. For Philip-and it should be for us-it is enough that Jesus knows. *“He [Jesus] Himself knew what he would do” (John 6:6).* Oh, yes our blessed Lord knows what He is about!

Philip received two directives from the Lord, the second dependent upon the first. It is often the way God works.

Initially, he was to “Go”-away from a successful and continuing ministry in a big city to a desert place not specifically indicated.

Without question, “He arose and went.” The rightness of that move immediately became apparent. In the distance there appeared a chariot and its rider. At once:

“The Spirit said unto Philip, Go near and join thyself to this chariot” (Acts 8:29).

Divinely brought together were a searching soul, an open book (The Book of Isaiah), an obedient soul-winner, and an accepting listener who sought at once to obey his new-found Lord.

Could Philip envision this outcome as he ministered in Samaria? Probably not.

He had to obey the divine directive, not knowing its outcome -before he could have any knowledge of the far-reaching results of his desert witnessing in the opening up of a whole continent to the gospel. Probably he never knew the full extent of blessing that grew out of that encounter.

O Beloved, let us obey the Lord! He sends us to REAP, step after step, day after day. We have seen that God does indeed SEND His people, when they are willing and responsive, on activities that become a part of His own wonderful plan.

Isaiah was sent to REVEAL the sinfulness of a nation, and in the process he saw also the sin within every human heart including his own.

The disciples were sent to see and to take part in a great spiritual harvest. But they saw only the need for temporal food.

There is at least one other person whom we ought to consider in this matter of divine commissioning.

Sent To Bear Witness

“There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. The same came ... to bear witness of the Light. He was not that Light, but was sent to bear witness of that Light” (the Lord Jesus Christ) (John 1: 6-8).

Note again the words: *“A man SENT from God, whose NAME was John.”*

A Name To Be Valued

This John was a remarkable person. His name meant “Jehovah is gracious.” What a fitting designation for one whose birth was itself an evidence of divine grace!

Likewise whether your name or mine has any precise meaning, in every case our name identifies us in a special way.

I wonder: What do people think about when they use my name, “Bob Cook”? Do they at least sometimes, and ultimately, think of my blessed Lord? Oh, I want them to think of Him, don’t you? I pray every day that the words I speak, whether on-air or not-and the very tone of my voice-may be filled with the love of God and the blessing of God.

If you are a child of God through faith in Jesus Christ, your name is “Christian, Christ’s one.” Do people think of Him, when they use your name?

Notice that the name also signifies character. “The same [that is, John] was sent to BE a witness.” Have you meditated on the thought that God wants you to be something? I am not talking about some wild-eyed, hysterical concept that would send you-unprepared and unanointed- to some distant place. God starts with us where we are. He uses what we have, and identifies Himself with it.

What talents are you aware that you have? (You may have some that you don’t even know about.) Say to God: “Here is my voice, ... or my selling ability ... or my teaching skills ... or whatever.” Say to God: “I turn this over to You. I want it to be Yours, no longer mine.” That is the first step toward becoming a witness.

A Job To Be Done

Twice in two verses the word “Witness” is used. In the original Greek this word is related to our word “martyr.” That is a sobering thought, isn’t it? Both as a noun (a person) and as a verb (an activity) “witness” stands for a solemn responsibility.

This matter of witnessing is not just speaking, although it includes that. We think of a witness in a court trial as somebody who tells what he or she knows personally to be a fact. That, of course, is important. But it is not the whole meaning of the word as found in Scripture.

John the Baptist was *“a man sent from God ... to bear witness of the light [the Lord Jesus Christ] that all men through him might believe” (John 1: 6,7).*

That is witnessing. It is speaking what you know to be a fact with a view to changing another person’s commitment.

God has not called us to deliver a religious lecture. Nor do you get anywhere spouting off religious beliefs, however well-laced they may be with Scripture.

At this point we come straight up against the old stubborn question: What about the heathen; are they saved or are they lost?

The answer has to be that God is altogether righteous. His basis for judgment will always be just.

“For as many as have sinned without the law shall also perish without law: and as many as have sinned in the law shall be judged by the law” (Rom. 2:12).

The light that John is talking about may be perceived in a number of ways.

There is the light of nature. By the visible works of the Creator one may be led to understand “His eternal power and godhead.” God has never left Himself without a witness, and where even limited light is perceived, and walked in, it has been shown to lead to Christ.

There is the light of revelation. By this light God’s will has been made known to us in the Holy Scriptures. This light was typified by the Shekinah glory in the tabernacle—the bright cloud by day and the pillar of fire by night that conducted the children of Israel through the wilderness. In the same way the light of the Word of God leads us through our earthly way.

There is the light of the gospel. This is represented by that noblest and brightest of the heavenly luminaries, the sun. Christ Himself is styled the Sun of Righteousness, having risen on His church "with healing in his wings."

There is also the most perfect light of all-eternal light. This light will never go out, nor will it ever change. We begin to experience its rays here on earth, when we come to Christ. It will go on through all the ages of eternity-the glory of God seen in the face of the Lord Jesus Christ.

All over the world there are men and women searching for light, though they may not know what it is, or where.

I remember a meeting years ago with Hubert Mitchell in Calcutta. It illustrated for me forever the hunger of the human heart for God's truth and the blessed satisfaction when that need has been met.

In those years I played a Martin trombone, very much the worse for wear. Hubert had an accordion. When I ran out of oil to lubricate the slide I would resort to nasal jelly which worked satisfactorily except that every time I blew the horn the menthol in the jelly perfumed the whole place.

Our audience didn't seem to mind. As we played favorite gospel songs people began to congregate. When we had quite a crowd we took them inside a near-by building which, as I remember it, was right next door to the University of Calcutta. We found we had numbers of students and business people, a very fine crowd.

We preached and sang and gave an invitation. At the close of the hour we were busy praying with people when I noticed a very distinguished gentleman coming toward me. He was richly dressed and apparently highly educated, and his manner was that of a real gentleman.

I shall never forget his words. "This - this message you are preaching- I have been looking for all my life."

Oh, yes, even a tiny ray of light has the power to lead to more light, and this gentleman had come upon the full shining of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.

We are talking about qualifications of anyone who would be sent by God on errands of His choosing. I want to be such a person. Don't you?

As we have thought about this subject we have realized that the first requirement is for us, ourselves, to see the Light (the Lord Jesus Christ) and to walk day by day in the glow of His

presence. That Light is to manifested through us to others.

There is another requirement we should not overlook.

A Relationship To Be Enjoyed

“He (the Lord Jesus) was in the world, and the world was made by him, and the world knew him not” (John 1 :11).

What a sad, sad picture! He came to His own (creation) and His own (people) didn't know Him. Do you know that feeling? I do.

As a boy, I lived in Toledo, Ohio. For the last three years of high school I attended Morrison R. Waite High School. I remember, even to this day a number of good friends I had there.

Then I was away from Toledo for some ten or fifteen years. When I went back, I was startled to find I could not locate anybody who had known me. I asked myself: How could this be?

Why, I used to ride my bicycle down Nevada Street to Raymer Boulevard, and by shortcut over to school, every single week day for three years!

During those high-school years I certainly was not what you would call an inconspicuous figure. Picture this: My lunch and my books were somehow in the hand that held the handlebars of that old, second-hand, Sherman-tank-type bike. My other hand grasped the violin case that contained the precious Wurlitzer that my father had bought me. You couldn't miss me!

But now there was not one familiar face.

If you multiply that feeling of loneliness and abandonment a million million times, you have a little inkling of how the Lord Jesus felt when He came to this world He made, and nobody knew Him.

I have to remind you, Beloved, that the same situation applies to ten of thousands of hearts today. They keep the Savior outside. They neglect and ignore Him.

Following close upon the record of humanity's rejection of the Savior is the blessed truth:

“But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons (children) of God, even to them that believe on his name” (John 1:12).

This is the relationship that you and I must enter into. . . and maintain ... and enjoy if we would be used of God. The verse says, *“Receive him.”* How do you do that? A good way to start is to pay attention to His word in Revelation 3:20:

“Behold, I stand at the door and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me. ”

There are three things that Jesus is said to be doing there: He is standing (waiting) ... He is knocking (seeking to gain attention and admittance). .. He is calling (the sweet words of entreaty, *“Come unto me.”*).

When you and I respond actively to this gracious One who is waiting ... and knocking ... and calling, we are thenceforth under His control we become candidates for commissioning to tasks large and small. He longs to use you. LET HIM SEND YOU!

