

## “Prayed for & Sent!”

John 17:13-26 & Mark 3:13-19

March 2nd & 5<sup>th</sup> 2008

### Background:

We're in the season of Lent approaching Jesus' last days before his crucifixion. Our passage this morning is Jesus' prayer. It's the final scene of his farewell meal with his disciples in the upper room—the Last Supper.

In our passage there are a few words I want to clarify. The “World” are those who do not know God. The “Evil One” is the embodiment of all that is opposed to God. To “sanctify” means to set apart. The prayer covers all of chapter 17 of John. It actually starts with Jesus praying for himself, then his disciples, then all who will believe in the future. We'll pick up the prayer with vs. 13 when he is praying for his disciples.

### Message:

Do you remember your childhood days? It's noon and you're out on the playground and the team captains are picking teams—are you the first? somewhere in the middle? The last? You're walking home on a Friday excited that your school week is over and you overhear the kids behind you—talking about the sleepover—the one you're not invited to. Ah the carefree days of childhood. Now it's the project manager picking the team and the cocktail party that you're hearing about.

Our first passage from Mark talks about being picked—Jesus picking his disciples. There were many who were followers, but Jesus called 12 that he wanted to be his disciples. 12—that special number for the people of Israel—it must have reminded them of the 12 tribes. Special—it does seem a bit exclusive. I mean what if you were one of Jesus followers and you didn't get picked. But then again what if you were--consider the sacrifices—often their lives—which they made.

I wonder what it sounded like to have Jesus call your name. I imagine his voice being firm and yet loving all at the same time. Inviting in a way that was irresistible. Jesus invited the 12 to be with him. To hang out with him. To live day by day at his side. I wonder what they talked about—in the down time. What jokes did they share? What were some of their special moments that weren't recorded in scripture? What would have been like to have an all-day companion who is intensely interested and cares for you. Someone that you long to spend time with. Just hanging out with Jesus—even for a day would be wonderful. It would be an amazing blessing.

But it would also be a great challenge. In both of our passages this morning we see that the disciples were with Jesus and were sent out. In Mark, Jesus named them to be with him, and to be sent out to proclaim.

In John Jesus says “as you have sent me into the world, so I have sent them into the world.”

The spiritual life is a journey of being with Jesus and going out so that others can be with Christ. For the last 3 years, I've been on a journey. I joined with 7 other pastors from various denominations who served in churches all over the U.S. and Canada. With the support of the Lily Foundation we met twice a year for reading and study and discussion. My time with these fellow travelers has made a significant impact on my faith. My theology actually changed somewhat. I went in thinking that mission was what a committee of the church organized and helped members of the church do—like going down to House of Charity with lunches, or sorting clothes at Mission Community Outreach Center, or painting rooms at Hope House, all in the name of Christ.

In my journey group, I came to a new understanding of mission. Mission isn't about what we do to serve God. Mission defines what the church is. We believe in a sending God. Theologians call this the “Missio Dei”. So I had a shift in my understanding of what the church is and how mission relates to it. Tim

Dearborn said it like this, “The church of God doesn’t have a mission in the world. The God of mission has a church in the world.” It’s a subtle but significant shift. Being the church means being sent out. Being a disciple means being with Jesus and being sent out. We often think of the church as a place but it truly is where God’s people are at any given moment. So, where is HPPC? Right now we’re here. This afternoon, the church namely Reads, Becerras, Brice’s, Kuuskveres, Wheldons, Kinder-Pyles, Tanseys, Groffs and more will be singing at Ham on Regal, the Sparks will undoubtedly be at Starbucks, Ken & Nadine coming home from the Ferris state BB game, Robin will be at the hospital in Portland. The church is wherever God’s people are. The church isn’t a place—it’s a people who are with Jesus and sent out to the world.

Several years ago I was in the car with our youngest son Philip who was a preschooler. We didn’t have a building for the new church that Scott and I were helping to plant. We drove by the future site where we had hosted VBS under a tent and Philip cried out, “Church.” As we continued on we passed the school where we had services and Philip cried out again, “Church, mommy!” Then we arrived at our destination, the home where we had a mom’s small group and Philip again called out, “Church!” We’re sent out into the world. Sharing Christ is about more than welcoming people when they come to worship with us. It’s about more than receiving people. It’s about going to them. Steven Sjogren asks a pointed question, “Are we a come and see church or a go and do church?”

To be a disciple means to be with Jesus and to be sent to those who don’t know that Jesus is with them and God loves them. If you have been called by Jesus to be one of his followers—one of his disciples then you have been consecrated. That means that you have been set apart. You have been given the job of sharing the love that you have experienced in Christ with those who do not know Christ.

It's not always easy. So Jesus prays for us. He knows that we are scared and need prayer. He knows that there will be times that we will be hated. Hated because we don't fit in and in our society it's important to fit in. To conform. To belong. But we don't belong. We don't join the world's ways. This is not our home. They do not belong to the world, just as I do not belong to the world. Now this is where it gets interesting. What does it mean for us as Christians, Christ followers to not belong to the world? Jesus doesn't want God to take us out of the world. Over the last 2000 years good Christians have disagreed about what it looks like to be in the world but not of it.

A young Amish boy, visiting Philadelphia with his widowed mother, witnesses a murder. When the detective on the case discovers a police cover up, he realizes his, the boy's and the mother's lives are in jeopardy. He hides out in Amish country, living amongst the community and having to abide by their peaceful customs. Things get more complicated when he falls in love with the young widow. But, soon the idyllic life is shattered when the villains discover his whereabouts.

We are not defined by the world but by Christ's mission. We are apostles of Christ—We are the sent ones. We trust God's promises of joy and love because others who have gone before us have trusted them enough to share them with us.

Jesus prayed not only for his disciples but for us. For those who didn't get picked—for those who haven't gotten to hang out with Jesus. Jesus prays for you. Jesus is confident that the early disciples will share the message of salvation and that we will continue to share it so that all may know God's love for them. Jesus has & will continue to make it known—through us!

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