

Cornerstone
Sunday AM, June 23, 2022
Day of the Christian Martyr

As you watched the incredible story of the obedience and martyrdom of John Chau, you may be tempted to think of this type of story as an isolated case. You may have heard someone say something like, “*Some crazy person went to this island and the natives killed him...the fool went there and never even thought something would ever happen to him.*” Nothing could be further from the truth! For centuries, this is exactly how frontier missions have unfolded. Someone is sent by God for the purpose of advancing the gospel, makes first contact with an unreached and unengaged people, and then pays the ultimate price for their obedience. There are many examples throughout history; some that may be familiar to you are The Ecuador Five (Jim Elliot, Nate Saint, Roger Youderian, Pete Fleming and Ed McCully) or James Harris and John Williams in the New Hebrides Islands.

You might not be aware that in the past century, more Christians have **died** sharing the Gospel than in all the time that has gone before!

- **God sends every **ordinary, surrendered biblical disciple** to accomplish His redemptive mission.** God’s mission is worth any sacrifice we may pay as we are bold and faithful witnesses.

I have spoken to you many times to listen for your next assignment; to be obedient to what you already know to do as biblical disciples on a mission for Christ; and to embrace obedience with joy even in the face of opposition.

John Chau and other persecuted Christian brothers and sisters exemplify what it means to be sent to share the message of Christ to those who have yet to hear. They pay the ultimate price joyfully.

Why don’t we have joy in our lives? You need to be inspired in living your own joyful obedience, regardless of the price you may pay...

Romans 10:13–17 For “*whoever calls on the name of the LORD shall be saved.*”

¹⁴ How then shall they call on Him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher? ¹⁵ And how shall they preach unless they are sent? As it is written:

“How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the gospel of peace,

Who bring glad tidings of good things!”

¹⁶ But they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Isaiah says, “LORD, who has believed our report?” ¹⁷ So then faith *comes* by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.

“For ‘everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.’ How then will they call on him in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in him of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without someone preaching? And how are they to preach unless they are sent? As it is written, ‘How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the good news!’ But they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Isaiah says, ‘Lord, who has believed what he has heard from us?’ So faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ” (Romans 10:13-17).

- You can go.
- You can choose where to go.
- You can choose when to go.
- You can choose how to go.
- You can choose not to go.
- You can choose what you do when you arrive at the place You are going.
- You can choose nearly everything associated with the action of going.

Being sent is another matter altogether.

- Someone else chooses to send you.
- Someone else chooses your destination.
- Someone else chooses your mode.
- Someone else chooses what you do when you arrive at the place to which you are sent.

Biblical disciples, those who have surrendered fully to Christ and have daily taken up their cross to follow Christ, live as sent beings. Abram didn't simply go to a far-off land; he was sent by covenant God (Genesis 12:1-3). The seventy followers of Christ didn't simply go on a trip; they were sent as sheep in the midst of wolves on their mission from Christ (Matthew 10:16). Ananias didn't just wander into the presence of Saul, the most notorious persecutor of Christians of the time; he was sent by God (Acts 9:17). The Elliots, Saints, Flemings, McCullys and Youderains didn't simply go on an evangelistic endeavor; they were sent by Christ to the tribe in Ecuador in the 1950s. And John Chau didn't simply decide to go on a mission; he was called and sent by Jesus Christ our Lord to bring the Good News of salvation to the people of the North Sentinel Island. **What is it about being sent that we need to more fully comprehend and be obedient to?**

PAUL DESCRIBES HIMSELF NUMEROUS TIMES AS “AN APOSTLE” (ROMANS 1:1; 1 CORINTHIANS 1:1; 1 TIMOTHY 2:7). The very meaning of apostle in the Greek language [apostolos] is “one who is sent with orders” and that word applied to the disciples Christ selected, including Paul].

The Apostle Peter's language indicates that we who have been “called out of darkness into His marvelous light” are the ones sent.

“But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light.” (1 Peter 2:9)

The prophet Isaiah gives an explanation of being sent by God in the beautiful response, **“Here I am, send me,”** following his eyes being opened to the majesty and glory of God on His throne (Isaiah 6:1-8).

JESUS CHRIST OUR LORD SENDS HIS OWN FOLLOWERS:

- in the power of the **Holy Spirit** to cross multiple boundaries (**Acts 1:8**)
- to make disciples of **all** nations (**Matthew 28:18-20**)
- to model His own mission as being **sent** from the Father (**John 20:21**)
- to announce that the kingdom of heaven is **near** (**Matthew 10:7**)

Jesus’ instructions were given to **ordinary** people: those he called from lives as fishermen, tax collectors and other backgrounds. Very few were counted among the spiritual elite (Simon the Zealot and Paul the Pharisee), yet many were called and sent on His redemptive mission, obediently trusting in the power and presence of the Holy Spirit. In reality, they were **no different** from each of us.

Being sent indicates that we have received the message **ourselves**, trusting in Christ Jesus our Lord. Can you see this pattern in your own journey of coming to faith in Christ? Who was sent to share the message of salvation with you? Who, specifically, are you sent to so that you may share the gospel?

Ibrahim, living in the African nation of Niger, is 65 years old and the father of fourteen children. He had lived his life following no religion aside from belief in evil spirits. But Ibrahim now trusts in Christ. He heard the gospel when a young Fulani Christian explained the Scriptures to him, carefully helping him understand that salvation is available only through Jesus Christ. Ibrahim gave his life to Jesus and was baptized in an above-ground cistern. He is now sharing the gospel with others and encouraging his family to also give their lives to Christ.

One day, nearly 30 years ago, I was sitting on a concrete bench, thinking about something I had just heard about missionaries who had lost their lives. I was wondering how anybody could go into a situation and give up their life for the Gospel. The Lord spoke to my heart that day, explaining that they had actually died years before! That is exactly where we need to be as well!

- **It isn’t a matter of giving up our lives when confronted with ‘a situation’; we need to give up our**

lives long before! We need to die to ourselves and live to Christ, even now!

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- God sends every _____, _____ _____
_____ to accomplish His redemptive mission.

Romans 10:13–17

Being _____ is another matter altogether.

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1 Peter 2:9

Isaiah 6:1-8

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