

An Apostolic People

31 - Ephesians: Rise Up & Walk
Church on the Park | Sunday, 7 April 2019

Text: Ephesians 4:11-13

Theme: God's people are an apostolic people—a people who are like Jesus the Sent-One.

Intro: Jesus has given us apostles to equip us to be an apostolic people. *But what does it mean to be apostolic?* Since the word apostolic is not an everyday English word, we need to define it. Apostle comes from the Greek word *apostello*, meaning 'to send.' Apostles are sent-ones. The word 'apostle' can be translated as ambassador, agent, delegate, representative or envoy. The emphasis of the word 'apostle' is that the sent-one has a close relationship with the sender—the apostle officially represents the sender. The sent-one carries the authority of the sender. He or she is given a mission, ministry and message. An apostolic people are those who have been sent by God to represent him and carry out his will. They are those who are of the nature and spirit of Jesus the Apostle.

1) Look to Jesus (Heb. 3:1-2).

- “Therefore, holy brethren, partakers of a heavenly calling, consider Jesus, **the Apostle** and High Priest of our confession; He was **faithful** to Him who appointed him, as Moses also was in all his house” (Heb. 3:1-2).
- To **understand** who apostles are, you need to **look to Jesus**.
 - One of the big **problems** today is that we are **looking to people** who call themselves apostles to **discover** who apostles are.
 - We should not look to men, even good men, to **define** who apostles are.
 - We must **look to Jesus**.
 - The only **ministry** the **Father** is **looking** for is **Christ's ministry** in and through us.
 - It's not **our works** that matter, but **Christ's works** in and through us.
- Jesus Christ is the **quintessential apostle**.
 - He is the **standard and benchmark** of what it means to be an apostle. We look to him to understand what an apostle is.
- Today, we are going to **consider Jesus**, just as Hebrews commands us.
- The writer of Hebrews is calling us to **deeply think about and contemplate** Jesus.
 - *Who is Jesus the Apostle?*
- **John 9:1-12** - “**Go, wash in the pool of Siloam** (which is translated, Sent)” (v. 7).
 - Like this man we are all born **blind**.
 - This story **contrasts** the **blind man** who received the Sent-One and the **Pharisees** who rejected the Sent-One.
 - Only Jesus the one who was **sent** by the Father can **restore our sight**.
 - You must **wash in Jesus** and his **word** to **see properly** (*Psalm 36:9)
 - It's as you **listen** to Jesus that you will **see**.
 - The **Pharisees** (and the Pharisaical spirit) remained **blind** because they did not receive Jesus as the sent-one from the Father (John 9:13-34).
- The **Gospel of John** gives us insight into **Jesus the Apostle**.
 - In the Gospel, **Jesus** continually refers to himself as **someone sent by the Father**.

2) Find your source of being in the Father (Ps. 36:9).

- “For with you is the fountain of life; in your light we see light” (Ps. 36:9).
- **Jesus the Apostle** has his **source** of being in the **Father**.
- Jesus' whole **identity and purpose** revolved around **being sent**.
 - He **knew where he came from, his mission and where he was going**.
 - His whole life was filled with **apostolic resolve**.
 - He was **not unsure**. Nor was he pushed around **by rejection and persecution**.
 - He was **sure and immovable** because he **knew his Father**.

- Our **whole identity and purpose** needs to also be **wrapped up in the Father**.
 - We must **find our source in God himself—nothing else**.
- “I can **do nothing** on my **own initiative**. As I hear, I judge; and my judgment is just, because I **do not seek My own will**, but **the will of Him who sent me**” (John 5:30; cf. **8:42, 12:49**).
- To **be sent** we first must be **with God**. Your **roots** come from **intimacy with the Father**.
- People usually have **their source in something else**.
 - Their **source of being (their identity)** may come from their **family, denomination, religion, job, possessions, talents, style, fashion, relationships, status or physical strength** (cf. **Jer. 2:13**).
- Jesus found his **substance** in the Father.
- **To be apostolic** means to find our **source and substance in the Father**.
 - “As the living Father **sent Me**, and **I live because of the Father**, so he who **eats me**, he also **will live because of me**” (John 6:57).
 - “So Jesus answered them and said, “**My teaching is not mine, but his who sent me**” (John 7:16).
 - Jesus is **not independent**, but totally **dependent** on his **Father**.
 - He is **rooted and grounded** in his **Father’s presence, words and will**.
 - “Then Jesus cried out in the temple, teaching and saying, “You both know me and know where I am from; and **I have not come of myself**, but He who **sent me** is true, whom you do not know. **I know Him, because I am from Him, and he sent me**” (John 7:28-29).
 - Jesus **knew his Father intimately and closely**.
 - And for us to be **apostolic** we also need to **know the Father deeply**.
- The **Father** was the **fountainhead** from which **Jesus was sent**.
 - John 8:18; John 14:24
- “Now as they observed the confidence of Peter and John and understood that they were uneducated and untrained men, they were amazed, and **began to recognize them as having been with Jesus**” (**Acts. 4:13**).
 - Compare with **Mark 3:14**
- **Being with Jesus and his Father** is the **core** of being **apostolic**.
 - The Father **sends** out those who **constantly abide in his presence**.
 - Remember the place where **Isaiah** was sent from (Isaiah 6).
 - We can only be **from God** if we are **intimate with God**.
 - Jesus’ identity was **rooted** in being **the Father’s son**.

3) Jesus the Apostle is completely submitted to his Father (John 4:34).

- Jesus was a **man under authority**, living for the **purpose** of carrying out **the Father’s will**.
 - He lived as a **servant rather than** as a **King**.
- John 4:34 - Jesus said, “**My food** is to do the will of Him who **sent Me** and to accomplish his work.”
- John 5:30 - “I can do nothing on my own initiative. As I hear, I judge; and my judgment is just, because **I do not seek My own will**, but the will of Him who sent me.”
- John 6:38 - “For I have **come down** from heaven, **not to do my own will**, but the will of Him who sent me”
 - Here we learn from Jesus what it means to be apostolic.
 - Jesus is **totally submitted** to the Father.
 - He does **nothing** on his **own initiative**.
 - He doesn’t come to his own judgment, but rather **listens** to what the Father says.
 - He’s **not opinionated**.
 - He does **not seek his own will**; He seeks the will of the one who sent him.
 - He is a man **under authority**.
- Being apostolic means the **Father** needs to **break down our will** so that we seek his will. It means **a life of total dependance on our Father**.
- **Saul & submission** (1 Sam. 13:8-14; 15:21-24).

4) Jesus the Apostle speaks the Father’s word, serves the Father’s mission and shines the Father’s character.

- “For he whom God **sent speaks** the words of God; for he gives **the Spirit** without measure” (John 3:34).
- “My people need to be drawn into my plan, rather than focus on their own plan. They need to know my struggle, rather than focus on their own struggles. I am a God of strategy and military precision. In their celebration of me as Father, tell them not to forget I am a warrior and commander of my hosts. I am the God of war against all evil and deception. I am the Father who is King and commander; the one who sent my Son on a mission to pull down the works of the enemy.” (3 April 2019, **My Journal**)
- “But the testimony which I have is greater than the testimony of John; for the works which the Father has given me to accomplish—they very works that I do—testify about me, that the Father has sent me” (John 5:36).
- “He who speaks from himself seeks his own glory; but he who is seeking the glory of the One who sent him, he is true, and there is no unrighteousness in him” (John 7:18).
- “I have many things to speak and to judge concerning you, but he who sent me is true; and the things which I heard from him, these I speak to the world (John 8:26).
- “And he who sent me is with me; he has not left me alone, for I always do the things that are pleasing to him” (John 8:29).
- “He who sees me sees the One who sent me” (John 12:45).
- “For I did not speak on my own initiative, but the Father himself who sent me has given me a commandment as to what to say and what to speak” (John 12:49).
- “for the words which you gave I have given to them; and they received them and truly understood that I came forth from you, and they believed that you sent me” (John 17:8).

5) Jesus the Apostle now send us into the world.

- “As you sent me into the world, I also have sent them into the world” (John 17:18).
- **Be careful**, just because you read these words doesn’t mean you’re sent.
- Jesus sends his disciples—those who are **sold out to him**, those who are **submitted** to him, those who find their source of being in him.
 - The ones that are sent are the ones that have lost their lives for his life—those who are rooted and grounded in his love.
 - You can only represent Jesus if you live a life of fellowship with Jesus.
 - And this is who you are!
- “So Jesus said to them again, “Peace be with you; as the Father has sent me, I also send you” (John 20:21).
 - Jesus then breathed on them.
 - We need Christ breath—his Spirit—within us to represent Christ.

Conclusion: Apostles are ones who have been sent by Jesus with a mission, ministry and message. They equip us to be like Jesus the Apostle who was intimate with the Father, sent by the Father, carried out the Father’s ministry and spoke the message of his Father. If we are apostolic we will reflect the Christ and do his works.