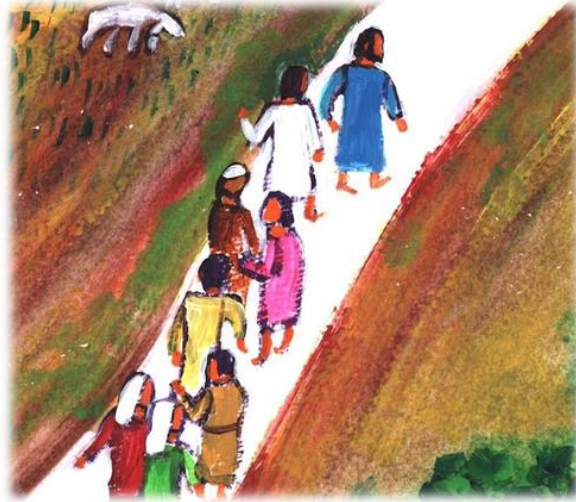


SENT



I am the Way (inset)
Berna Lopez

And he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up; and he went to the synagogue, as his custom was, on the sabbath day. And he stood up to read; and there was given to him the book of the prophet Isaiah. He opened the book and found the place where it was written,

"The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed, to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord."

And he closed the book, and gave it back to the attendant, and sat down; and the eyes of all in the synagogue were fixed on him. And he began to say to them, "Today this scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing."

Luke 4:16-21

The Certainty of Faith

According to Luke this episode comes at the very start of Jesus' ministry, before he has performed one miracle. Jesus has just returned from the region of the Jordan where after being baptized by John he was swallowed up by the wilderness for more than a month. He has been teaching in the synagogues of Galilee with a word of authority which has been stirring the people. But no healing – no casting out demons. And now in his own home town this man Jesus, whom they have known since he was a child, stands up to read from the prophet Isaiah.

"The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives ...today these words are fulfilled in your hearing."

His words are so absolutely certain, so sure, without the slightest tinge of boastfulness that everyone is stunned. This man has authority. But where did he get it? Has he been to school? No. Has he been appointed by the leaders in Jerusalem? No. Who gives him permission to talk like that?

And all spoke well of him, and wondered at the gracious words which proceeded out of his month; and they said, "Is not this Joseph's son?" And he said to them, "Doubtless you will quote to me this proverb, 'Physician, heal yourself; what we have heard you did at Capernaum, do here also in your own country.'" And he said, "Truly, I say to you, no prophet is acceptable in his own country. But in truth, I tell you, there were many widows in Israel in the days of Elijah, when the heaven was shut up three years and six months, when there came a great famine over all the land; and Elijah was sent to none of them but only to Zarephath, in the land of Sidon, to a woman who was a widow. And there were many lepers in Israel in the time of the prophet Elisha; and none of them was cleansed, but only Naaman the Syrian." When they heard this, all in the synagogue were filled with wrath. And they rose up and put him out of the city, and led him to the brow of the hill on which the city was built, that they might throw him down headlong. But passing through the midst of them he went away.

Luke 4:22-30

Remember now, not one miracle of healing has occurred yet. Jesus goes on to Capernaum and teaches in the synagogue and again the people are astonished at the force of his words. Suddenly Jesus' teaching is interrupted by a man with a demon, and his ministry of healing begins. Until that first healing, the only one who knows for sure that the Spirit of the Lord is upon Jesus, that Jesus is going to deliver the captives and open the eyes of the blind, is Jesus.

Jesus is utterly certain and remains utterly certain until he breathes his last breath at Calvary that he has been sent.

"Big deal! He was the Son of God wasn't he? Naturally, he knew that he was sent!" But remember, Jesus was also a human being --- every bit as human as you and I. And Jesus had to know that he was sent the same way that we have to know it....

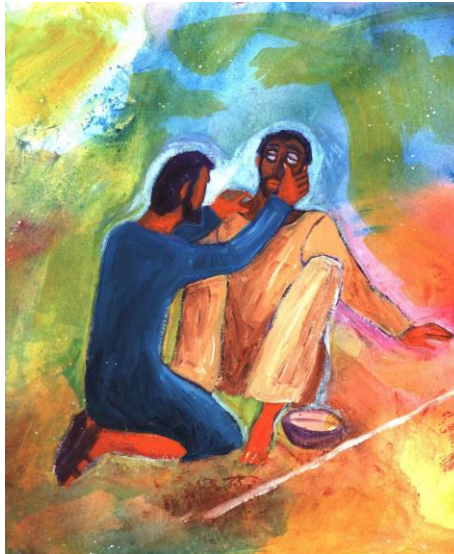
...by faith, by trusting the invisible God who had sent him into this world of visible trouble. Jesus' words had authority over human hearts, over demons, over the elements, over the wind because he believed that the Father was with him and that those doors would open when he told them to.

There would be fruit! If people disbelieved him, Jesus marveled at their unbelief; but it made absolutely no difference as to what he thought of himself. Jesus didn't need to have believers or admirers or followers to be reassured as to who he was.

If nobody on earth believed him as was the case when he hung on the cross – Jesus still knew why he was there.

As he passed by, he saw a man blind from his birth. And his disciples asked him, "Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind!" Jesus answered, "It was not that this man sinned, or his parents, but that the works of God might be made manifest in him. We must work the works of him who sent me, while it is day; night comes when no one can work. As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world." As he said this, he spat on the ground and made clay of the spittle and anointed the man's eyes with the clay, saying to him, "Go, wash in the pool of Siloam" (which means Sent). So he went and washed and came back seeing.

John 9:1-7



Healing the Blind

"While I am here, I am the light of the world ... I have been sent to open blind eyes ... Go, wash in the pool of Siloam --- which translated means *"having been sent."* Of course the man comes back with his eyes opened!

We Can Have It Too

But not only did Jesus know that he was sent, he expects us to know *that we have been sent.*

On the evening of that day, the first day of the week, the doors being shut where the disciples were, for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood among them and said to them, "Peace be with you." When he had said this, he showed them his hands and his side. Then the disciples were glad when they saw the Lord. Jesus said to them again, "Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, even so I send you."

And when he had said this, he breathed on them, and said to them, "Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained."

John 20:19-23

The men and women of God who today are preaching good news to the poor and bringing release to the captives with the authority of heaven are not those, who speak the most eloquently, or the most loudly, or have the most publicity, or the largest following; but those who know that they have been sent.

They know that they have been sent by the Son of God even if no one on earth believes this to be so, and are clear in their minds as to what they have been sent to do.

So Ananias departed and entered the house. And laying his hands on him he said, "Brother Saul, the Lord Jesus who appeared to you on the road by which you came, has sent me that you may regain your sight and be filled with the Holy Spirit." And immediately something like scales fell from his eyes and he regained his sight. Then he rose and was baptized, and took food and was strengthened.

Acts 9:17-19

Look back over your own ministry. Is it not true that in every situation where you knew yourself to be sent by the Son of God, the pre-sence of the Son of God attended your words, and your deeds? But when you were in doubt about your being God-sent, when you looked for reassurance to men, when you sought to get your sense of authority by seeing approval in their eyes, your words were empty. Nothing happened.

If we pat each other on the back or appoint each other as elders, independently of the direct presence of the Lord in our lives, our authority is not only questionable, it's demonic. The commission has to come directly from the Lord. Confirmed by the church, indeed, but initiated by the Lord.

When Paul and Barnabas were sent out from the Church at Antioch, other human beings were involved in the sending. They were fasting and praying and worshipping the Lord. They laid their hands on them and sent them off. But the one who called them and sent them clearly was the Holy Spirit – the Spirit of the Lord.

So, being sent out by the Holy Spirit, they went down to Seleucia...

Acts 13:4

And the long-term results confirmed that it was the Spirit who sent them. The one who does the sending is the Lord. And he sends us to a work so simple, so down to earth that every one of us can do it. Jesus never sends us to do grandiose things. He never sends us to make head-lines. He simply sends us to touch human lives with his forgiveness.

"As the Father has sent me, even so I send you... Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained."

Touch lives with the forgiveness of God.
Manifest God's mercy.
Show them God's goodness.

***Now I'm sending you to preach good news to the poor,
to proclaim release to the captives, recovery of sight to the blind,
to set at liberty those who are oppressed."***

Where are we to do this?

In exactly the place where we are now. In our present set of circumstances. Among those people with whom we are now in touch.

The minute you know yourself to be sent by God, to manifest the forgiving love of Jesus in that place where you are, there will be a change within you....

... An inner certainty. An awesome peace.

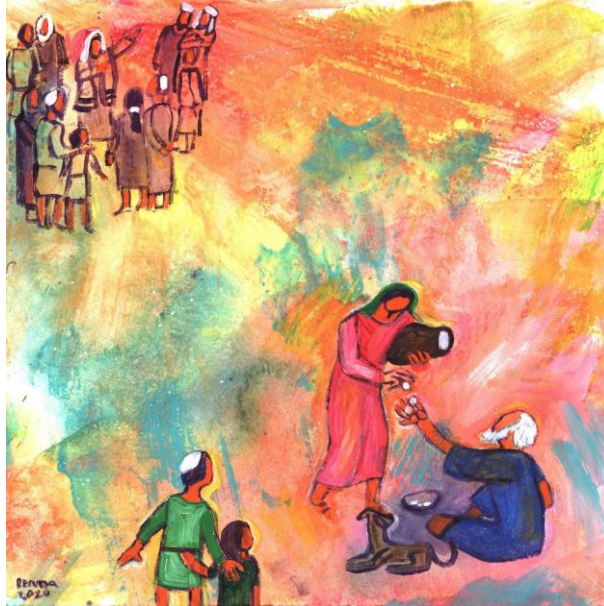
You will feel no need for haste. No need to prove anything or to work miracles or collar people and harangue them, because you know that at the right time God will open doors in those circumstances.

And you will do what you've been sent to do,
say what you've been sent to say.

There will be fruit!

For instance, what about the people we live with. Is it clear that we are to be touching their lives with the forgiveness of God? That we have been sent to them for this one purpose?

Our husbands, our wives, our children, our parents, the old folks.



Your Father Who Sees in Secret

Is God's goodness touching them through us? God's patience? God's mercy? Or are we always up tight?

The people we associate with in our daily work, do we really understand that our presence among them is sacramental? Believers and unbelievers. The attractive ones and the repulsive ones. The ones who accept us and the ones who don't.

Do we believe that God's mercy, God's forgiving grace, is to be touching them through us? San Francisco, New York, China, Africa come later if God chooses to send us there.

Right now he sent us here.

Notice where Jesus read that passage from Isaiah. Not up in Jerusalem or down by the Jordan, but in his hometown, in the midst of the people he'd been with all his life... Nazareth. Among his brothers and sisters and cousins. They rejected him and he went on to other places. But he kept coming back because his ministry to the lost sheep of the house of Israel began right where he was.

If Jesus had not begun in Nazareth and cared about Nazareth, what truth would there have been to his words in Capernaum, Bethsaida, Jerusalem, and Samaria?

In the future God may send us forth to distant places. We may never see our familiar brothers and sisters again until Messiah comes. But for now *we have been sent here*. And here is where we touch lives with the forgiveness of God.

On the evening of that day, the first day of the week, the doors being shut where the disciples were, for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood among them and said to them, "Peace be with you" When he had said this, he showed them his hands and his side. Then the disciples were glad when they saw the Lord. Jesus said to them again, "Peace be with you as the Father has sent me, even so I send you." And when he had said this, he breathed on them, and said to them, "Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained."

John 20:19-23



Receive the Holy Spirit

You will walk in peace, you will dwell under the unction of the Holy Spirit, you will set the captives free and bring to life many who languish in the shadow of death, when you receive those words of Jesus into your heart, and believe that as the Father sent him, so he sends you.

Prayer-

Majestic, kind, Holy Lord send us to the pool of Siloam to wash the blindness from our eyes. We want to know with absolute certainty that your Spirit is upon us, that you are with us, that we walk in the authority of heaven to bring vision to the blind, release to the captives, and good news to the impoverished. Help us to see that our presence is sacramental... that your mercy, your kindness, your forgiveness can be manifested through us. Right now, right here, wherever we are.... give us the vision that this is where you have sent us. Here is where we find the peace you offer us, here is where the holy is manifested in us. Amen and Amen.

Original: REB... Date unknown ... Also found in the booklet- Guidance (available for the asking)

All art: Berna Lopez bernalopez.org



THE LAMB
WHO WAS SLAIN
HAS BEGUN HIS REIGN

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