

**Sermon – Sent One**  
**Sunday October 11, 2020**

What word or phrase would you use to sum up 2020 so far?

This was the question Pastor Steve asked the staff in a Lament Exercise we did last month.

The first word that came to mind for me was the word *disruptive*. This pandemic has disrupted everything - our lives, our relationships, our routines, our sports,.

During the first six months, I spent every day figuring out how to be a stay-at-home parent.

And this was at a time when church ministry was the busiest and most stressful I've ever experienced.

If I had a nickel for every time we've used the word "pivot" in our staff meetings, I'd be a rich man. In fact, I've literally been keeping a tally at our meetings!

So for me, the word I used to describe this season is the word disruptive.

How about you? [What word or phrase would you use to describe how 2020 has been for you? Type it into the chat.](#)

Maybe for you the word is *exhausted*. You're exhausted emotionally from all the stress and pressure. You're exhausted mentally from all the thinking and planning. You're exhausted relationally from taking care of others and spending every moment with the same crazy people.

Maybe for you the word is *exposing*. This season has exposed habits and patterns that you're not proud of. Maybe you're full of doubt about whether you can handle things. Maybe you're more aware of your insecurities and inadequacies.

Maybe for you the word is *hopeless*. This has been a tough year! On top of this pandemic, we've also had racial violence, political division, natural disasters. And things don't seem to be getting any better, do they?

How do you do what God has called you to do when you're feeling exhausted, exposed and hopeless?

Maybe some of you have actually thought about quitting. Quitting your job, your ministry, your marriage, your faith.

What do you do when you're not even sure what God wants you to do anymore?

We're wrapping up a series called *Fixing Our Eyes on Jesus: Finding Our Focus in Uncertain Times*. This series is about finding stability and hope when we're stressed and confused.

This has been a challenging time for our church. As many of you know, the staff have been taking hits. There's been a lot of pain, hurt and confusion. As a church family, we're all feeling that pain together.

What do we do with that? What do we do when we're hurt, in shock and don't even know what to do? We fix our eyes on Jesus.

We've looked at three portraits of Jesus in the Gospel of John so far.

- Jesus as the Good Shepherd who cares for his flock.
- Jesus as the True Friend who lays down his life for you.
- Jesus as the Bread of Life who gives you everything you need.

Today we're going to look at Jesus the Sent One.

In John chapter 20, there's a powerful story about a group of men who had lost all hope. They had spent the last three years of their lives following a man they believed was Israel's Messiah or Anointed One.

His name was Jesus. And they believed that he was on a mission from God to defeat God's enemies and establish God's kingdom on earth.

But three days ago, their whole world collapsed. This man they had put all their hope in was arrested and crucified. Not only that, but he died at the hands of the very people he was supposed to overthrow.

Nothing made sense anymore. The mission was over. Their hopes were dashed.

But what would happen next would change everything. Not just for the disciples but for the whole world. John chapter 20, verse 19 (NLT).

**That Sunday evening the disciples were meeting behind locked doors because they were afraid of the Jewish leaders.**

Why were they afraid? They were afraid that the Jewish leaders would come after them and kill them because they had been followers of Jesus.

I think many of us can relate. Just like the disciples, we live in a world that has been turned upside down. It feels like everything we had worked on has been thrown out the window. We've lost our routines, our normalcy, our hope.

And like the disciples, we're afraid.

- Maybe you're afraid you'll lose your job or your business.
- Maybe you're afraid for your loved ones.
- Maybe you're afraid for your marriage.
- Maybe you're afraid you'll never be the same again.

[What's one fear that you have right now? Type it into the chat.](#)

Just like you, the disciples are living in a world that no longer makes sense.

But then, Jesus shows up. He comes to them in the midst of their fears and speaks the words that would change everything.

How many of you need to hear a word from God this morning? If you want to hear from God, type "Bring it God!".

John chapter 20, verse 21.

**Again he said, "Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I am sending you." Then he breathed on them and said, "Receive the Holy Spirit.**

How do you carry on when you're feeling exhausted and overwhelmed?

For the rest of this message, we're going to talk about three things Jesus gives us. His purpose, his power and his peace.

In the early 1900s, a psychiatrist by the name of Sigmund Freud believed that your primary motivation, what drives you to do what you do – is your desire for pleasure.

In other words, he believed that the reason you wake up every morning, the reason you do the things you do is so that you can enjoy a good life.

Do you agree with that?

One Austrian neurologist didn't. His name was Victor Frankl. He believed that what motivates you most isn't your desire for pleasure – it's your desire for purpose. That what you need isn't to live a comfortable life. What you need is to live a meaningful life. A life that makes a difference. Because **you were created for a purpose.**

It isn't surprising then that Jesus, the most influential person who ever lived, had a clear sense of purpose. This was a central theme in the book of John. Jesus is described as the Sent One. Sent on mission by his Father.

**As the Father has sent me...** [says Jesus]

In fact, over 38 times in the book of John, Jesus is described as the Sent One.

- Sent to the world on mission
- Sent to reconcile the human race with God.
- Sent to the outcasts and sinners so that they might experience the Father's love.
- Sent to heal and restore the sick.
- Sent to bring justice to the oppressed.
- Sent to defeat sin and establish God's kingdom.
- Sent to embody God's love and bring his rule and reign to earth.

Jesus had a clear sense of his purpose. But it doesn't end there. Jesus goes on to say,

**As the Father has sent me, so I am sending you.**

You also have a purpose! Just as the Father sent Jesus on mission, Jesus sends you to continue that mission! To join Jesus in his movement to restore this broken and fallen world.

You have a purpose. [In fact, type it into the chat: I have a purpose.](#)

And that purpose isn't just to make it through this second wave. It isn't to live a comfortable life. So what's your purpose? **Your purpose is to love God and love others in ways that bring more of God's kingdom to earth.**

How do you do this? There are so many ways of living our lives intentionally with God's kingdom purpose in mind. But here are just a few ideas to get you thinking:

- **You can build faith in your family.** God's plan for discipleship starts at home. You can watch the services together, do family devotions and pray together. Your home can be that place where future disciples and leaders are raised up. But building faith at home can be messy. That's why our homes need to be places where we learn to extend grace, love and forgiveness. The home is where children first learn these important skills. How can you be intentional about building faith in your family? Kerri, our amazing Children's Ministry has some fantastic resources on our website. [[cornerstonechurch.ca/starkids](https://cornerstonechurch.ca/starkids)] So please take some time to check them out.
- **You can bless others (eg. friends, students, coworkers and neighbours).** These are difficult times. So many people are hurting and lonely. People need someone who will listen to them, encourage them and help them with practical needs. Jesus sends us into the world, into our neighbourhoods, into our workplaces so that we can be a light for him. We're meant to put God's love on display wherever we go. So who is someone in your life that you can bless? What is a practical way you can show Jesus' love to them?
- **You can participate in Cornerstone's outreach initiatives.** During this pandemic, did you know that Cornerstone has:
  - Written notes to front-line workers, long-term care homes, bus drivers, teachers and neighbours
  - Collected over 100 backpacks to give to local children in need
  - Underwritten the computer and software system for the Markham Pregnancy Crisis Centre so that they could move their classes and services online
  - Underwritten a full season of trauma counselling for two women who have exited human trafficking
  - And these are just a few of the things we've been doing.
  - If you're encouraged by what God is doing through us, type in the chat "Praise God".
  - We'll be updating our website with new opportunities very soon, but there's one opportunity I'd like to highlight.
  - If you're interested in making sandwiches, baked goods or hot meals to be delivered to City Street Outreach or if you're interested in helping with sorting clothes and donations, check out our website for more information.  
[[cornerstonechurch.ca/icanhelp](https://cornerstonechurch.ca/icanhelp)]

Remember, you have a purpose. And it's not just to get through this pandemic. It's not just to live a comfortable life. Your purpose is to love God and love others in ways that bring more of God's kingdom to earth.

Why is this so important?

Victor Frankl believed that having **purpose gives you strength to persevere through adversity**. As a Holocaust survivor he saw this first-hand.

He saw suffering and pain at a level we can't even imagine. But he also saw something else. Prisoners who had no sense of purpose but merely hoped that things would get better, often died very quickly. It wasn't because of their *physical* suffering. It was because they had lost hope. They had lost their purpose.

On the other hand, those who survived the concentration camps faced the same suffering. But they faced it differently. They had more courage and faith. They had more strength and resilience. Why? Because they had a purpose.

- To accomplish a life-long dream
- To be there for their family and friends
- To tell the world how they had overcome this great evil.

Purpose gives strength to persevere through adversity.

Look at Jesus. Jesus was rejected, betrayed and crucified. How did he persevere?

The Bible says,

**For the joy set before him he endured the cross... (Heb 12:2, NIV)**

In other words, what gave him the strength to persevere?

- The joy of doing his Father's will
- The joy of finishing the race marked out for him
- The joy of bringing love and salvation to a broken and hurting world.

I wonder how many of you are so tired, the only thing you want is to just get through the day. To get your kids settled with school. To stock enough toilet paper. To manage your to-do list.

What do you do when you don't have anything left?

**Fix our eyes on Jesus... Consider him who endured such opposition from sinners, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart. (Heb 12:2-3, NIV)**

When you see how there's great meaning and purpose in loving others well in the course of an ordinary day – it won't make all your problems go away. But it will give your life purpose and the strength to persevere.

But in order to do that, you need God's **power**.

**As the Father has sent me, so I am sending you.”<sup>22</sup> Then he breathed on them and said, “Receive the Holy Spirit.**

You see, on your own, you can't do what God requires. Jesus didn't say, Apart from me, you can still make your life work.

What did he say? He said,

**...apart from me, you can do nothing (John 15:5, NIV)**

In other words,

- You can't love the difficult people you're with 24/7
- You can't handle all the stress and the constantly changing updates
- You can't figure out the best plans for your work, life or ministry

You simply don't have what it takes. None of us do. That's why we need the Holy Spirit.

So what does Jesus do next? He breathes on them. I know what you're thinking. If it weren't Jesus doing it, this would be a creepy thing to do. But it's actually full of significance.

In both Hebrew and Greek, the words for *breath*, *wind* and *spirit* are the same word. It points back to when God created man in the book of Genesis. How did he bring him to life? He breathed into him.

And with that image in mind, Jesus now breathes on his disciples. The Apostle John is making a point. Jesus is making a *new* creation. He's creating a *new* people. He's giving them *new* life.

But you can't do God's work apart from God's power.

That's why a great prayer to pray every day is this:

**Fill me afresh, Holy Spirit.**

Fill me with your love, with your healing, with your wisdom.

In the Chronicles of Narnia series, there's a great scene where Aslan, the Jesus-figure in the series speaks to Susan, one of the Pevensie children who's beginning to lose her faith. In this encounter, he says these words to her:

**You have listened to your fears, child... Come, let me *breathe* on you. Forget them. Are you brave again?**

Are you feeling discouraged and afraid? Are you feeling like you're tired and ready to give up?

Come to Jesus. Let him breathe on you. Forget your fears. Are you brave again?

Fill me afresh, Holy Spirit.

And as you're filled with his spirit, do you know what else Jesus gives you?

Twice in this passage, Jesus says *Peace be with you*. Now this was a standard Hebrew greeting that's still used today. But Jesus says it twice. It's a sign that there's more to it.

During his time with his disciples, Jesus promised them that when life gets hard he'll give them his peace.

***Peace* I leave with you; my *peace* I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid. (14:27)**

**I have told you these things, so that in me you may have *peace*. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world." (16:33)**

The peace Jesus had promised, he now gives to his disciples. He now gives to you. You can have this peace:

- When you're anxious and afraid.
- When you're overwhelmed and exhausted.
- When you're hurting and tired.

The Apostle Paul put it like this:

**the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. (Philippians 4:7, NIV)**

How many of you need to experience God's peace in a fresh way today? [If you'd like someone to pray for you at this time, click on the Request Prayer button and someone would be happy to pray for you in a private chat room.](#)

How do you do what God has called you to do when you're overwhelmed, exhausted and afraid? You receive God's purpose, God's power and God's peace.

Our passage this morning was the first time Jesus appeared to his disciples after his resurrection. It's significant that his disciples were overwhelmed and afraid. Why? Because it tells us a lot about Jesus.

- Jesus doesn't wait for you to get your act together.
- Jesus doesn't rebuke you for your failures or your lack of faith.
- Jesus isn't distant or detached.

When you're overwhelmed and anxious. When you're running away and afraid.

What does Jesus do? He comes to you. He draws near to you. He shows you the scars and wounds he suffered because he knows you're going to take hits when you're living out your purpose and mission.

That's why you can have hope. Jesus suffered and died on the cross. But because he rose again three days later, he gives you his purpose, power and peace.

So let's close with the passage we've been using throughout this series that forms Cornerstone's bedrock statement.

**let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles. And let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us, <sup>2</sup> fixing our eyes on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of faith. (Heb 12:1-2, NIV)**