

*Out of Your Comfort Zone: God's Surprising Challenge to Change the World – Week Two*

# **“Lord, Send Anyone. Just Don’t Send Me!”**

*Selected Scriptures*

**Introduction:** Last week I said that God’s formed Israel to be a missionary nation to reach the world (Gen. 12:1-3). Likewise, the church is formed to be a missionary people (1 Peter 2:9). But here’s the brutal truth: From the very beginning, God’s people have struggled to embrace their missionary call. Instead they prefer to cocoon in their own subculture and judge outsiders. Your challenge is to buck the trend.

## **1. PROBLEM W/ ISRAEL – They don’t want to be a missionary nation.**

- A. Abraham struggled to embrace God’s missionary call on his life. Genesis 12:1—25:11
  - 1. Abraham is called by God to be a blessing to all the families of the earth. 12:3
  - 2. Abraham is very slow in going. 11:31
  - 3. Abraham often defamed the name of God. 12:10-20; 20:1-18
- B. Israel as a whole struggled to embrace its mission.
  - 1. First example – Solomon: Compromise with the world (1 Ki. 11:1-2).
  - 2. Second example – Jonah: Ethnic pride (Jonah).
  - 3. The only way God fulfills his call is through pioneers under pressure: Joseph, Daniel, etc.
- C. By the first century, Israel is definitely not on mission. Acts 22:21-20 & Acts 22:21-22
- D. Point – God’s people are unwilling to accept missionary identity call.

## **2. PROBLEM W/ THE DISCIPLES – They don’t want to be a missionary people.**

- A. Modeling – Jesus consistently models his missionary passion for the world.
- B. Teaching – Jesus teaches a clear missionary focus to his disciples. Matt. 8:1, 5-12
  - 1. A centurion demonstrates great personal integrity and strong faith in Jesus. 8:5-10
  - 2. Jesus shows God’s tremendous future for the Gentiles. 8:11
  - 3. This and many other stories are to encourage the disciples with love for the world.
- C. Response – The disciples don’t totally get it. Matt. 15:21-28; Mark 7:26-30
  - 1. A Gentile woman comes to Jesus, asking for her daughter’s healing. Matt. 15:21-22
  - 2. Jesus tests the disciples (15:22-23), then tests the woman to reveal her faith. 15:24-27
  - 3. Jesus feeds the 4,000 in gentile territory. 15:32-39

## **3. PROBLEM W/ THE CHURCH – They don’t want to reach the world.**

- A. Teaching – Jesus commissions his disciples to reach all nations.
  - 1. Notice the repetitions of these commissions. Mission work is job one.
  - 2. Notice the logic of this commission. It follows 4,000 years of teaching.
  - 3. Notice the focus of this commission. It is worldwide & expanding. Acts 1:8
- B. First response – The church doesn’t go.
  - 1. The good news: the apostles do evangelize Jerusalem. Acts 5:28; 6:7
  - 2. The bad news: they don’t get out of Jerusalem.
- C. Second response – The church is forced to go.
  - 1. The good news: the church goes, but only because of persecution. Acts 8:1
  - 2. The bad news: Only the laypeople go. The apostles stay put.
  - 3. More bad news: When apostles do reach the gentiles, they get criticized.
- D. Third response – It took a pioneer under pressure to show the way.

## **4. WHAT ABOUT YOU? – The “ends of the earth” are right here! Will you cocoon with other Christians or enter the fray of personal mission?**

## *Series*

Service as a vehicle for mission

Common ground without compromise

Is the U.S. a mission field?

- A. For the past 1,500 years we have experienced Christendom in the west.
- B. From 1950 to present we are gradually exiting Christendom.
- C. Today we're at a crossroads. Americans must be missionaries within our own culture.