OT: Jeremiah 29:4-14

NT: Romans 10:10-15

GSPL: Luke 10:1-9, 16-24

Heavenly Father, You sent Jesus into our world so that we could be saved. Jesus showed us His love and His power as He healed the blind, the sick, the lame, and the deaf. He also SHARED with us the truth as He spoke Your Word to us. As You have sent Him into the world, so now He sends us. So God give us both power and courage, strength and gentleness to be able to SHARE CHRIST with our WORDS. Open up our hearts and our minds as we study Your Word today in our Life Groups. AMEN.

 I don’t know about you but I sure like it when I am with people who think like I do!

I like to refer to those kind of people as those ‘who get it’. When I am with people who get it, who think like I do, the conversations are easy. We share so much common thinking that many times we don’t even need to explain it…why? Because we get it.

 I think for us as Christians that is one of the reasons we tend to get isolated or insulated with other Christians as we grow in our faith. It’s as comfortable as it is reaffirming that we are right in our beliefs and thinking. The conversations are rich and the shared perspective builds up our faith and our lives.

 However, there is another side to where we are called to spend time. It’s the flip side of that same coin. Those are the conversations that need to happen with those who don’t believe like we do. Biblically speaking these are those who are worldly, lost sheep without a shepherd, sinners without a Savior.

 God instructs us as His people to be about His work. He wants us to Share Christ with our words. He sends us out into the world to be salt, light, and communicators of His love, His freedom, and His victory.

 In the Jeremiah 29 God’s people are very uncomfortable. They are in exile and away from their homeland. They are with people who don’t think like they think. They are in a land filled with false gods and idols and cultural customs that are based on an entirely different world view than the view their faith holds onto. Yet in those opening verses of Jeremiah chapter 29 God tells them:

***“Build houses and settle down; plant gardens and eat what they produce. Marry and have sons and daughters; find wives for your sons and give your daughters in marriage…increase in number there…seek the peace and prosperity of the city to which I have carried you into exile. Pray for it to prosper!”***

 This was horrible news to those of God’s people who wanted to get back to their land, their people, their practices. God was saying…settle down and make residence with these people who don’t think like you.

 SO WHY WOULD GOD TELL THEM THAT? Because God loves lost people. He cares deeply for those who are estranged from Him, hurting, and lured away by their sin and by Satan. His mission and heart beats for those who are lost to be brought back into the Kingdom.

God had His people on MISSION. They were carrying the news of JESUS Christ to a land and a people who hadn’t heard this good news of a savior.

 In Luke 10, Jesus sends out 72 disciples two by two to do the work of God.

 In Verse 16 He makes this point clear, ***“Whoever listens to you listens to me; whoever rejects you rejects Me; but whoever rejects me rejects Him who sent me.”***

 Jesus was sent by the Father into a sinful and dark world to rub shoulders with the sinners and to make peace between man and God, to save, and to heal. He now sends His disciples into the world to be a part of that very work.

 He sends us into the city we live in and the world to do the same work.

 So what do we do? Well Romans 10 states it very clearly.

***“Everyone who calls on the name of the LORD will be saved. How, then, can they call on the One they have not believed in? And how can they hear without someone preaching to them? And how can anyone preach unless they are sent? As it is written: How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news!”***

 God sends us out as His disciples to SHARE Christ with our words. We are to tell people of the Good News that JESUS is the SAVIOR for SINNERS. We do this not only in our actions and by demonstrating well ordered lives of peace but we are also called to share Christ with our Words.

 That can be uncomfortable. After all, we are told that politics and religion aren’t usually good topics for conversations!

 It is so challenging that only 1% of Christian Adults say they have the spiritual gift of evangelism. With so many people in our country who do not know the LORD as Savior it’s easy to understand what Jesus meant when He said…

***“The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few.”***

 Let me ask you are you willing to SHARE? Listen to the story of someone who has joined God’s labor force and the experience of SHARING Christ with WORDS.

**(VIDEO INSERT HERE)**

So are you ready to SHARE?

 Here are a couple things for you to consider as God sends you to your family, your neighbors, your friends, your co-workers, and to those you meet along the way…

1. I believe that the best evangelism is what has been understood as relational evangelism. It is different than handing out tracks or preaching on a street corner. It’s being intentional in building relationships with those who DON’T believe. This relationship needs to be genuine. Care for them, identify with them, journey alongside them. Earn the right to speak about what you believe. Remember no one cares how much you know until they know how much you care.

2. Starting a Spiritual Conversation is important and the groundwork for such a conversation should be set early on in your relationship. Here is an example. Someone asks you about your weekend. You might SHARE with them that Friday night you went to a play, Saturday you went to the kids soccer games, Sunday you went to church as a family, and then after lunch the afternoon was spent with the normal stuff, lunches, laundry etc…all the things you have to do to get ready for the week.

 You see by stating church in midst of that list you send a message without preaching. The other person hears that church is one of your values. As they come to trust you more, any questions or discussions about theology will make more sense when they know this about you.

3. You don’t need to know everything nor do you need to know every answer about God. With all the years and work that your pastors have spent in the scriptures, we would be the first to say to you that we too are still learning. What you should know is how your faith in Jesus has made a difference in your life personally. SHARING your faith is a lot easier when you talk about your journey and it will mean a lot more to your friend.

4. Finally, remember that SHARING the LORD with someone is not a solo act. It takes a team many times to have a person come to faith. Pray that the LORD would use you as a part of that team in this person’s life. Part of that team may be other folks here in the community of St. John’s. Inviting them and bringing them to a church event like Christmas or Easter, or our musical concerts, or inviting them to attend specialty groups that deal with finances, or offering them help through a tough time by attending a group on divorce, grief or recovery could be the very team of believers that they need to help them in their journey to the cross.

 We are blessed by God to be a blessing. And we’ve been saved to SHARE Christ with our Words with those around us!