

Paul, Called to be an Apostle

by Paul van Engelenhoven

This sermon delves into the unique calling of the Apostle Paul as an apostle, emphasizing the direct revelation he received from Jesus Christ and the authority to write inspired and infallible letters. It explores the distinction between the apostolic calling of Paul and the general calling of believers, highlighting the weighty responsibility of being sent by God to bring forth His kingdom into the world. The sermon encourages all believers to recognize their role as ambassadors for Christ and to serve Him diligently in every aspect of their lives.

Scripture: Galatians 1:12, Romans 12:6, Acts 14:14, 1 Corinthians 15:9, Hebrews 3:1

Topics: "Apostolic Calling", "Ambassadorship for Christ"

Description

This sermon delves into the unique calling of the Apostle Paul as an apostle, emphasizing the direct revelation he received from Jesus Christ and the authority to write inspired and infallible letters. It explores the distinction between the apostolic calling of Paul and the general calling of believers, highlighting the weighty responsibility of being sent by God to bring forth His kingdom into the world. The sermon encourages all believers to recognize their role as ambassadors for Christ and to serve Him diligently in every aspect of their lives.

Transcript

Let us open up our Bibles to the book of Romans. We'll read two passages. One is from Romans and one is from Galatians.

Both Romans and Galatians we'll read from chapter one. Romans, we'll do chapter one, verse one. We'll look at the second part or the second phrase of this verse and then we'll go to Galatians chapter one.

This is the living word of the living God. Paul, a servant of Christ Jesus, called to be an apostle, set apart for the gospel of God. We'll now look in Galatians as more carefully as Paul's calling and how the Lord led him in understanding of what he was to preach.

Galatians one, verse 10 to 17. For am I now seeking the approval of men or of God, or am I trying to please men? If I were still trying to please men, I would not be a servant of Christ. For I would have you known, brothers, that the gospel that was preached by me is not man's gospel.

For I did not receive it from any man, nor was I taught it, but I received it through a revelation of Jesus Christ. For you have heard of my former life in Judaism, how I persecuted the church of God violently and tried to destroy it, and I was advancing in Judaism beyond many of my own age among my people. So

extremely zealous was I for the traditions of my fathers, but when he who set me apart before I was born and who called me by his grace was pleased to reveal his son to me, in order that I might preach him among the Gentiles, I did not immediately consult with anyone, nor did I go up to Jerusalem to those who were apostles before me, but I went into Arabia and returned again to Damascus.

Let us go before the Lord and ask for a blessing. Heavenly Father, we pray that the power of your Holy Spirit would come upon us this morning, and we would see your glory. Father, we pray that you loosen us from anything that is off this earth and fill us with everything that is from heaven, from your throne of grace.

We pray, Lord, that you would teach us by the power of your Spirit that we might walk in your way. For we pray this in Jesus' name, amen. Beloved, in Romans 1, verse 1, Paul introduces himself in three ways.

He says, first of all, he is a servant or a slave of Christ, as we saw last week. Then he says that he is called as an apostle. And lastly, he says that he was set apart for the gospel of God.

This morning, we'll look at that second phrase, that he was called to be an apostle. So what is an apostle? How was Paul called to be an apostle, and are there still apostles today? Are there apostles in our midst, or what is the difference between Paul and people today? Now, before we dive into this question, I think we must understand that there is a danger of exalting the apostle Paul so far and so beyond that he is almost angelic, or he is almost similar to the Lord Jesus Christ in divinity, and it can damage our Christian lives. There is a tendency to exalt the apostle Paul above and beyond human beings, and so I've heard many times things like, well, that was the apostle Paul, or, well, that was him, or as though he had a special amount of grace for his own life, or for his sense of calling to God, or anything like that.

What I mean is this, there's a tendency to elevate Paul to an almost popish height, that Paul was so close to God because he was special, and we're not. And so I think there is a danger if we do this, because we will look at Paul's life and think there's no way for us to imitate the apostle Paul. After all, he was the apostle Paul, and I'm just me.

And so when Paul writes, be an imitator of me as I am an imitator of Christ, we think, well, that's beautiful words and a nice encouragement, but hey, we're not the apostle Paul. Well, I think the Bible is very serious and solemn when it speaks to us that we must be followers or imitators or be like the apostle Paul, although he had a specific calling. God extends a call to all Christians.

Solemnly and fearfully, we receive a call from God, a road to walk, a holiness, the same kind of holiness that the apostle Paul was called to, the same kind of loving life that the apostle Paul was called to, the same willingness to suffer as the apostle Paul was called to. God speaks to those who hear. God reveals his will to those who believe.

Now, I think it is clear that Paul had a special calling from God, a special apostolic calling, which none of us have this morning. After all, if you write us a letter, we're not going to add that to the New Testament as divinely inspired scripture. And so we don't have that apostolic calling, but every true Christian in a smaller way is also a send one from God, the child of God with the most holy purpose into this world, directly ordered by God.

And so this morning, I want to look at this word apostle when Paul says an apostle called to be an apostle, what it means. So I will first discuss that there are three kinds of apostles. And then at the end, we'll look at the unique calling of the apostle Paul and the new calling of other believers.

So let's dive in. The word apostle means simply the send one, the one who was send, that is the one who ascend from Jesus Christ. And I think when we hear the word apostle, we think immediately New Testament, the 12 apostles and Paul.

And then we think about those words. But if you think about it, Isaiah 6, the passage we read today, is also an apostolic calling to some sense. If you might know this, that the New Testament believers often read the Old Testament in Greek, the Greek translation of the Old Testament.

And this is part of the words of what it says. I'll read to Isaiah 6, 8 and 9. And I heard the voice of the Lord saying, whom shall I send? The word there in Greek is apostelo. You can hear the word apostle in there.

That's the word that is in the New Testament used for apostle. And so God says, whom shall I send? Whom shall I apostle? Then I said, this is the prophet Isaiah. Here I am.

Send me, apostelon. Send me. Let me be an apostle for you.

I want to be sent by you into the world. And he said, go and say to this people, Isaiah was a send one from God, an apostle with a purpose send from God, a special messenger. Another passage is Jeremiah 7, verse 25.

From the day that your fathers came out of the land of Egypt, that's Israel coming out of Egypt to this day, I have persistently send, apostela, I have persistently apostled. In other words, my prophets were send ones into the world to bring my word to the world. You see, the prophets in the Old Testament were the forerunners of the apostles in the New Testament, the ones that God sent from his throne, calling them to himself and send them out into the world and say, bring my message into the world.

And so the prophets of the Old Testament were, in a sense, apostles from God. And now for a hundred years, for hundreds of years between Malachi and Matthew, there were no apostles. There were no send ones from God until suddenly the apostle of apostles is sent into the world.

We read in Hebrews 3, verse 1. Therefore, holy brothers, you who share in a heavenly calling, consider Jesus the apostle and high priest of our confession. In all the Bible, there were people, many people send, and we say the apostles were the 12 and Paul, but the main apostle is not the 12, it's the Lord Jesus Christ, sent from God's throne from all eternity into the world to declare the word of God. Every apostle or every prophet before Jesus and every apostle after Jesus were simply people that were declaring the word that Jesus would one day bring.

Now, when Jesus ascends into heaven, what does he do? The apostle goes back to the right hand side of the throne on high. What does he do? He sends forth his servants as apostles, send ones from Christ into the world to declare the good news of the gospel of Jesus Christ. You see that? In the Old Testament, we see the God of Israel, Yahweh, sending forth his prophets.

Now Christ is going to heaven. He sends forth his apostles into the world, the send ones bringing the message of God. Now, if we come to the New Testament and we look at the people that are apostles apart from the Lord Jesus Christ, the apostle, there's three kinds of apostles that we find.

First of all, we find negatively the false apostles. 2 Corinthians 11 verse 5 says, Indeed, I consider that I am not in least inferior to these super apostles, as they called themselves. They were bringing a false message.

They said, we have a message from God. You need to be circumcised. And Paul says, I'm not one of those super apostles.

I'm not less than those super apostles. And what he's saying is, I'm an actual apostle and they're false apostles. 2 Corinthians 11, 12 to 15 says this.

And what I am doing, I will continue to do in order to undermine the claim of those who would like to claim that in their boasted mission, they work on the same terms as we do. For such men are false apostles. They're false apostles.

In other words, they are counterfeit people sent from God. In other words, they were not sent from God. They pretended to be real, but they were false.

There were people who identified themselves as apostles that were sent from God into the churches. And Paul says, you're fake. You're false.

You're not truly sent from God. And it's clear because the message you declare is not the message of God. It's clear in Corinthians that these false apostles were misleading people to be turned away from the gospel of Jesus Christ.

So the question is, are there false apostles today? Are there people who claim to be sent from God as apostles into the world, but are actually counterfeit apostles? People that say, we have heard from God. I have put my ear upon the lips of God, and I have heard his very word. I declare it here unto you.

But actually, all they put is putting their ear to the lips of Satan and not of God. Absolutely. Paul warns for that many times.

It says they're going to be false teachers. Actually, we have many people today, not so much in our circles, but in a wider circles who call themselves the apostles of God with the hope that they get the authority of the early apostles. They place themselves next to the early apostles and say, we have as much authority as them, and let us complete this message a little more and declare to you what God has told us.

And so we should be very careful of men who use titles as authority to declare the word of God. It is not according to scripture. There's many men who go out into the world, and may I add women as well, who say we are apostles from God.

We have been sent from God, but they've never sent from God. They never had the sign of approval from God's throne. They don't know the Lord Jesus Christ.

They speak of God as though they know him, but their message leads people, listen carefully, away from Jesus Christ to them. It's the sign of false apostles, people who bring people away from looking at Christ to looking to them. And so what you notice is that people are speaking highly about these apostles, but not so highly about Jesus Christ, because Jesus Christ is simply a means for them to exalt themselves.

And these false apostles, I fear, will only increase as the years roll by. Wolves in sheep clothing, misleading the people of God with pleasant words and stirring the flesh, but destroying pure faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. Well, that's the negative connotation of the apostles, but there's two positives, and I think we need to make a separation here.

There are, first of all, the 12 apostles, and we'll add plus Paul. And this is how we usually find the word apostle in the New Testament. Acts chapter 1, verse 1 and 2 says this, in the first book, O Theophilus, I have dealt with all that Jesus began to do and teach until the day when he was taken up, after he had given commands to the Holy Spirits, to the apostles whom he had chosen.

This is what we read in Matthew and Luke, where Jesus comes and he calls his disciples and they walk with him, and then he sends them out as the authoritative apostles that have been directly instructed by the Lord Jesus Christ. These are what we call the 12. Revelation 21, verse 14 exalts these men.

It says this, in the wall of the city are 12 foundations, and on them were the names of the 12 apostles of the Lamb. In other words, there were 12 apostles sent by Jesus Christ who form the foundation, the wall, so to speak, of the church. These 12 men were sent by God with a special calling.

They were to teach the Word of God purely, unadulterated, and they write it down to us, and so we have the New Testament. They were taught by Jesus directly, and one of none of those is alive today, and so we have no original apostle alive today. The Pope is not the incarnation of Peter in any kind.

There's no authority that he has. Actually, I would say that he has less authority because he misuses the scriptures than any other Christian in the world, and so we have no apostles alive today. Someone says, I am an apostle like the 12 apostles of Jesus Christ.

You can be sure that he is lying. He is deceiving you, and he is not sent from God. If somebody points himself at the range of being able to declare what is true apart from the scriptures, he is a deceiver.

How about the apostle Paul? It's a bit of a problem, isn't it? The apostle Paul didn't walk with Jesus Christ, and he quotes himself as being equal to the 12 apostles. So what's going on? Well, Paul explains it to us in 1 Corinthians 15. Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles, last of all is to one untimely born.

He appeared also to me, for I am the least of the apostles, unworthy to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God. That's what Paul is saying here in Romans. Paul called to be an apostle, a special one sent from God, but Paul says of all the 12 apostles, I am the one untimely born.

I am the latecomer, the least of all of them, because I persecuted them before. So I am the last, the last one, the final one. Paul was the last and the least, he says according to his own word of the apostles.

And so when Paul writes called to be an apostle, what he is saying is this, I am apostle because I met the Lord Jesus Christ because he revealed himself to me. What we saw last week that Jesus spoke directly from heaven is not just a wonderful testimony. It was a declaration from Jesus Christ that Paul was a special apostle, which means it's a long introduction to our text, isn't it? Which means simply this, that every word of the book of Romans is sent by God to us.

Every word, every syllable is the authoritative declared word of God. And we cannot push it down. We cannot break it.

We cannot bend it, but we must be subdued by the word. When Paul writes called to be an apostle, he's not just saying you need to listen to me. What he's really saying, I'm just an ambassador for the king of kings.

What I'm writing to you is not my opinion. What I'm writing to you is the word of God himself. That's heavy, isn't it? We know there's so many people today that that look at the Bible and say, I'll pick and choose.

Let's take a few examples. Well, the Bible says that God does not want women to have authority over men in the church. But hey, we're modern people, right? And nowadays we think that if the man leads, that it means that the man is more important than the woman.

And so we don't like that. And so we destroy and we break that and we say, well, Paul was just a man of his time. He was just writing as in his culture.

When we read the Bible more carefully as Paul is saying, this is from the garden of Eden decided so. This is from the beginning. It's declared this way.

And this is how men and women in the church will be happy and joyful as men lead in a godly fashion as the Lord Jesus Christ leads his church. But nowadays we say, hey, who's the apostle Paul? Certainly I have more understanding. I'm a modern man.

I'm a modern woman. Well, why? Why would I listen to that old man? He didn't even know the technology we have today. Let me take another topic.

Homosexuality. Nowadays it's churches that begin to promote homosexuality as a true form of love. They say, hey, we're not old-fashioned like the Roman Empire in those days.

And, you know, at that time they didn't understand the way we understand today. Now we realize and we take one word from Jesus and we say it's all about love. It's not about man or woman, but man and man and woman and woman.

As long as it's love, then it's the will of God. You see what is happening? People take the words of the apostles and they say, who cares? We're above the apostles. That's why we deal with this today.

Whatever the apostle Paul wrote down is not the word of the apostle Paul, but it's the word of God. And if you have homosexual desires, it's not impossible for you to enter the kingdom of God. You're like every one of us who have wrong desires in our heart from which we need to repent and turn to Christ.

You see, we in this world, what we try to do is look at our culture and try to run it into the Bible. But the Bible's message is clear. We need to come out of our culture into the kingdom of God.

And so as we go through the book of Romans and in every other passage of scripture, we need to understand if we disagree with the Bible, we need to be corrected. If I say I don't agree with that, that's fine. Then I need to change because the word is true and I'm wrong.

So simple, isn't it? People make it so complicated these days. They go discussion upon discussion upon discussion. They try to bring in moral arguments and say, well, well, I know some very nice homosexual men.

Being a homosexual doesn't make you unkind. Being a lesbian doesn't make you unkind. The Bible tells it's a sin.

I have known in prison some very nice thieves, some very nice murderers, very friendly people. We all have sinful desires when we're born. It doesn't make us, if you have homosexual desires, it doesn't make

you unhuman or less than human or anything else.

It just shows that we need to turn to God in repentance and faith. That's it. And if we struggle with those desires, welcome to all of us because we all have desires to fight.

You see that? But if we begin to accept our sin and say, hey, I'm just a guy who lusts more than other guys or I'm just a guy who covets more. I'm a girl who's just more jealous and envious than others. It's just who I am.

We need to come to the Word of God and say, this is what God says and I must change. You see, there's no need to be hateful or just despise one wrong desire above another, but we need to be true and loving and wise. In other words, we just need to share the Word and say, this is the truth.

All right. Which brings me to the last kind of apostle. We may call this the apostle with a small a, although there's no capital.

So depending on what Greek text you read, it's all capital. So the Bible doesn't say this is a super apostle or a capitalized apostle, but the Bible uses the word apostles for people outside the 12 apostles and outside of the apostle Paul. For example, Acts 14.14 describes Barnabas, who is none of the 12, as an apostle.

This is what it says. But when the apostles Barnabas and Paul heard it, they tore their garments and rushed out into the crowd. Barnabas is called an apostle, even though he's none of the 12 or Paul.

Galatians 1.19, but I saw none of the other apostles except James, the Lord's brother. Who's James, the Lord's brother? Well, he was one of those people when Jesus was on earth. He did not believe that Jesus Christ was the Messiah.

He says, why don't you go out? And it says, and even his brothers did not believe in him. But Paul clearly calls him an apostle here. So there were apostles in the early church that were apostles sent by God, but they were not like the 12 apostles.

They were not like the apostle Paul. They were not the authoritative apostles, the foundation of the church. In this case, it refers to brothers who were called to be sent out to be preaching the gospel.

And Paul says, Barnabas was like me, sent out to preach the message we received. People that Paul or that God sent out to proclaim the kingdom of God. Now there's others like Barnabas and James, probably Silas.

There's a text there as well. And God sends different people out into the Old Testament. These men are not apostles like Paul or the 12, but they do have apostolic ministries.

What does that mean? It means a ministry sent out by God. People sent directly from the throne of God as send ones into the world to declare God's word. Think about pastors, for example, whom God has ordained to spread the purity of God's kingdom.

They are not like the apostle Paul or the 12 apostles, but in a way they send men from God into the world. They follow in the footsteps like Barnabas and James, the brother of Jesus, and they're called to be messengers of God's words. And therefore, they have a weighty calling, a burden to bring forth God's word and not to serve men, to bring forth from God his word.

And yet I think we can draw the circle even wider and include, to some sense, all of God's people. Because all of God's people have received the Holy Spirit and a spiritual gift and are sent out by God into the church to bring Christ and the kingdom in other brothers and sisters' lives. In a sense, all of us are called by God.

When we came to Jesus Christ, he brought us not into heaven to himself, but he brought us back into the world to bring forth fruit to him. Jesus speaks about this in a number of parables. Do you remember that? Jesus sends forth servants into the world.

He sends forth servants to bring, to bear for fruit. And then after a long time, the owner of this place comes back and he requires an account for all of them to see what these workers have done. If you're a believer in the Lord Jesus Christ, Jesus has sent you into the world to bear fruit unto him.

You were apostilo, you were apostolized, you were brought into the world to bear fruit to him. Now, you're not an apostle like the Apostle Paul. It's not whatever you write is true.

We are submissive to the word of God and whatever God's word says, we must follow and obey. But in a real sense, God has directly called you to bear fruit. The reason why I bring this out is not to puff us up in some sense, but to understand that this is not some big company, big CEO that sends out and that has managers upon managers upon managers upon managers, and we're the janitor somewhere who never see the CEO of the company.

No, no, no. All of us, God directly communicates with us and sends us into the world to bear fruit. God has sent you if you're in Christ directly.

That's awesome, isn't it? Paul, as much as Paul was devoted to his calling, so we must be devoted to serve God himself. We have stood where Isaiah stood. Send me as real as God called Paul and Isaiah and all the prophets to bear fruit.

So he, by the Spirit, has sent us forth to bear fruit to him. When I was preparing this message, I was almost afraid to write down these notes because I realized this is like the burning bush. This is holy ground, isn't it? We're not coming to church once a week to to hear a sermon that somebody preaches from a word that was written down 2,000 years ago and somewhere long distant in the past, Jesus once upon a time came to the earth and did great works.

No. In this life, in this world, in this place dwells the Holy Spirit, and he is moving in all of our hearts to send us into the world to bear fruit for him. That's holy, isn't it? When we came to Christ, we came, as it were, to the burning bush.

And instead of taking our shoes off, our heart was taken out or replaced by a new heart and then sent forth to bring forth the kingdom of God in this world. So I want to kind of summarize this through the last two points to show the unique sending of the Apostle Paul that we have clear that we're not like the Apostle Paul, that we're not going to go out and write scripture and things like that. But at the same time, that we understand what we are called.

And Beloved, by the way, if what I'm saying is true and according to scripture, you are responsible for what you hear. It's always dangerous to come to church, isn't it? Because it's dangerous for me if I don't speak according to God's word, I will have to give an account for what I preach. But if what I preach is God's word, you will be accountable for what you hear to take this to heart and to bring this in your life.

First of all, what is unique about the Apostle Paul? Paul was sent through a vision, a direct meeting of Jesus Christ. He heard the actual voice of Jesus, which gave him apostolic authority. He said in Galatians 1.12, I received it through a revelation of Jesus Christ.

Somebody comes to me and says, Jesus Christ came to me and gave me a revelation of himself. And I need to tell you this. I say, I'm sorry, brother, I'll read the word.

Jesus doesn't come and appoint apostles as the way he did before. Believers today, we receive through the Holy Spirit, the testimony of scripture. He moves in our heart, but it's always subject to the scriptures of God.

This is the holy, living, breathing, alive word of God. Paul received the gospel from direct revelation, which meant he had an authority that none of us have. If you hear me say something that is not in agreement with the Apostle Paul, you say, little Paul, say you do not agree with the Apostle Paul, so you're wrong.

Right? There's no wrestling with me and the scriptures. If I teach you something that is not in here, that is not an agreement of God's word, it is up to you to tell me. Paul, you need to submit to the word of God.

That's where the order lies. God's ministers today are directly sent from God through the Holy Spirit, but it's not as a revelation of Jesus Christ. We don't meet Jesus in our bodies on earth.

However, it is through an inner calling of God. If a person has a calling to preach, it's the Holy Spirit who urges that person, and if he says, I'm not going to preach, God will force that man to preach. There is no honor, there is no superiority from a pastor above any other human being.

Exactly the Bible says the opposite. We are the servants of all. So there's no authority, there's nothing special about pastors that somehow they have met a certain level of holiness, and then God thought, this is a good one, let me pick him.

No, it's God's sovereign choice. He's going to go out for me, and often he uses the weakest of all. He used Paul, the persecutor of the church, and he says, I'm going to show my grace in the Apostle Paul.

And so I think that in most times when the Holy Spirit picks a man to preach forth the gospel in a public manner, he uses the smallest, the weakest, the most foolish to show his grace in that, so that the man can never boast in himself or in his gifts. Which brings us to our second point. Paul was sent to write inspired and infallible letters.

Paul was given the same authority as Moses, Ezekiel, Isaiah, the Apostle John, and many others to be endowed with the Holy Spirit, that as they wrote, they wrote the exact words that the Holy Spirit gave them to write. Now, a lot of men today like to say that they're that perfect. All right, there's people that say, I, I, whatever I say is right.

I've never taught a wrong thing. If you say that, what you're saying is, I'm like the Apostle Paul. Whatever I say is inspired, infallible truth.

Paul was endowed with the Holy Spirit when he wrote down this letter. It's the Holy Spirit writing to us. We don't have that.

All that we have today is by the Holy Spirit to understand God's Word and bring that forth. If you have a gift of teaching the people in your family or around you or to bring forth the gospel, you don't go sit on a

mountain and hope you receive some revelation of God that you bring forth. No, you pray to God, you read the scriptures, and God will bring the Word of God through you to bless those around you.

It's a different way. Do you see that? Which is perfect, isn't it? If God would be continuing adding more revelations, how would we ever have unity in the church? Now we're all brought under the same word. If you go to a Christian in Korea or Japan or Africa or wherever, you'll find that they've been reading the same word, that they have the same Holy Spirit, they're moved into the same Christ, and they know the same gospel.

One body across the world. In other words, when Paul writes, called to be an apostle, what he's saying is this, I am writing the Word of God to you. What I'm about to lay down before you is not mine, but from God.

Christians today do not have the same apostolic calling of the Apostle Paul. If a Christian today says something that is wrong, we can correct that person that he said something wrong. We don't say, well then you're not sent from God because you made a mistake in your life.

So we go as brothers and we correct the brother in love. We say, brother you're wrong because this is what the scriptures say, and in love we restore the brother to truth. You see that? We now work together under God's Word.

So we come to my final point, the unique sending of believers. First of all, what I want you to go home with today is this, that God still sends his people into the world, into their homes, into their workplace. If you're in Christ, you have been sent with a specific purpose into the world, and it might be to encourage younger sisters in the church, to bring forth Christ into your conversation to other sisters in the church.

That's not something you just pick up and thought, that's nice to do. I'm just coming up with new things. No, the Holy Spirit is leading you, guiding you, and sending you for that purpose into the church and into the world, to bring forth God's love into the world.

God sends people into the world. He sends every believer, that includes pastors who receive the call from God, and it is as holy and as solemn as the Apostle Paul's call. Even though your reach is not like the Apostle Paul, your giftings is not as extended.

I think none of our giftings are extended as the Apostle Paul. Even though we don't have his reach and his ability, we are sent from the same God, which makes our call as holy and as solemn as the Apostle Paul. This is a big deal.

This is a heavy, weighty, glorious call, because it is the Holy Spirit in us, through us, moving the kingdom of God further and further and more fully into the world. And so we must follow in the footsteps of the Apostle Paul with the same intensity, the same diligence, the same sacrifice, and the same wholeheartedness. In other words, we must follow the Lord Jesus Christ as the Apostle Paul followed Jesus.

We are direct servants and send ones from God. It changes things, doesn't it? You grasp the weight of the Christian life, the glory that God from his throne speaks and gives gifts to all of us to use those gifts for the glory of Jesus Christ. That through you, who might not feel so well, who is weary and tired and everything else, God works a miracle to bring another brother or sister to see Christ more fully and worship him more gloriously.

Or when another brother or sister is down, that you come with the love of Christ and your encouragement of Christ, and it is Christ through you by the Holy Spirit lifting that brother or sister out of the gutter and bring him back or bring her back into joyful fellowship with Christ, that you in a way are the extended hand of Jesus himself and his love and compassion. You see the weight of being sent by God. You see the church is not some self-managing firm that Jesus left behind and one day he was coming back to see what happened.

The church is the body of Christ which he controls and leads and guides. The church did not and does not consist, oh sorry, the church does and did consist of God's true servants who are truly sent by God into this world. Do you think about that this morning? You wake up, you're going to work on Monday morning, and you realize I'm a man, I'm a woman sent by God into this world to share the love of Christ and the good news of the gospel.

I'm an ambassador for a kingdom that will last forever. I have a high calling to bring forth Christ into my children, to bring forth Christ to my grandchildren, to bring forth the kingdom of God into the persons that live around me that I find on the street. To be sent by God is a holy calling.

We serve Jesus Christ directly which means he directly oversees our labors. Jesus says, I will be with you if you go to the ends of the earth. I will be with you which means that as we walk through this world, Jesus continuously sees us as we go forth and bring forth his work into the world.

That's glorious, isn't it? When you go into your workplace, Jesus is with you in the workplace. The Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, as Jesus declares, live inside of us. They're always present as we bring forth his word into the world.

Jesus watches over us. Romans 12, 6 to 8. Having gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, let us use them in proportion to our faith, if service in our serving, the one who teaches in his teaching, the one who exhorts in his exhortation, the one who contributes in generosity, the one who leads with zeal, and the one who does acts of mercy with cheerfulness. In other words, what Paul is saying is God has sent you into the world.

Serve as Jesus Christ deserves to be served. It's high, isn't it? It's weighty. Jesus walks with us every step of the way as we serve him, and so we need to walk with special care.

We can't just sit down and say, okay, I'm going to heaven. I believe in Jesus Christ, so one day I'm going to heaven. No, you're sent out with a purpose.

The giftings that you've been given, the reach that you've been given, the opportunities that you're given are God's employment to your soul. Paul was called to be an apostle, to teach the churches the infallible word of God so we can fulfill the will of God in our lives, so we can be prepared and be sent out into the world to bring the love of Christ into our homes, into our neighborhoods, into our cities, into our country, even until the end of the world, bringing forth the gospel of Jesus Christ. So let us not be deceived to think that we are authoritative apostles, but let us also not be deceived in thinking that we're just coming to church one day a week.

No, no. We've been sent by God with a specific gift and a specific calling, and so in a sense we are all called to be an apostle by God. Let us pray.

Dear Heavenly Father, in the name of your Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, and through the Holy Spirit, I pray that you pour forth a supernatural vision of your love, your power, your glory, your strength, that my brothers and sisters would be strengthened and encouraged to go forth into the world and bring the work of Christ and the love of Christ and the life of Christ to every soul that they meet according to the gifts that you have given. Father, we pray this in Jesus' name. Amen.

Video: <https://sermonindex2.b-cdn.net/qJOUh3wJEwo.mp4>

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/paul-van-engelenhoven/paul-called-to-be-an-apostle/>

Grow in Your Walk with Christ

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

www.sermonindex.net