



GOD SENDS

A Responsive Reading

Curt Watke, PhD



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GOD SENDS: A Responsive Reading

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Curt Watke, PhD, Executive Director

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GOD SENDS THE SPIRIT TO CREATE THE WORLD

Responsive Reading Selection 1

Leader

Before the beginning of time and space, God stood at the edge of vast nothingness,
and imagined a universe teeming with living possibility,
and envisioned a companionship walking in a garden of perfection,
and God said: "Let us make human beings in our image."

Group

Then God said, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness." (Genesis 1:26)
and so, God begins his mission in the world today.

Leader

God sends the Spirit to hover over the formless void,

Group

The earth was without form and void, (Genesis 1:2a)

Leader

and in the darkness of the deep, the Spirit brought forth life,

Group

and darkness was over the surface of the deep. And the Spirit of God was hovering over the surface of the waters. (Genesis 1:2b)

Leader

and out of the breath of his mouth, the Spirit brought the world,

Group

By the word of the LORD the heavens were made, and all the stars by the breath of His mouth. (Psalm 33:6)

Leader

and with the creativity of the artist, the Spirit adorns the heavens,

Group

By His Spirit He adorned the heavens. (Job 26:13)

Leader

and out of the depths of the ground, the Spirit brings streams of living water,

Group

You make springs gush forth in the valleys; they flow between the hills (Psalm 104:10)

Leader

and by the breath of his Spirit, he sustains the world,

Group

If He were to set His heart to it and withdraw His Spirit and breath, all flesh would perish together and mankind would return to dust. (Job 34:14, 15)

Leader

and through the breath of his Spirit, he renews the earth,

Group

When You send Your Spirit, they are created, and You renew the face of the earth.

(Psalm 104:30)

Leader

and so, the Spirit continues in the mission of God in the world today.

GOD SENDS THE SPIRIT TO MAKE A NEW CREATION

Responsive Reading Selection 2

Leader

God sends the Spirit, and he convicts people of sin,

Group

And when he comes, he will convict the world concerning sin ... because they do not believe in Jesus (John 16:8,9)

Leader

and by the power of his Spirit, he convicts people of righteousness,

Group

And when he comes, he will convict the world concerning righteousness ... because Jesus goes to the Father, and you will see Him no longer (John 16:8,10)

Leader

and by the power of his Spirit, he convicts people of judgment,

Group

And when he comes, he will convict the world concerning judgment ... because the prince of this world now stands condemned. (John 16:8,11)

Leader

and by the power of his Spirit, he guides people to truth,

Group

But when He, the Spirit of truth, comes, He will guide you into all the truth; for He will not speak on His own, but whatever He hears, He will speak; and He will disclose to you what is to come. (John 16:13)

Leader

and by the regeneration of his Spirit,

Group

He saved us, not because of works done by us in righteousness, but according to his own mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit. (Titus 3:5)

Leader

he removes our heart of stone,

Group

I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; I will remove your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh. (Ezekiel 36:26)

Leader

and by the renewal of his Spirit,

Group

And I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes and to carefully observe My ordinances. (Ezekiel 36:27)

Leader

he makes us a new creation,

Group

Therefore if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. (2 Corinthians 5:17)

Leader

and so, the Spirit continues in the mission of God in the world today.

GOD SENDS THE SON TO BRING GOOD NEWS

Responsive Reading Selection 3

Leader

God sends his Son, Jesus, as the image of the invisible God,

Group

The Son is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. (Colossians 1:15)

Leader

and in the obscurity of a manger, the incarnate Son of God brings great joy,

Group

But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid! For behold, I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people: Today in the city of David a Savior has been born to you. He is Christ the Lord!". (Luke 2:10-11)

Leader

and out of the backwaters of Nazareth, the Son came to save sinners,

Group

This is a trustworthy saying, worthy of full acceptance: Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am the worst. (1 Timothy 1:15)

Leader

and out of the darkness of the world, the Son brings light,

Group

I have come into the world as a light, so that no one who believes in Me should remain in darkness. (John 12:46)

Leader

and in the social networks of the despised, the Son came to seek and save the lost,

Group

But Zacchaeus stood up and said to the Lord, "Look, Lord, half of my possessions I give to the poor, and if I have cheated anyone, I will repay it fourfold." Jesus said to him, "Today salvation has come to this house, because this man too is a son of Abraham. For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost." (Luke 19:5-7)

Leader

and in the pain of the brokenhearted, the Son brings good news to the poor,

Group

The Spirit of the Lord GOD is on Me, because the LORD has anointed Me to preach good news to the poor. (Isaiah 61:1)

Leader

and in the captivity of the prison, the Son brings a message of deliverance,

Group

He has sent Me to proclaim liberty to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to release the oppressed, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor. (Luke 4:19)

Leader

and so, the Son continues in the mission of God in the world today.

GOD SENDS THE SON TO BE THE GOOD NEWS

Responsive Reading Selection 4

Leader

In the midst of everyday circumstances, God Sends the Son to reveal the glory of God,

Group

The Word became flesh and made His dwelling among us. We have seen His glory, the glory of the one and only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth. (John 1:14)

Leader

and in the midst of corruption and sinful desires, the Son enables his people to partake of the divine nature,

Group

Through these He has given us His precious and magnificent promises, so that through them you may become partakers of the divine nature, now that you have escaped the corruption in the world caused by evil desires. (2 Peter 1:4)

Leader

and in the midst of his trial before Pilate, the Son bears witness to the truth of who he is,

Group

Then You are a king!" Pilate said. "You say that I am a king," Jesus answered. "For this reason I was born and have come into the world, to testify to the truth. Everyone who belongs to the truth listens to My voice." (John 18:37)

Leader

and throughout his mission, the Son does the will of God the father who has sent him,

Group

"For I have come down from heaven, not to do My own will, but to do the will of Him who sent Me." (John 6:38)

Leader

and towards the end of his earthly mission, the Son sends his followers, just, as God sent him,

Group

“As You sent Me into the world, I have also sent them into the world.” Again Jesus said to them, “Peace be with you. As the Father has sent Me, so also I am sending you.”

(John 17:18, 20:21)

Leader

and at the end of his earthly mission, the Son gives his life as a ransom for many,

Group

For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life as a ransom for many. *(Mark 10:45)*

Leader

and so, the Son continues in the mission of God in the world today.

GOD SENDS BELIEVERS TO JOIN HIS MISSION IN CREATION

Responsive Reading Selection 5

Leader

God sends the followers of Jesus to join his mission wherever they are,

Group

“But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you, and you will be My witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.” (Acts 1:8)

Leader

and when facing people who rebel against God,

Group

For our transgressions are multiplied before You, and our sins testify against us. Our transgressions are indeed with us, and we know our iniquities: rebelling and denying the LORD, turning away from our God, speaking oppression and revolt, conceiving and uttering lies from the heart. (Isaiah 59:12-13)

Leader

they announce God's reign over the world,

Group

And he entered the synagogue and for three months spoke boldly, reasoning and persuading them about the kingdom of God. (Acts 19:8)

Leader

and when seeing people worshiping the creature,

Group

They exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is forever worthy of praise! Amen (Romans 1:25)

Leader

they announce God as the creator of all things,

Group

Worthy are You, our Lord and God, to receive glory and honor and power, for You created all things; by Your will they exist and came to be. (Revelation 4:11)

Leader

and when seeing people defiling the environment,

Group

The earth mourns and withers; the world languishes and fades; the exalted of the earth waste away. The earth is defiled by its people; they have transgressed the laws;

(Isaiah 24:4-5)

Leader

they announce that we are to be stewards of God's creation,

Group

The Lord God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to work it and keep it.

(Genesis 2:15)

Leader

and when hearing people denying the image of God within them,

Group

For although they knew God, they did not honor him as God or give thanks to him, but they became futile in their thinking, and their foolish hearts were darkened. *(Romans 1:21)*

Leader

they announce that humans are God's image bearers,

Group

So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them. *(Genesis 1:27)*

Leader

and so, the followers of Jesus continue in the mission of God in the world today.

Group

God designed us for mission. God sends us on assignment.

Leader

God gifted you for a reason, and so, how will you join God at work today?

GOD SENDS BELIEVERS TO JOIN HIS MISSION IN COMMUNITY

Responsive Reading Selection 6

Leader

God sends the followers of Jesus to join his mission in the community,

Group

For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them. (James 2:14-17)

Leader

and when hearing people defiantly turning away from God,

Group

turning away from our God, speaking oppression and revolt, (Isaiah 59:13)

Leader

they announce the need for repentance,

Group

Repent, then, and turn back, so that your sins may be wiped away, (Acts 3:19)

Leader

and when watching people who are enslaved to sin,

Group

Jesus replied, "Truly, truly, I tell you, everyone who sins is a slave to sin." (John 8:34)

Leader

they announce freedom from the power of sin,

Group

We know that our old self was crucified with Him so that the body of sin might be rendered powerless, that we should no longer be slaves to sin. (Romans 6:6)

Leader

and in the brokenness of human life,

Group

Each of us has become like something unclean, and all our righteous acts are like filthy rags; we all wither like a leaf, and our iniquities carry us away like the wind. (Isaiah 64:6)

Leader

they share God's love and grace to those who are in need,

Group

How precious is your steadfast love, O God! The children of mankind take refuge in the shadow of your wings. (Psalm 36:7)

Leader

and so, the followers of Jesus continue in the mission of God in the world today.

Group

God designed us for mission. God sends us on assignment.

Leader

God gifted you for a reason, and so, how will you join God at work today?

GOD SENDS BELIEVERS TO BE HIS AMBASSADORS

Responsive Reading Selection 7

Leader

God sends the followers of Jesus to be his ambassadors,

Group

Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, God making his appeal through us. (2 Corinthians 5:20)

Leader

the visible replica of God,

Group

Then God said, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness." (Genesis 1:26)

Leader

and in the hopelessness of estranged relationships,

Group

Once you were alienated from God and were enemies in your minds because of your evil behavior. (Colossians 1:20)

Leader

they announce the message of reconciliation,

Group

that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting to us the message of reconciliation. (2 Corinthians 5:19)

Leader

and in the hopelessness of fractured families,

Group

Don't be like your fathers, and like your brothers, who trespassed against the LORD, the God of their fathers, so that he gave them up to desolation, as you see. (2 Chronicles 30:7)

Leader

they announce the hope of restoration,

Group

I will restore to you the years that the swarming locust has eaten, the hopper, the destroyer, and the cutter, my great army, which I sent among you. "You shall eat in plenty and be satisfied, and praise the name of the Lord your God, who has dealt wondrously with you. And my people shall never again be put to shame." (Joel 2:25-26)

Leader

and in the hopelessness of destroyed lives,

Group

Their end is destruction, their god is their belly, and they glory in their shame, with minds set on earthly things. (Philippians 3:19)

Leader

they announce the hope of renewal,

Group

and have put on the new self who is being renewed to a true knowledge according to the image of the One who created him. (Colossians 3:10)

Leader

and so, the followers of Jesus continue in the mission of God in the world today.

Group

God designed us for mission. God sends us on assignment.

Leader

God gifted you for a reason, and so, how will you join God at work today?

GOD SENDS BELIEVERS TO SHARE THE GOOD NEWS

Responsive Reading Selection 8

Leader

God sends the the followers of Jesus to share the good news of salvation,

Group

He said to them, "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to all creation." (Mark 16:15)

Leader

and in the midst of human rebellion,

Group

Transgressing and denying the Lord, And turning away from our God, Speaking oppression and revolt, Conceiving in and uttering from the heart lying words. Because they had rebelled against the words of God, And spurned the counsel of the Most High. (Isaiah 59:13; Psalm 107:11)

Leader

God's kindness leads to repentance,

Group

Or do you show contempt for the riches of his kindness, forbearance and patience, not realizing that God's kindness is intended to lead you to repentance? (Romans 2:24)

Leader

and in the midst of human sinfulness,

Group

for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God. (Romans 3:23)

Leader

God's mercy endures forever,

Group

But this I call to mind, and therefore I have hope: The steadfast love of the LORD never ceases; his mercies never come to an end; they are new every morning; great is your faithfulness. (Lamentations 3:21-23)

Leader

and in the midst of repentance,

Group

If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness. (1 John 1:9)

Leader

and faith,

Group

For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you profess your faith and are saved. (Romans 10:10)

Leader

we are saved by God's grace,

Group

For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God— not by works, so that no one can boast. (Ephesians 2:8-9)

Leader

and so, the followers of Jesus continue in the mission of God in the world today.

Group

God designed us for mission. God sends us on assignment.

Leader

God gifted you for a reason, and so, how will you join God at work today?

GOD SENDS BELIEVERS TO MULTIPLY DISCIPLES

Responsive Reading Selection 9

Leader

God sends the the followers of Jesus to multiply disciples,

Group

“Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.” (Matthew 28:19-20)

Leader

and when we are saved,

Group

For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. (John 3:16)

Leader

we become a follower of Jesus,

Group

For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation for all people, training us to renounce ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright, and godly lives in the present age, waiting for our blessed hope, the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ, who gave himself for us to redeem us from all lawlessness and to purify for himself a people for his own possession who are zealous for good works. (Titus 2:11-14)

Leader

and when we turn from darkness to light,

Group

The god of this age has blinded the minds of unbelievers, so that they cannot see the light of the gospel that displays the glory of Christ, who is the image of God. (2 Corinthians 4:4)

Leader

we are called to mission as a light to the nations,

Group

"I will also make You a light for the nations, to bring My salvation to the ends of the earth."

(Isaiah 49:6)

Leader

and when we turn from blindness to sight,

Group

And I will lead the blind in a way that they do not know, in paths that they have not known I will guide them. (Isaiah 42:16)

Leader

we are called to mission as a witness for God,

Group

"You are My witnesses," declares the LORD, "and My servant whom I have chosen, so that you may consider and believe Me and understand that I am He." (Isaiah 43:10)

Leader

And when we turn from deafness to hearing,

Group

Incline your ear, and come to me; hear, that your soul may live. (Isaiah 55:3)

Leader

we are called to mission as a proclaimer of the good news,

Group

How beautiful on the mountains are the feet of those who bring good news, who proclaim peace, who bring good tidings, who proclaim salvation, who say to Zion, "Your God reigns!"
(Isaiah 57:7)

Leader

and so, the followers of Jesus continue in the mission of God in the world today.

Group

God designed us for mission. God sends us on assignment.

Leader

God gifted you for a reason, and so, how will you join God at work today?