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## What is Day of the Christian Martyr?

According to church tradition, June 29 marks the martyrdom of the Apostle Paul. This year, Christians around the world will take time on June 29 and throughout that weekend to honor the Lord through the legacy of those who have sacrificed their lives for the advancement of the gospel.

The Voice of the Martyrs invites you and your congregation into fellowship with our Christian brothers and sisters who are persecuted for their bold and faithful witness at any cost.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES ARE AVAILABLE AT [VOM.ORG/MARTYR](http://VOM.ORG/MARTYR) FOR FREE DOWNLOAD AND USE.

## Sermon Builder – What Is It?

The Voice of the Martyrs serves the local church. We desire to resource the local church to the glory of God and the purposes of Christ for the advance of His eternal kingdom. This resource is a tool to help you as you engage your congregation with Day of the Christian Martyr resources. In response to feedback from pastors, we are providing this sermon builder resource to give you a starting place as you lead your congregation's Day of the Christian Martyr focus. It is one option as you preach. Feel free to pull illustrations, content or thoughts as you build your sermon for that day. Be blessed and know that we are praying for you as you lead your church into fellowship with our persecuted Christian brothers and sisters and into a greater obedience to the Great Commission.

**Note About Day of the Christian Martyr Video Featuring John Chau's Story:** As you watch the compelling story of the obedience and martyrdom of John Chau, please know that you may be tempted to think of this type of story as an isolated case. Nothing could be further from historical reality. For centuries, this is exactly how frontier missions unfolds. Someone is sent by God for the purpose of advancing the gospel, makes first contact with an unreached and unengaged people, and then pays the ultimate price for their obedience. There are many examples throughout church history; some that may be familiar to you are The Ecuador Five (Jim Elliot, Nate Saint, Roger Youderian, Pete Fleming and Ed McCully) or James Harris and John Williams in the New Hebrides Islands.

## Sermon Planning—Begin with the End in Mind

### WHAT DO I WANT OUR CONGREGATION TO KNOW AS A RESULT OF THIS SERMON?

God sends every ordinary, surrendered biblical disciple to accomplish His redemptive mission. God's mission is worth any sacrifice biblical disciples may pay as we are bold and faithful witnesses.

### WHAT SHOULD I CHALLENGE OUR CONGREGATION TO PURSUE AS BIBLICAL DISCIPLES?

To listen for their next assignment; to be obedient to what they already know to do as biblical disciples on a mission for Christ; and to embrace obedience with joy even in the face of opposition.

### WHY IS VOM TELLING THE STORY OF MARTYRS?

John Chau and other persecuted Christian brothers and sisters exemplify what it means to be sent to share the message of Christ to those who have yet to hear. They pay the ultimate price joyfully. Enter into fellowship with the global body of Christ and be inspired in your own joyful obedience, regardless of the price you may pay.

*“For ‘everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.’ How then will they call on him in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in him of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without someone preaching? And how are they to preach unless they are sent? As it is written, ‘How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the good news!’ But they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Isaiah says, ‘Lord, who has believed what he has heard from us?’ So faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ” (Romans 10:13-17).*

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## Context of Romans 10:13-17

As we read the epistle to the Romans, Paul writes concerning God’s love for and relationship with Israel. A cursory reading might lead one to the conclusion that the construct of Romans 9-11 only affects God’s relationship with Israel. However, the timeless principles found in God’s Word always inform our present and future.

Yes, Paul went to great lengths to describe how Israel was God’s chosen people, misunderstood that the righteousness of God could only be found in Christ, and pursued the false hope of righteousness by trusting in the law (Romans 9:30). The confession that all who call upon the name of the Lord will find salvation (Romans 10:12-13) indicates that a righteousness pursued through any other avenue except Christ is futile, as exemplified by Israel.

So, Paul is writing specifically about Israel’s faulty trust in the law; however, the backdrop of the foundation he laid in Romans 1 indicates that each pursues their own righteousness (Romans 1:17-23) even in the face of God’s clear revelation (Romans 1:19).

It is in Romans 10:13-17 that Paul specifically addresses the topic of “how”: How do those who are pursuing their own righteousness move from self-reliance to trust in Christ alone? Praise God that He provided a clear understanding of the biblical disciple’s role in His redemptive mission!

## Sermon Introduction

While these words may sound alike and even seem synonymous, there is stark difference in the outcomes that accompany the words *sent* and *went*.

*Went* is the past tense of the verb *go*. *Sent* is the past tense of the verb *send*.

They both connote action and movement. However, the action is derived from different instigations. Basically, I can never *send* myself. Someone has to initiate the action of my being *sent*.

I can go. I can choose where to go. I can choose when to go. I can choose how to go. I can choose not to go. I can choose what I do when I arrive at the place I am going. I can choose nearly everything associated with the action of *going*.

Being *sent* is another matter altogether. **Someone else** chooses to send me. **Someone else** chooses my destination. **Someone else** chooses my mode. **Someone else** chooses what I do when I arrive at the place to which I am *sent*.

Biblical disciples, those who have surrendered fully to Christ and have daily taken up their cross to follow Christ, live as *sent* beings.

Abram didn't simply *go* to a far-off land; he was *sent* by covenant God (Genesis 12:1-3).

The seventy followers of Christ didn't simply *go* on a trip; they were *sent* as sheep in the midst of wolves on their mission from Christ (Matthew 10:16).

Ananias didn't just *wander* into the presence of Saul, the most notorious persecutor of Christians of the time; he was *sent* by God (Acts 9:17).

The Elliots, Saints, Flemings, McCullys and Youderains didn't simply *go* on an evangelistic endeavor; they were *sent* by Christ to the tribe in Ecuador in the 1950s.

And John Chau didn't simply decide to *go* on a mission; he was called and *sent* by Jesus Christ our Lord to bring the Good News of salvation to the people of the North Sentinel Island.

What is it about being *sent* that we need to more fully comprehend and be obedient to? Let's work through some passages of Scripture to better understand the following: *Who is sent? Why we are sent? To whom are we sent? How we are sent? What results from being sent?*

## Who Is Sent?

PAUL DESCRIBES HIMSELF NUMEROUS TIMES AS "AN APOSTLE"  
(ROMANS 1:1; 1 CORINTHIANS 1:1; 1 TIMOTHY 2:7).

- A. The very meaning of apostle in the Greek language [apostolos] is "one who is sent with orders" and applied to the disciples Christ selected, including Paul [Strong's G652].
  1. Specifically, in Galatians 1:1, Paul fills this meaning with some specific information:  
"Paul, an apostle—not from men nor through man, but through Jesus Christ and God the Father, who raised him from the dead."  
"One who is sent with orders" — not sent from man but sent through Jesus Christ and God the Father
  2. The Apostle Peter's language indicates that we who have been "called out of darkness into His marvelous light" are the ones sent.

- a. “But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light.” (1 Peter 2:9)
3. The prophet Isaiah gives an explanation of being sent by God in the beautiful response, “Here I am, send me,” following his eyes being opened to the majesty and glory of God on His throne (Isaiah 6:1-8).

#### JESUS CHRIST OUR LORD SENDS HIS OWN FOLLOWERS...

- A. in the power of the Holy Spirit to cross multiple boundaries (Acts 1:8)
- B. to make disciples of all nations (Matthew 28:18-20)
- C. to model His own mission as being sent from the Father (John 20:21)
- D. to announce that the kingdom of heaven is near (Matthew 10:7)

## Section Summary

Jesus’ instructions were given to ordinary people: those he called from lives as fishermen, tax collectors and other backgrounds. Very few were counted among the spiritual elite (Simon the Zealot and Paul the Pharisee), yet many were called and sent on His redemptive mission, obediently trusting in the power and presence of the Holy Spirit. In reality, they were no different from each of us.

**Illustration:** Show *The Voice of the Martyrs’ “Day of the Christian Martyr” John Chau video*, available at [vom.org/martyr](http://vom.org/martyr) for free download.

## Why Are We Sent? (Romans 10:13-16)

#### PAUL SETS FORTH A LOGICAL PROGRESSION.

- A. Those who call upon the name of the Lord will be saved. (v. 13)
  1. How then will they call on Him in whom they have not believed? (v. 14)
    - a. Belief is expressed in calling upon the name of the Lord.
  2. And how are they to believe in Him of whom they have never heard? (v. 14)
    - a. Hearing about Christ precedes belief in Christ.
    - b. John Chau was sent to a group of people who have never heard the message of Christ.
  3. And how are they to hear without someone preaching? (v. 14)

- a. Hearing about Christ demands a voice proclaiming Christ.
4. And how are they to preach unless they are sent?
  - a. The obedience of biblical disciples proclaiming the message of Christ is foundational to the end result of those calling upon the name of the Lord to be saved.
  - b. Being sent indicates that we have received the message ourselves, trusting in Christ Jesus our Lord.

**Application question:** *Can you see this pattern in your own journey of coming to faith in Christ? Who was sent to share the message of salvation with you? Who, specifically, are you sent to so that you may share the gospel?*

**Illustration:** *Ibrahim, living in the African nation of Niger, is 65 years old and the father of fourteen children. He had lived his life following no religion aside from belief in evil spirits. But Ibrahim now trusts in Christ. He heard the gospel when a young Fulani Christian explained the Scriptures to him, carefully helping him understand that salvation is available only through Jesus Christ. Ibrahim gave his life to Jesus and was baptized in an aboveground cistern. He is now sharing the gospel with others and encouraging his family to also give their lives to Christ.*

*(For more of Ibrahim's story, visit [icommittoprayer.com/request/2215/ibrahim](http://icommittoprayer.com/request/2215/ibrahim))*

## To Whom Are We Sent? (Romans 10: 13-14)

In the text, who is “they”? (“How then will they call on him in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in him of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without someone preaching?” Romans 10:14)

**OPTION 1: “THEY” REFERS BACK TO ROMANS 10:1 — “BROTHERS, MY HEART’S DESIRE AND PRAYER TO GOD FOR THEM IS THAT THEY MAY BE SAVED.”**

- A. This would position “they” to be a specific ethnic group: Israel.
- B. Is Israel to be the only recipient of God’s salvation, to whom Romans 10:13 refers? That if exclusively Israel calls upon the name of the Lord, they will be saved?
  1. Non-exclusive: certainly if Jewish people call upon the name of the Lord, they will be saved, but not to the exclusion of others calling upon the name of the Lord.
  2. Representative: So this option, with a reading of the entirety of the biblical canon, suggests that in the Romans passage, Israel is representative of those who have yet to believe in Christ. (2 Peter 3:9; John 3:16)

OPTION 2: “THEY” REFERS BACK TO ROMANS 10:13 — “FOR EVERYONE WHO CALLS UPON THE NAME OF THE LORD WILL BE SAVED.”

- A. This would position “they” to be everyone who does not meet the first step of Paul’s progressive logic: those who have yet to believe.
- B. This would remind us that people from every tribe, tongue and nation are among the “they.” This includes our local neighbors who do not yet believe, and it includes our global neighbors who do not yet believe.

**Illustration:** *John Chau exemplifies this passage of Scripture. He was an ordinary Christian who saw God’s heart for the Sentinelese people. Seeing them through God’s eyes captured John’s affection, and he obediently responded to God’s call by becoming the one sent to share Christ with them. He prepared for years. He prayed earnestly. He obeyed regardless of the personal cost. He joyfully surrendered his life to bring the redemptive message of God to the Sentinelese.*

**Application question:** *To whom among the “they” is God attuning your heart? Is it an individual who you know does not yet believe? Is it a group of people in your community that seems to be unreached by the Good News of Christ at this time? Is it a people group in another geographic region who have yet to hear the message of Christ?*

## How Are We Sent? (Romans 10:15)

WE ARE SENT *PROCLAIMING*.

- A. The word “preaching,” in the Greek, leads us to visualize one who heralds news, one publicly proclaiming the gospel and matters pertaining to it [Strong’s G2784].
- B. Therefore, we do not associate the activity of preaching in Romans 10:14-15 with the formal long-form communication of a pastor or teacher. It is simply an open, public proclamation of the salvation that is found in Jesus Christ our Lord.
- C. Paul, the master missionary of the early church, tried various methods of proclaiming the gospel:
  1. Reasoning in the synagogue with the Jews and the Gentile worshipers (Acts 17:17)
  2. Proclaiming the gospel in the marketplace (Acts 17:17)
  3. Discussing at the place of Epicurean and Stoic philosophers (Acts 17:19-20)
- D. Yet Paul always stewarded the gospel with which he was entrusted by boldly preaching Christ crucified, and he proclaimed the power of the gospel to transform lives.
  1. Not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God unto salvation (Romans 1:16)
  2. Not in excellency of speech but in preaching Christ crucified (1 Corinthians 2:2)

**WE ARE SENT WITH BEAUTIFUL FEET.**

- A. Paul quoted a portion of Isaiah, and the full verse gives a richer context to what Paul may have been thinking:
1. “How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him who brings good news, who publishes peace, who brings good news of happiness, who publishes salvation, who says to Zion, ‘Your God reigns’” (Isaiah 52:7).
  2. The imagery of “beautiful feet” gives context to the beautiful message of salvation.
  3. Paul also uses imagery of feet in Ephesians 6 to indicate that our feet are shod with the gospel of peace.

**WE ARE SENT WITH GOOD NEWS.**

- A. The word “gospel” means “good news” or “glad tidings” [Strong’s G2098].
1. God’s offered salvation is good news — a message of the gift of God’s grace (Ephesians 6:23).
  2. God’s offered salvation is free from condemnation for those in Christ Jesus (Romans 8:1).
  3. God’s offered salvation is born of His love for us in offering Christ as the atonement for our sin (Romans 5:8; 1 John 4:10).

**Illustration:** *The beautiful feet of those sent with the Good News of the gospel are not necessarily soft or manicured feet. One non-resident missionary working with frontier native church planters — those giving their lives for the advance of the gospel in one of the world’s most difficult countries — often noticed the feet of the church planters he met with. Slipped into flimsy plastic sandals were feet with blisters, callouses, broken and missing toenails, mangled toes and swollen ankles. Despite the physical appearance of those front-line workers’ feet, they were the beautiful feet of those who were bringing Good News to those who were perishing without any hope in Christ.*

**Illustration:** *Roberto, a Mexican indigenous evangelist, has been sent by God to bring the gospel to communities where others will not go. He walks for days to reach these communities, often with little or no food, communication, or adequate medical care. His ministry is dangerous, and he has suffered beatings as well as ongoing threats because of his work sharing the gospel in unreached remote communities. Roberto’s “beautiful feet” bring the message of peace at great personal cost to those who have yet to respond to God’s offer of salvation. (For more of Roberto’s story, visit [icommittoprayer.com/request/2293/roberto](http://icommittoprayer.com/request/2293/roberto))*

## What Results from Being Sent? (Romans 10:13, 16-17)

### REJECTION OF THE MESSAGE (ROMANS 10:16)

- A. Paul indicates, quoting from Isaiah, that not everyone will obey or believe the message of the Good News.
  - 1. Failure is stated as a fact, not as a criticism of the message bearer.
  - 2. Paul wrote to the church at Corinth about those who reject this gospel message: “The god of this world has blinded the minds of those who do not believe, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine on them” (2 Corinthians 4:4).
  - 3. John wrote similarly of Jews who had rejected Christ: “He came to his own, and those who were his own did not receive him” (1 John 1:11).
- B. Jesus himself indicated that he would be rejected by many.
  - 1. “He who rejects me and does not receive my sayings has one who judges him; the word I spoke is what will judge him at the last day” (John 12:48).
  - 2. “Have you not even read this Scripture: “The stone which the builders rejected; this became the chief cornerstone” (Mark 12:10).

### ACCEPTANCE OF THE MESSAGE (ROMANS 10:13)

- A. “Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved” (Romans 10:13).
  - 1. Acceptance of the message leads to repentance.
    - a. “I have not come to call the righteous but sinners to repentance” (Luke 5:32).
    - b. “No, I tell you; but unless you repent, you will all likewise perish” (Luke 13:3).
  - 2. Acceptance of the message leads to life and life abundant.
    - a. “I come that they may have life and have it abundantly” (John 10:10).
    - b. “Again Jesus spoke to them, saying, ‘I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life’” (John 8:12).
    - c. “Jesus said to her, ‘I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live’” (John 11:25).

## PERSECUTION OF THE MESSENGER

(Paul does not address this in this passage in Romans, but the witness of Paul's own life, Jesus' teachings, and persecution suffered by biblical disciples throughout Christian history prompt its inclusion.)

### A. Biblical Teaching About Persecution

1. Biblical disciples **will be** persecuted for righteousness' sake, for their bold and faithful witness.
  - a. "Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven" (Matthew 5:10).
  - b. "If the world hates you, know that it has hated me before it hated you" (John 15:18).
  - c. "Blessed are you when people hate you and when they exclude you and revile you and spurn your name as evil, on account of the Son of Man!" (Luke 6:22).
  - d. "Indeed, all who desire to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted" (2 Timothy 3:12).
2. The goal of persecution is to silence the bold and faithful witness as the persecutor attempts to stop the advance of the message of Christ.
  - a. "And they arrested [Peter and John] and put them in custody until the next day, for it was already evening... So they called [Peter and John] not to speak or teach at all in the name of Jesus" (Acts 4:3,17).
  - b. "And when they called in the apostles, they beat them and charged them not to speak in the name of Jesus, and let them go" (Acts 5:40).
  - c. "But when [members of the synagogue] heard these things they were enraged, and they ground their teeth at [Stephen]... Then they cast him out of the city and stoned him. And the witnesses laid down their garments at the feet of a young man named Saul... as they were stoning Stephen" (Acts 7:54,58,59)
3. Biblical disciples will joyfully pay any price to advance the message of Christ, who is worthy of our sacrifice.
  - a. "And he said to all, 'If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me'" (Luke 9:23).
  - b. "But whatever gain I had, I counted as loss for the sake of Christ. Indeed, I count everything as loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For his sake I have suffered the loss of all things and count them as rubbish, in order that I may gain Christ" (Philippians 3:7-8).

- c. “Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery trial when it comes to test you, as though something strange were happening to you. But rejoice insofar as you share Christ’s sufferings, that you may also rejoice and be glad when his glory is revealed. If you are insulted for the name of Christ, you are blessed” (1 Peter 4:12-14).
- d. “And he died for all, that those who live might no longer live for themselves but for him who for their sake died and was raised” (2 Corinthians 5:15).
- e. “Worthy are you, our Lord and God, to receive glory and honor and power, for you created all things, and by your will they existed and were created” (Revelation 4:11; see also Revelation 5:7-9).

**Application:** *As biblical disciples who trust and follow Christ daily, we are sent by God, like John Chau, to those who need the message of the gospel. We are not responsible for their response to the message or to us as His messenger. Our calling is to be faithful, counting every possible cost (rejection, opposition, humiliation, physical abuse, even death), and in the face of knowing the cost, we view Christ as worthy of any sacrifice that we may make.*

*Our persecuted brothers and sisters in Christ, living and ministering on the world’s most difficult and dangerous frontier mission fields, exemplify that type of obedience every day. They are marginalized, oppressed, abused, imprisoned and even killed for living boldly for Christ. How can each of us be inspired today by their story of faithfulness? How can we pray for those who are living on the frontlines of gospel advance in the world’s most difficult and dangerous frontier mission fields?*

## Corporate Prayer Example as Congregational Response

### A PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING (FROM THE BOOK OF COMMON PRAYER)

Almighty God, Father of all mercies, we your unworthy servants give you humble thanks for all your goodness and loving-kindness to us and to all whom you have made. We bless you for our creation, preservation, and all the blessings of this life; but above all for your immeasurable love in the redemption of the world by our Lord Jesus Christ; for the means of grace, and for the hope of glory. And, we pray, give us such an awareness of your mercies, that with truly thankful hearts we may show forth your praise, not only with our lips, but in our lives, by giving up ourselves to your service, and by walking before you in holiness and righteousness all our days; through Jesus Christ our Lord, to whom, with you and the Holy Spirit, be honor and glory throughout all ages. Amen.