

John Sermon part 2: Send & Receive

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Reading: John 17

Email is a big part of my life. Other people send me emails and I send other people emails. Every day, in and out. I recently did a clear-out of my inbox because it had well over a thousand emails in it and that's just confusing. My husband just lets them pile up & ignores them most, I believe the current tally in his inbox is ...

The office computer has a box in the corner of the screen labeled 'Send and Receive'. That's what you push to wake up the computer to the possibility that a message is either trying to get in or trying to get out. How do you get on with emails?

It is an extraordinary thing though isn't it – I am just old enough to know what it was like to have a job before the days of email, when you had to put a stamp on something and put it in a letter box and then wait 3 days for it to arrive. This instantaneous sending and receiving is quite astonishing.

And actually it fits in very well with the theology in John's Gospel. 'Receive' and 'send' are two of John's favourite words.

Listen again to the extraordinary simplicity and clarity of the sending and receiving process as described in John 17 verses 8 and 18

Jesus is praying to his Father:

the words that you gave to me I have given to them, and they have received them and know in truth that I came from you; and they have believed that you sent me.

As you have sent me into the world, so I have sent them into the world.

It is a clear and straightforward flow

God sends Jesus to us.

God sends his word to us, in the form of Jesus, and using the words of Jesus.

Jesus sends God's word to his disciples.

His disciples have received the word, have received Jesus himself, and so they believe.

The world has on the whole chosen to not receive him, and so they do not believe.

Jesus sends his disciples into the world to continue the flow of word, the word of love, grace & truth.

At each point in the process there is choice, freedom. God in his freedom chooses to send his word, chooses to send Jesus his Son. Jesus in his freedom chooses to work in complete one-ness with God his Father

People can choose to either receive or reject the gift of the word

People can choose to be sent, or not.

So it is with emails. You have to choose to click 'send' (and sometimes it is better to not send!). When I receive your email I can block it, delete it, or open it (sometimes it's better not to open them, especially emails that begin "dearest beloved sister in Christ")

If I open it, read it, and appreciate it I might well send it on again to someone else ... if it is a cute kitten video I might send it to Leith who might well appreciate a cute kitten video.

Let me read John 17 verse 8 again. Listen again for each of the key words, each of them used many times in John's gospel, at the way the interlock and build on each other

the words that you gave to me I have given to them, and they have received them and know in truth that I came from you; and they have believed that you sent me.

The challenge in reading John is not that it is difficult, but that it seems so easy. Our brains skim over this, thinking, 'yeah, got that'.

word. gave. given. received. know. truth. came. believed. sent.

Reading John is a process of holding each of these, letting them sit, sink in, finding yourself in them, letting them find you

This is the action of the Holy Spirit to inspire and build faith, to reveal truth and grow us into maturity in Christ.

Offering