



Four Metaphors of a Sent Identity



As followers of Christ our calling is to bring the gospel message of redemption and restoration to all of the brokenness we see in our world. Scripture gives us various “job descriptions” for how we can live out our sent identity as we engage in meaningful conversations with believers and those who have yet to know God. In this lesson we will look at four metaphors that give us a picture of what this can look like in our everyday lives.



Scripture to Begin

READ:

And he told them many things in parables, saying: “A sower went out to sow. And as he sowed, some seeds fell along the path, and the birds came and devoured them. Other seeds fell on rocky ground, where they did not have much soil, and immediately they sprang up, since they had no depth of soil, but when the sun rose they were scorched. And since they had no root, they withered away. Other seeds fell among thorns, and the thorns grew up and choked them. Other seeds fell on good soil and produced grain, some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty. He who has ears, let him hear.” Matthew 13:3–9

Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, God making his appeal through us. We implore you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God. 2 Corinthians 5:20–21

PRAYER:

God, thank you that you choose to use us, your imagers, to fulfill your kingdom purposes here on earth. We want to be your Spirit-filled ambassadors, your faithful cultivators, bringing your gospel message in tangible ways to this fallen world. Teach us, Jesus, to follow in your footsteps as sent ones so that many may live out the truth and beauty of the good news of your kingdom.

Foundational Principle

- We all have a role to play in bringing the gospel message to people both in word and in deed.

Watch and Read



Heather Holleman:
“Four Metaphors of a Sent Identity”¹



BibleProject
The Royal Priesthood²

The goal of the Christian life is that we be transformed into the image of the Son (2 Corinthians 3:18). The temptation is to view transformation as a product of our actions. But transformation happens as we experience the power of the gospel in the midst of our brokenness. We need Christ to renew us. We need to preach the gospel to ourselves!

And as we apply the good news of God's kingdom to our own lives it begins to affect every part of who we are. We see the gospel not as something I need once for my personal salvation, but something much greater. We learn that not only individuals, but all creation needs the redemption and restoration found in Jesus Christ. Everything will be put in right relationship with our Creator by what our King accomplished through his life, death, burial, and resurrection.

This is the beauty and power of the gospel message and we are named as God's ambassadors, compelled to herald this good news. Living out our "sent identity" will look different based on our context and calling, but we all have a role to play in the grand story. This is exciting!

The Bible also gives us job descriptions of sorts to help guide our efforts. Let's take a look at what scripture has to say about being a Sent One.

“ Christian disciples are sent men and women—sent out in the work of world evangelism which our Lord was sent, and for which He gave His life. Evangelism is not an optional accessory to your life. It is the heartbeat of all that we are called to be and do.”³

-Dr. Robert Coleman,
*The Master Plan of
Evangelism*



The Four Metaphors of a Sent Identity

Heather Holleman, in her book *Sent*, mentions four titles or job descriptions. In any given situation you might be called on to fulfill any one of these roles⁴:

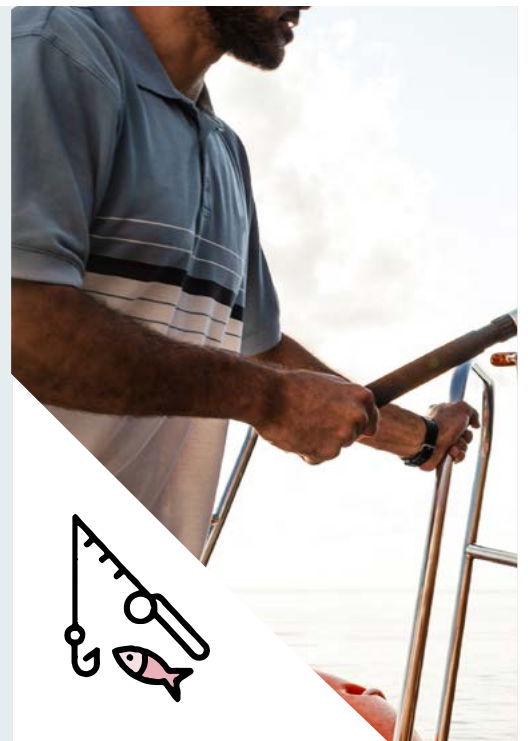


HARDWORKING FARMERS

What do farmers do? They sow gospel seeds, break up hard ground, plant new seeds, and bring in the harvest. The farming metaphor is found in the prophets, like Jeremiah and Hosea, and in 2 Timothy 2:6. Hardworking farmers, wherever they go, work to create good soil so that the gospel can take root and grow. These hard workers always speak from the vantage point of The True Story of the Whole World and normalize the spiritual aspect of this language.

PATIENT FISHERMEN

What do patient fishermen do? They constantly cast out bait and patiently wait for a catch. In this metaphor, fishermen use language that resonates with Scripture and connects with people and spiritual realities. Talking about going to church or praying, or even communicating basic ideas from Scripture, like love or fear, can open the door for meaningful gospel conversations.



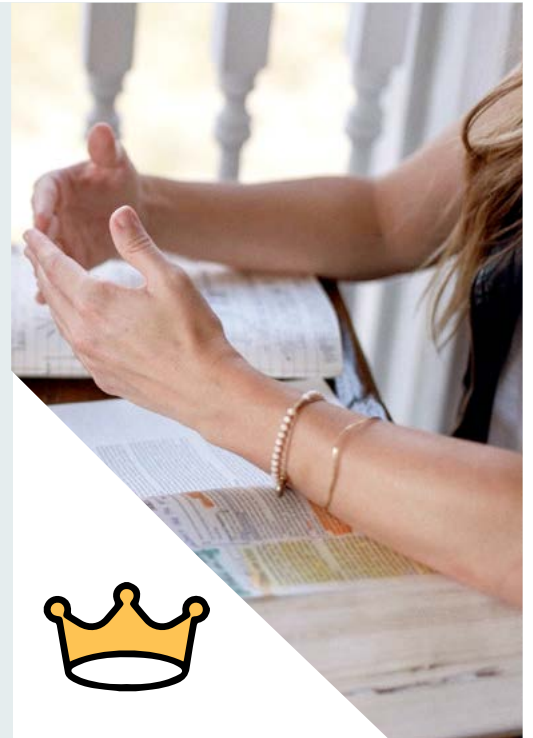


CONFIDENT AMBASSADORS

Paul describes followers of Jesus as “ambassadors” (2 Corinthians 5:17). Unlike farmers and fisherman who share the gospel message, ambassadors are tasked to deliver a message from the leader of their home country. We are confident ambassadors, tasked by God to deliver the message of salvation, regardless of how the recipients receive it.

AUTHORITATIVE ROYAL PRIESTS

The “royal priesthood” describes a beautiful assignment from the Lord. The combination of “royal” and “priest” includes both the highest position in the Roman world and the highest title in the Jewish world in the first century. According to Scripture, royal priests fulfill three duties: pronounce blessings in the name of the Lord, teach God’s Word, and proclaim God’s excellencies as His witnesses. The same is true for us today. In realms where titles matter, knowing that we are royal priests can give us great confidence as we step out into different cultures and societies.



“

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

”



Putting It into Practice:

- Choose one of the metaphors above. How could this title and job description change how you interact with people in your home, neighborhood, and workplace? Jot down five specific activities that you could try as you live out this persona in daily life.



Reflect and Share

After you take time to reflect on your assignments from this week, discuss the following questions with your learning cohort:

What Did You Discover?

- About God
- About yourself
- About the mission of God

Taking It to Heart

Hardworking Farmers - sow, plow, plant, and harvest

Patient Fishermen - extend, wait, cast, draw in

Confident Ambassadors - represent, deliver the message, inform

Authoritative Royal Priests - bless, teach, and witness

- Which biblical metaphor (farmer, fisherman, ambassador, or royal priest) most resonates with you and why?
- Which metaphor do you think you do the most and which one would you like to do more of in your relationships?
- Consider again the [“The Royal Priesthood”](#)⁵ video. How do you see yourself as an extension of his priesthood in relation to your community and your family?



Going Deeper:

Going Deeper is a list of tools for you to continue your learning on this topic, should you choose to do so.



READ: We highly recommend going through the whole chapter 1 in [Tangible Kingdom Primer](#)⁶



READ: Heather and Ashley Holleman [Sent](#) (Amazon) or *Sent* (Moody Press) with 40% Cru discount⁷



READ: [The 9 Arts of Spiritual Conversation](#)⁸ by Heather Holleman



READ: [Sent One Stories](#)⁹



ENDNOTES

1. Heather Holleman, “Four Metaphors of a Sent Identity,” accessed 22 May 2022, https://staffweb.zoom.us/rec/play/WPZFqDDKOq1nCPa2vBa0vFjelG7LRSNgR8WcW0Tx4-5qpZYGpG24DrK_1aNaOrznXgoWEBZLqwCHoJKM.N6poltk-Wa9GJKCH?continueMode=true.
2. Bible Project. *The Royal Priesthood*, accessed 22 May 2022, <https://bibleproject.com/explore/video/royal-priesthood/>.
3. Robert Coleman. *The Master Plan of Evangelism* (Ada, MI: Revell, 2010), 72.
4. Heather and Ashley Holleman, *Sent: Living a Life that Invites Others to Jesus*. (Chicago: Moody, 2020), 55–86.
5. Bible Project, “The Royal Priesthood.”
6. Halter, Hugh and Matt Sway, *Tangible Kingdom Primer* (Gig Harbor, WA: Missio Publishing, 2009).
7. Heather and Ashley Holleman, *Sent: Living a Life that Invites Others to Jesus* (Chicago: Moody, 2020).
8. Mary Schaller and John Crilly, *The 9 Arts of Spiritual Conversations* (Carol Stream: Tyndale House Momentum 2016).
9. Cru. *Sent One Stories*, accessed 22 May 2022, <https://www.cru.org/us/en/communities/campus/lifeonmission/sent-ones-stories.html>.