

# Sermon Note: Sent Out

## Fourteenth Sunday after Pentecost

### Introduction

We are at the end of our Worship with Rejoicing series. As we conclude we explore 1 Kings 8, where we see the grandeur of the temple dedication and Solomon leading the people in worship and prayer. The Ark of the Covenant is placed in the temple, and the glory of God fills the space. This moment is a powerful reminder of God's presence among the people. However, Solomon's prayer reveals that this encounter with the divine is not meant to stay within the temple walls. The purpose of worship is not merely to bask in the presence of God but to be transformed by it—to be sent out into the world, equipped and inspired to make a difference. Worship that doesn't lead to action is incomplete. As we delve into this passage, we'll explore how true worship calls us to respond by actively participating in God's mission in the world.

### Illustration Videos

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NB5uSHCIgS0>

In a compilation of two different clips, Fred Rogers talks about the importance of helpers.

### Video Discussion Questions

1. How does Mr. Rogers' advice to "look for the helpers" during tragic events connect with the idea of being sent out to make a positive impact in the world?
2. What does it mean to be a "helper" in our communities, especially in response to the challenges and tragedies we witness or experience?
3. How can we, as people of faith, take the inspiration from worship and channel it into actions that embody the role of a "helper" in times of need?
4. In what ways can we identify and support the "helpers" in our own lives and communities? How does this reflect the spirit of being sent out to serve?
5. Mr. Rogers suggests that even in the face of tragedy, there are always people working to make things better. How can this perspective encourage us to remain hopeful and proactive in our efforts to contribute positively to the world?
6. How can we, as a congregation, take concrete steps to be the "helpers" that others might look for in times of need?

### 1 Kings 8:1, 6, 10-11, 22-30, 41-43 (NRSVue)

<sup>1</sup>Then Solomon assembled the elders of Israel and all the heads of the tribes, the leaders of the ancestral houses of the Israelites, before King Solomon in Jerusalem, to bring up the ark of the covenant of the Lord out of the city of David, which is Zion.

<sup>6</sup>Then the priests brought the ark of the covenant of the Lord to its place, in the inner sanctuary of the house, the most holy place, underneath the wings of the cherubim.

<sup>10</sup>And when the priests came out of the holy place, a cloud filled the house of the Lord, <sup>11</sup>so that the priests could not stand to minister because of the cloud, for the glory of the Lord filled the house of the Lord.

<sup>22</sup>Then Solomon stood before the altar of the Lord in the presence of the whole assembly of Israel and spread out his hands to heaven. <sup>23</sup>He said, “O Lord, God of Israel, there is no God like you in heaven above or on earth beneath, keeping covenant and steadfast love with your servants who walk before you with all their heart, <sup>24</sup>the covenant that you kept for your servant my father David as you declared to him; you promised with your mouth and have this day fulfilled with your hand. <sup>25</sup>Therefore, O Lord, God of Israel, keep for your servant my father David that which you promised him, saying, ‘There shall never fail you a successor before me to sit on the throne of Israel, if only your children look to their way, to walk before me as you have walked before me.’ <sup>26</sup>Therefore, O God of Israel, let your word be confirmed that you promised to your servant my father David.

<sup>27</sup>“But will God indeed dwell on the earth? Even heaven and the highest heaven cannot contain you, much less this house that I have built! <sup>28</sup>Regard your servant’s prayer and his plea, O Lord my God, heeding the cry and the prayer that your servant prays to you today, <sup>29</sup>that your eyes may be open night and day toward this house, the place of which you said, ‘My name shall be there,’ that you may heed the prayer that your servant prays toward this place. <sup>30</sup>Hear the plea of your servant and of your people Israel when they pray toward this place; O hear in heaven your dwelling place; hear and forgive.

<sup>41</sup>“Likewise when foreigners, who are not of your people Israel, come from a distant land because of your name <sup>42</sup>—for they shall hear of your great name, your mighty hand, and your outstretched arm—when foreigners come and pray toward this house, <sup>43</sup>then hear in heaven your dwelling place and do whatever the foreigners ask of you, so that all the peoples of the earth may know your name and fear you, as do your people Israel, and so they may know that your name has been invoked on this house that I have built.

### Scripture Discussion Questions

1. What is the Ark of the Covenant in verse 1?
2. Why do you think the cloud, symbolizing God’s presence, filled the temple and made it impossible for the priests to continue their service verses 10-11? What does this signify about the nature of God’s presence?
3. In verses 22-30, Solomon prays for God’s forgiveness and attention to the prayers of the people. How can we apply Solomon’s approach to confession and prayer in our personal lives or community worship?
4. Rev. Dr. Derek Webber writes, “We are in the presence of God always. When the service ends, and we head out into the sunshine or the rain we left behind, worship continues. When we wake on Monday, ready to head into whatever occupies our time and our energy, worship continues. In the midst of the emails and the texts, in the meetings and lectures, and the meetings that could have been emails and the lectures that were paragraphs from the assigned readings, worship continues. In the encounters with neighbors and authorities, in answering the incessant questions from the children in our care, in navigating the jumble of emotions as we live in community and relationship, worship continues. That’s what Solomon’s prayer says” What are your thoughts about this writing? Do you agree? Disagree? Why?
5. “When the service ends... worship continues.” What is your reaction to this statement?
6. What is one way you will commit to living out your faith this week, either in service to others, sharing your faith, or embodying Christ-like qualities in your interactions?

### **Additional (Optional) Questions**

1. What was Solomon praying about in verses 22-30?
2. Where does the Bible say God dwells, according to Solomon's prayer?
3. Why is it important to remember that God dwells among us and not just in places of worship?
4. If God dwells among us, what is still important or special about times of worship together?
5. How does Solomon's prayer help us understand the concept of being "sent out" to live our faith?
6. How can you apply the idea of being "sent out" to live in your daily activities no matter where you are?
7. What are some ways you can recognize and celebrate God's presence in your neighborhood this week?

### **Weekly Action**

This week, identify a specific way you can be "sent out" to make a positive impact in your community. Whether it's volunteering, reaching out to someone in need, or advocating for a cause, let your actions reflect the transformation you experience in worship. Consider how these actions can be an extension of your worship and a way to carry God's presence into the world. At the end of the week, discuss your experience with a trusted friend, family member, or spiritual partner.

### **Prayer**

In life, in death, in life beyond death, God is with us. We are not alone. Thanks be to God. Amen.