



The Command to Go
Message Notes, February 11, 2018
Matthew 9:35-10:1, Matthew 28:18-20

The love and compassion Jesus felt for the shepherd-less multitudes was not an end in itself. It moved him to action – to call his disciples to prayer and then to send them out.

Jesus' Command to GO:

1. Is to all Christians

- Bearing witness to Jesus and sharing his gospel is inherent in who we are as Christ-followers.
- The biblical call to GO is clear:
 - Matthew 28:18-20 – “... go into all the world, make disciples, teach them all I have taught you ...”
 - Acts 1:8 – “the Holy Spirit will come upon you with power and you will be my witnesses ...”
 - 1 Peter 2:9 – “... you are a royal priesthood to declare his praises ...”
 - 2 Corinthians 5:18-20 – “... He has given us the ministry of reconciliation; we are Christ’s ambassadors.”
- The more accurate expression for “go” in the Great Commandment of Matthew 28:18 is “as you go” or “as you are going.” This captures the principle that it is not so much about going to a place, but rather a posture of life that reminds me that I *am* a witness of Jesus, all the time, everywhere I go, among any I cross paths with in my life.
- Michael Green expresses this well in his book *Evangelism in the Early Church*: “Believers in the early church went everywhere gossiping the gospel”.

2. Is characterized by a sense of urgency.

- Jesus’ expression of “the field ripe with harvest” embodies this sense of urgency. The harvest is ready. *Now* is the time to bring it in. In agriculture, when the crop is ready, you harvest it! You don’t procrastinate.
- Jesus’ action *steps* reveal his sense of urgency – “Pray to the Lord of the harvest” – i.e., for other workers to join you, because I am sending you out into the field, now.
- 2 Corinthians 5:14 – “the love of Christ compels us ...” We are moved, propelled, for the need is urgent!
- The foundation for this “compelling” response is laid in the preceding verses (5:10-11) – “the fear of the Lord ... “ Because every person will stand before God and give account for their actions, and His righteous judgment will have *eternal* consequence.
- Do we believe this? Do we care for the eternal destiny of human souls, esp. loved ones and friends?



3. Acknowledges the reality of obstacles.

- Jesus gives authentic warning that there will be difficulties in this mission: “I send you out like sheep among wolves; be on your guard against men – they will hand you over, arrest you, flog you; men will hate you because of me.” Matthew 10:16-22
- Many in the world face the obstacles of actual persecution, danger and death.
- Our obstacles here in the U.S. are different:
 - Our own pride and dignity (worry about what others will think of us)
 - Cultural and family norms (discussing personal matters such as faith is frowned upon)
 - Fear that we might offend someone and “run them off.” Rebuttal: If someone is lost and doesn’t know Jesus, they are already “off”; to where can you “run them”?
 - Worldly deceptions. The various “isms” of society: Humanism – people are basically good; Secularism – this world is really all there is/all that matters. There’s no eternity; Relativism – there is no absolute truth, just “my truth” or “your truth.” Anything goes.

4. Jesus promises provision (to counter all the above obstacles).

- His authority – “He called his 12 disciples to him and gave them authority.” (Matthew 10:1) “All authority in heaven and earth has been given me, therefore go and make disciples. (Matthew 28:18)
- His Spirit and power – “And you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you” (Acts 1:8)
- His presence – Inherent in His Spirit filling us, but he also tells us directly, “and surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.” (Matthew 28:20)
- But like all aspects of our faith, we don’t truly experience the Lord’s grace/provision until we need it; until we step out into the call, the challenge, the obstacles. When we step out, in trusting faith, provision comes.

May we embody the heart of the four lepers in the story from 2 Kings 7: When they had come into God’s miraculous provision of food, in the face of their hopelessness, they said, “This is not right for us to enjoy this bounteous provision from God while all the people are still trapped and starving in the city. We must go and tell them of this bountiful food so they may come, eat, and be saved.”

Reflection Questions

1. How would you rate your sense of urgency about sharing the gospel with those who are lost? (Scale of 1-10, 1 being low)
2. If your personal urgency assessment is low, what contributes to this?
3. What obstacles to Jesus’ command to go do you contend with? (see #3 above)
4. What would help you overcome these obstacles?
5. How do the “provisions” that Jesus gives impact your willingness to “step out into the harvest field”?
6. Who is one person you can “ask the Lord of the harvest to send you to” and to lead you in how to connect with them and share with them the gospel?