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"Go!"

Genesis 1: 1-2 Matthew 28:18-20; 2 Corinthians 13:11-13

## INTRODUCTION

After Jesus was raised from the dead, he told Mary Magdalene to tell the disciples to meet him in Galilee. In our gospel lesson this morning, we read of that historic meeting. On that mountain Jesus gave them what we have come to call the Great Commission. Hear the word of the Lord from Matthew 28:16-20.

## PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION

Open our eyes to see your truth. Open our ears to hear your voice. Open our souls to sense your touch. Open our hearts to feel your love. Open our minds to receive your word. In the name of Jesus Amen.

Every year at Conclaves at Camp Cho Yeh one of the staple features is something called "Energizers." I've been a part of them many times. What I have a hard time imagining is 5,000 guys doing one. To give you a feel for what that might have been like our youth would like to share one with you called Revolution.

Energizer

Revolution

Passing the Peace

Thank you for sharing your experiences with us. I'm so glad you had this opportunity. I want you to know that we missed you. Did you miss us? Did you have time to miss us? I know there's at least one thing you didn't miss and haven't been missing this whole summer—Homework.

Whether you realize it or not, before Jesus Christ left this earth, He gave us all homework. Our daily homework is wrapped up in a small two-lettered word that packs a powerful punch. It is the word, "go."

The daily homework of every Christian and every church is this, "Go."

Most of us don't have any problem with going somewhere on a daily basis whether it is to work or to school or to shop or to run errands or to buy groceries, but Jesus said our daily homework is to "Go and make disciples."

The problem is, very honestly - a lot of us are not doing our homework.

Jesus gives us, his students, three wonderful reasons why we should not hesitate to "go" and carry out our daily mission and accomplish our daily homework.

I. God Gives Us His Power To Enable Us To Go

"And Jesus came up and spoke to them, saying, 'All authority has been given to me in heaven and on earth.'" Before Jesus ever asks us to do anything for Him, He does the one thing He knows He needs to do in order for us to do it. He gives us the power and the authority that we need.

We not only have the ability to do this homework - we have the authority to do it. That is so important. I may have the ability to go out to an intersection to direct traffic, but I do not have the authority.

On the other hand, along with the authority comes the ability. Anything that Jesus Christ gives you the authority to do, he also gives you the ability to do.

*In case you don't think that was a big deal to these disciples, do you realize that what Jesus was asking these disciples to do appeared to be impossible?"*

*It was geographically impossible - The entire world had not even been discovered yet. People believed the world was flat and no one knew that there were people that lived all over a world they had not even seen.*

*It was physically impossible - There were no ships, no planes, no television, and no radio and to ask a simple little band of disciples to go into all the world seemed physically impossible.*

*It was numerically impossible - Think about it. He was talking to (at most) about 500 people. How in the world could they go to the entire world?*

*It was financially impossible - The wealth of the entire early church combined was less than the equivalent of \$10,000 American dollars.. How could anybody reach the world on that kind of budget?*

*It was legally impossible - It was against the law to speak, preach or teach in the name of Jesus and followers of Jesus Christ if they took these words seriously, knew they would be persecuted, imprisoned and martyred.*

*It was socially impossible - Christians were considered the discards and the rejects of society and no one would listen to them.*

*HOWEVER, as the angel Gabriel said to a teenage girl named Mary who was told she would be the mother of the Messiah, "What is impossible with people is possible with God."*

With this Commission comes God's commitment to help us carry out the Commission. This is not a recommendation we can accept or reject. It is not a motion that requires a second. It is not up for a majority vote. It can't even be debated, discussed or amended. This is a command from Jesus.

II. God Gives Us His Plan To Encourage Us To Go

Now Jesus gets very specific in His assignment and very distinct in exactly what our homework is. We are to do three things: make disciples, mark disciples, and matriculate disciples.

We are to make disciples of "all nations." The word "nations" is "ethne." It's the Greek word that gives us our English word "ethnic." Jesus commands us to make disciples of all ethnic groups, of all nationalities. I think what Jesus meant was to make disciples "from" all nations. It's impossible to make disciples of any one nation. In all our efforts we have not been able to make the United States a "Christian" nation. The Presbyterian Church originated in Scotland. It is the Church of Scotland. The St. Andrew's Cross is the Flag of Scotland. But it is not a nation of 100% Christians much less 100% Presbyterians. Marge Carpenter, former moderator of the General Assembly was once asked to describe the Presbyterian Church in three sentences. She said, "Started in Scotland. Came to the United States. Gone to Korea."

Notice again that in order to make disciples of or from all the nations, we are to "go into all the nations." We cannot complete our daily homework until we get out of the church and go into the world. As I've said before, the Greek word we translate "church" is "ecclesia." It comes from a combination of two words, "ek" which means out" and "kaleo" which means "called." To be a part of a church is to be "called out." So, we are called out of the world to gather together to make disciples. But we are also called out of the gatherings of disciples to GO to the world to make more.

In addition to making disciples we are commanded to "mark disciples." Jesus commanded us to "baptize them in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit." While it is true that we "ordain" certain people to the office of Ruling Elder or Teaching Elder, every Christian is commissioned by their baptism to GO and make more disciples.

Third, we are to matriculate disciples. ( that was the only M word I could think of to keep my alliteration going) After we baptize them we are to "teach" them to observe "All that I commanded you." Through our Bible Study Classes, our small groups, our Vacation Bible Schools, our sending youth to Triennium we are teaching others what Jesus commanded, and teaching them to observe and obey what Jesus commanded....primarily which it to GO!

The plan is simple. As we go, we are, in our own way to be sharing Christ, leading people to become followers of Christ, baptizing them into a local fellowship of believers and teaching them, so that we can mature them in order that they might also become makers of more disciples.

### III. God Gives Us His Presence To Empower Us To Go

This is so crucial. Do you see how The Great Commission is a joint effort? Jesus is not just asking us to do this for Him. He is asking us to do this with Him.

This is the only time where the teacher gets involved with the student in doing the homework and carrying out the assignment! We GO but we don't go alone.

I want to share one last thing about the word GO. The tense of the verb is more like, "as you are going." That's what I mean by daily homework. As you are going about your daily business...as you are going into the world, make disciples. Jesus is not calling us to make a special trip. Mission isn't a trip. Mission is a daily walk of life.

At Purdue University 5,000 Presbyterian youth made a trip. On that trip they were inspired to live a life of Going. But our Daily Homework is to make disciples as we are GOING\_into our world.

I loved hearing about what our youth shared with us this morning. I pray that what they heard and learned will not only stay with them, but will stay with us.

When we were at the Astros game on July 22, I got an email on my phone. It came from the church email. It was from a man named Chris Ruhl. 39 years ago Chris was in one of the small groups I led at a Youth Conference at Montreat, North Carolina. Yes, I used to go to National Youth Conferences.

*His email said, "My name is Chris Ruhl and when I was 19 and a new Christian I caused all kinds of problems at the Presbyterian youth conference in 1977 at Montreat. You were there and we talked some away from the crowd.*

*There is too much water under the bridge to connect again but thank you for your music, understanding, patience, and counsel to that teenager who was full of excitement but was empty of knowledge. In Christ, Chris Ruhl."*

While some of us were watching the Astros beat the Angels 2-1, I was being thanked for something I said at a Youth Conference 39 years ago.

I emailed Chris back and got his phone number and last Saturday night we got to talk for a couple of hours about the "water under the bridge." Chris is a professor of computer science at Rogers State University in Bartlesville, Oklahoma.

So the question I have for our youth who attended Triennium. Who impacted you this week that would have you contact them to thank them in 2055? The question I have for the rest of us is, "Who impacted you 39 years ago that if you could you would write or call to thank them?" The question I have for us all is, 'What are we doing today that will impact someone now?

A college choir was all set to present a concert of music in a large church. The program of sacred song was to be carried live by a local radio station. When everything appeared to be ready, the announcer made his final introduction and waited for the choir director to begin. One of the tenors was not ready, however,

so the venerable conductor refused to raise his baton. All this time, nothing but silence was being broadcast. Growing very nervous, the announcer, forgetting that his microphone was still on and that he could be heard in the church and on the radio, said in exasperation, "Get on with it, you old goat!"

Later in the week, the radio station got a letter from one of its listeners--a man who had tuned in to listen to the music from the comfort of his easy chair. All he heard was silence until he heard "Get on with it, you old goat!" He took the message personally. He had been doing nothing to further God's work, and this startling message was enough to convict him and get him going again.

Jesus has given us a GREAT Commission. Jesus wants us to get on with it.

In a world where people of all ages are emerging from their homes because of a virtual reality game called Pokemon GO, may we find the motivation to join the Revolution and JUST GO. As I said in my article this week, my hope is that some would come to our church in search of Picachu and instead Pick a pew and find us to be their home away from home that will lead them to reserve a spot in their eternal home in the heavens. Having done that, my hope would be that they would join us in Going into the world making, marking and matriculating more disciples. We are to go and 'catch em all' and more importantly, "love em all."

We have been gathered to grow—changing lives and growing disciples. Having been gathered to grow we are sent to serve and share... the love of God through the transforming love of Jesus Christ. The only way we can to that though is to GO!

Let's pray, Dear Lord, we are humbled by your love for us. We cannot begin to fathom the depths of your love. We cannot adequately respond to that kind of love enough to merit it. We can take our commission to heart and seek through our actions to carry it out. Lord, so fill us with your love that we will not be able to contain it.--that we will not be able to keep it to ourselves.

Lord, You have provided for us so abundantly. You have given us so much opportunity. You have entrusted to us the work of reconciliation. To you we pledge our allegiance. To you we dedicate our service. For you we commit to GO.

We pray for the family of Glenn Reilly whose mother's memorial service was held on Friday. We pray for the family of Martha Hefner whose funeral was held yesterday. We pray for the family of Linda Bronkema, a friend of Ivan and Anne Oakes who died yesterday in Washington State.

We pray for those who serve you by Going to other lands. We give thanks for their courage, which remains a badge for their boldness. We hold high their vision of wholeness as they go about teaching and healing others.

As your disciples went to Galilee and there met Jesus on the mountain, let your world be our area and that same Jesus be our source of strength. Let us go tell it from that mountain to every mountain and valley not only that Jesus Christ was born, but also that he is our risen and reigning Lord.