

The Mission Mandate: Go

Matthew 28:16-20

1. Introduction.

- a. In light of seeing Jesus gathering his first disciples and calling them to follow Him on mission (Lk. 5), we spent last time looking at the Great Commission.
 - i. This was not a calling merely for the original twelve, but for all future disciples.
 - ii. It is a mission that is to be passed from faith to faith, and generation to generation.
- b. In light of the feedback from that sermon, I was asked by several people to consider exploring the concept a little further. So today we will. Many were encouraged to make some changes in their life, but they are wanting to hear a little more of the “how.”
 - i. We explored the three principles of disciple-making, namely, going, baptizing, and teaching. However, I was intentional in not giving any explicit application. The reason is that this mission will look different in each person’s life—and it should.
 - ii. So instead of trying to give personal application, I want to spend some time exploring the underlying principles a little further. This sermon will not be anything new from the last sermon, as much as, it is an opportunity for us to think about the same thing yet once again. However, we will focus on the first principle of disciple-making—“Go!”

2. Review.

- a. Jesus orders His disciples to a mountain which He has designated (16).
 - i. Whenever Jesus taught something critical in the Gospel of Matthew, Matthew records Jesus as having taught it from a mountain.
 1. Sermon on the Mount (5-7).
 2. The Mount of Transfiguration (17).

3. The Olivet Discourse from the Mount of Olives (24-25).
 4. The Great Commission (28).
- ii. The Great Commission is His final instruction before His ascent to heaven.
- b. Some disciples worship, yet other are doubtful (17).
 - i. “Doubt” is not the word for unbelief. Rather, it is a wavering hesitancy at what a risen Christ now means for the world.
 - ii. It is important not to disconnect verse 17 from 18-20. This is the fourth time they have encountered the risen Christ. As a result, this is not doubt at his bodily resurrection. Rather, they are hesitant as to what they are now responsible to do in the light of Jesus’ resurrection. There is uncertainty in their minds.
 - iii. In light of this hesitancy, Jesus not only instructs on what this mission is to be, but also gives some tremendous reasons to have faith for this mission (18-20).
 1. He gives promises to fuel the mission.
 2. He gives promises to fuel radical, risk-taking decisions.
 - a. These are decisions that look foolish to the world.
 - b. These are decisions that, apart from a resurrected Christ, make little sense.
 - c. Indeed, they are what mark the difference between “worshippers” and “doubters.”
- c. Last time, I gave a simple three-point sermon, based on the structure of Matthew 28:16-20, that ought to control our missional-orientation. In 2020, I want our church to:
 - i. (1) rest in the authority of Christ.
 - ii. (2) trust in the method of Christ.
 - iii. (3) bank on the provision of Christ.

3. Principle #1 of the disciple-making mandate– we must “go!”
 - a. Many will understand the participle, “go,” to mean something like, “as you are going...” But this is not completely accurate.
 - i. This interpretation makes disciple-making sound like an appendage to your life. It is not.
 - ii. Rather, when a participle is modifying an imperative, the participle takes on the force of the imperative. In other words, “going” is not an optional component to the disciple-making enterprise. Rather, it is a command to be obeyed, if obedience to disciple-making is to be obeyed. It is a pre-requisite command.
 - b. When it comes to mission (both local and global) we have made a detrimental distinction between “sender” and “goer.”
 - i. There is some validity to this, especially when it comes to global mission.
 - ii. However, this does not detract from the mandate of each individual disciple to be going (in some capacity). If you are not one going to the nations, at the very least, you are called to go to the neighborhood. Every disciple must view themselves as a missionary.
 - iii. Now the degree of this “going,” and what it looks like at a practical level in your life, is subjective; but the mandate to go is very objective. “Going” must be a reality for us. Do not confuse “going” with “sending.” Both are necessary, but they are not the same thing.
 - iv. God is a “going” God. He is a missionary God. Therefore, by definition, if you are a following disciple of this God, then going must become a critical, identifying marker in your life.
 - c. What is the missio-logical, disciple-making reason for our decisions? How do our decisions help or hinder our ability to go?
 - d. A helpful tool for self-examination is to regularly analyze if you are a F-A-T Christian (i.e., Faithful, Available, Teachable).
 - i. These three categories are necessary for you to grow in maturity. They are also necessary for you to be found faithful in your calling as a missionary.
 - ii. Of the three, perhaps the greatest barrier to faithful mission (in our context) is our availability.

1. How are we intentionally creating space to “go?”
2. Again, how are the various decisions we make, and the activities we fill our schedules with, helping (or hindering) our availability?
 - a. Career?
 - b. Family?
 - c. House?
 - d. Hobby?
 - e. Money?
 - f. Etc.
- iii. God’s promise to provide for our needs only comes on the path of mission. Any pursuit that is not in line with mission has no promise of provision attached to it. This is hard to reconcile in an affluent culture, but biblically speaking, God’s provision only accompanies mission.
- e. We now have an unprecedented amount of missionaries being imported onto U.S. soil (the new Roman Empire).
 - i. It bespeaks of how ripe our nation is for the Gospel.
 - ii. The U.S. is no longer filled with the de-churched, but the unreached.
 - iii. Foreign missionaries have now identified the U.S. as one of the most strategic places for mission. The result of this is that “going” could not be easier for as the American Church. We live in an unprecedented time of opportunity. Will we be faithful?

4. Conclusion.

- a. This is why we exist as a church – Missio Dei (Mission of God).
 - i. This is what is behind our strategy for planting smaller, strategically located churches.
 - ii. This is what is behind why we want to strategically locate community groups.

- iii. We need to be asking very intentionally (mission-minded) questions for what we do, where we do it, and why we do it? How can we strategically infiltrate the various areas of our community?
 - iv. We gather as a church to be equipped, but so that we can be sent right back out.
 - 1. For some, this will be the neighborhoods.
 - 2. For some, it will be moving with a church-planter.
 - 3. For others, it may be going to the nations.
 - 4. But wherever it is, staying is not an option. An inward, consumer mentality will stifle our usefulness for the spread of the kingdom.
 - v. The Christian life is to be one of continual, strategic missional effort.
 - vi. Christ is very passionate about His mission. As followers of Him, this is our calling. It is a mandate given to the church. So may we be useful for Him in His call on our lives.
- b. Next time, we will talk about the principle of teaching. But “going” is a non-negotiable, and it is where all true disciple-making must begin.

Small Group Questions:

1. How does your current lifestyle hinder your availability for disciple-making in the area of evangelizing? What is hindering you from being able to disciple within the church, whether that is a potential leadership role, or one-on-one discipleship?
2. Share with the group some strategic ways you can “go” as an individual? How can you better reach the places God has placed you, or the places to which He may be calling you?
3. Discuss ways in which your group can “go” together. What are events or activities you can do to reach the lost people in your neighborhoods and communities? There is no “right way” to do this. Be creative.