

Text: Matthew 28:18-20
Theme: It's Time to Go!

February 12, 2017

As a child, I remember being overly anxious to go somewhere that I really wanted to go. In my eagerness, I'd pester my parents with the question, "Is it time to go yet?" or "Isn't it time to go?" Perhaps I was the only overly eager child, or perhaps not. The words of our text direct our attention to that tiny, yet very powerful word, "Go." As we focus on the words of the Great Commission, as it is called, we consider our theme, "It's Time to Go!"

I. As God's redeemed people, now is the time for us to go. A. But unlike our childhood eagerness, we are hesitant to go. 1. We are hesitant because we fail to realize reality. If Christ returned at 10:00 am this morning, how many people would miss their crown of eternal life simply because no one had made the effort to tell them? If you value statistics, 66% of the people in the world are living with no hope, with no promise of the crown, with no assurance of heaven. Even more startling, one of the fastest growing mission fields in the world is the United States. The reality is heartwrenching because some of those people are waiting for you, for me to show them Jesus.

2. We are hesitant because we don't know how people will react. Those of you who are avid Packer fans, how many of you spend even five minutes of your day worrying about what someone else might think of your avidness? Yet when it comes to matters of eternity, we worry. "Maybe they won't accept my words. Maybe they will view me as being pushy. Maybe they won't do anything which will only make me think I did something wrong." Regarding things that matter most, we are often hesitant to go and the greatest reason for that hesitancy is that we forget those familiar words when we need them most, "I will be with you always, to the very end of the age."

3. We are hesitant because we think we are unqualified. Those of you involved in the workforce, how many of you believe you are over qualified for the tasks that are set before you? One more question, "How many of you realized a long time ago that with every occupation, there are things you can only learn along the way?" We can look at the Great Commission and conclude, "Not me. I'm not qualified." But did Jesus ever check the credentials of His disciples or choose only those who were obviously qualified? Those disciples are the most unlikely bunch Jesus could have ever chosen. What we think doesn't matter. What matters is what God thinks and what God knows.

B. We may be hesitant, but God still calls us to go. 1. As He calls us, He empowers us. Those of you who use cordless drills or other cordless equipment, what must you do periodically so that your cordless equipment works? If you buy a new cordless drill but never plug it in, it's worthless. Left to ourselves, we'd be like that drill that was never charged. But since God is our power source, He empowers us to go. So, it's no longer about us, what we know or what we can do. It's all about what God intends to do through us. As He calls us, He says, "I will supply all your needs. I will give you what you need when you need it to do what I need you to do."

2. As He calls us, He gives us instruction. How many of you only read the instructions when all else fails? As you look at the Great Commission, does it say,

“Go and figure it out yourself. Go and see how things work for you and if all else fails, check back with Me?” As He calls us and as we go, He gives us specific instructions, “Make disciples, baptizing and teaching.” That’s our mission. That’s been the mission of Lutheran Hour Ministries for the past hundred years. God never sends you out without the necessary instructions. Whenever you are sent to touch a heart, you can be sure He will provide everything you need to be effective.

3. As He calls us, we go. While at the beach in Jacksonville, Florida, one summer, a man saw a lifeguard suddenly jump to his feet. He took the Red Cross flag and waved it frantically. Then he grabbed a life buoy and rushed out into the water. In a few seconds, three other guards swam out to help rescue the man. Later that afternoon, the man who witnessed the event went to say thanks for their dedication. Walking into the station, he was struck by a sign on the wall which read, “If in Doubt, Go! What an appropriate sign to find on the wall of every church and on every heart as we hear the command of God to “Go!”

C. What do we do as we go? 1. As we go, we support those working where we cannot go. For the past hundred years, Lutheran Hour Ministries has been going where we cannot go. As we support their work, we enable them to reach people beyond our reach. You may not see lives change before your eyes, but it’s been happening for a hundred years through this single outreach effort. It might seem like your support couldn’t really make a difference. Yet, when we pool our resources God is at work and where God is working, great things are always happening, things we may never know about until we arrive in heaven.

2. As we go, we let our light shine in a world that is filled with lonely, hopeless people, a world that needs our love and care. Dr. Leonard Cammer, a psychiatrist who has specialized for thirty years in treating depressed persons, said, “The human being is the only species that can’t survive alone. The human being needs another human being—otherwise he’s dead! A telephone call to a friend. An occasional word, a ten-minute visit, can be more effective than twenty-four hours of nursing care. You can buy nursing care, but you can’t buy love.” Within this starving world, you can make a difference by being you, by doing what you do as a caring Christian in action.

3. As we go, we realize the urgency. If you cut a huge gash in your leg while working in the woods, would you ignore it until quitting time? If you slid off the road on a snowy day, would you merely sit in your car until the snow melted? Life has its urgent moments, moments when something needs to be done now. Time is running out on this world. Any moment, Christ could return. People around us need to hear, need to see the love of Christ and the hope He offers. They need to know that we care about them, that we care enough to do something, to do whatever God gives us to do believing people will benefit from our sense of urgency.

4. There is no time like the present, no greater need than to expand the population in heaven. Now is the time to be who we are because it’s time for you and me; it’s time for us to go. Amen.