

Text: Matthew 28:16-20

Theme: Someone Needs to Go

June 11, 2017

We are living in the generation of the “someone.” “Someone needs to help that person sitting along the road with a flat tire, but not me.” “Someone needs to fix this broken world, but it’s not me.” There are so many things that someone needs to do, but in our independent-minded, someone else generation, it’s not us. We are quick to admit that there’s a problem, but the rest is for someone else. Our text contains some of the most familiar words in the New Testament. As we look at these words, we are reminded ever so clearly that someone needs to go.

I. Jesus makes it clear that we, collectively, need to go. A. But our frequent response is to find an excuse. 1. I can’t go because I’m not qualified. Of all the excuses we create, this is the most prominent. Look at Moses - “Lord, I can’t speak.” Joshua - “I can’t possibly step into the shoes of Moses.” King David - “I’m too young”. The twelve disciples - “We don’t know what to say or what to do.” It sounds like a broken record, especially when we chime in with our own, “I’m not qualified because” excuses. Yet, at the end of the day, they are what they are. They are excuses, means of avoiding responsibility for a task God has set before us.

2. I can’t go because there are so many other people more suited. It goes something like this, “You don’t need me because there are so many other people who could do that task. Besides, they could do it better than I could. They are a better choice than I am.” We so desperately want to believe that we’ve never used that excuse before God, that we’ve always gone when our God wanted us to go. It’s just that He hasn’t wanted us to go because there are those others who are the better choice. But who are we fooling? We like excuses, to excuse ourselves, yet when God is the one giving the instructions, excuses aren’t what He wants to hear in response.

B. So why does God need someone to go? 1. He needs someone to go because there’s a sense of urgency. How many times have you commented or heard someone else comment that the end of the world can’t be far away? God needs someone to go because time is running out. If no one tells them, if no one teaches them, if no one assures them that a kind, loving, caring God is always with them, what’s going to happen when the end arrives? When that moment comes, it’s suddenly too late. I should have. I wish I would have. Had I known, I would have done. All those statements will be pointless. Someone needs to go now before it’s too late.

2. God needs someone to go because He has chosen to use people to get the message out. We can insist that using people is a bad idea, that a much better plan would be to let God do it Himself, but the reality is that God has decided and once God decides, God doesn’t change His mind. As Jesus says, “Go and make disciples, baptizing and teaching,” He makes it clear that it’s our responsibility. God could do it Himself, but that’s not God’s plan. His plan is to use people talking to people. With that as His plan, someone clearly needs to go or no one will hear the message that will change their lives, that will set them on the path leading to that crown of life.

C. Convinced we need to go, what do we do? 1. We go. We step up to the plate. Whatever imagery or terminology we choose to use, our response is to go. Of the

words Jesus spoke, the word “go” is the most important. Everything else Jesus instructs us to do will fail unless we go. But what does “go” look like? Are we trying to “push” religion onto people who have no interest? “Go” means to do something, but that something needs to be the right something. As we go, we do the right thing by sharing the message with our actions, by offering care and concern, by sharing the good news of Jesus when God opens the door. Until the door is open, it does no good to talk.

2. We go and meet them where they are. As Jesus instructed His disciples to go, did He say, “Go from house to house and say x, y, and z?” As we go, we need to determine the best way to go. Do I go by offering my caring heart or do I go by being a friend and allowing them to become comfortable with me? Do I go by being there for them in the tough moments? Timing and method is everything. Going without a plan, without considering our approach is worse than doing nothing. We need to meet them at their level, on their home turf, in their comfort zone. When we go and meet them where they are, their hearts will be open and receptive to our good news of comfort and hope.

3. We make disciples. If only the chosen twelve had gone out after Jesus ascended into heaven, how far would the message have spread? Jesus says, “Go and make disciples,” because He knows that more will spread the message to more. Suppose you wanted to create a human chain from our church into Medford. Could you do it with a handful of people? Could you do it with a hundred or five hundred? To make it happen, you would need more. As we step into those “someone” shoes, we go by realizing that more disciples is how we get the message out. Because Jesus says, “Go and make disciples,” we focus our energy on making more.

4. We go and teach. Suppose you suddenly became the new owner of Tombstone Pizza. As you walked through the empty plant, you counted the number of people you needed to hire. Then, you put an ad in the Star News offering \$30/hour for each person who arrived until you had your workforce. What would happen if you took each one of them to their workstation and went back to your office and put your feet up on the desk? That’s what occurs when we share but fail to teach. As we teach, the message gets imprinted and when it’s imprinted, it will stick rather than be forgotten the moment we walk away.

5. As we become that someone who realizes the need to go, we remember that He will be with us always. Jesus is the only one who can accurately use always and never. We may toss those words around when we’re trying to make a point, but Jesus doesn’t use “always” idly. As we become that someone, our most valuable piece of information is that God is with us, that He is using us, that He is showing us what to do and when to speak. We may not see results, but never underestimate the power of God. Never forget that, when God is at work, things are always happening even when we think our efforts have accomplished nothing.

6. The generation of “someone” - it’s the generation in which we live. Yet don’t let that stop you because you are that someone, that someone who says, “Lord, for the sake of Your people, I will go wherever You send me.” Amen.