



THE GREAT 'GO' MISSION

And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age." Amen.

Matthew 28:18–20 (NKJV)

A potential danger facing all of God's people is that of loosing our vision for what the Lord essentially called us to do. It's possible to be enmeshed in a church-oriented lifestyle and still lose sight of our primary calling to reach a lost world with the gospel of Jesus Christ.

A number of years ago, a pastor friend of mine spoke with me about his church, who, when faced with an opportunity to enlarge their youth outreach, voted not to do so because they felt better equipped to handle a smaller number of kids.

The church voted this way even though there were three leaders in the church who were willing to take on the extra responsibility that would accompany such a ministry, the over all consensus of the church was not to expand!

What amazed me is that my friends church claimed to be as committed to the Great Commission as anyone. How skewed our vision for evangelism can become! Many congregations, as well as individual Believers, will acknowledge our Lords command to "go into all the world," but often regulate it to missions giving or to missions education, all the while never seeing that WE are called to be missionaries ourselves.

I'm all in favor of teaching about and giving to the work of missions around the world, but not to the exclusion of our own personal responsibility to "do the work of an evangelist..." (2Tim.4:5b).

It's easy to teach and to give our money to this great challenge. But, to turn around and not want to reach deeper into our own "Jerusalem" because the added responsibility might inconvenience us, or put a greater financial burden on us, only reveals a mentality that really doesn't understand the very heart of our Lords command to "GO YE..." (KJV) Don't miss the "ye" part! And don't make the mistake of thinking the "go ye" is necessarily a call to pack up and move to some region of the globe that is foreign to you. God isn't calling all of us to go to some remote area, set up a hut, befriend the natives and draw pictures of Gods plan of salvation in the dirt with a stick. He has, however, called all of His children to the mission field, even if it's only sharing the gospel of Christ with the neighbor next door.

The word "GO" in Matthew 28:19 is a significant verb. A literal rendering of the Greek text would read "As you go...." In other words, as you are going, make disciples, baptize, and teach. It's not that we stop all other activities to "go into all the world," it is more that as you are going through life, make evangelism part of your lifestyle.

What also concerns me about my friend's church is not just their limited vision to reach the youth in their community, but also the reasoning behind such a decision. They felt "better equipped" to minister to a smaller group of young people. Of course, the underlying implication is that they can only do what their limited resources allow them to do.

This mentality begs the question, Is God not our greatest resource for carrying out the great "GO-mission?" Before Jesus said, "Go into all the world", didn't He first say, "All power is given unto me in heaven and earth?"

A churches problems are never due to a lack of resources to accomplish what God calls them to do. Our greatest failure is that we often separate His promise from His provision. God never calls us to do what He doesn't also equip us to do it with.

Tucked away in 1 Chronicles are two verses that briefly mention a man named Jabez. We know little about him, because these are the only verses in the Bible that mention his name. Perhaps you've never read of him before, so here are the two verses about him.

Now Jabez was more honorable than his brothers, and his mother called his name Jabez, saying, "Because I bore him in pain." And Jabez called on the God of Israel saying, "Oh, that You would bless me indeed, and enlarge my territory, that Your hand would be with me, and that You would keep me from evil, that I may not cause pain!" So God granted him what he requested.

1 Chronicles 4:9–10 (NKJV)

It's the "enlarge my territory" part that impresses me. Here is a man that asks God to give him a greater area. If you think about it, that takes some courage. Realistically, that will mean greater responsibility, added cost in maintenance and probably more personnel to handle the work that having a "larger territory" would bring.

That kind of prayer would make the average finance committee somewhat nervous. There are always a few headaches that comes with any type of growth. When a church begins to expand its ministry base, you can count on some difficulties. But let us never decide not to grow simply because we don't think we are equipped or because to do so would only add a greater burden on the church. That kind of thinking never got the church of our Lord Jesus Christ anywhere!

Some people look at a mountain and see an obstacle. Others see the same mountain and view it as a opportunity. I hope that will always be the perspective of our Grace Baptist family. That is the kind of missionary spirit that most honors the Christ who tells us to go.

Just some Food For Thought...

~ Pastor Frank

