

## Women & More

### “Go”—*Make Disciples*

3 May 2012

“Then Jesus came to them and said, ‘All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore, **go and make disciples of all nations...**’” Jesus is talking with his beloved twelve, after he’d risen from the dead and just before he returned to the Father. He had appeared to many people before his ascension, but his final words of instruction go to his disciples—his *followers*—then and now!

But before we can **“go” for him**, we have to **“come” to him!** Scripture overflows with his invitation for us to come...and when God bids us come, it’s always to a good thing. • Coming from the Old Testament:

Psalms 66:5, 16 **“Come** and see what God has done, how awesome his works in man’s behalf!

16 **“Come** and listen, all you who fear God; let me tell you what he has done for me.”

Psalms 95:1-2, 6 **“Come**, let us sing for joy to the Lord; let us shout aloud to the Rock of our salvation. 2 Let us **come** before him with thanksgiving and extol him with music and song.

6 **“Come**, let us bow down in worship, let us kneel before the LORD our Maker...”

Psalms 96:8b “...bring an offering and **come** into his courts.”

Psalms 100:2 “Worship the LORD with gladness; **come** before him with joyful songs.”

Isaiah 1:18 **“Come** now, let us reason together,’ says the LORD. ‘Though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are red as crimson, they shall be like wool.’”

Isaiah 48:16 **“Come** near me, and listen to this: From the first announcement I have not spoken in secret; at the time it happens I am there.”

Isaiah 55:1 **“Come**, all you who are thirsty, **come** to the waters; and you who have no money, **come**, buy and eat! **Come**, buy wine and milk without money and without cost.”

• Coming from the Gospels:

Matthew 11:28 **“Come** to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest.”

Matthew 25:34 “...**Come**, you blessed by my Father; take your inheritance, the Kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world.”

Mark 1:17 **“Come, follow me,’ Jesus said, ‘and I will make you fishers of men.’”**

Mark 6:31 **“Come** with me by yourselves to a quiet place and get some rest.”

In John 1:39 Jesus’ disciples had asked him where he was staying, and Jesus responds: **“‘Come,’ he replied, ‘and you will see.’”** Verse 40 goes on to say that they went and spent the day with him!

John 21:12 “Jesus said to them, **‘Come** and have breakfast.” This was after the great catch of 153 fish, that Jesus invites his disciples to breakfast.

And there are more. Notice that throughout Scripture Jesus has invited us to “come” to so many good places: He says, “Come” see, listen, sing, shout, extol, bow, kneel, worship, bring an offering into His courts, and then “come” and reason together with the Lord Himself. “Come” thirsty, buy and eat without money. “Come” weary and burdened. “Come” blessed of the Father. “Come” follow, “come” rest, and “come” and have breakfast. **Have we come to him? Have we come for salvation, for His sovereign rule in our lives, for His generous wisdom and guidance...?** Is there any good thing that the Lord won’t invite us to “come” to Him for? This is his gracious and overflowing plan for us, to “come” to him for anything and everything and bask in his providential provision daily, and...

Then the Lord Jesus tells us to do something for Him—something for others—he tells us to “go.” And how on earth can we say “no”? He asked the Prophet Isaiah “*Who will go for us?*” and Isaiah responded in 6:8: “*Here am I. Send me!*” What will be our response to Jesus in his *Great Commission*?

**Matthew 28:18-20** “*Then Jesus came to them (his disciples) and said, ‘All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. 19Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, 20and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.’*”

I. **Jesus has been given all authority by the Father**, so what he says goes! In John 17:18 Jesus says to God, as he’s ready to leave the earth: “*As you sent me into the world, I have sent them.*” Those of us that have “come” to Christ, he will send out into a world that does not know him to tell them about his great salvation—the gospel, the way to God—that’s our job now. And he specifically says that we are to *go to all nations*. John Wesley claimed, “The world is my parish” (ref: Matthew 28:19). Jesus was sent to die for us, and now he will send us to live for him.

II. And because of that authority...**therefore we’re to “go” and make disciples**. **The reason for the “go” is to make disciples!** And we should think of “disciples” not only as people who have already come to Christ (followers), but people who don’t know Christ yet, those that we need “**to make disciples.**” We too often think of making disciples only in terms of discipleship where we’re teaching people to grow in their faith, and follow Christ so that they can reproduce—like in *Women & More*. But “**making disciples**” is **bringing lost people to Christ!**

III. **We are to baptize them** after they have received salvation through faith in Christ. Baptism shows the world—a picture of our faith—that we belong to Jesus Christ, and it’s a testimony of his grace at work in our lives. We may not do it ourselves, personally baptize them, but we’ll teach them about baptism, encourage them to be baptized, and an overseer will baptize them.

IV. **And then we are to teach them, Scripture says.** There are opportunities to daily teach along the way with our children; our neighbors, our friends and in the places we go like the beauty salon.... And we want to take advantage of those opportunities that we may have to teach non-verbally, by the way we live our lives, and to teach verbally in those golden opportunities that the Spirit will give us.

V. We won’t do any of it alone—**He is with us always** to the very end of the age. We’ve said it before: God never asks us to do anything that he intends for us to do without him, and witnessing is no exception. Two major elements about witnessing should serve to set us free from worry or anxiety:

**FIRST:** Acts 1:8 says that **He**, the Spirit of God, **makes us witnesses.** *“But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.”* Our witness begins where we are—our own town. The Holy Spirit lives within us, once we know him by faith in Christ, and he will give us that ‘holy nudge’. He will literally give us the words. We don’t have to *make it happen*; we don’t have to fret and stew about what we are going to say, or how we are going to say it or if it’s the right time. We’re going to know that it’s the appointed time to open our mouths for Christ if we’ve been staying connected to the Vine and daily “coming” to him and praying for the lost.

But it’s not only what the Spirit of God uses us to say, it’s our lives: the way we live before our neighbors, friends and family. **People that don’t know Christ can catch so much from our lives, often more than from our words—as long as they match up!** In Psalm 96, it clearly says that we are to: *“Declare to all peoples the glory and wonder of God.”* In conversation, we can point people’s hearts to God as we’re moving through the day. In this whole Psalm it speaks to the fact that our strength is in Him; He reigns; He is the Lord of life!

**SECOND:** When Luke wrote about that last time Jesus was with his disciples, he said that **being witnesses for Christ will happen**; it will take place, and we will witness. What kind of witnesses are we, and will we be a part of making disciples to know Jesus? We never know what God might use

in order to bring somebody to Christ by the way we live or what we say. What is God’s heart for the unbeliever, the hurting? Clearly, his heart is to go after them! How closely do our hearts resonate with God’s heart?

John 21:15-17 records Jesus asking Peter if he loved Him and Peter’s response. Each time Peter said he loved Jesus, Jesus told him to “*Feed my lambs,*” “*Take care of my sheep,*” and “*Feed my sheep.*” If you really love me, Peter, you will feed my sheep; if we really love Christ, we will spend time feeding the sheep that are lost. Those are the ones he has a lot to tell us about in the parable where he went out after that one lost sheep. In Matthew 10:6 Jesus literally says, “*Go rather to the lost.*”

Do we see the world as God sees it? Does it grieve our hearts when we see the way the lost sheep live? Does it make us want to go after those lost sheep, to rescue them like God did when he sent his Son as a sacrifice for all of us? God sacrificed on our behalf, and that’s what he wants from us—a heart like his, willing to sacrifice for the lost.

And it’s going to take sacrifice. Unless we’re willing to sacrifice, we probably are not going to have time for those lost sheep: to pray for them, to spend time with them and to tell them about God’s plan to forgive sins and redeem their lives through faith in Jesus. We live in a world that is so fast-paced, so packed full, that unless we sacrifice some of our time—things we want to do in our comfort zones—we may never have the time to obey Jesus, and “go.”

It’s much easier to get together for lunch with our friends who love Jesus. But Jesus says, “*Go rather to the lost.*” And if we really love him, we will feed his sheep. Jesus says to feed them. Who are they? The lost ones and those who know him but who are not walking close to him. We’re to love those sheep back to God—into a tighter relationship with Jesus.

2 Corinthians 5:17-20: “*Therefore (because you belong to Christ), if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come! All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and **gave us the ministry of reconciliation:** that God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting men’s sins against them. (Remember, Jesus spent time with sinners, publicans and Pharisees—with people who didn’t know him personally, and who didn’t know God. He took a lot of criticism for it.) And **he has committed to us the message of reconciliation.** (bringing together people with their God—reconciling men to God.) *We are therefore Christ’s ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us.*”*

It could not be clearer: **God wants to make his appeal to the lost through us!** What a wonderful, awesome opportunity we have. Jesus had compassion on the crowds, but what he said to his disciples when he was mentoring them at that point was: *“Pray ye the Lord of the harvest, that he would send forth laborers”* out there—to reach those people in that crowd. Jesus wanted his disciples to know that they couldn’t do it all, and neither can we!

Who are the people in our lives that we have relationships with that are unsaved: family, friends and neighbors? We want to write their names down and pray that God will use us, or someone else, to move them to the point where they are able to receive the sowing of the seed—the gospel. What a precious thing! Encourage them to have a healthy interest in spiritual things—let them know the gospel clearly. We need to be ready, so we’ll not miss the most exciting thing that can happen to them...and to us.

- The ‘bridge’ illustration helps tremendously in explaining the gospel clearly when we get to the point where we get to harvest a seed—lead someone to Christ. We can sit with a pencil and draw the bridge with a box on either side: man on one side and God on the other. This is the gulf that is between them, the reason we are so separated. When we’re talking to someone, we can have them explain the attributes of man—sinful man—and then write them in one box. Do we have to teach a kid how to lie? No, we are born sinners. Then write the attributes of God in the other box, so that they see the difference—explain our character versus God’s character. Draw the cross in the middle of the bridge to show that Jesus’ blood bridged the gap. **Help them see that we are sinners—and in need of a Savior!**

*“No amount of scholastic attainment,  
of able and profound exposition,  
of brilliant and stirring eloquence  
can atone for the absence of a deep, impassioned, sympathetic love  
of human souls.”*

*David Brainerd*

Let’s pray that God enables us to bring someone to harvest. We might not be the one that gets that opportunity, but we can pray for it and we can be prepared. Paul explains that someone will plant the seed, someone else will water, but God brings the harvest. **God is the One responsible for the results!** Thankfully, we just need to be faithful to do what the Spirit of God leads us to do...to “go” and make disciples.