

Go!

The “Go” Statements of Jesus

by Glenn Newton



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Introduction

Christianity has always been a “go and tell” religion. After Jesus ascended into heaven, His followers took His commission to “go into all the world and preach the gospel” seriously. Thirty short years later, Paul told the church at Colossae that “the gospel is bearing fruit and growing throughout the whole world.” They understood what it meant to “Go!”

In many cases, Christians today have traded in the “Go and tell” commission of Jesus for a “Come and see” commission of consumerism. We have traded in the hard task of outreach for the much simpler task of building attractational worship assemblies. Throughout the Gospels, Jesus encouraged His followers and His potential followers to “Go.” This study will look at several of those “Go” statements and give practical applications that will help us become more effective as we attempt to “preach the gospel to every creature.”

About the Author

Glenn Newton is the minister for the Pleasant View church of Christ in Pleasanton, California. He has served in ministry since 1993 and has previously worked with churches in Alabama, Mississippi, Florida, Tennessee, and Washington. A 1997 graduate of Heritage Christian University, Glenn actively speaks at lectureships, workshops, and meetings throughout our country; has co-authored two other books, (“The Great Commission Part 2” with Steve Cummings, and “Elder/Preacher Relationships That Work” with his father Gene, and his brother Mark) and authored two other Flex studies. He and his wife Regina have been married since 1991 and have three sons, and one grown foster son.



Lesson 1

Go Into All The World

Key Verse:

*And He said to them,
"Go into all the world and preach the gospel to all creation"
(Mark 16:15)*

WARM UP



When I was a toddler, I am told that I called my dad "Igo." Everywhere my dad went, I wanted to go with him. It didn't matter if he was taking out the trash, I wanted to go. As I got older his name changed to Daddy. Although I still loved being with him, the desire to go with him wherever he went faded. I was becoming more independent. As I reached the teen years, I not only didn't want to go with my dad, I didn't want to go where he told me either.

Such is our relationship with God. When we first come to God through the saving blood of His Son, He becomes our "Igo." We will follow Him where ever He leads. But somewhere along the way, we all go through the spiritual teenage years. Our relationship with God becomes much more casual, and we don't have much interest in going where He tells us to go. For some, we never get out of those years.

We end up exchanging our passion for the Father for the comfort of a padded pew.

But our God is a God who has always called people to “go.”

- “Go forth from your country” (Genesis 12:1)
- “Go free my people” (Exodus 3:10)
- “Tell the sons of Israel to go forward” (Exodus 14:15)
- “Go into the land I promised you” (Joshua 3)

When Jesus left this earth, his last words were crucial. No one would use their last words to tell those they loved something trivial and unimportant, especially the Son of God. Where did He tell us to go? What did He call us to do?

WORK OUT



The command: “Go into all the world and preach the gospel...”

We often look at missions as a program of the church that sends money to remote locations to spread the gospel. Although world missions is vital and important, we must not neglect “our world,” that is, the people right in our own communities that need to experience Jesus. The word “go” in this text is used in the active tense. This means, “As you are going into all the world, preach the gospel.” Sometimes the call to “go” is a call into our own communities, families, and even congregations.

Jesus told the disciples in John 4 that the fields were ripe for harvest. The fields are still ripe for harvest. Poor economy, struggling families, high unemployment, war, and political unrest have people asking more questions than ever. Jesus is always the answer, no matter what

the question is. The book of Acts speaks of the miraculous growth of the early church. They grew because they preached Jesus!

- Peter preached Jesus (Acts 2)
- “They preached Jesus” (Acts 3:26)
- The apostles were arrested for preaching Jesus (Acts 4:2)
- Peter preached Jesus to the rulers even while he was under arrest (Acts 4:8ff)
- They are rebuked for preaching Jesus (Acts 5:26)
- “They did not stop preaching Jesus” (Acts 5:42)
- Stephen was accused of preaching Jesus (Acts 6:14)
- Stephen preached Jesus as he was being killed for it (Acts 7)
- Philip met the eunuch and “he preached Jesus to him” (Acts 8)

The early church knew not only where they were called to go, but they also knew what to preach when they got there. Often we get distracted from the real message of the church and, as a result, the majority of our time is spent majoring in minors. For example, if you have a “door-knocking Saturday,” you may have a dozen people show up. But if you try to change the assembly times or the color of the carpet in the worship center, thirty people will show up to protest to the elders.

I once spoke at a “Missions Sunday” at a relatively large congregation. Representatives from each mission they supported were there. There was a sense of pride at this church for all that they had accomplished in the mission fields, and that is justified. But, I noticed on their numbers board, they had two baptisms that year locally. It was October! The early church told the whole world in thirty years, and they didn’t leave it up to someone else. Isn’t it time we begin sharing our faith in Jesus with the same enthusiasm?

The scope: "...to every creature..."

Todd Agnew, in his song, "My Jesus," challenges Christians with the fact that many of us have sub-consciously predetermined what kind of people we want to reach. Many of us want to reach people who look like us, act like us, and have families like us. But the fact is, evangelism can be messy. The people we reach don't always act like us. How would "the least of these" be treated in your congregation? Agnew writes, "My Jesus would never be accepted in my church, the blood and dirt on His feet would stain the carpet."

Yet, Jesus plainly said, "to every creature." He not only preached it, He practiced it. Jesus reached out to Samaritans, prostitutes, lepers, tax collectors, liars, thieves, and cripples, just to name a few. Is our scope of evangelistic prospects as broad as Jesus'? In Matthew 8, A leper had an encounter with Jesus. Lepers were the ultimate rejects of Jewish society. A leper wasn't even allowed to live within the gates of the city. The only food a leper could eat was the scraps that were thrown to him. Jesus not only healed this man; He touched him.

Can you imagine how this leper must have felt? Living for years with this dreaded disease, it had been ages since he felt the touch of another human. There are people in our communities and cities that are starving for the touch of Jesus Christ. They may be messy and have some "baggage," but they fall under the category of "every creature." And lest we forget, we all fall under the same category.

The result: "...he who believes and is baptized will be saved."

Paul reminds us on at least two occasions (Romans 1:16; 1 Corinthians 15:1-4) that the gospel saves us, and very few of us would debate that. What some might debate though, is the act of faith in which God's saving power is made manifest in our lives. Paul said in Romans 6 that the act of faith is baptism. This act of submission is

where we come into contact with the death of Jesus Christ. "Therefore we have been buried with Him through baptism into death, so that as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life" (Romans 6:4).

But may we all remember that it is not what we do in baptism that saves us; God does the saving. Not because baptism is a work, but because it is an act of submissive faith that says, "I believe." Paul goes on to say that once we have been baptized, we should consider ourselves "to be dead to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus." Jesus tells us to go, with the ultimate desire that people will be saved.

COOL DOWN



Mark 16:20 says "And they went out and preached everywhere, while the Lord worked with them." They did exactly what Jesus called them to do. The discussion I pray this book will inspire is: "Are we doing what Jesus called us to do?" Jesus did not tell us to take a "Field of Dreams" approach to evangelism ("If you build it, they will come."). He told us to go! He told us to go to the lost sheep and bring them back into the fold.

The story is told of a Union soldier who was given a message to take to Ulysses S. Grant. Since the message was classified and they did not want it to get in the wrong hands, he memorized it. He traveled fifty miles through cold rain and gunfire to finally to arrive at Grant's headquarters. As he approached the general, he began shaking and in a trembling voice he said, "I have forgotten the message."

May we never allow the journey and the distractions to cause us to forget our message. Our message is the gospel, of which we are not ashamed, because it is the power of God unto salvation (Romans 1:16).

Discussion Questions:

1. Can you think of other biblical examples where God called people to "go?"
2. In what ways are the fields ripe for harvest in your city or community?
3. What distracts us from focusing on the primary message of Christian faith - the gospel?
4. How might congregations or individual Christians consciously or subconsciously "screen" the people they want to reach?
5. Why is baptism an essential part of obeying the gospel?
6. How does the concept "as you are going" change your view of missions or evangelism?