

Session 3

HOW: GOING

Mathew 4:18-22; Acts 1:8

Memory Verse

But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come on you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.

– ACTS 1:8, CSB

How: Going

THEOLOGICAL THEME: The Bible is clear about what is expected of Christians. They are to love God, love others, and carry the gospel to the nations.

Even though it seems in many ways that the popularity of Christianity in American culture may be waning, missionary fervor is as strong as ever. In the most generic sense, a missionary is a person who goes out, seeking to convert others to a different way of life. As such, there are all sorts of missionary enterprises in twenty-first century American life.

Our culture is filled with materialist missionaries working to convince you that you can be happy if you have enough stuff. There are secularist missionaries trying to prove that there is meaning in a world devoid of God. There are even sexual missionaries who argue that real happiness can only be found through embracing the new sexual ethic.

Christianity might not be culturally en vogue, but missionary activities have never been more popular. Christians must enter into this world of ideas and ideologies to present the compelling and life-giving message of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

? Do you have a favorite Christian missionary? Who is it? Why is their story so compelling to you?

? Other than Christian missionaries, what kinds of “missionaries” have sought to convert you?



What tools do Christians need to effectively share Christ in twenty-first century America?

Session Summary

With these two texts we learn both the *where* and the *what* of going. We see that we are called in ever-expanding distance to reach others with the gospel: first where we are, then the surrounding area, and ultimately even to those in other countries. It might look something like gospel conversations and service to your neighbors, workplace, and city; to Middle Tennessee; and on overseas, non-domestic mission journeys.

The “Go” of the Great Commission introduces intentionally in all areas of our life. “Neighbors,” for example, would be a broader term than neighborhood including but not limited to one’s coworkers, friends, and so on—essentially, those God providentially brings into our lives.

But what do we do as we go? Matthew wrote that Jesus taught, preached, and healed. We are to model Jesus’ approach, which allows us to engage the whole person with the whole gospel. Serving with our DxD groups is the way that we can imitate Jesus’ teaching, preaching, and healing. With the extra intentionality of serving with our apprentices, we will be able to see true multiplication occur.

Serving also allows for two other opportunities. First, we ought to always invite along the lost and searching to serve with us. Service is often an easy onramp for the disconnected. Second, combining multiple DxD groups together in service can often provide growth opportunities through a broader shared experience.

Though the *where* and *what* of going are very important, Acts 1:8 doesn’t begin with either of those topics. Instead, Acts 1:8 begins with a promise: “You will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come on you.” As we turn our focus toward going in this study, we will begin with God’s promise. The Holy Spirit empowers God’s missionaries to carry the good news.

1. Go with Power (Acts 1:8a)

During the forty days after His resurrection and prior to His ascension, Jesus taught the disciples further about the kingdom of God and indicated that they would be part of His mission to continue the things He had begun to do and teach. Today, believers need to know what Jesus did and taught about the kingdom of God so they can understand their own mission as witnesses for Him.

When Jesus speaks, His people should pay attention. The words spoken in Acts 1:8 were a guarantee. Power was coming with the advent of the Holy Spirit. The disciples were called to be witnesses of all that Jesus had done, but they were not called to fulfill this mission on their own. Jesus sent the Holy Spirit to empower this mission.



What does the Holy Spirit do in the lives of Christians? How does the Holy Spirit empower the mission of Christ?


Jesus promised that the Holy Spirit would bring power. But what kind of power? What exactly would the Holy Spirit do? In John 14:26, Jesus said the Holy Spirit (the Counselor), “whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and remind you of everything I have told you.” As you obey Christ in mission, you can trust that the Holy Spirit will give you power to remember Christ’s teaching.


The Holy Spirit comes to strengthen you for the mission but that isn’t all. According to John 16:8, the Holy Spirit will “convict the world about sin, righteousness, and judgment.” When Jesus sent His Holy Spirit, He was sending His agent of conviction. Jesus commissions His followers to go and proclaim the good news. However, conviction of sin can come only through the Holy Spirit.

As you go, you need not carry a burden to try to force people to become Christians or to guilt or pressure them to follow Christ. You are called, commanded, and commissioned to proclaim liberty to those in captivity to sin. You can trust in the Holy Spirit to work through God’s Word to bring about God’s salvation.

Jesus directly connected the power to accomplish the commission He was giving with the presence of the Holy Spirit. The equation is simple: without the Spirit, there is no power. The Spirit is the One who enables believers to overcome their fears and to fulfill what their Master has asked them to do.


While the disciples clearly did not fully understand the nature of God's kingdom in Christ, Jesus did not chastise them for their misunderstanding. Rather, He affirmed that they could never fully know what God had fixed to occur by His authority. Their role as Jesus' disciples was to rely upon the power of the Holy Spirit to share the truth of the gospel locally and globally.

 Why is prayer important as you seek to fulfill the mission of Jesus?

 Application: What evidence could you point to that shows the Spirit's power at work in your life or the life of our church?

2. Go with Direction (Acts 1:8b)

Because the Bible is God's Word, it can be easy to read all of it with a sort of mystical awe. Some basic truths can be missed because people are looking for a deeper or more complicated meaning. As it relates to Acts 1:8, Jesus's command to "be my witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth," don't miss the simple truth that is staring us in the face. Jesus' command was simply that the disciples should start where they were and carry the gospel with them as they spread about.

 Discuss a time when you overanalyzed a Bible verse and missed the simple truth that it contained.

Some have suggested that a more applicable rendering of Matthew 28:19 would be “as you are going,” rather than “Go, therefore, and make disciples.” The command for Christians to evangelize is not only the command to go to specific places at particular times on “mission trips” to share the gospel. Christians are to be gospel people everywhere.

In a court of law, a witness is someone who has seen or experienced something and then tells others about it. In Christianity, a witness is someone who has experienced Jesus Christ through the gospel and then tells others about Him. Either way, the witness must be communicated.

The spread of the gospel among the early disciples was not optional. Jesus said, “You will be my witnesses,” not “you might be my witnesses.” There was an expectation of gospel work. The Great Commission as communicated in Matthew 28:16-20 and Acts 1:8 served as a rock tossed into a pond. The ripple effect would overtake the world. It wouldn’t come all at one time, but as the disciples spread from their place, so too would the gospel spread.



How have you used your life to spread the gospel of Jesus Christ?



Application: If Jesus were to appear to you today, how do you think He would instruct you to spread the gospel? Where is your Jerusalem, Judea, or Samaria?

After giving His disciples this command, Jesus ascended to heaven, and His earthly ministry came to an end. Jesus’ first disciples did not do the work of evangelism and making disciples in their own strength. The Holy Spirit empowered them with courage, love, and joy. In the same way, He empowers us today.

3. Go and Preach the Gospel (Matt. 4:18-22)

When Jesus called His followers and empowered His followers, He gave them a particular message. Jesus did many things. He healed the sick, gave sight to the blind, caused the lame to walk, restored the disenfranchised, and even brought the dead to life. But when He recruited His disciples, He didn't promise to make them miracle-workers. The call was simple, "Follow me . . . and I will make you fish for people" (v. 19).

The Jesus' call to these men was dramatic. The nets were more than just objects these fishermen were holding; they represented their source of income and even their identity in the community. When Jesus called them, He was calling them to abandon everything else and find their source of security, identity, and purpose in Him. James and John actually had to leave their families to do so. This underscores the commitment that Jesus calls out in all of us. We must leave everything when we choose to follow Him.

No longer would Jesus' disciples find their joy and satisfaction in catching fish. Instead, He would teach them to share the "good news of the kingdom" (v. 23) and to bring many sons and daughters into God's family.

There are many good things you can and should be doing in your community. The service that you will render as a part of your DxD groups might be incredibly valuable. But nothing is as valuable as the gospel of Jesus.



Have you ever been caught up in doing good things but neglected to proclaim the gospel? How can you avoid this error in the future?

Jesus has given you a direction and power, but He has also given you a message—that message is the gospel. When John the Baptist was arrested, he began to have doubts about his life and ministry. He had spent his entire ministry preaching and teaching about Jesus, but as he looked at his impending death, he wondered if his

entire ministry had been wasted. Jesus replied to John in Matthew 11:5-6, “The blind receive their sight, the lame walk, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the poor are told the good news, and blessed is the one who isn’t offended by me.”

John didn’t work miracles. John preached the good news. Because John preached the good news, lives were changed. John had fulfilled his calling.

Jesus has given us the words to speak. There is much that we can do, and there is much that Jesus will do through us, but the one non-negotiable is the gospel. Jesus said to “Go, therefore, and make disciples” (Matt. 28:19). How? With the simple, life-changing message of the gospel.

God does not have to use us for His work; He is more than powerful enough to use anything He sees fit. But in His grace, He has chosen to use the imperfect, broken people of the church to extend His kingdom. Following the standard Jesus set for disciple-making means that we go to be with people and rely on the power of Jesus working through us.



To fish for people, we must be with people. How does Jesus’ incarnational ministry inform the way we pursue discipleship?



Application: How do your daily habits and routine need to change to make room to be with people this week as Jesus was?

Conclusion

For the last fifty or sixty years, many Christians in evangelical circles have fought culture wars or sought to see Christians in the seats of government and power to change the land. But the early Christians were powerless peasants. They didn’t have prestige or influence in a worldly sense. They had the command of the Lord, the power of the Holy Spirit, and the gospel of Jesus Christ.

They didn't have the things the world counts as wise or important, but those early Christians turned the world upside down. The rock tossed into the pond turned out to be more like a mountain thrown into the ocean. The cross and the resurrection secured salvation and pardon. But on the day of Pentecost, Jesus set the message of the gospel on fire and fanned it into flames with His disciples. The ripple effect overtook Rome and the entire world.

The gospel of Jesus is foolishness to the world, but it is the power of God to salvation for all who believe. (See 1 Cor. 1:18.) And it is your opportunity and privilege as a follower of Jesus to proclaim this good news and to see sinners set free. Get going!

? Why is it tempting for Christians to look to celebrities, government leaders, or policy makers to Christianize culture?

? The early Christians were a “missionary minority” instead of a “moral majority.” How might a renewed identity as a “missionary minority” drive the church to greater influence on her culture?

? Read 1 Corinthians 1:18-25. What is the wisdom of God? How is it different from the wisdom of the world? How should this influence our going in the name of Jesus?

CHRIST CONNECTION: The gospel is the good news of Christ's death, burial, and resurrection that makes salvation possible to all who believe.

MISSIONAL APPLICATION: Jesus came into the world to seek and save the lost. As His followers, we are called to obey His missionary commands and imitate Him in His missionary ways.



FOR NEXT WEEK

How: Gospel Conversations

Main Passages

- 1 Corinthians 15:3-4, 1 Peter 3:15-16

Session Outline

1. Look for Opportunities (1 Cor. 15:3; 1 Pet. 3:15-16)
2. Keep the Main Thing the Main Thing (1 Cor. 15:3-4)
3. Trust the Holy Spirit (Gal. 6:7-9)

Memorize

But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come on you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.

- Acts 1:8, CSB

Daily Readings

- Monday - Acts 1:8
- Tuesday - Matthew 4:19-23
- Wednesday - Matthew 9:37-38
- Thursday - Romans 10:17
- Friday - Mark 16:15-16
- Saturday - Isaiah 6:8