

“Going” – Matthew 28:18-20

I. INTRODUCTION [Ephesians2]

A. *Making Men*

1. Michelangelo referred to the work of sculpting as “Making Men.”
2. With his creative eye, as he looked at a block of rough stone, he envisioned a form inside it.
3. The act of sculpting was for the master simply the task of cutting away the unnecessary stone.
4. Michelangelo was once pushing a heavy block up a small incline to his work area so he could do some sculpting.
 - a. a neighbor watched him for over an hour as he worked to get this block in place.
 - b. finally he asked, “Michelangelo, why do you labor so hard over that ugly, heavy piece of rock?”
 - c. the artist replied, “There is an angel inside that wants to come out.”
5. Despite Michelangelo’s genius, he started 44 statues but completed only 14.
 - a. in an Italian museum you can see his 30 unfinished works.
 - b. there are huge blocks of marble, some with only a hand or a foot completed.

B. *No Unfinished Works*

1. God sees the potential masterpiece that resides in every single one of us.
2. And none of His works will ever be left unfinished!
3. Did you know that a work of art is exactly what the Bible calls you?
4. Look with me at Ephesians 2:10

For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.

- a. the word “workmanship” is the Greek word ‘*poema*’
- b. we get our word ‘poem’ from it.
- c. it meant a finely crafted work of art –
- d. a thing of great beauty, skillfully fashioned by a master.
5. That’s what we are – God’s *poema* – His finely crafted work of art.
6. And what He has begun in us, He *will* complete! [Phil. 1:6]

C. *Today*

1. Turn now to Matthew 28 –
2. As we see how God has called us to work *with Him* in this “Making of Men & Women.”

II. TEXT

A. *Set Up in vs. 16-17*

1. After the Resurrection, Jesus told the disciples to return to Galilee & that He would meet with them there.
2. In v. 16 we read

16Then the eleven disciples went away into Galilee, to the mountain which Jesus had appointed for them. **17**When they saw Him, they worshiped Him; but some doubted.

3. Jesus told them to go to a mountain they were familiar with.
4. When they arrived, Jesus appeared to them again – and when they saw Him, they worshiped.
5. Even though they all worshiped, for some there was a *holding back*.
 - a. the resurrection was too new, and just too good to be true.
 - b. they were having a hard time getting their minds around the **FACT** that Jesus had conquered death, for they had seen Him die in the most terrifying way.
 - c. the idea **ANYONE** could come back from what Jesus had suffered was simply outside their intellectual ability to grasp.
 - d. and yet, here He was! So their *hearts* worshiped, even while their *minds* wrestled.
6. It's vs. 18-20 we want to focus on, but notice **WHERE** they were when Jesus spoke to them – on a mountain. This will become important later.

B. V. 18

18And Jesus came and spoke to them, **[STOP]**

1. Catch that – it's important: Jesus had appeared to them in vs. 16 & 17 but was standing *before* them.
2. When they *worshiped* Him, He came *among* them and *spoke* to them.
3. God inhabits the praises of His people.
 - a. when we worship, Jesus enters in & dwells among us –
 - b. revealing Himself in a way the person who doesn't worship will never know.
4. So Jesus came and spoke to them -
saying, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth."
5. In order to understand just how *dramatic* this statement of Jesus is, we need to do a quick review of Biblical history.
 - a. in Genesis 1 we read that when God created man & woman, He delegated dominion over the earth to them. [vs. 26-28]
 - b. being created in His image, they were the agents of His authority over the physical creation.
 - c. Lucifer, the highest of all God's created *spiritual* beings, staged a heavenly coup and tried to steal God's throne. [Isa 14 & Eze. 28]
 - d. the rebellion was unsuccessful & Lucifer was removed from his role as leader of the angelic hosts.
 - e. but this wasn't the end of the rebellion. Renamed Satan, he continued his resistance against God by coming to earth and enlisting Adam and Eve in his scheme. [Gen. 3]
 - f. when they turned from God to follow Satan, they yielded the authority God had delegated to them over the physical creation, over to the devil. [Luke 4:5-7, Romans 6:16-23]
 - g. though Satan had lost in his bid to gain authority *in heaven*, he was

- successful* in his bid on Earth.
- h. once his authority was secure, he embarked on a campaign of terror against humanity.
 - i. you see, though the devil could not assail God Himself, he could at least attack, deface, & torment those who bear God's image – men & women.
 - j. and that's what history has mostly been – the long sad tale of the earth held hostage, it's inhabitants terrorized by war, sickness, sin, and death.
6. Dominion of Earth had been *given* to Man, had been *forfeited* by man, and could only be *reclaimed* by a Man.
 7. This is why Jesus came.
 - a. because He was born of a virgin, the sin-connection to Adam that had marked all other men & women was not passed to Him. [Heb. 4:15 1 Cor. 15:45]
 - b. Jesus was the only one born since Adam on whom Satan had no claim.
 8. And this is why the devil worked so hard to get Him to fall!
 - a. if he could get Jesus to go the same way Adam had, then his bid to claim earth & humanity as his own would be secure.
 - b. but if Jesus was *successful* in His mission to reclaim man's lost dominion, then his defeat was certain.
 9. And this is why in the temptation of Jesus in the wilderness we find the devil taking Him to a *mountain* where he showed him all the kingdoms of the Earth and history.
 - a. listen to how Luke tells it in Luke 4:5-7

⁵Then the devil, taking Him up on a high mountain, showed Him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time. ⁶And the devil said to Him, "All this authority I will give You, and their glory; for this has been delivered to me, and I give it to whomever I wish. ⁷Therefore, if You will worship before me, all will be Yours."
 - b. you see, dominion was what Jesus had come for – to take up the mantle of authority Adam had turned over to Satan.
 - c. but the path to reclaiming dominion lay through the cross.
 - d. Satan offered a *short-cut*; an *easier* route.
 - e. but Jesus knew the devil is a liar, and the authority He was aiming at wasn't *under* Satan, but **OVER** him!
 - f. the cross was the only way to secure this authority.
 10. Now, here they are in Galilee on *another mountain*.
 11. It's *after* the cross, and after the Resurrection which proved the cross had been the divine pry-bar to wrest mankind's lost dominion from Satan's grip.
 12. Jesus is telling the disciples what Adam lost has been reclaimed; a new day has come for the human race.
 - a. we need no longer be terrorized by sin & death.
 - b. we need no longer listen to or follow the lies of the devil,
 - c. lies which aim at one thing = destroying the image of God which is a man or woman's greatest legacy & gift.
 13. Jesus said, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth."

- a. as Man – He **reclaimed** authority of Earth.
 - b. as God He **always** possessed the authority of heaven.
 - c. through the Incarnation, as the God-Man; He **united** ALL Authority under One head & Name, and forever broke the devil’s back.
 - d. this is why we read in Colossians 2:15 that Jesus has forever stripped the demonic hosts of their power.
14. Friends, it’s crucial we understand what Jesus is saying here.
- a. He is the King of all kings – the Sovereign all earthly kings bend their knee to.
 - b. nothing happens that doesn’t have to answer to Jesus for.
 - c. and nothing happens that ultimately won’t be turned into the accomplishing of God’s plan.
 - d. just as Satan could not derail Jesus **prior** to the Cross, now, **even more** since Satan has lost **any** authority, history follows a course designed by God.
15. Based on Jesus’ all-encompassing authority He says to the disciples -

C. Vs. 19-20

19 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,
20 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.”

1. Then Matthew adds -
“Amen.”
2. This translation of v. 19 puts the emphasis in the wrong place.
 - a. the New & Old KJV’s put the emphasis on “Go!”
 - b. but the passage is actually –
“In your going therefore, be discipling all the nations.”
3. I realize this is a bit technical but I say it for those who’ve taken some of Greek – the word “Going” is **passive!** [explain]
4. What Jesus is saying here is this –
 - a. because He’s now **THE** Authority, a new priority has been handed to us.
 - b. as the One to whom we surrender, our **Lord** – it is His commands and His priorities we follow; without question or hesitation.
 - c. and what He’s called us to concern ourselves with, **the prime directive** of our lives is to be and make disciples.
 - d. in v. 19, that’s what the “therefore” is there for!
5. As we go through life, following the Lord’s direction, we are to see every moment, every event, every meeting, as an opportunity to **be** a disciple and to **make** disciples.
6. Our **real** occupation, our holy vocation, is **discipling**.
 - a. our **job** may be as an electrical engineer, salesperson, assembly-line worker, or student – but our **calling** is discipling.
 - b. our **position** may be as a foreman, employee, student, or home-maker, but our **vocation** is discipler.
7. No matter where the Lord takes us; Jerusalem, Galilee, Syria, Rome, London,

- Calcutta, Tokyo, Beijing, New York, Rio de Janeiro, Chicago, or Oxnard – as we go, we're to see ourselves where we are as disciples who make disciples.
8. Jesus was making it crystal clear here to the 11, who were all Jews, that salvation was not just for the Jewish people; it was for **all peoples**.
 9. The word “nations” is ‘ethnae’ from which we get our word ‘ethnic.’
 - a. Jesus wasn't speaking here of geopolitical countries with physical borders.
 - b. He was talking about **ethnic groups**, any group of people who band together around a specific language and culture and who define themselves as a group as distinct from others.
 10. Jesus tells the 11 disciples, and by extension, **us**, that while the world has been broken by sin into thousands & thousands of such ethnic groups, God's plan is the same for all – to become disciples of Christ.
 11. Before the Cross, the world was divided into **many** races & ethnic groups.
 12. **Since** the cross and what Jesus accomplished there; His authority erases all the previous distinctions that divided humanity into various groups.
 - a. now there are just two groups, two races;
 - b. the old man & the new man; the old humanity & the new.
 - c. the lost & the saved; those dead in sin & those who've been born-again.
 13. Jesus' authority supersedes all other authorities; now there are no boundaries that can hinder the work of discipling.
 14. We are to see our lives as divinely directed by God to be where we are because that is where He's taken us, and to use this moment to grow deeper in our own walk with Him while reaching out to others with the hope & promise of a new life.
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15. Last week Peter had a serious cold & was very careful to not pass it to others.
 - a. he stayed home one day at the height of it and then when he came back over the next several days he was very careful to maintain a distance.
 - b. he did this because he knows that such viruses are passed through contact.
 - c. generally this is the way most sicknesses are transmitted, by contact with someone who's sick or a carrier of the germ or virus.
 16. Those who are born again have been injected by God with a **spiritual** virus –
 - a. not like the physical viruses that sicken a healthy body;
 - b. this virus brings spiritual health to a sin-sick & ruined soul.
 - c. it's an inoculation that over time **reverses** the devastating effects of sin & conforms them to the image of Christ – the Perfect Man.
 - d. here's the deal – this spiritual virus we've been infected with is highly contagious – it's passed from one person to another.
 - e. God wants us to be **infectious Christians** – disciples who spread the virus of the Good News of Life everywhere we go.
 17. The other day I was standing in line at the store when someone behind me started coughing. We're talking a loud, hacking burst that made my hair move!
 - a. I thought, “Oh great! What she's got everyone in this line is now going to get! Thanks for sharing!”
 - b. what Jesus is saying in v. 19 is that I need to have the same attitude **in a positive way** about where I was, right at that moment.
 - c. in my going, life had carried me to that place; the person in front of and

- behind me in that line were potential disciples, and I, *as a disciple*, had an opportunity to be a part of what God is doing in this world.
- d. a simple word of greeting, a kind remark, looking for an open door to turn their attention to eternal things, a consideration of their soul.
 - e. evangelism doesn't mean turning to the person behind me and saying, "Do you know Jesus? You'd better give your heart to Him or you'll burn in hell forever!?"
 - f. if you go fishing, you don't put a bare hook in the water; you *bait* it.
 - g. the best evangelism is a lifestyle that is so loving and lovely it attracts the lost by its excellence.
18. The best way to do what Jesus says here – to make disciples, is by being one!
19. There's a saying that was popular recently – "Wherever you go, there you are."
20. That's pretty much what Jesus says in v. 19 – "Wherever you go, that's where life's taken you, so be what you are – My disciple! And as My disciple, your priority is to make more. So, go for it!"

D. Baptizing and Teaching

1. Jesus lists the two phases or dimension of discipling –
 - 19 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, ² teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you;**
2. The first step in making a disciple is *baptism*.
 - a. baptism was simply the rite which identified a person as born again and a member of God's covenant people.
 - b. when Jesus said that we make disciples by baptizing them in the Name of the Father, Son, & Holy Spirit, He meant that the life of a disciple *begins* when they take a specific step of *identifying* with God as He's revealed Himself through the Gospel.
 - c. their names are now attached to His Name.

 - d. in the early church, a person indicated their reception of Christ by baptism.
 - e. today, while baptism is still crucial & every Christian ought to be baptized – the church has adopted some other forms for a person to indicate their *initial* faith in Christ.
 - 1) the "altar call"
 - 2) the "sinner's prayer"
 - f. whatever form is used, the important thing, the *essential* thing, is that there is a specific moment, commemorated by a unique act, that marks a person's conscious identification with Jesus.
 - g. do you have that? Is there a moment in time when you said with complete understanding; "I believe that Jesus died for my sins and rose again for my justification and new life" →
 - h. and you built a memorial to that moment by taking a public stand?
 - i. baptism is public, the altar call is public.
 - j. Jesus said, "**Whoever confesses Me before men, him I will also confess before My Father who is in heaven. But whoever denies Me before men, him I will also deny before My Father who is in heaven.**" [Matthew 10:32-

33]

- k. if you've never taken a public stand for Christ, we're going to give you an opportunity to do that today in just a few minutes.
 - l. so Step 1 in making disciples is *conversion*, being born again,
 - m. which is signified by taking a public stand.
3. Then comes Step 2 – *teaching*.
- a. in v. 20 Jesus said that we are to teach *all* the things He commanded.
 - b. the authority of Jesus is to reach into & transform every part of our lives –
 - 1) our speech
 - 2) our thoughts
 - 3) our work habits
 - 4) our actions
 - 5) our relationships
 - 6) our marriage & parenting
 - 7) our sex life
 - 8) our finances
 - 9) there isn't a single area of our lives that isn't to come under His lordship.
 - c. holiness, truth, & love are to become the principles that govern every word, deed, & thought.
 - d. what Jesus says here reminds us of the importance *teaching* plays in our lives as disciples.
 - 1) gifted teachers, anointed by the Spirit, are a vital part of discipleship.
 - 2) this is why the central ministry of any local church has to be teaching *the Bible*.
 - 3) Jesus didn't say that disciples were made by teaching psychology, or current issues.
 - 4) disciples are not formed by endless topical sermons sprinkled with a few verses torn from their context & made to say something they don't really mean.
 - e. Jesus said that teaching was to convey *all things He commanded*, and since He is the Word of God, that means both the OT & NT – the entire Bible, cover to cover.
 - f. there is no better way to do that than to study through the Bible verse by verse.

III. CONCLUSION

A. To The End

- 1. Jesus ends with -
and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age."
- 2. Though Jesus ascended into heaven and was no longer visibly present with the disciples –
- 3. He wanted them to know that His presence & authority would remain with them in the Person of the Holy Spirit Who would soon come upon them and empower them to their task of being disciples who make disciples.
- 4. That happened on the Day of Pentecost, not many days after this.
- 5. "Lo!" is one of those words that *defies translation*.

- a. it was used by a speaker who wanted to arrest all attention for a most important remark.
- b. different Bibles translate it as “Look! – See! – Behold!”
- c. I like, “Pay close attention because this is really, really important!”
6. Jesus wanted the disciples to realize that just as He’d been with them for the last three years, from now on, though they couldn’t see Him any longer, He was no less present.
7. And all that He’d done with them, they were now to go and do with others, spreading the power of a new life to the very ends of the earth and the end of history.

B. “Lo!”

1. There’s a true story about a man in the 1950’s named Lo Tau Dang who was a college student in Taiwan.
2. He was quite intelligent & an excellent student whom many held out great hope for.
3. He was approached by some missionaries who shared Christ with him and worked to convert him.
4. Lo was convicted of his sins & considered becoming a Christian but balked at the last. He would not surrender himself to the Lord.
5. He was proud and would not turn himself over to another master.
6. Still, whenever he saw the Christians, he was deeply convicted.
7. So he decided to leave Taiwan and moved to England where he enrolled in graduate studies in Cambridge University in London.
8. His roommate turned out to be a Christian, who again shared the love & truth of Christ with him and drove him absolutely crazy.
9. So he again packed up and moved to CA.
10. Not long after he settled into his new apartment he got a knock on the door – it was Christians going house to house, witnessing.
 - a. once again they shared the gospel with him.
 - b. but Lo Tau Dang was resistant and when it was obvious they were getting no where with him one of the men asked him to just take a small NT they were giving away.
 - c. he refused, the man insisted, so he took it from the man’s hand and threw it across the room into the fire in the fireplace.
11. The next day he went to clean the ashes of the previous day’s fire out the fireplace, and noticed that of that entire NT, only one small fragment was left unburned.
12. He lifted it to read these words – “An lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the age.”
13. Taiwan, London, CA – Lo had gone around the world to get away from God, but God would not be ditched.
14. And there, alone in his apartment thousands of miles from his home, God spoke to Him with a very personal word.
15. Lo Tau Dang gave up and finally surrendered himself to Christ. That’s a true story!

C. God Is At Work Because He Has All Authority

1. The point is this – Because All Authority belongs to Christ, and Christ’s authority has made disciple-making the highest priority, we can be assured the Spirit of God is at work in the people around us.
2. We don’t know the way the Lord is preparing the hearts of those we meet and speak to.
3. We may only be planting seeds, or watering seeds others have planted.
4. As we faithfully follow the Lord and look for discipling moments – we will even see times of harvest.
5. I believe this is one – a time of harvest.
6. Maybe you saw the Passion this week and are here because your heart has been stirred by God to seek Him.
7. So now, as we apply what we’ve studied today – who here wants to publicly stand for Christ?