

How do you react when you are told to go? Are you filled with adrenaline and excitement ready for the challenge, ready to win? Are you filled with dread, fearful of not making the mark or getting it wrong? Are you filled with an apathy, I can't be bothered right now, I have other things to do.

Go is forceful, it's directive and Go is the command Jesus gives to his disciples in this wonderful commission we find at the end of Matthew's gospel and it is a command he gives to us. But how do we go and make disciples in 21st Century Britain? For some, you hear the command to go and make disciples and you are filled with excited anticipation but my guess is the majority of us hear that command and are filled with a mixture of anxiety and dread. How do we go into our workplaces, our communities, our neighbourhoods and share the joy of the gospel? This is what I want to look at this morning.

Going starts from a place worship. That's what we see in the story. The disciples have journeyed with Jesus for three years but to them Jesus was a good teacher, someone to follow, some believed he was the messiah but God himself? Then Jesus dies, they hear that he is risen from the dead and they follow the command to go to Galilee. They gather on the mountainside (a familiar place for them) and then they encounter the risen Jesus. He's there, he is in their face. Their response...we see in verse 17 **"When they saw him, they worshiped him."** These disciples hadn't just had trinity Sunday, where the trinity was explained to them with a 3 leaf clover, they hadn't been to a lecture on the divinity and humanity of Jesus but being in the proximity of the risen Jesus led them to worship, they may have not had all the answers, it even says some doubted, but they worshipped. Jesus was no longer just the man they followed, he was God himself, worthy of praise and adoration. As Tom Wright says "Jesus is the 'Emmanuel', the one in whom 'God is with us'. Now he declares that he himself is 'with you always'. The only appropriate reaction to this is indeed worship, worship of the one true God who is now, astonishingly, revealed in and as Jesus himself."

Worship is the starting place for the disciples in their commission and it needs to be our starting place. We go because we worship. Worship is a response to the incredible, life changing, death destroying love and power of God, we respond not just with our songs on a Sunday, or our liturgy, or our hour long service but with our whole lives.

When we worship it changes our perspective, it take the focus away from our fears, our own selfish ambitions, our own desires and fixes them firmly back on the one we worship.

When we fully grasp in our worship the incredible beauty of the good news we have found in Jesus, it becomes something that we want to share. You know when people fall in love, they want everyone to meet that person because they think they are great. I was like that with a dog I dog-sat for this summer. I wanted everyone to meet Benny because he is so great, I wanted to share the greatness of Benny with others. It should be the same with this love we have found from which nothing can separate us from, this love that is so high and wide and deep and long.

The more we worship, the more we love, the more we feel we are able to actually go and share the joy of the gospel.

As the disciples worshipped Jesus, he went on and commanded them saying **“All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. 19 Therefore go and make disciples of all nations.”**

As we say yes to following Jesus, as we dedicate our lives to the worship of God, we too follow this command to go and make disciples.

Now this can feel totally terrifying or to some unnecessary. We live in an individualist society, our faith is a private personal thing, BUT this command is clear “Go and make disciples.”

What does that look like for us specifically. I want to suggest three simple ways we can go

1. Firstly we live the gospel. Last week Lynda mentioned that sharing the gospel is about was how we live and how we love. So, how do we live the gospel?
It starts with living with the understanding that good news of Jesus matters and make a difference to the spaces and places we go to in our day. What if we started everyday day with the simple prayer “Lord, let me make a difference in the places I am going into today” It’s amazing when we pray those prayers how the Lord gives us those opportunities (Even if we don’t really want them). How moments spring up to show God’s love and kindness through our actions, through our conversations, through our

decisions.

It also looks like living distinctively. Now, Distinctive is different to pious. This isn't about going round holier than thou, judging everyone we walk past who doesn't live like we do. This is about walking into our days carrying the fruit of the Spirit, Being people of love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, self-control. I recently had a conversation with someone who was about to get baptised. He was sharing about how loads of his friends who weren't christians wanted to come to his baptism and he was baffled but as we got talking it was so clear that the way he lived, the decisions he made and the way he loved made people want to know more about following this Jesus. He was worried about not having the right words, or the right arguments but people were attracted to his faith not because of his clever rhetoric but because they saw how Jesus had made a difference to his life. It is amazing how much people notice when you live your life confident in the joy of the gospel, it's attractive.

2. So we live the gospel, but secondly, we love. The way we love people is powerful and transformative. How do we love well? Firstly we learn how to serve. Martin Luther King says "Everybody can be great ... because anybody can serve. You don't have to have a college degree to serve. You don't have to make your subject and verb agree to serve. You only need a heart full of grace. A soul generated by love." We show the love we find in the gospel by serving one another. Putting others above our own needs, being ready to support the person in the office when they are struggling. Being a friend to the person in our neighbourhood who has recently been bereaved. Cooking a meal for that person who is struggling. Always offering to make the tea. As we serve we love. How do you serve in your communities, in the spaces you occupy?

Also, love looks like surrender. By this I mean, there will be some people in life we find easy to love but there will also be people in our communities, families, work places, that we find hard to love. I live in community, at when its good, its really good but there are times, when I am tired and overwhelmed and feel like everything is pressing in on me where living in community is actually really difficult because people are difficult. I have to learn to love my brothers and sisters in community when I find them really hard to be around. It's not easy. So I am trying to simply pray "Lord, help me to see that person as you do, help me to love that person like you do" It is amazing what can happen when we start to see the people we struggle with through the eyes of Jesus. Love is powerful, people will question it and love leads people to the joy of the gospel.

3. Speak. So we live, we love and finally we speak. This is the one people are often terrified of doing but we have good news and we can use our words to share it. We

don't have to do that by shouting on a street corner, or reading out scripture to all our colleagues but we can when opportunity arises speak what we know of the good news of Jesus. I think we do this in two simple ways.

Firstly, know why Jesus is good news to you, know how he has transformed your life, have stories of God at work, of answered prayer, of where God has been in the joyful moments of your life and where he has been in the immense struggle and pains you have faced. Know as it says in 1 Peter 3:15 "the reason for the hope that you have." People love a good story, it's why there are so many autobiographies to buy, why we watch documentaries, we are fascinated by other people's story. Sharing your story doesn't force the gospel down people's throats, but it captivates people into the greater story, the grand narrative of God at work in the world that he loves.

Secondly, get excited by the good news. I am a big TV watcher and when I watch a TV programme I really really like, I start telling everyone about it. I am an evangelist for many TV programmes, it's easy to talk about the things we are excited about. Let's reconnect with the excitement of the gospel. Realise once again why you said yes to following Jesus in the first place. Sometimes we think speaking about the good news, is all about having the right argument, about having a 4 point illustration of why we should follow Jesus at our hands. We need to come armed instead with our stories and our excitement. Our lives can be the greatest witness to the good news of Jesus through how we live, how we love and how we speak.

So we worship, then we go but and here is my final point. We don't go alone. Jesus ends his command with a promise. "I will be with you." When we go and share the joy of the gospel, we are not going alone, we are going empowered by the Spirit, we have the presence of God with us. In our first reading today we see Phillip prompted and directed by the Spirit It says "**And the Spirit said to Philip, "Go over and join this chariot."** **30 So Philip ran to him and heard him reading Isaiah the prophet and asked, "Do you understand what you are reading?"** **31 And he said, "How can I, unless someone guides me?"** **And he invited Philip to come up and sit with him."** Phillip took that prompting and the invitation of the Eunuch and showed him the love of God, he used the moment and the launch pad of the holy scriptures that the man happened to be reading, to speak to the Eunuch, who would have been an outsider, about the good news of Jesus. Are we ready to be prompted by the spirit for those moments and opportunities to

show people, whoever they are, how we live and how we love. Do we trust that God will be with us when we get it right and when we don't do such good job. God goes before us, he is with us, we can trust him as we share the joy of the gospel.

So, this week, as we step into this world that God loves so much, let's go aware of the awesomeness of Jesus, empowered by his command to go and confident that we do not go alone but the presence of God goes with us.