

Go and make disciples

Sunday 12th July 2020 (Covid 19 facebook 5mins)

We are continuing our look at what is church. I had a few ideas, but during the recent HL fasting and prayer day I kept hearing the word “go”. My first thoughts were go where, how, when, why?? But then I heard “Go and make disciples”

So, as I was preparing for today, considering what is church, I have reflected on those words, “Go and make disciples”.

At HL our mission statement is, “A safe place, a transforming place and a sending out place”. It describes what we aim to be as church. I want to focus on the last statement, a sending out place.

Recently it has felt like we have done a lot of sending out. I’m thinking of some of our members going to train for ministry, Ian, our minister will be shortly going off to his next appointment, and others training as LPs. So as a church we are getting quite used to sending out. These folks have felt called to specific roles within the church. We could very easily think oh no, that’s not my calling, God calls some folk to go and minister, not me. That is not my gifting

But we are *all* called to be sent out. Not all as ministers and preachers admittedly. Jesus tells his disciples,

18 “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. 19 Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in^[a] the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, 20 teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.”

Jesus told the disciples to *go* and make disciples. I want to focus on the word, “go” and then very briefly the word disciple”

For years I have heard go as the command, do not stay here, go out, go away, which of course is correct. I have found it a scary word, and I immediately think go where, when, how, why? I can’t, I don’t know what to do or say. Other people are better at it than I am.

The word translated as *go* in the bible is poireuthentes, (**pooryouthentes**), which originates from the word **poros**, meaning " **ford**, or **passage way**, to transport something from one destination to another.

Picture a ford, a shallow crossing of a river, helping a traveller across.

Picture a passageway, a long, narrow way, maybe having walls either side, giving access to somewhere, keeping a traveller in the right direction.

Both a ford and a passage way help to transport a traveller from one destination to another.

So, when Jesus commands the disciples, and indeed ourselves, to *go*, it isn't just the physical act of moving, but *how* we can go.

Jesus wants us to become like a ford or passageway. He wants us to *help* others on a journey of finding Jesus as Lord and saviour by creating easier access like a ford. Or gently guiding the direction, like a passage way. Its not about how clever we are or how long we have been a Christian. Its about being, being there like a ford or passage way.

Jesus didn't say, go and find people to come and fill our churches on a Sunday morning. He commanded us to walk beside people, gently guide them, encourage them, support them. To be there.

A quick word about disciple. Jesus commands us to go and make disciples, or to disciple. I love this definition from HELPS word-studies,

i.e. helping someone to *progressively learn* the Word of God to become a matured, growing *disciple*

Progressively learn. So, its not about dropping a word of faith now and again, chance encounters. It's the long haul. It takes time.

So, what is church? We are Church. We send people out.

We raise up people of all ages, sex and race to become influencers. To become like a ford or a passageway. To be disciples.

Church is going out into our neighbourhoods and communities, schools and work places, not just as ministers and preachers, but as facilitators, friends, companions, helping to make the journey a little easier. Maybe helping to cross the river, or keep on track, by friendship, modelling Christian behaviour, telling our story, prayer. And most importantly, loving.

So, as we make preparations to re-open churches, lets ask God who can we stand with, where that might be, how that might be.

Let's *all* go and make disciples.

