

Go to Grow

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Matt 4¹⁸⁻²², Mark 16¹⁴⁻¹⁸, John 15¹⁻⁸

Do you remember the first time you travelled by yourself away from home – a long way from home. I remember it quite well. I had been away from my family before but always to relations – to places I knew well. But when I was about 11 years old I travelled by train to a place north of here called Wainakarua. There was a huge combined Scout camp up there and I was booked to go. The whole thing was new for me. The place, the event, the trip, the train. Everything was new. And though I enjoyed it afterwards – the trip was pretty scary to begin with.

I grew up that trip. I began to see the world as a place I could navigate by myself and I began to realise that I could handle more than I thought I could. But more than that I realised that in order to discover these things I had to make a move; I had to actually go somewhere, leave home, take a risk.

Perhaps you can remember better your first day at school. I can certainly remember my first day at my second primary school and at my High School. It was kind of exciting and scary all at the same time. I both did want to be there and I

didn't. Truth to tell I knew there was no other option but it was still scary.

What about your first day at work? Was that scary? The first time you played a team sport? The first time you dated someone? Hands up those who remember that?

The fact of the matter is that there is no grow without go! Growth requires movement – it requires that we leave our comfort zones; it requires that we let go of the safe harbour. The sea does not consist solely of the harbour.

And yet, if you're anything like me you struggle to make the move when you need to at times. How many of us have hesitated to go to that party or event where there'll be a whole lot of new people to meet? How many of us have made a new year's resolution to lose weight or to get fit and we've struggled to go there even for a few days? How many of us have lied about our availability not because we didn't want to do something but because we were nervous about how we'd go? And yet... there's just no growing without going. We have to go to grow; we have to be willing to leave home if we want to discover the world. More than that however, we will never learn the lessons God has for us by staying put. **God needs us to go...**

This is a basic spiritual principle which Jesus touches on again and again in the NT. 'You have to go to grow!'

Jesus said...

“Follow me, and I will make you fishers of people.” ²⁰Immediately they left their nets and followed him. **We can't stay with our nets friends, Jesus says 'Go with me!'**

Jesus said...

“Go into all the world and proclaim the good news to the whole creation.” **Get out there – don't hang around – the world is waiting for us to go!**

Jesus said...

⁷As you **go**, proclaim the good news, ‘The kingdom of heaven has come near.’ ⁸Cure the sick, raise the dead, cleanse the lepers, cast out demons. You received without payment; give without payment. (Matt 10) **When we go things happen. The sick are healed, the dead are raised, the lepers are cleansed and the demons are cast out – all because we go...**

Finally Jesus said...

³⁸and whoever does not take up the cross and follow me is not worthy of me. ³⁹Those who find their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake will find it. (Matt 10) **When we go with Jesus we discover... our lives! We find our true life. Our lives are returned to us and we are freed. But...**

We have to go to grow...

Perhaps the greatest issue in our lives today in regard to our eternal future and, indeed, the kingdom of God is this one – are we willing to go? Are we willing to hear God’s call above all the other calls in our life? Above the call of career, above the call of self-fulfilment, self-promotion and self-preservation? And this doesn’t mean we abandon the important people God has put around us but it does mean that we have a clear sense of call – of God’s leading. And that leading to go is hard to hear because so much of what society says to you and I today is ‘Stay!’

Stay! At home and watch TV

Stay! In your own culture which you know and understand and feel comfortable in.

Stay! With your small group of friends because you know them and are safe with them.

Stay! In your job, your hobby, your interests, your righteousness... The world preaches stay! God calls us to Go!

Even when God does say ‘Stay’ in the Bible He says it so we’ll be equipped **to go!**

⁴⁹And see, I am sending upon you what my Father promised; so stay here in the city until you have been clothed with power from on high.” (Luke 24)

Why were they to stay in the city? Simply so they could be filled with the Holy Spirit in order that they might go in

God's power. In God's economy whenever we are called to stay it is so that we might **Go** more effectively.

In this coming year we want to explore both how God calls us and what to expect and look for in following that call and what going will mean for us. We want to ask ourselves – not just as individuals but as a church 'Are we going with God?' Are we really hearing God and what is God saying to us?

So the question is – will you join us on this journey next year? Will you risk becoming open to God's invitation to go? Will you allow yourself to be stretched next year because going always stretches us – always challenges us – always brings us back to our basic trust in God.

I really hope so because I think we could make a huge difference if we even began to go as God wants us to. Think of the changes our own family would see in us as we go. Think of the greater influence we'd have in our places of work and play. Think of the more direct results of a church reaching so much more intentionally into a community in need and friends, you won't need my permission to go. If God calls you or a group of you to go and serve somewhere in the community – let me say now – **Go!**

It is no coincidence that Jesus' invitation to His disciples is an invitation to Go! God's word of salvation is a word to Go because it invites us to discover a new life with God in the driving seat. Is that where God is for you today? Is God

really in the driving seat of have we subtly but surely taken completely over? I wonder if it's time you said to God 'Lord I want you back in the driving seat of my life; I want you to be in charge; to be in everything I am and do.

If that's you can I invite you to come up the front after we've finished and speak to one of our prayer partners who will help you to let God back into your life.

We have to Go to Grow. That's where we're heading next year. I can't wait!