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The Last Words of Jesus, Part 2

And Preach

Text: Mark 16:14-15

The eleven original disciples have been at table with Jesus (v.14). Jesus has been baring His soul. They review the disciples’ response to the resurrection. Jesus rebukes them for their unbelief and hardness of heart. Then, Jesus gives an assignment.

1. Go
2. Into all the world

I am imagining a legitimate set of questions that might have been on the minds of the disciples. Even if these were not questions actually asked, they hung in the air.

The first is the question of *mobility.* Jesus commands His followers to *go.* This command dares the followers of Jesus *to leave the* comfort of the familiar. These Jesus-lovers are to get moving.

Next is the question of range. How far should these disciples go with their message? Jerusalem? Bethsaida? Capernaum?

No, these followers of Jesus are assigned to **the world.**

The next question has to do with action. What, exactly, are these apostles to *do* as they go out?

They are to preach.

Mark 14:9 gives us a hint of the idea that the gospel would be preached widely. Jesus comments after an anonymous woman breaks open an alabaster flask and pours it out over Jesus’ head. Then Jesus says,

*...whenever this gospel is preached in the whole world, what this woman has done will also be told as a memorial to her* (*14:9*)

I want to divide this last consideration of the commission into three parts.

1. The action: preach!

2. The content: the gospel

3. The audience: every creature

 **1. The action: PREACH**

I can hear some of you excusing yourselves from this point. After all, you are not a preacher, so you say. However, the Greek word used in this text, *kerusso*, simply means *to proclaim, to herald (like a town crier), to proclaim, to publish.*

[Strong’s Dictionatry: 2784. κηρύσσω kērussō, kay-roos´-so]

The ones who preach are the ones who simply proclaim the gospel, cry out the good news, publish glad tidings. Every believer can, and should, do that. When Jesus commissions His followers, He sends them *out* to talk Him *up*!

Preaching takes many forms in current culture.

* Some preachers don’t think they are truly preaching unless they are yelling and berating the people. Lots of brimstone, lots of fire, lots of rebuke.
* Others see preaching as a conversation with the congregation. They want to relate on a personal level. They sit in an easy chair on the platform and have a fireside chat with the congregation.
* Some preachers deliver theological/biblical lectures and see their task as that of disseminating information.
* Others deliver motivational talks with a little scripture added and call it preaching.

When Jesus sent His followers out, He sent them out to preach (Mark 3:14), to proclaim.

Jesus commissions His followers not merely to proclaim, but to be the heralds of a *specific* message.

**2. The content: the Gospel**

The gospel is the good news. What’s so good and what’s so new?

Before Jesus came, a person could have a relationship with God that forged by rule-keeping and ritual-enacting. When Jesus came, He made it possible for people to know God through Christ. Jesus ushers us into the presence of the God who forgives us in Jesus. We who were once far off, spiritually, may now draw near (Ephesians 2:14-18). Before Jesus came there was no thought that a follower of God could internalize God. However, when Jesus came, He began to offer an intimacy previously unknown. Paul would write about in in Colossians 1-

*To them* (generations) *God willed to make known what are the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles: which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.* (Colossians 1:27)

We may have Christ live *in* us. That’s good news!

**3. The audience: every creature**

We go

 Into the whole world

 We proclaim

 The gospel

 Q: To whom????

 A: **Every creature!**

A few years ago, there was a movement afoot, in evangelism and missions, which suggested that people ought to reach their own kind. It was a movement centered on the principle of homogeneity. This text goes against that idea. The followers of Jesus were not to take the good news only to their own kind. They were to take it to **every creature.** African Americans are not to *confine* themselves to ministry to other African Americans. Europeans are not to minister *only* to other Europeans. Africans are not to *restrict* themselves to reaching only Africans. Caribbeans are not to see themselves as ministering to other islanders *only*. These lovers of Jesus are to see **every creature** as worthy of hearing the good news.

**Illus**.

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| A one-legged schoolteacher from Scotland went to J. Hudson Taylor to offer himself for service in China. "With only one leg, why do you think of going as a missionary?" Asked Taylor."I do not see those with two legs going," replied George Scott. He was accepted. |

I hear some of you saying, “Pastor, I can’t go. I am too advanced in years to travel to another culture. I cannot learn a new language at this age and stage”. If that is the case, you are still not excused from obeying the last words of Jesus. Even if these words were not directed to the church in the 21st century (I think they are), there are still levels on which we can all participate in seeing to it that the gospel is presented to every creature.

* We can train those who will go. The Church provides educational opportunities for those who will go to another culture and proclaim Jesus.
* We can fund those who will go- **for example**, our own Sarah Hesse went to Germany for 10 months. Some of us provided the financial support necessary to go minister in Germany
* We can pray for those who will go

Sandra Goodwin has written:

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| Last night I took a journeyTo a land far 'cross the seas;I didn't go by boat or plane,I trusted on my knees.I saw so many people thereIn deepest depths of sin,And Jesus told me I should goThat there were souls to win.But I said, "Jesus, I can't goAnd work with such as these."He answered quickly, "Yes, you canBy traveling on your knees."He said, "You pray; I'll meet the need,You call and I will hear;Be concerned about lost souls,Of those both far and near."And so I tried it, knelt in prayer,Gave up some hours of ease;I felt the Lord right by my sideWhile traveling on my knees.As I prayed on and saw souls savedAnd twisted bodies healed,And saw God's workers' strength renewedWhile laboring on the filed.I said, "Yes, Lord, I have a jobMy desire Thy will to please;I can go and heed Thy callBy traveling on my knees."Sandra Goodwin. |

Amen