

## **“Your Mission, Should You Accept It”**

II Thessalonians 3:1-5; Matthew 28:16-20

Highlands Presbyterian Church, Columbus

July 6, 2014 – 5<sup>th</sup> Sunday after Pentecost – Rev. Ronald Botts

A man tells this story about his dog, a big Irish Setter. He says the dog knew three things well: he knew where his food bowl was, he knew the rattle of the car keys, and he knew the word “go.” When anyone left the house in an automobile, the dog seemed to be of the opinion that he had both a right, and an obligation, to be in the back seat.

On one particular day a neighbor was visiting. The dog was half-asleep under the dining room table and so the guest didn’t even know he was about. After a while the friend picked up his key chain and got up to leave saying, “Well, guess it’s about time for me to **go**.”

Now this was the magic word, and so that’s all it took to set the dog into motion. Even though he had dozed off, this roused him immediately from his stupor to be fully awake.

That word “go” brought him out from under the furniture with a wild scramble. He sent the newspaper flying, knocked over an end table, and nearly toppled the floor lamp. Turning the corner he hit the freshly polished kitchen floor full steam, spun around twice, upset three chairs, and went right through the screen door backwards. And all of this simply because he heard the word “go.”

Jesus said to his disciples, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. 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, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you.”

“Go, and make disciples of all,” said Christ. Now if that old dog could understand the meaning of the word “go” then people as smart as we should have no trouble at all in taking up this simple command of Jesus with equal enthusiasm.

“Go, and make disciples of all.” Be about your work. Do what the Master tells you to do. Show by your words and example what it is to be a disciple, so that others will come to know God as well.

“Go, and make disciples of all.” I think it’ll be all right with Jesus, though, if you want to wait until the end of the service to get started!

Now this morning you get to be part of the sermon. Around the campfire everyone’s voice is important. Let’s talk today about why it’s so hard for most of us to act on Jesus’ directive to spread the word? “Go, and make disciples of all” would seem clear enough, yet I get the feeling that we’re not always sure of how to go about this.

Do any of you experience difficulty with this? Can I see a show of hands? Why do you suppose this is the case? What’s the dilemma? What inhibits us from simply doing what Jesus says?

Is our reluctance due to something lacking in our own faith commitment?

Our knowledge?

Our desire not to be rejected?

Our lack of the right words?

Our American emphasis on the right to  
think and do however you wish?

Can we spread the Word or create disciples through our actions as well as our words?

Would you find it easier to work on a Habitat house or talk about faith with another?

How might we start to resolve this dilemma?

Should we equip ourselves individually to do this work or see ourselves more as a team using the base of the church?

[Dialogue with the congregation]

There was an old TV show that started out each episode with a self-destructing tape recording. Each time it laid out a possible assignment framed by the words "Your assignment, should you decide to take it..."

In our scripture today we have our assignment put before us in Jesus' words: "Go and make disciples of all." This is our mission. How then shall we answer?