

A Cup Overflowing –  
A study of the Christian life

Lesson 3:

A Christian Life is...

*An Evangelism-filled Life*

# “Go ye means go me”?

- It makes a nice, catchy title for a book, but let’s look at the context.
- Where did the phrase originate?
  - With Jesus – in the “great commission”

# The Great Commission

- Matt 28:18-20 – “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all 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. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.”

# The Great Commission

- Matt 28:18-20 – “...go and make disciples...”
- Mk 16:15-16 – “Go into all the world and preach the good news to all creation. Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be condemned.”

# The Great Commission

- Matt 28:18-20 – “...go and make disciples...”
- Mk 16:15-18 – “Go into all the world and preach the good news to all creation. Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be condemned. And these signs will accompany those who believe: In my name they will drive out demons; they will speak in new tongues; they will pick up snakes with their hands; and when they drink deadly poison, it will not hurt them at all; they will place their hands on sick people, and they will get well.”

# “Go ye means go me”?

- It makes a nice, catchy title for a book, but let’s look at the context.
- Where did the phrase begin?
- Who was he talking to?
  - To the eleven – Matthew 28:16 & Mark 16:14.

# “Go ye means go me”?

- It makes a nice, catchy title for a book, but let’s look at the context.
- Where did the phrase begin?
- Who was he talking to?
- Is it reasonable to assume that “*go and make disciples of all nations*” and “*go into all the world*” would be meant to apply to every Christian for all time?
- On the other hand, is it reasonable to assume that *some* of us have *no* responsibility for evangelism of any kind?

# What *is* our responsibility?

- “Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect, keeping a clear conscience, so that those who speak maliciously against your good behavior in Christ may be ashamed of their slander.”

*1 Peter 3:15-16*

# What *is* our responsibility?

- “But in your hearts set apart Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect, keeping a clear conscience, so that those who speak maliciously against your good behavior in Christ may be ashamed of their slander.”

*1 Peter 3:15-16*

# Romans 12:4-8

“Just as each of us has one body with many members, and these members do not all have the same function, so in Christ we who are many form one body, and each member belongs to all the others. We have different gifts, according to the grace given us. If a man’s gift is prophesying, let him use it in proportion to his faith. If it is serving, let him serve; if it is teaching, let him teach; if it is encouraging, let him encourage; if it is contributing to the needs of others, let him give generously; if it is leadership, let him govern diligently; if it is showing mercy, let him do it cheerfully.”

# Gifts

- Paul itemizes a different list in 1 Corinthians 12:  
<sup>8</sup> “To one there is given through the Spirit the message of wisdom, to another the message of knowledge by means of the same Spirit, <sup>9</sup>to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing by that one Spirit, <sup>10</sup>to another miraculous powers, to another prophecy, to another distinguishing between spirits, to another speaking in different kinds of tongues, and to still another the interpretation of tongues.”
- What’s the common thread here?

# Gifts

- Paul itemizes a different list in 1 Corinthians 12:
  - message of wisdom, message of knowledge, faith, gifts of healing, miraculous powers, prophecy, distinguishing between spirits, speaking in...tongues, interpretation of tongues
- Still another list in Ephesians 4:
  - <sup>11</sup> “It was he who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers...”

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- Still another list in Ephesians 4:
  - <sup>11</sup> “It was he who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers, <sup>12</sup>to prepare God’s people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up <sup>13</sup>until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ.”

Okay...

...so perhaps a better title for our lesson would  
be...

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A Christian Life is...

~~An Evangelism-filled Life~~

*A Ministry-*

# What *is* our responsibility?

- “But in your hearts set apart Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect, keeping a clear conscience, so that those who speak maliciously against your good behavior in Christ may be ashamed of their slander.”

*1 Peter 3:15-16*

Next week...

*A Christian Life is A Forgiveness-filled Life*

## Notes for *A Christian Life is An Evangelism-filled Life*

Slide 2:

- Nothing wrong with the phrase, and Ivan Stewart has led many to Christ – and helped others lead many to Christ – with this book and others.

Let's take a look at that phrase for a minute though, and see whether we agree or disagree that “go ye” means “go me”...

- - The phrase began with Jesus, of course, in some of the last words he spoke before his ascension.

Slide 3:

- No real point to make here with the KJV rendering of the verse, except on the surface “make disciples” and “teach” doesn't seem like the same thing, but the Greek word μαθητευσατε (math-et-eu-sat-e) could reasonably be translated either way. There's not an awful lot of difference between “make disciples” and “teach” anyway, but the former does seem to be something that would effect a more lasting change in the life of the pupil (or disciple).

Slide 4: <none>

Slide 5:

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- We tend to stop with verse 16, but both the thought and the context extend through verse 18. We *do* have people today preaching the good news (i.e., gospel) throughout the world. What we *don't* have are people driving out demons, speaking in tongues (i.e., languages they have not studied), drinking poison without effect (well, except alcohol), or miraculously healing people by the laying on of hands.

I've personally picked up a snake with my hand, so I left that one out. Seriously, I believe the context of miracles here gives this the context of the believers picking up poisonous snakes, and perhaps even getting bitten, without effect.

Slide 6:

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Back to our other slide here...

- ***Question #1 on handout.***

- He was talking to the remaining 11 apostles. The two references in Matthew and Mark state that explicitly. A parallel passage in Luke also states it explicitly.

Slide 7:

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- We know Jesus was talking to the apostles when he said that. Mark's account even gives a list of miracles to be performed by those who believe.

Is it really reasonable to assume – based on the context of the passage – that Jesus literally meant these instructions to be carried out by each and every Christian henceforth to eternity? It's my opinion that this is not a reasonable interpretation of this passage.

- **However**, having said that, in light of what we know the rest of scripture to say, is it reasonable to assume that some of us have a responsibility to evangelize, and some of us have no responsibility at all? It's also my opinion that this is an equally invalid assumption.

So how are we to put this to practice in our own lives? What *are* we supposed to do with regard to evangelism?

Slide 8:

- Common passage here, but there are a couple of important parts of these verses that we often neglect...

Slide 9:

***Question #2 on handout.***

- We are told to “**set apart Christ as Lord**” in our heart. If Jesus is not Lord of our life, nothing we say or do will make a lasting impression on those around us.
  - **FIRST**, make sure Jesus is Lord – not only in heaven, but in our life. That means a lot – our words, our actions, our goals & plans, etc. must all be driven by the fact that Jesus is Lord of our life. Of course we won't be perfect, but we'll be good enough for others to see “the hope that [we] have”.
  - **THEN**, they will ask us about *why* we have such hope.
  - **THAT'S WHEN** we will have an opportunity to “give an answer”.
- **Why** should we “do this with gentleness and respect”?
  - “...so that those who speak maliciously against your good behavior in Christ may be ashamed of their slander.”

Sounds a lot like Romans 12:20, doesn't it? (“If your enemy is hungry, feed him;

if he is thirsty, give him something to drink. In doing this, you will heap burning coals on his head.” – Paul is quoting from Proverbs 25:21-22.)

So, clearly we have *some* evangelism responsibility, but let’s look at a few other scriptures.

Slide 10:

- What’s the context here?
  - The context is “body life” – the fellowship of believers, “church”, ekklesia (the “called out”) – and working with one another toward one goal. The list of gifts here is not intended to be exhaustive, but is given as an illustration of how working together, with each member doing his or her part, can accomplish our goal.

Much debate has taken place over the years about whether these gifts even apply to us any more, but there is nothing in the context to indicate that they don’t. Clearly the *miraculous* gifts – prophesying is the only one listed here – are not extant in the church today, but there is nothing miraculous about “showing mercy” or “encouraging”, or the other gifts listed. The point is that we all have a part – a *ministry*, if you will.

- There are a couple of other passages we need to look at in the same vein, then there’s a connection we need to make that relates to our lesson on Evangelism...

Slide 11:

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- ***Question #3 on the handout.***

Slide 12:

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- ***Question #4a on handout. – Go to next slide before discussing question #4b.***

Slide 13:

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- ***Question #4b on handout.*** What these passages have to do with the idea of *An Evangelism-filled Life* is that God gave *some* to be evangelists. It is not true that he gave *all* to be evangelists. As a matter of fact, if there’s one idea that runs constant through these 3 passages, it’s that we must all use whatever gift(s) God has given us, for the building-up of the body and the glory of the Lord.

God gave *some* to be apostles, *some* to be prophets, *some* to be evangelists, and *some* to be pastors and teachers. Take all 4 of these “somes”, and you still don’t have a whole!

There will still be a large part of the body who aren't in any one of these 4 groups. The point in this passage isn't that we all have gifts. The points are these:

1. The emphasis is on **God** and **God's people**. It was **he** who gave these gifts to these groups of individuals.
2. These people had these gifts for the sole purpose of building up the body for *further* work – in other words, to equip the rest of the body to use *their* gifts!
3. How long will the church need these gifts? Until we *all* reach unity in the faith (IOW, forever), and become τελειοι (perfect). To see that “perfect” in this verse *really* means “perfect” the way we use the word (and not “complete”, as it's sometimes used), compare with Matthew 5:48. The same word is used to describe the Father.

Slide 14: <none>

Slide 15:

Perhaps a better title is ***A Ministry-filled Life***, if for no other reason than we are *not* all evangelists, but we *are* all ministers – each of us has a ministry to fulfill. Each of us has a gift or gifts from God that we have been given to build up the body & to help the body mature (Ephesians 4:12), and to serve others (Mark 9:35).

Slide 16:

- Remember, before we can even *think* of evangelism, or ministry, or whatever word is appropriate, we must first “***set apart Christ as Lord.***” Jesus said, in Matthew 5:16, “In the same way, let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven.” If Jesus is not Lord of our life, men may very well “see [our] good deeds”, but it's unlikely we'll be doing those good deeds so that the praise will go to God.

***Question #5 on the handout.*** We discussed earlier whether the “great commission” was specifically intended for the 11 remaining apostles, or for Christians in general. Is there anything in the context of 1 Peter 3:15-16 that would lead us to believe it *does not* apply to us? I don't believe so. Peter wrote his letter to Christians in general, and these are instructions that apply to us today in every sense that they applied to first century Christians.

***Question #6 on the handout.*** “Always be prepared...” means several things. Here are some ideas, but this is not by any means a complete list:

1. knowing scripture
  2. memorizing scripture
  3. living in such a way as to enhance what we say, rather than detract
- Maybe we *can't* literally “***go into all the world and preach the gospel***”, but we *can* “preach the gospel” into *our world* (i.e., our “sphere of influence”) by letting our light shine and always being prepared to give an answer for the hope that we have.