

No one can wait to grow up and leave home – and when it finally happened you can remember how scary it really was! It is no different for a bird when it is time to leave the nest, or when a new neighborhood becomes "home." When it is time, it is time. And whether we go or let go ... forward we must move.

Jesus last words to his disciples were, "Go!" "It is time to move on. It is time for YOU to GO OUT!" It is time for YOU to DO FOR OTHERS what I have done for you." My guess is their first thought was – "wait, Jesus that was your job! How can we do what you had to come to earth to do?" They had gotten comfortable with Jesus doing all the heavy lifting, but all along he had been getting them ready. (Just like parenting, Jesus' ministry with the disciples was preparing them to leave the nest.)

Every leper he touched and foot he washed, every stranger he welcomed, every lesson he shared, and every loaf he blessed was getting them ready. He simply asked them to remember what He had done for them, and their task was to share who they had become. He didn't expect them to know or do everything He did – but simply expected them to tell what they knew and share how his love had changed them. .

Now it is our turn! We have our own misgivings as we hear words like "go, baptize, teach!" for there some things we cannot do, and some we are afraid to try. But how is that any different from a child who first leaves home, or a parent who has to let go once kids are grown up? But didn't God create us, weaknesses and all? Why then would we question His wisdom in making us unique, or allow shortcomings to get in the way of his call to serve? Each of us is part of his body on earth – which we call "the Church." Together, we have the gifts to cover most scenarios ... except death. And that is why Jesus took care of that one, for us. With death out of the way, only life remains for us to tackle.

Jesus' command is simple, "Go!" Think about what that means. "Don't stay here ... don't look back ... go somewhere new ... move forward." And the reason we move forward is that is where we will find Jesus waiting! He lives not in the past, but in our present and future!

Everyone loves a new car – all we want is to try to keep it perfect and new. But a car needs to be driven, and a driven car will eventually get scratches, scrapes and need repairs. What good is a new car if you are so afraid to drive it that it never gets used? Just as a car is meant to be used, so faith is meant to be shared. If your are afraid to go on the road, why buy a car? It is the same with faith, our gifts, and our opportunities – they must be used or they will be wasted. As God doesn't waste gifts, why should we?

One of most ignored aspects of creation narrative is God's "rest." When God "rested" what does that really mean? Some say that creation was so strenuous, that God was simply worn out. Others claim that God was so fascinated with his creation, he wanted to sit back and enjoy. And some have suggested that after creation, God withdrew from creation and we are now on our own.

I would suggest that this is a metaphorical rather than a literal description of God's activity, and that God's "rest" was actually as much a day of "creation" as the first six

“days” had been.

Jesus’ examples of teaching, healing, comforting, feeding, praying, washing feet, welcoming strangers, telling stories were all examples for us. They remind us of what He did, and where to see Him “doing for us today.” What more powerful witness can there be there for you to share what you have seen, and felt, and experienced, and observed, and has been shared with you? It is not for us to “save” anyone – only Jesus’ grace can do that. But as we share ourselves, talk about God’s love, and joyfully live by faith, God will work miracles through us. It happens! We all have life changing moments that we can never forget. What are yours? And remember, when you share those moments, it is not about you, but how God’s love touched even you.

A young mom once confided that she didn’t go to church because her husband wouldn’t go with her. When he was ready, then she would go. And so I asked, “Have you ever considered that maybe he doesn’t go because you don’t? Maybe he is waiting for you to lead him. If it isn’t important for you, why should it be important for him?”

*Our assumptions and excuses can be roadblocks to ministry!* It is like fishing; unless you get your line in the water, there is no way you will catch any fish.

When those disciples decided to quit hiding in the darkness of an upper room and reached out to their world, thousands upon thousands came to faith. And that witness eventually, centuries later, has touched even you and me.

When my wife, Suzie, was dying, she scared me once day with the question, “How can I be sure that I will be in heaven; that God will forgive me for all that I have done wrong?” Of all people, she was the last to have to worry, and yet she was facing what I have never faced. My first response was anger that anyone would have hinted that we might somehow not be “good enough” for Jesus’ sacrifice to be enough!

But the love of Jesus was all she was asking for. And rather than memorized answers or trying to remember a perfect Bible passage, we talked about God’s love and all the miracles we had shared in our lives, and his promise that He would never abandon or forsake us. She said, “I’m OK, but who will teach this to my kids?”

Then I knew what was up ... she really didn’t have a question, but needed to remind me that I had to be one of their disciples. I couldn’t leave that work for anyone else and had to make sure they didn’t get confused as someone had confused her. She was telling me what Jesus told his disciples, “Go, reach out and be the disciple that Jesus expects you to be.” Time to move on and make sure you do what you need to do.

When he was only 2, our grandson Jack asked Chris and Courtney for “pears” before their meal. “Pears?” They didn’t understand. They told Jack they didn’t have pears. Again, he said, “pears!” And then they understood, he was asking for “prayers!” And so they did, and again, “a little child shall lead them.”

When we worry about our weaknesses, we are forgetting God’s sacrificial gifts, and miss the point of being a disciple! After Pentecost, the disciples simply told the story of Jesus’ love the best they could, and “each in his own language understood!” That is the Spirit and work, and all we need do is “go.”

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