



Peninsula City Church

Jesus Said...

Go and...

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Go and...

An Introduction

Q. Have you heard and obeyed Jesus' last command?

Have you ever had the moment when you have told your children or grandchildren do something and you realise that they are not listening? Or you have been told to do something by your parents, boss, or even your coach and you realise that you were not listening and don't know what they just said? You know those times when it all seems to get lost in the atmosphere somewhere. The lips were moving, but the mind was not engaged to be able to take it in and do it.

1. Shema

It has tended to be the case with God's children throughout history; many times we have tended not listened and obeyed. God has been speaking, but a lot of the time, well, we just have not been listening. The result is that simply we have not obeyed Him. In Hebrew, the general word used for listening and obeying is 'Shema.' An example of this is found in a passage like Deut 6:4-6,

⁴ "Listen, O Israel! The LORD is our God, the LORD alone. ⁵ And you must love the LORD your God with all your heart, all your soul, and all your strength. ⁶ And you must commit yourselves wholeheartedly to these commands that I am giving you today" (Deut 6:4-6 NLT).

Jesus picked up this commandment, and said,

³⁶ "Teacher, which is the most important commandment in the Law of Moses?" ³⁷ Jesus replied, 'You must love the Lord your God with all your heart, all your soul, and all your mind' (Matt 22:36-37 NLT; see also Mk 12:30; Lk 10:27).

Jesus would regularly use a statement about hearing what God was saying. For example,

"Anyone with ears to hear should listen and understand!" (Matt 11:15 NLT).

Jesus also said that,

¹⁵ "If you love Me, obey My commandments... ²¹ Those who accept My commandments and obey them are the ones who love Me. And because they love Me, My Father will love them. And I will love them and reveal Myself to each of them" (Jn 14:15, 21 NLT)

John in his first letter picked this up and stated how this plays out within our relationship with our Heavenly Father when he said,

"Loving God means keeping His commandments, and His commandments are not burdensome" (1 Jn 5:3 NLT)

So, as a result of what has been pointed out, hearing and obeying our Heavenly Father is paramount. There is a relationship between the two ideas of hearing and obeying God. However, it is also evidence of our love for Him. So, in light of this fact, it could be asked, what have we done about Jesus' command to Go into the world and continue the work that He started?

2. Jesus knew His authority, and so commanded His followers

Q. On what basis did Jesus tell His followers to go?

Matthew in his gospel account recorded Jesus' last words to His followers before He ascended back to heaven. He points out that, that Jesus said,

¹⁶ "Then the eleven disciples left for Galilee, going to the mountain where Jesus had told them to go. ¹⁷ When they saw Him, they worshipped Him, but some of them doubted! ¹⁸ Jesus came and said to His disciples, 'I have been given all authority in heaven and on earth. ¹⁹ Therefore,

go and make disciples of all the nations (all people groups), baptising them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. ²⁰ Teach these new disciples to obey all the commands I have given you. And be sure of this: I am with you always, even to the end of the age” (Matt 28:16-20 NLT).

In Mark’s gospel account he also recorded Jesus’ last words to His followers. He picks up on some things that Matthew did not record, especially to preach the gospel.

¹⁴ “Still later He appeared to the eleven disciples as they were eating together. He rebuked them for their stubborn unbelief because they refused to believe those who had seen Him after He had been raised from the dead. ¹⁵ And then He said to them, ‘Go into all the world and preach the Good News to everyone...’ ²⁰ And the disciples went everywhere and preached, and the Lord worked through them, confirming what they said by many miraculous signs” (Mk 16:14-15, 20 NLT).

While Luke in his version, stressed others aspects, particularly that Jesus would send the Holy Spirit.

⁴⁴ “Then He said, ‘When I was with you before, I told you that everything written about Me in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms must be fulfilled.’ ⁴⁵ Then He opened their minds to understand the Scriptures. ⁴⁶ And He said, ‘Yes, it was written long ago that the Messiah would suffer and die and rise from the dead on the third day. ⁴⁷ It was also written that this message would be proclaimed in the authority of His name to all the nations (people groups), beginning in Jerusalem: “There is forgiveness of sins for all who repent.” ⁴⁸ You are witnesses of all these things. ⁴⁹ ‘And now I will send the Holy Spirit, just as My Father promised. But stay here in the city until the Holy Spirit comes and fills you with power from heaven”” (Lk 24:44-49 NLT).

So a combination of these three accounts gives the reader a fuller picture of what Jesus said to His followers. That is, based on Jesus Christ having been given all authority in heaven and earth; He commanded His followers having gone your way continue the work in the power of the Holy Spirit, which He had already begun. Notice that Jesus commanded His followers to continue the work. He based this command on the truth (indicative) that He had been given all authority in heaven and on earth by the Father for all time. This is an important biblical principle of interpretation that a command is always based on an indicative. So, when Jesus said to go and make disciples, it was because that fact of the matter is He has all authority to be able to state this commandment.

3. Our response to Jesus’ command

Q. How have we tended to respond to Jesus’ command?

Jesus commanded His followers to go and continue the work, and for the most part, they went. In this commandment, Jesus has also commanded us to go, but we have often gone the other way.¹ That is, we have disobeyed His direct command to continue the work that He had begun.

Jesus understood what it meant to have been given back His authority, which He had before He came to earth. It is from this place of authority that He was able to make this command to His followers. This was an authority that He had before He came to earth. Therefore, He said to His Father,

¹ Green, Keith, “Jesus Commands Us to Go.” Off the album *Jesus Commands Us to Go*. by Shepherd Music 1984.

² “For You have given Him authority over everyone. He gives eternal life to each one You have given Him... ⁵ Now, Father, bring Me into the glory We shared before the world began” (Jn 17:2,5 NLT).

So, when we respond to the final command of Jesus, we need to respond due to His authority as God. We also need to obey to Him as the One who has obediently fulfilled the work of redemption.

As with the first Christ-followers, we also need to be the ones who are going and continuing the work that Jesus Christ has already began. However, we are not to go in our strength. But as Luke in his gospel has pointed out Jesus said,

⁴⁹ “Now I will send the Holy Spirit, just as My Father promised. But stay here in the city until the Holy Spirit comes and fills you with power from heaven” (Lk 24:49 NLT).

His followers were to wait for the Holy Spirit to come and empower them to be able to continue the work. They were to be empowered witnesses to Jesus Christ, as He said,

“But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you. And you will be My witnesses, telling people about Me everywhere-- in Jerusalem, throughout Judea, in Samaria, and to the ends of the earth” (Act 1:8 NLT)

We know that Jesus Christ sent the Holy Spirit and that He came on the day of Pentecost empowering them to do the work. They were told this would happen and it did. That is why they were able to go out and continue the work that He had begun.

¹ “On the day of Pentecost all the believers were meeting together in one place. ² Suddenly, there was a sound from heaven like the roaring of a mighty windstorm, and it filled the house where they were sitting. ³ Then, what looked like flames or tongues of fire appeared and settled on each of them. ⁴ And everyone present was filled with the Holy Spirit and began speaking in other languages, as the Holy Spirit gave them this ability” (Acts 2:1-4 NLT).

So, Jesus Christ did not send His followers out ill-equipped. He had spent three years with them and then gave them the Holy Spirit. As it was with the early Christ-followers, so too we need to spend time with Jesus Christ and be empowered and led by the Holy Spirit to be about to go and effectively continue the work as His church. We are to go out into the world and preach the gospel, and not wait here for people to come to us. If we are a Christ-follower, then we have already been sent and empowered by the Holy Spirit to be His witnesses.

Some concluding thoughts

So, coming back to the opening question,

Q. Have you heard and obeyed Jesus’ last command?

When He says ‘Shema,’ do we listen and obey Him, or come up with excuses? So, have we been hearing and obeying our Heavenly Father? This is evidence of our love for Him. In light of this fact, what have we done about Jesus’ command to ‘Go’ into the world and continue the work that He started? If Jesus has commanded us to go into the world, why do we often disobey and go the other way?

In 1984 Keith Green at a concert sang the song, “Jesus Commands Us to Go.” Although it was over 30 years ago, the lyrics are still relevant today and they are,

“Jesus commands us to go
But we go the other way
So He carries the burden alone
While His children are busy at play

Feeling so called to stay

Oh, how God grieves and believes
That the world can't be saved unless the ones He's appointed obeys
His command and His stand for the world
That He loved more than life, oh He died, and He cries out tonight

Jesus commands us to go
It should be the exception if we stay
It's no wonder we're moving so slow
When His church refuse to obey
Feeling so called to stay

Oh how God comes as He starts the great judgment of fire
So He can gain, His greatest desire
Cause He knows that the souls of the lost
They can only be reached through us; we're His hands and His feet."²

Consequently, we need to remember that Jesus said that, "I have been given all authority in heaven and on earth. **Therefore, go and...**" It is one thing to say that we love Him, but it is another thing to show Him that we love Him. Remember that as John said in his letter,

"Loving God means keeping His commandments, and His commandments are not burdensome" (1 Jn 5:3 NLT)

We have already been deployed by Jesus empowered by His Spirit and given the message to share with those around us. So if that is the case, why do we disobey Him and we do not go? We say that we love Him, but do we not show it by our obedience? As the old saying goes "Actions speak louder than words."

It is time for us to Go and... Jesus Christ has said, "Shema." We need to hear and obey displaying our love by our actions to His command that still stand to this very day. Will we obey, or disobey since actions speak louder than words?

² Green, Keith, "Jesus Commands Us to Go." Off the album *Jesus Commands Us to Go*. by Shepherd Music 1984.