

To Go or Not to Go: Why the Church Is God's Only Plan

There is a question that sits at the heart of every believer's life, and it is not the one Hamlet wrestled with. Shakespeare's tortured prince stood at the edge of action and pulled back, paralyzed by the fear of what lay beyond death. For the Christian, that fear has been answered. We know what lies on the other side of life. And so the question is not whether to live or to die. The question is whether to go.

In Matthew 28:18-20 Jesus declares that all authority in heaven and on earth has been given to Him, and on the basis of that authority, He sends His followers into the world to make disciples of all nations. The command is not tentative. It is not a suggestion for the spiritually adventurous. It is the marching order of a King who has already won the war.

And yet, if we are honest, many of us hesitate.

What We Are Saved Into

"It is more important what you are saved into than what you are saved out of." This is a statement that Dudley Daniel, spoke quite often and puts quite a spin on what so many consider important when it comes to belonging to a local church or movement. To be 'saved' into anything less than God's Biblical church, where His presence is felt and only His Name exalted, is to simply move from one form of bondage to another, from sin to religion.

Many of us carry remarkable stories of what God has rescued us from. Those stories matter, but they are not the destination. What lies ahead, the inheritance of the saints, the glory of what God is building, is so magnificent that everything we have come from will fade into insignificance by comparison.

This changes how we think about mission. It changes how we think about the church.

The Church Is Not simply a Tool for Mission. It is key to the Mission.

Ephesians 3:10 contains a powerful statement: through the church, the manifold wisdom of God is made known to rulers and authorities in the heavenly places. Not through individual heroics. Not through programs or platforms. Through the church.

Psalms 68:6 tells us that God sets the lonely into families. First Corinthians 14:26 describes a gathered community where every person brings something, a hymn, a word, a revelation, a tongue, an interpretation, and all of it is directed toward building one another up. Ephesians 3:21 declares that glory belongs to God in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations.

The church is not a supporting structure for mission. The church is the way. It is the only means by which the nations can be effectively disciplined. When we grasp this, everything changes. We stop treating church as a weekly event and start seeing it as the very body through which Christ is advancing His kingdom on the earth.

A Lesson From the Wilderness

The Israelites were only an eleven day journey from the Promised Land. They wandered for forty years because they refused to go in. The numbers are sobering. Approximately 1.4 million people over the age of twenty-one had to die in the wilderness before God's people were ready to cross the Jordan. That is somewhere between eighty and a hundred deaths every single day for four decades.

When the time finally came to enter the land, two of the tribes, Reuben and Gad, looked at the territory east of the Jordan and decided it was good enough for them. They asked Moses to let them stay and not cross over

the Jordan. Moses' response was sharp and immediate. He asked them why they would discourage the hearts of the people of Israel, just as their fathers had done a generation before. The same spirit that had cost a generation forty years in the wilderness was rising again.

Discouragement is not passive. It is not simply failing to cheer someone on. It is an active force that can derail what God is doing in an entire community.

Joshua, whose name carries the same meaning as Jesus, 'Jehovah saves', gathered the people before they crossed over. The response of the tribes is striking. All that you have commanded, we will do, and wherever you send us, we will go. It reads like a direct echo of Matthew 28. Go, therefore. And we will go. I am with you always. Only may the Lord your God be with you.

What It Looks Like in Practice

In Acts 20, the apostle Paul is on his third missionary journey, and he is not traveling alone. Around him is a team drawn from multiple churches: Berea, Thessalonica, Derbe, Asia. Each of them brought something distinct, and each of their home churches modeled something worth carrying into every gathering of God's people.

The Bereans were known for being full of the Word, receiving what was taught with eagerness and then searching the Scriptures daily to test it.

The Thessalonians were faithful examples, people whose lives and joy in the Holy Spirit made them a model for entire regions.

Gaius from Derbe embodied hospitality, opening his home to Paul and to the whole church.

Timothy carried a sincere, inherited faith, one that had been lived out before him by his grandmother and mother.

Tychicus was ready to minister, trusted to speak not just what he had been told but what he genuinely knew.

Trophimus was present even when not prominent, a quiet witness to the reality that God uses every faithful presence, seen or unseen.

The Deeper Meaning of Encouragement

True encouragement is not the same as empty affirmation. It is not telling people what they want to hear or smoothing over difficult truths to keep the peace. Biblical encouragement, what the New Testament calls *paraklesis*, the same root word used for the Holy Spirit Himself, is something far more substantive.

It is rooted in truth. It strengthens faith. It calls people toward obedience. It helps believers remain steady in their duty and devotion to God.

Romans 1:11-12 describes it as a mutual exchange, where faith strengthens faith. Romans 15:4 ties it to Scripture, because it is through the Word that we find hope. And Romans 15:5-7 grounds it in love, the kind that welcomes one another as Christ has welcomed us, not comparing churches or competing with one another, but fixing our eyes together on Jesus and glorifying the Father with one voice.

The church belongs to Jesus. He is building it. Our part is simply to go, to be present, to be faithful, and to encourage one another along the way.