

MISSION MONTH
Mission Month: Me
1 Corinthians 16:13-18
June 4, 2017

I want to tell you about friends of mine. Their names are Jason and Carrie. They have three children: Fia, Cai and Xander. Carrie is the daughter of good friends of our and we used to hang out together. Our kids played with each other. Carries older sister babysat our kids. When Carrie was old enough to go to college she went to a Christian college. She met Jason and got married and all the while she was wrestling with this nagging (for lack of a better word) feeling inside of her that God wanted her to do something with her life. Carrie was a resident assistant during college and loved talking with the girls in her dorm. She joined Campus Crusade For Christ and began working for them on campuses with Jason by her side. Jason eventually joined what is now called CRU and together they began ministering to college students who were struggling with their faith and experiencing growing pains and homesickness.

A while back, they launched out into full time missionary status with CRU. We sat down with Jason and Carrie and heard their story and Julie and I decided to become a part of their financial support team. All because Carrie could stop listening to that voice inside of her. She wondered, can I make a difference, can God use me to touch another life? Over the years, Carrie and Jason kept listening to that voice and they are now stationed at the CRU headquarters in Florida. They are both working on awesome projects. Carrie is developing curriculum and Jason got plugged into the Jesus Film project and he was put in charge of designing an app for iPads so that you could pull up the Jesus Film (an evangelistic film about Jesus and salvation). As of this date, the Jesus film has been translated into over 1000 languages and I can report to you that the app is finished and people are using it in Nepal, in Bangladesh, in Saudi Arabia, in Brazil and all over the world. All because these two young people listened to the voice of God nudging them to take a chance, to take a step.

So, can I tell you something really neat...God wants to do that with you too. Not do what Jason and Carrie are doing but, God has something for you to do and He'd love for you to hear the call to go...to get busy doing what it is God built you to accomplish for the Kingdom.

But, here's the problem...we allow outside voices and sounds to drown out the still, small, inner voice of **God** who **is calling us to GO**. We listen to all the other voices because they're easier to listen to and easier to answer. Go to school, go to college, go make money, go find a career, go search for your dreams, go have fun, go fall in love, go get married, go raise a family, go...

And all the time we are saying NO to God's voice. Granted, we're not taught too well how we can hear God's voice. There is a fantastic story in the Old Testament of a master and his apprentice. The master's name was Eli and the apprentice was Samuel. One night, Samuel heard the voice of God calling his name – "Samuel." He went over to Eli and woke him up and said, "what do you want." This happened three times until Eli realized that it was God calling Samuel. You see, even some of the saints of the Bible had a hard time hearing God.

So, let me say this to you this morning...stop and spend some time listening to the voice of God. It often come is nudges and urging. Sometimes it comes in a nagging way about something you don't want to do but, you just can't get it out of your thoughts, that's God doing that! How do I know? Because that's how God works. He calls us softly to follow, to GO and to do what He has created us to do and to be who he has created us to be.

But, not only do we drown out the voice, sometimes **we** out right **turn GO into NO**. We have all kinds of reasons to say NO when we hear God saying GO. We have our jobs and all those financial responsibilities. We have our reputations to uphold. We have doubts about our abilities to do what God is calling us to do. We have families to take care of.

I'm left asking the question what happens if God said GO and we said NO? God is fond of saying GO. The word appears 2015 times in the Bible. For a quick comparison of the impact of that number, I'll tell you the word STAY only appears 319 times.

- What if Abraham had said NO when God said GO?
- What if Moses said NO when God said GO?
- What if Ruth said NO when God said GO?
- What if Mary and Joseph said NO when God said GO?
- What if Paul said NO when God said GO?
- And what if we say NO when God says GO?

Who will miss out on the message God want you to speak, who will lose their soul if they don't hear the words of hope you are supposed to bring. Who will lose their faith and hope if you're not there? What world changing event will go undone if we say NO.

I know this is scary and I know that God might ask you to do something you never dreamed of in your wildest imagination. But, God will equip you for whatever task He calls you to and the God who calls you will not leave you. And that same God will see it through to the end with you. You might not think you're good enough, brave enough, smart enough, spiritual enough, or bold enough. But, God doesn't call the qualified, God qualifies the called. I don't have to understand, nor explain why God says GO, I just have to obey Him when He does.

Let me tell you about some other friends of mine. Corrie and Kyle met in college just like my other friends. [Pic of the Wertz Family] Corrie and Kyle went to Messiah College and were believers who knew that God wanted to do something with their lives. Both of them got involved with Youth With A Mission and are now spiritual leaders in this important ministry. They live in uptown Harrisburg in the Youth With A Mission training center where they work with teams of college age young people who want to do mission stuff. They teach and train these young people to get ready to GO and on occasion, when God calls, they GO themselves. Corrie and Kyle have two beautiful, very young kids, did I mention that. Oh, and they are on their way back to Nepal to train Youth With A Mission volunteers in Nepal for 5 months...all four of them...kids and all. Their sole desire is to have people who do not know Jesus come in contact with people who love Jesus more than life.

As a kid I remember saying something to this effect to God, "I'll do whatever you want but, please don't send me to Africa." We had just had a presentation at church by a missionary from Africa and there was nothing he said that would have made me want to go to Africa. He said it was hot, the people were poor and malnourished, the trip was difficult and there were dangerous animals. Why would I want to do that! Now, I've been there six times.

God has this amazing way of turning our hearts around and helping us to see what wasn't there before. God turned my heart around and I have been to Africa six time in eight years. We also sponsor a Compassion Child in Ghana. God took my NO and turned it into a GO. God softened my heart, opened my eyes, and gave me a passion for what is happening in West Africa. And God can help you turn your NO into a GO.

Turn your NO into GO.

¹³ Be on guard. Stand firm in the faith. Be courageous. Be strong. ¹⁴ And do everything with love. ¹⁵ You know that Stephanas and his household were the first of the harvest of believers in Greece, and they are spending their lives in service to God's people. I urge you, dear brothers and sisters... 1 Corinthians 16:13-15

God may not be asking you to drop everything and go to Nepal or Sierra Leone or anywhere else for that matter. God might be calling you to your neighborhood, your work place, your family, your friends to be a spiritual presence in what otherwise might be a dark place. So, how can that happen. If you look at this

passage with me you'll notice some things in verses 13-15. The first thing God says to us this morning about moving into a missional life is **be on guard**. Most of the missional opportunities that God wants you to take advantage of are right in front of you, if you have your eyes open.

The second thing that the people of the Corinthian church are being reminded of is to be **courageous or bold**. Most of the missional things God is going to call us to are going to require us to take a leap of faith or an action step of some kind. The mission for you most likely will be right in front of you but, it will often require you introducing yourself, or to speaking up or speaking out. I wonder how many opportunities we miss when we hesitate or feel like it's not our place to say something.

Okay, the third directive that is in verse 13 is to be strong and it points to the fact that being a missional person takes a strong and determined will. The weak will fall away from the task of showing Jesus to the world. But, the strong will stay the course and not be discouraged when it looks like the world we live in is going to "you know where" in a handbasket.

So, there's one more thing I want to point out from verse 14...it says that we are to do all this mission stuff, out of love. This is not what love looks like. When the opportunity is right in front of you and you take the leap and boldly do what God has called you to do we are to do it with love. We can negate every one of the previous directive if we do for another motive other than love.

The Bible tells a story that points this out in one of my favorite books, Jonah. In this short read, go home and read it today, God calls this guy named Jonah to go to a town called Nineveh. But, Jonah, unlike any of us, pretty much says NO to God. He jumps on a boat going the opposite direction from Nineveh. While on this boat, a really bad storm come along and in order to quiet the storm they throw Jonah over board because he tells them that he made God mad. The story says that a giant fish (or whale) [Pic of Jonah in the whale] swallows Jonah and then spits him out on the beach at – who knows where? – right, Nineveh, the town he was supposed to go to. So, he tells the town about God and how much God loves them and the change their ways and fall in love with God, much to Jonah's surprise and disappointment.

Jonah was hoping that they would not change their ways and that God would blast these people into infinity and beyond, right. He is so convinced that this is going to happen that he goes up on a hill outside of town to watch the firework show God is going to provide. He's thinking this is going to be destruction of biblical proportion, right. But, God – who is all about the love, right – say to Jonah, I'm going to spare this town and all the people because they now love me. And Jonah gets upset. He's like, you're supposed to wipe them out, that's no fair. And God says, there are 120,000 people down there and I love them so, get over it. How many times do we hesitate to offer God's love because we believe those people are getting what they deserve? Love should, no "must" rule the day and rule in our hearts if we are going to be a mission minded group of people called CrossPoint Church. Amen?

Jesus loved us while we were yet sinners.