

Saying “No” to “Go”!

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One of the great things about the love of God is that it is unconditional. We love using the Greek word for this, *agape*. It just sounds great and moves us to a level beyond sentimentalism. This also becomes one of the great challenges for a disciple of Jesus because it means we give the love we have received. There is something awesome and, at the same time, hard to grasp about things that are unconditional. We do not live in a world like this, for anything of value costs something. But deep down, we know that in God’s culture, *unconditional* is right.

But! Is unconditional also right when it comes to other commands that we read about in the Bible? Of course it’s right with *love*, but what about with *go*, as in Matthew 28:19. Is going to the nations unconditional, like a soldier responding to the command of his general, or is it more of a response like “That’s a good idea that I’d like to think about”? If Jesus is Lord, then any response that is conditional seems to amount to saying “no” to His command to “go.” Because this command is in the Bible, our response is usually not a defiant “no,” but rather a soft one that says, “I’ll go if I can choose when and where,” or, “Right now is not the time,” or, “This is not the place to go (to people like refugees or Muslims).”

It seems that this exact situation is where our theology moves from the church or classroom to life. We know—and from the Bible, can defend—the attributes of God: that He is everywhere all the time with full power and control. Is God as present in Syria or Iran as He is in America? Do the promises and truths of passages such as Psalm 139 still apply in those countries—that there is no place in all creation where I am out of His presence? It seems we choose the wrong meaning when we say, “The safest place to be is in the center of God’s will.” It’s wrong when we make this mean that the physically safe places are the center of God’s will. That was not the case with Jesus. The center of God’s will for Him was the cross. Now, spiritually, the center of God’s will is the safest place, and in fact, if you know Jesus as Savior, then you are already spiritually safe; you are already living eternal life.

We are fully convinced of the truth of our faith and that it is able to stand in both theory and practice no matter what circumstances come our way. In fact, we are so convinced of it that we know it is the truth for all people at all times in all places. **This has to mean that, along with a belief and practice of unconditional love, we also believe and practice an unconditional going.** We go anywhere at any time, knowing He is everywhere at all times. Will it be physically dangerous and challenging? Absolutely! Will there be times we are led by the Lord to use wisdom and discretion? Yes, but never in a way that depends on our comforts or preferences. Those of us who have been to these kinds of places will tell of an amazing experience of God’s presence individually and with His people. A sense of God’s

presence that is so real and strong that you know that even if it were just you and God, you would be a majority.

It is interesting in Matthew 9:38 that Jesus does not tell His disciples to pray for the harvest, but rather for workers to be sent to the harvest. It was then and remains now vitally important for us to go to the nations. **There is still a harvest waiting.** Praise the Lord for those who continually and unconditionally answer this call. May we join them and send them as never before!



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