

**“Do You Know What You Are Supposed to Be Doing?”
Isaiah 55:1-11; Matthew 28:16-20**

1 “Come, all you who are thirsty, come to the waters;
and you who have no money, come, buy and eat!
Come, buy wine and milk without money and without cost.
2 Why spend money on what is not bread, and your labor on what does not satisfy?
Listen, listen to me, and eat what is good, and you will delight in the richest of fare.
3 Give ear and come to me; listen, that you may live.
I will make an everlasting covenant with you, my faithful love promised to David.
4 See, I have made him a witness to the peoples, a ruler and commander of the peoples.
5 Surely you will summon nations you know not,
and nations you do not know will come running to you,
because of the LORD your God, the Holy One of Israel, for he has endowed you with splendor.”
6 Seek the LORD while he may be found; call on him while he is near.
7 Let the wicked forsake their ways and the unrighteous their thoughts.
Let them turn to the LORD, and he will have mercy on them,
and to our God, for he will freely pardon.
8 “For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways,” declares the LORD.
9 “As the heavens are higher than the earth,
so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts.
10 As the rain and the snow come down from heaven,
and do not return to it without watering the earth and making it bud and flourish,
so that it yields seed for the sower and bread for the eater,
11 so is my word that goes out from my mouth:
It will not return to me empty, but will accomplish what I desire
and achieve the purpose for which I sent it.

16 Then the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain where Jesus had told them to go.
17 When they saw him, they worshiped him; but some doubted.
18 Then Jesus came to them and said, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me.
19 Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations,
baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,
20 and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you.
And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.”

Introduction

Three questions: as a Christian and as a church, “Do you know what you’re supposed to do? Do you know How to do what you’re supposed to do? Are you doing what know you’re supposed to do?”

The general purpose of the church comes from Jesus. It appears on the front of the worship bulletin every Sunday. “First Presbyterian Church exists to help one another ‘love God, love neighbor, love one another, and make disciples’ wherever we are in the Salt Lake area.” Some years ago, our Session elders chose Five Guiding Principles to be used by the pastors, the session, staff and ministry leaders as they

envision, plan, carry out, and evaluate programs, ministries and projects of our church: celebrating in worship, teaching discipleship, engaging in community service, encouraging personal ministry, and growing outreach.

I. WORD and Deed

The purpose of the church and these guiding principles express both word and deed, what we are to say and what we are to do as followers of Jesus.

There's a quaint saying attributed to St. Francis of Assisi. It goes, "Preach the Gospel and if necessary use words." The problem is that Francis never said this. And it goes against the Franciscan theology and practice of education. Francis most certainly preached the Word.

Faith in Jesus Christ is spread from person to person by word. Jesus is the Word of God. John begins his gospel account with "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God... The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth."

Words capture the meaning and purpose of God's creative and redemptive plan for each of our lives. Using words in worship, study, service, and outreach is essential.

In Isaiah 55, we read a special word that has a depth and breadth of meaning. The Hebrew word is נֶפֶשׁ *nephesh*, most commonly translated *soul*. Here, the King James Version has it: "Everyone who thirsts, Come to the waters; And you who have no money, Come, buy and eat... And let your soul delight itself in abundance. Incline your ear, and come to Me. Hear, and your soul shall live." Fill yourself, fill your soul with only the best.

The Hebrew *soul* is a word closely associated with the English word *appetite*, with both physical and spiritual hunger. In Isaiah 26:8-9, he says, "Yes, Lord, we wait for you; your name and renown are the desire of our hearts. My soul yearns for you in the night; in the morning my spirit longs for you." God provides for both. "Come, buy wine and milk without money and without cost... and your soul will delight in the richest of fare." Your soul will delight!

Last weekend, I was delighted to be with my family back east for my niece's wedding. Rehearsal dinner Friday, wedding reception Saturday: you know the feeling. Oh, yes! Fully satisfied. Just right. Well, have you ever felt that way spiritually? The Word of God is meant to fill us in this way. Because the soul is your being, yourself as a living and breathing person. Soul is the very essence of the human being. Soul distinguishes us from every other living thing. The Word of God is what nourishes the soul.

II. Word and DEED

The Franciscan Tradition is a biblical one as it rightly tries to balance both orthodoxy and orthopraxy grounded in the Gospel. Orthodoxy: right belief through the Word of God and orthopraxy: right practice through faithful living. In Isaiah 55 and in other places in the Bible, God says, “Come.” In Matthew 28 and in other places, Jesus says, “Go.” Come and go. You and I are here this morning because we have come. The Lord would also have us leave this morning to go!

Bryan Olson of the Schwab Center for Investment Research. He gathered the data to prove the investment strategy that regular investments, even in small amounts, will make a big difference. Making a few small changes can make a big difference in your savings and retirement. Olson says that giving up potato chips with lunch could save you \$176.80 a year and generate retirement savings of over \$10,000 in twenty years. Giving up two doughnuts a week could boost your nest egg by over \$6,000 in two decades. Switch from double lattes with whipped cream to regular coffee, and you could save \$429 per year — a whopping \$27,000 over twenty years, not to mention the calories.

Jesus said, “Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations.” What a huge task. It’s known as the Great Commission. But, remember: all the positive steps you take, even the smallest ones, make a significant difference over time. The words “Go, therefore” mean “Move out.” NT scholar Dale Bruner explains it this way: “Because Jesus is Lord, his disciples should keep making *extensive* decisions, be reaching *out*, be seeking ways to get in touch with people, be asking themselves, ‘Are we moving out?’”

Matthew tells us how the disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain where Jesus had told them to go. “When they saw him, they worshiped him; but some doubted.” Matthew is acknowledging that Christians are both believers and doubters. I find this to be good news. Jesus doesn’t correct or attack this doubt. He quietly overlooks it (almost as if it’s normal) and gives them the Great Commission. “Do this, anyway! Expect great things with your very ordinary faith” (Bruner).

Conclusion

May I suggest that at the conclusion of worship that you go, take a small step. Welcome someone here at 1st Pres this morning. Say something like, “Good morning. I’m Mike. I really enjoyed worship today. How about you?” Have a conversation for a few minutes. Ask questions, express interest in that person. Or, sometime tomorrow, tell someone about your faith. “How was your weekend? I was in church yesterday and I really enjoyed the message.”

I began by asking, “Do you know what you’re supposed to be doing?” I conclude with Isaiah saying, “Come, come to the table of the Lord” and with Jesus saying, “Go, go with God’s goodness to share.”