

## Fulfilling The Great Commission

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### Introduction

Jesus the Christ promised to build His church in Matthew 16:18, and build her He did (Acts 2). He built her, as the only institution through which mankind could be saved, and to her He adds those who obey Him (Acts 2:38, 41, 47).

Sadly, not all of the “added” understand, or take seriously, her purpose. In some instances, she has ceased to become the “life saving station” Christ intended, and has become only a social club. Wanting to become like those around her, some members try to become everything and end up becoming nothing, because they do not fulfill the Master’s directions.

It is my task today to encourage and challenge us to be about the business of FULFILLING THE GREAT COMMISSION, which should always be the focus of the church of Christ!

### TAKING OUR MOUNTAIN—OUR WORLD—FOR CHRIST!

Caleb, a great man of God from the past, had confidence that God’s people could take the land God had promised — if only they would do as He said! Numbers 14:8-9 *“(8) If the Lord delight in us, then he will bring us into this land, and give it us; a land which floweth with milk and honey. (9) Only rebel not ye against the Lord, neither fear ye the people of the land; for they are bread for us: their defence is departed from them, and the Lord is with us: fear them not.”*

Although the majority of his brethren failed, due to unbelief, he prevailed in faithfulness — and eventually was able to take the mountain God had promised him years before. Joshua 14:6-14 *“(6) Then the children of Judah came unto Joshua in Gilgal: and Caleb the son of Jephunneh the Kenezite said unto him, Thou knowest the thing that the Lord said unto Moses the man of God concerning me and thee in Kadeshbarnea. (7) Forty years old was I when Moses the servant of the Lord sent me from Kadeshbarnea to espy out the land; and I brought him word again as it was in mine heart. (8) Nevertheless my brethren that went up with me made the heart of the people melt: but I wholly followed the Lord my God. (9) And Moses sware on that day, saying, Surely the land whereon thy feet have trodden shall be thine inheritance, and thy children's for ever, because thou hast wholly followed the Lord my God. (10) And now, behold, the Lord hath kept me alive, as he said, these forty and five years, even since the Lord spake this word unto Moses, while the children of Israel wandered in the wilderness: and now, lo, I am this day fourscore and five years*

*old. (11) As yet I am as strong this day as I was in the day that Moses sent me: as my strength was then, even so is my strength now, for war, both to go out, and to come in. (12) Now therefore give me this mountain, whereof the Lord spake in that day; for thou heardest in that day how the Anakims were there, and that the cities were great and fenced: if so be the Lord will be with me, then I shall be able to drive them out, as the Lord said. (13) And Joshua blessed him, and gave unto Caleb the son of Jephunneh Hebron for an inheritance. (14) Hebron therefore became the inheritance of Caleb the son of Jephunneh the Kenezite unto this day, because that he wholly followed the Lord God of Israel.” (emphasis mine, e. j.) It took Caleb much patience, perseverance and effort to take His mountain. So will it be with us!*

Why was Caleb able to take his mountain, when so many failed? He had the determination that he was going to do as God desired! Numbers 14:24 *“But my servant Caleb, because he had another spirit with him, and hath followed me fully, him will I bring into the land whereinto he went, and his seed shall possess it.”* He had such determination because He believed God!

Another important lesson we all need to learn from Caleb, is that the work is just that — work — and we should not expect the taking of our mountain, our world, for Christ to be easy. Hebron was a mountain inhabited by a race of giants who lived in walled cities. He didn’t ask for someone else to conquer his land for him. Rather, he asked for the mountain, knowing the obstacles! He then, by faith in God, claimed it — not by words only, but by actions! YOU AND I CAN, AND SHOULD, DO THE SAME! *Why is it important that we do the same?* Because we are commanded to:

### **GO INTO “ALL” THE WORLD!**

We are to go “take our mountain” too — at home and abroad (Matthew 28:18-20; Mark 16:15, 16). *Are we working to fulfill the command? Or are we like the unfaithful of Caleb’s day who would not do battle with evil?*

We have wonderful examples of faithfulness throughout time. Not only do we have the example of Caleb from so many years past. We also have the example of the early Christians, who, *“...went everywhere preaching the word”* (Acts 8:4), even when being persecuted. (emphasis mine, e.j.) One of the greatest examples is that of the Apostle Paul, who also taught at home and abroad. On his missionary journey’s he went to at least 12 countries. Included in this was the answering of the *“Macedonian call”* of Acts 16.

All of the examples are not from the past however, for we have examples of those today — such as: Jim & Judy O’Connor — who spend several months each year in foreign fields, as well as doing much work here in the states; Randy Watson — a full time worker in Latvia; Tom Newberry, a modern day Caleb, who at the age of 82 works in two week campaigns in Jamaica each year; Jana Bentley — a young adult who goes to various countries on summer campaigns for Christ; Peyton & Rebecca Jenkins, Ashley Heck — and others — teens who work in two week campaigns in Jamaica. Many others could be named, but these will suffice as examples of some who faithfully work to win the world for Christ. One of the great encouragements gained from these examples is that AGE is not a factor — those mentioned range from 17 to 82 years old.

Knowing the we must GO, and seeing that there are those of various ages who do go, it is important to ask, “*HOW SHOULD WE GO?*”

### **GO DEFINITELY!** (De-fin-i-tive-ly)

Acts 8:12 *“But when they believed Philip preaching the things concerning the kingdom of God, and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized both men and women.”* (emphasis mine, e.j.)  
 Definitive = “*servicing to define or specify precisely*” (Webster 297).

Many teach a “form” of the Gospel, and thus people are converted to their “doctrine”. Paul warned the Galatians concerning the heeding of such teaching. Galatians 1:6-7 (6) *I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel: (7) Which is not another; but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ.* (emphasis mine, e.j.) Pervert = “*to cause to turn aside or away from what is good or true or morally right: CORRUPT; To twist the meaning or sense of: MISINTERPRET*” (Webster 856). We must make sure our handling of God’s message does not become perverted, but is definitive and pure — lest we deceive or be deceived!

All people everywhere — regardless of culture — need the same thing! What? The Gospel of Christ! Romans 1:14-17 “(14) *I am debtor both to the Greeks, and to the Barbarians; both to the wise, and to the unwise. (15) So, as much as in me is, I am ready to preach the gospel to you that are at Rome also. (16) For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek. (17) For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith.”*  
Why? Because of Sin! Romans 1:18 “*For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness;”* Romans 3:23 “*For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God;”* What is the cure? Jesus Christ! John 8:31-32 “(31) *...then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on him, If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed; (32) And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.”* Romans 6:12-13 “(12) *Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof. (13) Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin: but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God.”*

With so many being given a constant diet of error, thus being lost, SOME-ONE MUST GO DEFINITELY teaching them the truth of God’s Word!

### **GO PERSISTENTLY!**

Acts 19:20 “*So mightily grew the word of God and prevailed.”* We all want the work with which we are involved to grow, and prevail over the sinful world. Yet, too often, too many have “spiritual myopia” — near sightedness. *How many, after a month or two, a year or two, lose interest in a good work?* A few disappointments and “let’s go to something else”. That’s not the way it was in the first century!

Acts 19:20 is a concluding statement that could be made because Paul had been “persistent” in his efforts! Acts 19:8 “...he went into the synagogue, and spake boldly for the space of three months, disputing and persuading the things concerning the kingdom of God.” Acts 19:9 b-10 (9 b) ...he departed from them, and separated the disciples, disputing daily in the school of one Tyrannus. (10) And this continued by the space of two years; so that all they which dwelt in Asia heard the word of the Lord Jesus, both Jews and Greeks.

We can have such “concluding statements” today, concerning our work, if we persistently go — with the right message and attitude!

### **GO REALISTICALLY!**

Realistically — not all will respond “positively” concerning the truth! The reason Paul left the synagogue and went to the school was because of the rejection of truth by some. Acts 19:9 a “But when divers were hardened, and believed not, but spake evil of that way before the multitude, he departed from them...” Yet, their rejections of “that way” did not stop his work!

We don’t quit preaching at home, even when we have little or no “visible response”. Yet, many have quit with mission work because they don’t think it is worth it, since they see little “visible” results. If the same attitude were had at home, many congregations would have disbanded long ago!

You may, or may not, be able to: move to a foreign land to fulfill the great commission; spend several months a year to fulfill the great commission; spend two weeks on a Gospel campaign, to fulfill the great commission. If you can, get involved in a good mission work. If you can’t, you can encourage and support those who do — for every faithful effort is important and viable in fulfilling the great commission!

It is true that fewer and fewer people are interested in Christ and His will. This truth does not give reason to quit, however. Christ did not say “Go,” as long as people are interested!

### **CONCLUSION**

Mankind is in sin. Jesus Christ is the answer. We have the knowledge and ability to show them the way. So, LET US TAKE OUR MOUNTAIN — OUR WORLD — FOR CHRIST! Let us be about the business of FULFILLING THE GREAT COMMISSION!

*How?* BY GOING: INTO ALL THE WORLD! DEFINITELY, PERSISTENTLY, and REALISTICALLY!

Of course, to be faithful in any work of saving souls there is a need to begin with SELF! If you are not a New Testament Christian, you need to study, learn and obey God’s will. If you have already become a New Testament Christian, but are unfaithful, you need to repent.

### Works Cited

A Merriam-Webster (1977). Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary. Springfield, Massachusetts, G. & C. MERRIAM COMPANY.