

“Dare to Go!”
by Rom A. Pegram (7/2/17)

Five weeks ago, we began this ‘Dare to Be Great’ worship series with a game of Jeopardy. And today, I want to revisit that game, as we come to the last in this series of messages on *greatness*. But this one’s going to be different. This is going to be Trinity UMC Jeopardy *Advanced!* And if you’ve been paying attention throughout this series, you shouldn’t have any problem with the answers for today. Our theme for Jeopardy today, once again, is going to be ‘GREAT THINGS,’ so let’s see how you’re going to do today...

- **We’ll start with ‘great things’ for \$100.** All 3 Great Statements that we’ve been studying—the Great Commandments, the Great Compassion, and the Great Commission—are all found in this Gospel. (What is ... ‘The Gospel of Matthew’?) All right. Very good. Now, let’s go to for the next one...
- **Here are ‘great things’ for \$200.** This theological term (begins with ‘M’) is synonymous with ‘love in action.’ (What is ... ‘Mercy’?) You’re exactly right. Now, shall we try again?
- **Here’re ‘great things’ for \$300.** [*Sound*] Oh, there’s the Jeopardy ‘picture of the day.’ The people in this picture recently committed to this step in their spiritual growth. (What is ... ‘a growth group’ or ‘The Heaven Class’?) Exactly right! O.K., here’s the last one...
- **‘Great things’ for \$400.** Pastor Rom is excited about this incredible 8-part worship series that begins next week. (What is ‘HEBREWS SUMMER: Getting to Know God through Jesus’?) OK, so I sprung that one on you, didn’t I? Sorry ‘bout that... Perhaps we’ll do better with the next one...
- **‘Great things’ for \$500.** [*Sound*] Wow. Final Jeopardy is ‘Great Words.’ And so, here we go... This was Jesus’ final command to his disciples. (What is: ‘Go and make disciples of all the nations’.) That’s exactly right, from the Great Commission...

Folks, this is the ‘Go’ part of the Great Commission ... and that’s where we’re headed today. Last week, we talked about the ‘Grow’ part of the Great Commission ... and this week we’ll talk about the ‘Go’ part of the Great Commission. I kind of did them out-of-order and I’ll tell you why later. But, for now, let’s review this *great* passage of scripture right now, shall we? Here’s the Great Commission (Matthew 28:16-20, NLT)...

Then the eleven disciples left for Galilee, going to the mountain where Jesus had told them to go. ¹⁷ When they saw him, they worshiped him—but some of them doubted! ¹⁸ Jesus came and told his disciples, “I have been given all authority in heaven and on earth. ¹⁹ Therefore, go and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. ²⁰ Teach these new disciples to obey all

the commands I have given you. And be sure of this: I am with you always, even to the end of the age.”

So, what was the first word in the actual commission Jesus’ gave us? ‘Go!’ But, why does Jesus tell us to ‘go?’ Why does Jesus command us to ‘go?’ In order to answer that question, *I need you to learn two things today: Why Jesus Came from Heaven to Earth ... and then Why We Are to Go.* And the truth is ... *you can’t understand one without understanding the other*, so let’s start with *why Jesus came*. Here we are in Matthew, Chapter 28. Jesus is just about ready to leave the Earth—to ascend to Heaven to sit at the right hand of his Father. He’s now talking to his disciples (120), and his final words are this commission to ‘go.’ But, again, you can’t understand why he said that ... until you understand why he came from Heaven to Earth in the first place. So, here are 3 reasons why Jesus came to Earth:

HE CAME TO SHOW HIS LOVE FOR US. In order to understand God’s love for us, though, we need to go back to the beginning—the Book of Genesis and the Creation Story. It’s the story of the Garden of Eden, where God put two people in that garden—Adam and Eve. And it was there, in that garden, that God had a dynamic relationship with both of them (just like we’re to be in a relationship with God)...

In order for it to be a real loving relationship, God had to do something really interesting. God had to give Adam and Eve ... FREE WILL. Folks, the truth is ... *you can’t truly love ... unless you have a choice to love.* God could have set up this whole relationship and forced us to love him. But, didn’t we talk last week about the fact that ... God never forces. That’d be against God’s nature, so God gave Adam and Eve FREE WILL. They got to *choose* to love God ... or not... And they got to *choose* anything in the Garden *except* eat of the fruit of the tree of good and evil—the one in the center; ‘you don’t touch that,’ is what God said. So, God gave ‘em a choice, either to obey or disobey. One choice was to love God; the other was to love God ... *not so much!*

As most of you know, Adam and Eve *chose* to disobey God ... and any time there’s disobedience with God, there are consequences. They got kicked out of the Garden of Eden. And their disobedience ripples down through time even to us today...

You see, God created you. God loves you and gives you the freedom to love him back. But, like Adam and Eve, sometimes we choose to disobey God. Every one of us in this room (myself included) have chosen at times to disobey God. We’ve all taken our turn rejecting God, but *that doesn’t mean God doesn’t love us...*

Now, why are you telling me all of this, Rom? I thought you were talking about why Jesus came to Earth to start with. Well, if you’re to come to understand God’s love and why Jesus came to Earth in the first place, you have to understand that Jesus came *to restore our relationship with God*, broken way back then in the Garden of Eden...

You see, God loves us; we have a choice to love him back. And when we’ve chosen to disobey God (sin), that destroys our relationship with God. In other words, our

disobedience condemns us to both separation from God in this life ... and separation from God for all eternity! So, *here's how much God loves us*. God says, in effect, "I'm not going to stop with what happened in the Garden. I'm going to fix this. I'm going to send my son, Jesus." So, *this is the big reason why Jesus came!* He came because God loves us so much, God would not stand for us being condemned forever. God wanted this relationship repaired. And he wanted it done right the first time ... so God sent his very best in his son, Jesus. Just look at Jesus for a moment. Go with me to John 1:14 (NLT), where he says,

"So the Word became human and made his home among us. **He was full of unfailing love** and faithfulness. And we have seen his glory, the glory of the Father's one and only Son."

And if that's not enough, scripture makes God's love extremely clear in Romans 5:8 (NLT):

"But God showed his great love for us by sending Christ to die for us **while we were still sinners.**"

Isn't that incredible? It's easy to love someone who's loveable. But, God sent Jesus and loved us through him ... while we were still the scum of the Earth—still sinners! *That is incredible!* You see, Adam and Eve turned their back on God in the Garden; you and I turn our back on God as well. But God intervenes and says you don't have to live that way for eternity. Let me send you Jesus. And Jesus came. Jesus came to die on the cross to show, once again, God's love for us. I want you to know that truth today. GOD LOVES YOU. That's the first reason Jesus came ... *to show his LOVE for us!* Next...

HE CAME TO SHOW HIS COMPASSION FOR US. This is just one example, folks, but listen to what it says in Matthew 9:36 (NLT): "When he saw the crowds, he had compassion on them because they were confused and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd."

Now, Jesus did come to love us; that's a part of his nature, his character. But, *he also came to show compassion on us*; that's because he truly cares—seriously concerned for our well-being. You see, if we had to stay dead in our sins, we would be separated from God for all eternity ... in a place called Hell (i.e. Hades, Gehenna, etc.). *Holiness & sinfulness cannot co-exist*, that's why there has to be a Hell. But, you see...

- In love, Christ demonstrates his true nature...
- In compassion, Christ saves us from destruction...
- In love, Christ came to show us who God really is...
- In compassion, Christ came to remind us what Hell is really like...

Again, God saw our situation. He saw our desperation—separated from him, turning our backs on him, on our way to spend eternity in that awful place called Hell ... and Jesus

said, “I can’t allow this to happen!” So ... *he came to show his compassion for us—to save us from an eternity separated from God...*

John 3:16 (NLT)—that famous verse—says it most clearly: “For God loved the world so much that he gave his one and only Son, so that everyone who believes in him will not perish but have eternal life.” Jesus came to show his love for us; Jesus came to show his compassion for us. God did everything possible to keep us from eternal destruction ... *except force you to believe!* Again, if he forced you, it wouldn’t be love ... because love always involves a choice! Then the third thing Jesus did for us is this:

HE CAME TO SHOW HIS DREAM FOR US. John 10:10 (MSG) says, “A thief is only there to steal and kill and destroy. I came so they can have real and eternal life, more and better life than they ever *dreamed of.*”

Before Martin Luther King, Jr. said, “I have a dream...”, God said the same thing. By choosing to turn our backs on God—what happened in the Garden of Eden, God’s original dream for us was shattered. My dad might have called it ‘shooting yourself in the foot.’ We had no idea when we turned our backs on God just what that would mean. We moved from ‘God’s very best’ for us, to settling for much less ... but, the Good News is ... God doesn’t want us to!

You see, *God’s dream for you is* for you to have a relationship with Him—for you to find forgiveness through Christ, for you to know for certain that you’re going to Heaven when you die, and for you to have that much better life we just read about (John 10)!

- God wants to reconnect with you...
- God want you to live at the highest level possible...
- God wants you to experience that type of life...

That’s why Jesus came... So, let me ask you this: *Have you experienced God’s love for you through Jesus Christ? Have you personally experienced God’s compassion for you through Jesus Christ? And do you know God’s dream for you through Jesus Christ?* These are the reasons that Jesus came...

So, why should we GO into our world ... as Jesus has asked us to? ‘Because Jesus did the same for us...

- **WE GO BECAUSE OF OUR LOVE FOR OTHERS.**
 - Just as Jesus came to show his love for me, I go because of my love for others (actually his love—Holy Spirit—that lives in me & loves through me)...
- **WE GO BECAUSE OF OUR COMPASSION FOR OTHERS.**
- **WE GO BECAUSE OF OUR DREAM FOR OTHERS.**

Do you want to be GREAT in God's eyes? Then let's GO ... and do what Jesus has called us to do. We've got our work cut out for us, don't we? But the GOOD NEWS is we don't have to do it on our own! Why? Because Jesus promised ... "I am with you always, even to the end of the age." Folks, it's time to GO ... with God; it's time to BE THE KINGDOM OF GOD right here in Lomira and beyond...