

Wings

*“Those who wait on the Lord shall renew their strength;
they shall mount up with wings like eagles.”
Isaiah 40:31*



October 10, 2010

Go and Do

The religion of Christ is a religion of action. But followers of Christ have become quite good at replacing the action with a number of cheap imitations.

“So which of these three do you think was neighbor to him who fell among the thieves?’ And he said, ‘He who showed mercy on him.’ Then Jesus said to him, ‘Go and do likewise’” (Lk. 10:36-37).

The lawyer with whom Jesus was speaking on this occasion correctly understood that loving one’s neighbor was essential to obtaining eternal life (v. 25-28). But in typical lawyerly fashion, the man sought to analyze the requirement in terms of a legal distinction: “but who is my neighbor?” (v. 29).

Jesus responded with the parable of the Good Samaritan. At the end of the parable, even the lawyer got the message: my neighbor is anyone who I have the opportunity to help. “Go and do likewise” is a call to imitate the unselfish kindness of the Samaritan in our own lives toward anyone and everyone.

The parable provides a wonderful lesson in applied Christianity, but there is a deeper lesson here that deserves attention. Boil down this exchange to its basic components, and a vital truth emerges: eternal life requires that I “go

and do” something. Salvation, in other words, requires action on my part. Furthermore, it is not left up to me to define the nature of that action. The parable demands action that is personal, direct, and sacrificial.

The problem today is not that people do nothing; rather, they replace the action with a variety of cheap imitations that fall short of what Jesus taught.

For example, some people “go and talk.” They truly believe, with all their heart, everything Jesus ever taught, including the beautiful message in this parable. Really, they do—just ask them. They freely share that conviction in their conversations. But for all their talk, they never find the time or opportunity to translate the talk into meaningful deeds.

Others “go and preach.” The world needs to hear the message of this parable, along with everything else Jesus taught, and they have committed their lives to declaring that message. Some of them can become quite eloquent in articulating the message — and can appeal to the original Greek to support their argument. But their academic erudition often

becomes a stumbling block to personally performing what they are preaching. You see, their work is much too important to be bothered with such trivia.

Still others “go and advocate.” These are some of the busiest people you’ll know. They work tirelessly to “raise awareness” of all the suffering and injustice in the world, and to expose the privileged interests who shamelessly exploit the disadvantaged. Ironically, for all their lofty ideals, these agitators usually accomplish the least good for the objects of their organized compassion.

And then there are those who “go and pretend.” They put on just enough of a facade of religion to give the appearance of charity. It’s all a sham, of course, but as long as the charade holds and people are impressed, who cares?

Against all these substitutes, the call of Jesus remains a simple, “go and do.” No shallow promises, no boasting, no fakery, no excuses — just go out into the world and live the life that God wants us to live. Whatever others might see or not see, *God knows* what we are doing, and that’s all that matters.

– David King