# Go ye into all the world

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Date: 01 January 2000

Preacher: Prof Donald Macleod

[0:00] I'm going to start in a way a long way from this verse. Around the year 1720 there was in the Church of Scotland a great controversy.

It was called the Marrow Controversy because it was about a book called The Marrow of Modern Divinity. That book was written around 1646.
It was forgotten fairly quickly until one day Thomas Boston went to a homeless parish in Simpron. And at this time Boston was very perturbing his own mind about various questions about the Christian gospel.
He was perplexed as to the nature of faith and about the terms of the gospel's invitation.
[1:14] He was very unhappy about the limited way in which Christ was offered in many of the pulpits of the day.

And as he sat in this very poor home he saw on the windowsill two books. One of them was this book called The Marrow of Modern Divinity.
He took it home and he was thrilled by it because it confirmed his own sentiments. He read it, he devoured it and he purchased it.
He commended it to his own fairly wide circle of friends and one of them published the book sometime later.
To their consideration there was an immediate outcry. The book was condemned by the assembly in the year 1720.
[2:26] Its teaching was declared to be unlawful. And Boston and his colleagues like Ralph and Ebenezer Erskine were forbidden to publicise it or to preach its opinions.

This whole Marrow theology, it was condemned, it was put beyond the pale of God's church in Scotland.
The assembly condemned many things in the Marrow. It condemned the view that assurance was of the essence of faith. It accused the Marrow of teaching universal redemption.
It accused the Marrow of saying that the law had no place in the Christian life. But the real problem was this.
That the Marrow of Modern Divinity and Thomas Boston and Ralph and Ebenezer Erskine, all of these men wanted to preach the whole Christ fully and freely to every single human being.
[3:40] They wanted an unfettered gospel. They wanted a universal offer. And they wanted a free offer of the Lord Jesus Christ.

And at the heart of the Marrow, there was a great rendering of the words of my text tonight. The Marrow renders the text in this way.
Go and tell every man without exception that is good news for him. Go tell every man without exception that is good news for him.
This, as you see, is Mark's form of the so-called Great Commission. It differs from Matthew's in two details.
First of all, by saying that we are to go to every creature. In Matthew's form it is, go to all the nations. But the Mark's form is, go to every creature.
[4:54] Mark gives the whole commission a great particularness, a great individuality. It is so intensely personal. Go and tell every man.

And the second detail, the second change is this. That Mark says, preach the gospel. Matthew says, go and make disciples, go teach.
But in Mark's form it is, go and preach the gospel. It is indeed literally, tell them the good news. And what the Marrow did was to give us the superb translation of the Mark and form of the commission.

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Tell every single man without exception that is good news for you. A reminder that God's word is good news.
A reminder too that this good news is for every single creature, for every human being. Well I want to probe these words and this great message for a moment this evening.
[6:03] I want to speak to those who aren't Christians. I want to speak to those who don't think they're Christians. I want to speak to those who doubt if they're Christians.

I want to speak to those who one day will preach the gospel. Because here there is something utterly foundational to the whole mission of the church.
And the whole caste of the gospel of Jesus Christ. Those Marrow men are referred to. Those men were great Calvinists.
We might even say that they were high Calvinists. They believed all the five points. They believed in limited atonement, in God's election, in all these things.
And yet they felt, as they read the New Testament, they felt that they had to be able to go and say to absolutely every man, I have good news for you, whoever you are.
[7:01] And I want to say to you tonight, whoever you are, I have good news for you. Well what is that good news? What can we say to every man and woman, to every boy and girl in the world tonight?

What good news do we have for them? Well first of all we have this. I can say to absolutely every one of you, Christ is able to save you.
I can say that with no qualification, with no limitation, with no room for any exception, whatever Christ is able to save you.
You may feel that you are a great sinner. You may feel you are an exceptional sinner. You may feel that you are a unique sinner.
You may put this gospel so far from you, by a whole battery of disqualifications. And then I have said to you, God is able to save you.
[8:07] Christ is able to save you. No matter that one sin, that weighs so heavily upon your conscience. No matter your bondage, no matter your habitual sin.

No matter your thralldom, no matter the gravity, or the notoriety, or the uniqueness of your transgression. Christ is able to save you.
And you have no right to turn to the living God and say, no, you can't save me. Not even you can save me. Because I am so unusual and I am so unique.
There is no one in the world tonight who has the right to run from the force of this great message and say, God cannot save me. I want you to know that Christ is able to save you.
I can say for this reason, that the blood of Jesus Christ, God's Son, cleanses from all sin. It has that power because it is the blood of his Son.
[9:16] The blood of his only Son. And there is no guilt so high. There is no stain so indelible. There is no reputation so foul.

But the blood can cleanse it. And the blood can cover it. And I want you to know that, that whatever you sin has been, wash me with his soap and I shall be clean.
I shall be whiter than the snow. Sinners plunge beneath this flood, lose all their guilty stains. I want you to know too, that there is no sin, there is no power of sin.
There is no dominion of sin. There is no bondage and there is no thralldom of sin. From which the Holy Spirit is not able to deliver. We must never allow that there is somebody who is so warped and who is so bent and who is so corrupt.
That the Spirit of God cannot undo the damage done by sin in the depths of that man's or that woman's nature. God is able to save you.
[10:23] I am saying to you, God's love is deep enough. I am saying to you, Christ's blood is powerful enough.

I am saying to you, God's spirit is powerful enough. God in Christ is able to save you. And I want you to take it, to take it now in the quietness of your own soul.
And I want you to say unto your soul, Christ is able to save me. Christ is able to save me. You take it right home to yourself.
And then again, I have this good news for you. I have the news for you that God offers you Christ. And God offers you salvation in Jesus Christ.

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And that offer is made to every man, to every woman, to every boy and girl. It's made to every creature. To men and women with no exception whatsoever.
[11:31] You know, the male men were very, very bold in the proclamation of this great doctrine. They said, Christ is dead for you. They meant that Christ was crucified.

He is there for you to come to. They said, we turn to sinners of mankind lost. And we say to these sinners of mankind lost, we say to them, Christ is yours.
You sinner, Christ is yours. They said, he's not yours in possession, but he's yours in the offer. He's there for you to take.
They spoke in their quaint 17th century way. And they said, God has made a deed of gift and grant to mankind lost. To every sinner of mankind lost.
You know what they meant? They said, here is an offer. And it has your name on it. Here is God offering his own son.
[12:39] And that offer is made in God's name. It's a deed made out by God. It's a grant made by God. And they said, you know, Boston and these men said, this offer is your name, man, sinner.

And God wants your signature. God wants your acceptance. And whatever you passed, or you present, or you sin or guilt or corruption, the offer has your name in it.
That's what they said. And that's what I'm saying to you. That tonight, God is offering you a son. And God is offering you salvation in his son.
God is offering you Christ as a covering for your guilt, as a leader in your bewilderment, a teacher in your confusion, a brother in your solitude and in your loneliness, a shepherd in your waywardness. He is offering you a whole Savior, prophet and priest and king and shepherd and brother and friend and physician. He is offering you the whole Christ.
[13:50] Now, every day in this world, in our century, we are inundated with free, free, free offers on every side. Here is a great free offer.

God has made this offer. He's put your name on the very form. And God wants your signature. God wants your acceptance.
I have good news for every creature. I have a free offer for every creature. That's what this great good news is, what this gospel is. I have the offer of Christ and salvation for every man and every woman, with no exception whatsoever.
And I tell you again this. I have this news for you. It means a great deal to God that you'd come and accept his salvation.
I believe that God is not only offering, but God is pleading, and God is beseeching, and God is entreating.
[14:58] I know that preachers are called the ambassadors of Christ. And maybe we feel ambassadors ought never to compromise the court or the king that sent them.

And maybe we say to ourselves, well, we ambassadors, we mustn't beggar the gospel. We mustn't demean or be mean the gospel by going too low and by pleading and wrestling with sinners.
And we imagine, well, let us just proclaim this gospel in great and imperious terms and tell you, God commands you to repent. And I could very well stand here and say to you imperiously, God commands your faith.
And I could say, take it or leave it. But I see the Lord Jesus Christ and he beholds a city and he weeps and he wails over it.
How often, he laments, would I have gathered you as a hang gathers her brood under her wings, but you were unwilling.
[16:09] I see the apostle Paul and he says, I beseech you in Christ's stead. I plead with you as though God did beseech you by us.

This God who has no pleasure in the death of the wicked. This God who will have all men to be saved. This God, I say, it matters to him.
This God is a pleading God. I know this God does his own decrees. I know this God does his own invincible grace.
But I have this great good news for you. God is not only making you a cold, cool, calm, collected offer. But God is pleading and God is beseeching.
Will you please receive it? Will you please accept it? Turn ye, turn ye. Why? Why will ye die? O house of Israel.

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[17:11] My compassion, said the Lord in Osea, my compassions are kindled within me. My compassions are in spasm because God was so intensely concerned that the church would turn from its apostasy and accept and receive his salvation.

And my news for you, as you sit tonight in that pew, my news for you is God pleads with you to accept his salvation.
And I say this to you too. I have a promise. A promise which God just authorized me to make to every man and woman and to every boy and girl.
God makes you this promise. If you come, you will in no wise be cast out. Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved.
It doesn't matter from what background, from what pit you come. It doesn't matter with what reputation you come. There is this miraculous promise that if you come, you receive a magnificent welcome.
[18:28] There will be joy in heaven. God himself will run and throw himself on your neck to make plain the pleasure of glory in the return and salvation of a sinner.

And that is an absolute promise. You can be certain, you can be sure that if you turn to God in Christ tonight, then that promise will find its fulfillment.
And what you've been and what you are and what you've said, your whole past, will be of no consequence. That is God's promise. Well, there is God's news.
There is the news that I have tonight for every single creature. I have the news that God can save you. I have the news that God offers you salvation.
I have the news that God pleads with you to accept salvation. I have the news that God makes you a promise that if you turn to him, then you will live.
[19:31] If you go black, you'll be welcome. If you believe, you'll be saved. There is nothing in this world as sure as that, nothing whatsoever.

If you turn, then you will live. Well, there is what God says to us. Go, he said, and tell them all, tell them the good news.
Tell every man, I have good news for you. Tell every woman, I have good news for you. Tell every boy and girl, I have good news for you, for every single one of you.
Let me for a moment go behind this whole presentation. What are the great principles that lie behind the way these men presented the gospel and behind this form of words before us tonight? There seem to me to be two great facts here. The first is this. The Bible is warious against every form of preparationism.
[20:35] Now it may be a big word. I mean by this. There are so many people and they think that they've got to make certain preparations before they can go to God in Jesus Christ.

They think they've got to dress up and they've got to put a good face on things and change their appearance and do certain things and go through certain steps before they dare go back to God. and that little distortion has lived very close to the gospel right down the centuries. Men have felt there is something I must do and something I must be before I could dare to go back to the Lord Jesus Christ.
You see, it's virgin tells a story of an artist who wanted to paint a certain street crossing in Birmingham. and it seems that there was a character a street sweeper who was part of the scenery of that part of the city and the artist said to him will you come and sit for me because I want you in my painting.
And the man of course was chucked to me and said yes I'll come and he came and he came all dressed up. He looked like anything but a street sweeper.
[22:05] And the artist said you're no use to me I want a street sweeper. I want you as you are as you wear as you are every day. That's what I want.

But there are so many people who would treat the gospel in the same way and they dress up and they bid on their cosmetics. They try to reform their lives.
They try to amend things to repair things. They try to deal with their weaknesses. They try to get real conviction of sin and real interest in the gospel and real love for God's people and they're going to go to Christ and say Lord here I am now I'm ready I have conviction of sin now Lord and I've got love for your people now Lord and I've got interest in the gospel and I'm a real seeker Lord and don't I look good and dressed up I've come for my salvation.

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But we know that we can't dress up before we come to God. We know that we can't deal with an old lack of conviction.
We know we can't make ourselves holy before we come. We know that if we could we wouldn't need to come at all. We must come to Christ unprepared.
[23:35] We must come to Christ because we can't prepare ourselves. We must come to Christ just as we are as unprepared sinners as crossing sweepers in our own nature with our own reputation or real selves.

Not disguised not cosmeticised not dressed up but we come unprepared. We come now.
That's what these men were saying. Tell every man you have good news not tell the prepared not tell the convicted or the interested or the seeking or the enquiry.
You remember that marvellous moment at Philippi. There had been that earthquake and this man comes out this Roman soldier this man of brutal pagan background out he comes and he comes out screaming what must I do to be saved?
What must I do? Well Paul did know was this man elect or not but Paul certainly knew he wasn't prepared this man wasn't dressed up but Paul said to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ do it now right this instant here do it now he didn't say to him you must go through certain stages and be convinced of sin and become an inquirer and a catechumen and all these things he said now just as you are believe in the Lord Jesus Christ so that's my first great concern let's do our way with all this preparation we don't need preparation to come we don't need it because Christ is the only preparation and if we stay from him till we're ready then we'll be doomed and damned because he is all our preparation all I need in thee
[25:37] I find or put it secondly in this way this great teaching that God wants us as sinners and as sinners we have a right to come to Christ as sinners and you know that's put so beautifully in the gospels he came to seek and to save that which was lost this man received but sinners and eat with them that's the gospel we are to come as sinners and you know in the marrow that is expounded with magnificent elaboration you have a man in the marrow and he says oh yes I would come to Christ immediately but I'm such an ungodly man I am so vile and I am so full of sin and so full of corruption and how can I as an ungodly man how can I come to the Lord

Jesus Christ and the marrow says to this man look you are standing the gospel of Christ on its very head because ■■ are saying that Christ came to seek the righteous and the gospel says it came to seek the unrighteous you are saying that Christ came to heal those who are whole and the gospel says he came to heal those who are sick the gospel says he came to save sinners and you are saying he came to save the godly and who often that's what we're doing stand in the gospel of Christ on its very head as if the Lord came to save the prepared or the godly or the righteous or the whole whereas the whole gospel is talking about Christ saving sinners and then the objector goes on and builds up the whole drama and says to evangelists or to the preacher of the marrow are you saying that suppose a man is a vile sinner suppose he has committed the most appalling sins are you saying that that man can come to Christ this man with his guilty past this man with his vile sins this man with his outstanding career in sin whatever his sin was are you saying that that man can come to Christ indeed yes is the picture
I am even saying that the more numerous and the greater a man's sins have been the more reason he has to flee to Christ and the more confident he ought to be in going to save you because he came to save sinners and there's a point in the marrow when they begin Martin Luther and Luther's great teaching on the same doctrine that it's us sinners we go to God and Luther's teaching was so magnificent to you Luther said when the devil comes to you and says you're a sinner you're a vile sinner you're an awful sinner you're a unique sinner then what do you do to him well you say to him I agree with you Satan I am an ungodly man I am a vile and a wretched sinner
I agree with you Satan and you know what I do Satan I'll take your sword and with your own sword I'll cut your throat Satan because he receives sinners you prove me a sinner and when you prove me a sinner you prove to me that I can go to Christ and Christ can save me oh thank you Satan he says you have driven me to Christ you've made me a sinner you cut your own throat this man receives sinners that's what Luther said and there are so many mailed ways of expressing that same truth in the history of reformed theology those very mailed men away back in the early 18th century around 1710 or 1712 there was a thing called the Octorarder Creed I won't go into its details but that creed said something quite remarkable it said this you don't need to renounce sin in order to come to Christ you don't need to renounce sin in order to come to Christ

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I don't think that there is a very wise form of words and it was condemned by the assembly and in my view quite rightly so because at first glance it looks as an encouragement to continue in sin and yet you know at its heart there was a great truth you know nobody's ever come to Christ before renouncing sin not one you know if we had to renounce sin before we came to the Savior we'd never come to him and yet the devil is saying to you you can't go until you deal with that sin and you deal with that one and then he says and there's this one and there's this one and there's this one and you spend your life dealing with all those things before you come to Christ and that's why that creed beneath that unwise form of words was saying something of enormous importance that you can come to Christ even while sin is still a problem you can please as a sinner that's what that creed was saying or let me tell you about Rabbi Duncan
[32:05] Rabbi Duncan had this madness way of saying it too he said sin is the handle by which I get Christ sin is the handle by which I get Christ I don't he says see any verse in the New Testament that says that John Duncan is invited but I see verses that say he came to save sinners and I say John Duncan is a sinner and so I then say John Duncan can come to Christ sin is the handle by which I get Christ that's what Duncan said let me sum up the whole thing for you in terms of that great hymn by Charlotte Elliot in which the writer says just as I am without one plea but that thy blood was shed for me and that thou bidst me come to thee that's all and it continues and it is this to us just as I am and waiting not to remove one blot waiting not to remove one blot that's what the devil wants us doing he says the devil wants us to wait until we deal with the blots and if we keep on dealing with the blots then we'll never come to Christ just as I am and waiting not the blots will be dealt with by the Lord himself just as I am the compass round with much confusion and many a doubt that's the way it is you can wait until you've dealt with all those confusions and all those doubts fightings and fears within without and all the time we're waiting our souls in peril and so they're saying to us just as I am we come with the stains the dark stains we come with the blots with the confusions and the doubts the fears and the fightings we come with them we don't come after we've dealt with them let me close let me speak to those who tonight doubt their own salvation may be members of the church of God

I often think the best remedy for doubt is to agree with the devil and say to him you're right I was never converted I was never saved I'm lost and then you say I'm a sinner it's a solemn thing to be a sinner but it's a great thing too to be a sinner it's a great thing Luther said he can't make you a worse thing than a sinner and he came to save sinners suppose tonight you've been a hypocrite for the last 47 years suppose you're sure you were never saved I have good news for you that right now if you've never believed you can believe here and now and as a sinner you can take
Christ as your savior I want to speak to a very unusual class class found in my experience only in the free church those who are Christians who have never thought of themselves as such it may be as I've gone through this strange analysis of faith maybe you can say I believe that Christ can save me I believe he offers me salvation I believe he pleads with me I believe he promises me salvation and I take him maybe you've done so long ago can you find yourself in that kind of faith maybe all those years the locusts have eaten
I heard a man conduct worship some time ago I knew him many years ago I thought him a Christian then but he didn't see it that way today he's an elder in the church he looks back with tears and he speaks of the years that the locusts have eaten because Satan kept him in the delusion that he was not a Christian I turn to those who are not Christians who don't think they're Christians and I say to you I have good news for you I've told you what the news is and I want you to take up those words with me just as I am without one plea but that thou bidst me just as I am and waiting not to deal with one dark stain or one dark blot but just as we are to come and
I shall close with this one day God will ask all of us which means you and I did you ever hear the news did you ever hear my news the news about my son did anyone ever tell you that he could save you that he offered you salvation that he pled and wrestled with you to accept his salvation that he solemnly promised you salvation and you will say yes Lord I heard the news and do you mean that you never did anything that you were never impressed never moved by my news about my son and every mouth will be stopped may God bless his word to us get us pray if on at

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