

Menifee United Church of Christ

Established in 1962 by God, Jesus and the Holy Spirit

SERMON FOR

February 15, 2015

“God Is Your Go Pilot”



Reverend Bill Freeman: Senior Minister
Eckart Seeber: Music Minister
Marie Paulus-Nyquist: Children's Minister
Ray Hawkins: Lay Reader

Menifee United Church of Christ

Sunday Service and Sunday School 10 AM

*26701 McCall Boulevard,
Menifee, California 92586
(951) 679-1149*

Email: uccmenifee@gmail.com

Website: menifeeucc.org

Live Life Fully Alive!

Psalm 30:1-5

I will extol you, O LORD, for you have drawn me up, and did not let my foes rejoice over me. O LORD my God, I cried to you for help, and you have healed me. O LORD, you brought up my soul from Sheol, restored me to life from among those gone down to the Pit. Sing praises to the LORD, O you his faithful ones, and give thanks to his holy name. For his anger is but for a moment; his favor is for a lifetime. Weeping may linger for the night, but joy comes with the morning.

Mark 1:40-45

A leper came to him begging him, and kneeling he said to him, ‘If you choose, you can make me clean.’ Moved with pity, Jesus stretched out his hand and touched him, and said to him, ‘I do choose. Be made clean!’ Immediately the leprosy left him, and he was made clean. After sternly warning him he sent him away at once, saying to him, ‘See that you say nothing to anyone; but go, show yourself to the priest, and offer for your cleansing what Moses commanded, as a testimony to them.’ But he went out and began to proclaim it freely, and to spread the word, so that Jesus could no longer go into a town openly, but stayed out in the country; and people came to him from every quarter.

* * * * *

“God Is Your Go Pilot”

* * * * *

Sam Smith lived alone, except for his beloved pet dog that he had for many years. The dog finally died and Sam Smith went to his pastor, and said, “Pastor Pete, my dog died. Could you do a memorial service for my dog?” Pastor Pete scoffed and said, “No. We can’t do a memorial service for an animal in our church. But I’ll tell you what, there’s a Catholic Church down the road, and they’ll probably do a memorial service for your dog; heck, Pope Francis said our pets go to heaven and Saint

Francis preached a sermon once to the birds.” Sam Smith said “Thank you. I’ll go right now and ask them.” Then Sam Smith asked Pastor Pete, “Do you think \$50,000 is enough to donate to the Catholic Church for doing my dog’s memorial service?” Pastor Pete said, “Why didn’t you tell me your dog was a Protestant?”

God is your go pilot. That’s what I want to talk with you about today. God is your go pilot. I’m not saying God is your co-pilot, although that’s good too. I’m saying God is your go pilot. I believe God is flying high above you and calling you to go. Or maybe God is flying right next to you and calling you to go. Go and have a memorial service for a pet. Go and help the poor. Go and comfort the sick. Go and visit the prisoner. Go and forgive those who hurt you. Go and love your enemies. God is your go pilot. Are you going to go when God calls you to go? Or will you think of some sort of excuse? Oh God, I’m too busy to go. Oh God, I’m too tired to go. Oh God, I’m too strapped for cash to go. Oh God, I don’t have the right skills to go. Oh God, someone else will go. God is your go pilot. Will you go if God calls you to go?

A leper came to Jesus. The leper begged Jesus to heal him. The leper said to Jesus, “If you choose, you can make me clean.” Jesus reached out and touched him. (Now, you’re not supposed to touch lepers, but Jesus did anyway.) Jesus said, “I do choose. Be made clean.” Immediately the leper was healed of his leprosy. Jesus said to the leper, “Don’t say anything to anybody; but go, do what you’re supposed to do to prove that you’ve been healed of your leprosy.” The leper did go, and, of course, he told everybody that Jesus healed him. And people came from miles around to see Jesus. Did you notice that Jesus didn’t just heal the leper. Jesus healed him and then said, “Go.” And I wonder if Jesus was saying to the healed leper: Go and do what you have to do to prove that you’ve been healed, and then go and help others.

Jesus knows you can't go and help others until you've been healed. Jesus knows you can't go and help others until you've been healed of your leprosy. Jesus knows you can't go and help others until you've been healed of your addiction. Jesus knows you can't go and help others until you've been healed of your depression. Jesus knows you can't go and help others until you've been healed of your anger. Jesus knows you can't go and help others until you've been healed of your hate. Jesus knows you can't go and help others until you've been healed of your fear. Jesus knows you can't go and help others until you've been healed of your guilt. Jesus knows you can't go and help others until you've been healed of your shame. So Jesus wants us to go and be healed of leprosy, addiction, depression, anger, hate, fear, guilt, shame, and whatever. And then Jesus wants us to go and help others. (Say to those around you, "Go and help others.")

Jesus appeared before his disciples, after his resurrection. And what did he say to them? "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations." Jesus didn't say to his disciples, "Go therefore and only help those who look like you, act like you, and believe like you." Jesus didn't say to his disciples, "Go therefore and start an exclusive religious club and keep some people out of it." Jesus didn't say to his disciples, "Go therefore and proclaim that your religion is right and everyone else's religion is wrong." Jesus said to his disciples, "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations." What does it mean to go and make disciples of all nations? I believe it means to go and help people to open their eyes and see God's creation all around them. I believe it means to go and help people to open their eyes and see God's kingdom of heaven all around them. I believe it means to go and help people to open their eyes and see God's love all around them.

Are God, Jesus, and the Holy Spirit calling you to go and make disciples of all nations? Maybe they're calling you to go into the

Menifee community and make disciples of everyone you meet. Go tell your friends. Go tell your neighbors. Go tell your loved ones. Go tell it on the mountain. Go tell everyone you meet about God, Jesus, and the Holy Spirit. Go tell everyone you meet about this church that worships God, Jesus, and the Holy Spirit. Go tell everyone you meet about this church that helps people. Go tell everyone you meet about this church that helps people who are hurting. Go tell everyone you meet about this church that helps people who are homeless. Go tell everyone you meet about this church that helps people who are hoping to live life fully alive, with other people, and with God, Jesus, and the Holy Spirit.

Menifee UCC benefits from the many people in this church who know that God is their go pilot. God calls them to: Go and do something and they go and do it. God calls them to: Go and feed the hungry one Saturday morning a month at this church and they go and do it. God calls them to: Go and give food and clothing to the Pastor's Pantry at this church and they go and do it. God calls them to: Go and help take care of the Peace Garden at this church and they go and do it. God calls them to: Go and sing in the Choir every Sunday at this church and they go and do it. God calls them to: Go and take part in Bible Study every week at this church and they go and do it. They do these things because they know God is their go pilot. They know that God is flying high above them, or maybe God is flying right beside them, and calling them to: Go.

Is God your go pilot? Is God calling you to: Go and do something? Is God calling you to: Go and feed the hungry one Saturday morning a month at this church? If so, will you go and do it? Is God calling you to: Go and give food and clothing to the Pastor's Pantry at this church? If so, will you go and do it? Is God calling you to: Go and help take care of the Peace Garden at this church? If so, will you go and do it? Is God calling you

to: Go and sing in the Choir every Sunday at this church? If so, will you go and do it? Is God calling you to: Go and take part in Bible Study every week at this church? If so, will you go and do it? Is God your go pilot?

Sara Bareilles had a hit song a few years ago called “Brave.” Sara Bareilles sings, “Say what you wanna say. And let the words fall out. Honestly I wanna see you be brave.” God wants to see you be brave. God wants to see you be brave and go. God wants to see you be brave and go and help others. Go and do what you were born to do. Go and do what you were made to do. Go and do what you were created to do.

The first two letters of God are G-o. You can't spell God without Go. I believe that's providence, not coincidence. Jesus said to his followers: Go and make disciples of all nations. Christianity is not a stand around religion. Christianity is a: Go and get things done religion. Go and help the poor. Go and comfort the sick. Go and visit the prisoner. Go and forgive those who hurt you. Go and love your enemies. I believe God is flying high above me, or maybe God is flying right next to me, and God is calling me to say to you today: Go. Go. Go. Go.

Let us pray...

*God of Love,
Help us to go.
Help us to go and do your will.
And help us to go and help others.
Now and forevermore.
By the power of the Holy Spirit.
And in the name of Jesus.
Amen.*



*Meniffee
United Church of Christ*



*Whoever you are,
Wherever you are on life's journey
You are welcome here!*

*Jesus didn't reject people
Neither do we*



THE GOLDEN RULE

*What is hateful to you
do not do to others.*

Judaism

*Do to others what you would
have them do to you.*

Christianity

*None of you believes until he wishes for his
brother what he wishes for himself.*

Islam

*Do not do to others
what would cause pain if done to you.*

Hinduism

*Hurt not others in ways that you yourself
would find hurtful.*

Buddism

*Regard your neighbor's gain as your gain,
and your neighbor's loss as your loss.*

Taoism

*Do not do to others
what you do not want them to do to you.*

Confucianism

*Treat other people
as you'd want to be treated in their situation.*

Humanism