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Peace, Sun Prairie
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The Ascension of Our Lord

Matthew 28:19-20

**THERE'S NOTHING LEFT TO DO
BUT PROCLAIM THE MESSAGE**

There's nothing left to do but proclaim the message. Christ's Great Commission makes that clear to us. When Christ ascended into heaven He said the words that we refer to as the Great Commission: *"Go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you."*

In other words, dear Followers of Christ, the work is done. There's nothing left to do but proclaim the message!

How can it be said that the work is done? As a congregation we are busy –busy with worship services that take a lot more behind the scenes coordinating and labor than people realize, busy for endless hours with a building committee, a finance committee, and voters meetings, busy with Bible classes, maintenance, outreach, activities. We have a busy school. Students and teachers alike scramble to stay on top of the multitude of things happening all at once. Parents and employees are busy. Even retired folk will tell you that retirement is a myth. If anything, it seems there is no end of work no matter where you are.

But in all this our labors and busyness we are not adding anything at all to Christ's Great Commission. Our objective is to proclaim the message about Christ. Nothing more, nothing less. There's nothing else for us to do.

There's nothing else for us to do because Christ has already done everything for us. Think of it. We aren't pitching a program for

weight loss or cardiovascular training or small motor repair where for a price the instructee is given the directives for what he needs to do for the desired outcome. Rather, we offer a finished product, so to speak –an outcome for which the hearer doesn't need to lift a finger.

We are announcing and offering to all eternal salvation, rescue from guilt, death and hell. All the work has already been done. All the instructions have already been followed. Our Savior, Christ, perfectly, flawlessly carried out everything that was necessary for us to be saved. There's nothing left to do, but proclaim the message. That's all He tells us to do.

Imagine if Congress decided to forego all taxes for 2006. There were no forms you had to fill out. You did not need to register or apply to be excused. There was simply nothing to do, but to believe the announcement that for 2006 there will be no taxes. Would you consider it burdensome to tell someone? On the contrary, wouldn't it be the main topic of conversation for weeks?

Christ has given us just such an easy task. He has done the hard part. All we do is go and tell. Proclaim the good news of what is. Christ has died, risen and ascended into heaven. It's all Him. We are forgiven! We are free.

Sometimes in all our busyness of telling, in all the work surrounding our telling, all the effort and expense at creating opportunities to tell, our real purpose gets lost in the shuffle. The busyness becomes an end in itself. Even in parenting, we become so encumbered with the busyness of earthly things: homework, sorting clothes, recitals, lessons, athletics, making dinner, planning a party, cleaning bathrooms and so on that we forget the whole purpose of doing all that for our children is ultimately to give them the best environment possible to tell them and teach them about salvation in Jesus. But very often we neglect that. It's kind of like preparing the house and food for a superbowl party and then forgetting to turn on the television. It shows how our naturally sinful hearts are so inclined away from God and engrossed in this world.

Thankfully, the good news we tell the world is still meant for us too. By the death and resurrection of Christ we also are forgiven. The sin-tax has been lifted from us! There's nothing left to do but proclaim the message.

Secondly, there's nothing left to do but proclaim the message because we are not responsible for whether the message has any effect. Jesus said, "Go and make disciples," but He did not say, "Go and make believers." That is not in our power. God the Holy Spirit uses the message about Jesus that we are to proclaim and through that message brings people to faith in Jesus and saves them.

It is wonderfully comforting news that whether in the home, school, church or anywhere else, though we do everything in our power to proclaim the message faithfully, whether someone comes to faith in Christ, or stays with Christ or is saved is entirely up to Him. When our ascended Lord returns one day, He will not ask us how many believers we've made, how much our church grew or how well the children remain with Christ after we had taught them. He only wants us to proclaim.

Christ ascended into heaven specifically for the purpose of sending His Spirit to give His message power. By the power of the Holy Spirit, the Gospel about Jesus will sustain, strengthen and expand His Church to the end of the world. There is nothing left for us to do but proclaim it.

Remembering how simple our task really is, may that motivate us to give ourselves even more to it. And when the task does seem cumbersome, exhausting or filled with perils –like even a daring \$2 million spending cap –may we trust the promises that accompany His Great Commission to us: "*All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me,*" and "*Surely I will be with you always to the very end of the age.*"