Sunday School Rally Day
Rolling Meadows - 1969

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IN NOMINE JESU

St. Matthew 28: 16-20 Now the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain to which Jesus had directed them. And when they saw Him they worshiped Him; but some doubted. And Jesus came and said to them, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to Me. GO THEREFORE AND MAKE DISCIPLES OF ALL NATIONS, BAPTIZING THEM IN THE NAME OF THE FATHER AND OF THE SO AND OF THE HOLY SPIRIT, TEACHING THEM TO OBSERVE ALL THAT I HAVE COMMANDED YOU; AND LO, I AM WITH YOU ALWAYS, TO THE CLOSE OF THE AGE."

The time has come to stop fooling around! The time has come to get with the Lord and to go with Him! THERE HAS BEEN FOOLING AROUND!

Our World has been playing around with SECULARISM and the idea that people can make it WITHOUT GOD - leaving Him entirely out of their calculations - forgetting His Power to pass judgment - rejecting His mercy - paying Him lip service but offering Him no real respect from their heart or in their life - defaming His Name by word of mouth, by bitterness of action, by hopelessness of attitude.

THE CHURCH has been playing around! For too long the Church has been satisfied with a mediocre, nonchalant, come-see-come-saw, easy-going type of Christianity and Discipleship. For too long Christians have contented themselves with minimums rather than maximums - with what they calculate will be just enough UNDERSTANDING (Knowledge) and FAITH in Christ to squeek by, to get them through the pearly gates when their last hour comes - and they let it go at that. The LIFE IN CHRIST has become sort of a side line affair - not to be take too seriously - except, of course, when the chips are really down and there is no where else to turn. - like covering all your bets - taking out a little eternal life insurance.

THE CHURCH has been playing around! This is demonstrated in its worship (Communion) life, in personal and family Bible Study (Confirmation Class - not a one had family devotions.) in personal and family Devotions - in the sheer ignorance and lack of understanding of what it means to be a DISCIPLE OF JESUS CHRIST. And then Wherever Christians do meet - whether in the ~~family~~ Home or in the Church - they seem to have frequently forgotten their first love and they fritter away their best efforts bickering among themselves. The AGE OF THE TIGER has come - where love grows cold and the CLAW becomes the rule!

Salt - Light

The time has come to stop fooling around. The time has come to get with the Lord and to go with Him! The time has come to be PROPHETIC. The task of the prophet has never been popular! The prophets of old were scorned, derided, despised, persecuted, stoned, run out of town. No matter! The WORD OF THE LORD

was in their heart and on their tongue. They had to speak! Nothing short of death could still their voice. They laughed at Noah - they cried against Moses - they scorned Isaiah - they passed Jeremiah and Ezekiel off as madmen! John the Baptist had his head cut off - Paul was beaten, whipped, stoned, imprisoned - John was exiled to the Isle of Patmos. I could go on and on with example after example! THEY HAD TO SPEAK THOSE THINGS THEY HAD SEEN AND HEARD.

That brings us to Rally Day and what CHRISTIAN EDUCATION (or better what CHRISTIAN DISCIPLESHIP) is all about. I want you to concentrate on just 3 words from our text. I want you to concentrate on them in the light of the fact that less than 30% of our congregation is in Church on any given week for worship - 40 % of our children are enrolled in Saturday School - 60% of our children are in Sunday School - 5% of our adults and confirmed youth are in Bible Class.

The first word is GO! This is said by Him who has all power - ALL AUTHORITY IN HEAVEN AND ON EARTH - our crucified, but risen LIVING LORD who wants us to know and be sure that nothing can ever really hurt us now - not people who persecute us, not the devils in hell - NOTHING IN HEAVEN OR ON EARTH! He has ALL AUTHORITY!

And He says GO! GO AND MAKE DISCIPLES OF ALL NATIONS! Notice that our Lord does not hem and haw around. He does not say, Would you - perhaps - maybe - if you are so inclined - if you can find the time - if you can work it into your schedule. There are no conditions at all! There are no if's, but's, or maybe's! The COMMAND is GO! Even the devils shake and tremble and kneel down in submission before His powerful, authoritative Word. We have no business trying to offer excuses or alibis as to why we cannot do as He commands. GO AND MAKE DISCIPLES! To those outside of the Church the invitation is - with all of the compassion and yearning which the Savior's bleeding heart can muster - THE INVITATION IS C O M E! To those inside the COMMAND is: G O! When you try to argue against that, you are arguing with Him who is the TRIUMPANT, COMING LORD who has ALL AUTHORITY IN HEAVEN AND ON EARTH!

This GOING must begin in your own home - with your husband, your wife, your parents, your relatives, your children. It will do no good to win the whole world

neighbors - people at work - at school - wherever you are

for Christ and lose the members of your own family. From home the command reach out to the Church Family (the members of this congregation) - then to the community - then to the greater Chicago area - finally to all nations! - NO RES. As long as God gives you live and breathe and strength the COMMAND is G O! There is work to be done - GO and GET AT IT!

The second word is BAPTIZE. Our Lord is telling us how we are to MAKE DISCIPLES. We are to BAPTIZE THEM INTO THE NAME OF THE FATHER AND OF THE SON AN OF THE HOLY SPIRIT. This is where the new creation of the new life in Christ takes place! God's own SPIRIT - the same Spirit that brooded over the waters at creation - that brought all things into being - THAT SPIRIT is BREATHED INTO MAN for a second time so that he becomes again a LIVING SOUL with GOD'S OWN LIFE breathed into him. THAT WHICH IS BORN OF THE FLESH IS FLESH; THAT WHICH IS BORN OF THE SPIRIT IS SPIRIT....TRULY, TRULY I SAY TO YOU, EXCEPT A MAN BE BORN AGAIN OF WATER AND OF THE SPIRIT HE CANNOT ENTER INTO THE KINGDOM OF GOD....This is the washing of REGENERATION - NEW LIFE - and RE-CREATION right into the FATHER AND THE SON AND THE HOLY SPIRIT.

But as any parent can tell you, it takes a lot of doing to raise a child. It takes a lot of love and tender-loving care. The baby has to be fed, held, comforted, assured, consoled. Diapers need to be changed. There are middle-of-the-morning feedings. It takes a lot of discipline and nurture - just plain blood and sweat and tears - to raise a child. The child does not grow all on its own. It takes patience, and suffering, and endurance!

So the third word is TEACH. The new life in Christ will die without this! It does no good to bring your child to the Baptismal Font for this new birth and then imagine that the job is done. GROWTH has to happen - and it will not happen all by itself. That is why the ALL-POWERFUL LORD gives the additional command: TEACH - TEACH THEM TO OBSERVE ALL THAT I HAVE COMMANDED YOU!

That responsibility belongs to the Church, it is true - but first of all it belongs to PARENTS. And not even the Church can do what parents will not permit to happen. If you do not give us your children, we cannot even begin to carry

Mothers brought their children to Jesus - suffering

out our responsibility.

But no matter what the Church does or tries to do, it is usually for nothing if it is not reflected in the home. That is why the apostle says: FATHERS... BRING UP YOUR CHILDREN IN THE NURTURE AND ADMONITION OF THE LORD!

The reason why fathers and mothers are not doing this is because they themselves are SPIRITUALLY ANEMIC. They have not grown themselves since the day of their Confirmation - and what little they had then has long since died out! How can you feed to your children what you yourself do not have?

Do as I say - Don't do as I do!

It does not good for a father to say to his child: Now I want you to go to Sunday School and Confirmation Instruction....I had to do it when I was a boy.... It didn't hurt me....It won't hurt you. Perhaps more than ever before children are asking questions. If they never see you pray, or worship, or give thanks - WHAT ARE THEY TO THINK? If they never see you come to church - or very seldomly - WHAT ARE THEY TO THINK? If they see you sit back and reject the invitation of Christ to come to His Communion Table - WHAT ARE THEY TO THINK? If they never se you open the Scriptures, come to Bible Class, grow in Grace - WHAT ARE THEY TO THINK? If they do not see the LIFE IN CHRIST carried out in your home - in your love - in your relationship - by your actions - by your words - WHAT ARE THEY TO THINK?

Joy - Radiance

The NEW LIFE IN CHRIST - born OF THE SPIRIT - nourished and strengthened through HIS WORD --- that LIFE lives and breathes and has its being in a very vital, vibrant RELATIONSHIP to GOD HIMSELF. Anything else is out of the question It is just as impossible as a husband and wife saying they are married without the consummation and fulfillment of their marriage into ONE FLESH.

Christians have to do their THING. (That thing is to take the GOOD NEWS of Jesus to heart - to teach and tell people by every means of JESUS CHRIST - to bring people wherever they are, under whatever circumstance, whatever age, the Good News of Christ, the Savior of men - and then to lead them by the power of the Spirit of God to the obedience of Faith in Christ. That's a full-time job - for parents, for teachers, for pastors, for the whole church. Stop fooling around!)