

# HUGGS

Heartfelt, Uplifting, Guest Stories

DEVOTIONS FROM OUR CHURCH FAMILY  
FEBRUARY 6, 2020

## Mission

"And he said to them, "Go into all the world and proclaim the gospel to the whole creation..." (Mark 16:15 ESV)

Jesus told His disciples in this verse that their response to His departure after having been with them for three years was to go into the whole world and tell of what He has done for them and what He has done for all creation.

This verse has quite a few life-changing verbs in it. As Christians, we are not called to sit still. We are called to GO and do big things for God. This command looks different for every person. Some people read this verse and feel the call of going into long-term or short-term mission work in a foreign country. Some feel the same call for staying in the United States.

Whether we are involved in foreign or domestic mission work, every Christian is called to go into the entire world and proclaim the gospel. We are not called to sit comfortably in our American homes. As American Christians who are very well blessed physically, we should never use domestic missions as an excuse for staying in our comfort zones and not being involved in ministry activities.

We should not be known for our successes or our jobs but rather we should be known for a heart that desperately seeks to serve others and uses their talents as a ministry to proclaim the good news of Christ. I challenge you to recognize the opportunities God has presented before you and how you can use those to minister to God's children.

--Shelby O'Bryan

## Are You Prepared?

If you lived in and around western Kentucky in January/February of 2009 you will remember what I'm going to talk about—the *ice storm*. Freezing rain fell for hours and ice formed everywhere. Trees were falling, power lines were knocked down and nearly everyone was without electricity; not just for a few hours or even a few days, but weeks. My house was dark for 19 days. Many people simply were not prepared.

In our high-tech world, most people just don't think they can survive for three weeks without electricity. Now here we are five years later and the local weather station is calling for a 70% chance of freezing rain after midnight changing to snow by 6:00 AM. Meteorologists have been watching this weather system for the last several days as it forms southwest of our area and slowly moves our way. Accumulation predictions vary hour by hour, but they all agree that this system has the potential to cause problems. Big problems. And now the race is on. Bread, milk, bottled water, generators, anything that might help people "survive" is now a precious commodity. People everywhere are talking about being prepared. Some are even fighting to get the last gallon of milk.

Are we that prepared for Jesus to come again? Are we fighting to live for Jesus like some fought for that last gallon of milk? The forecast is clear, he is coming again! "And if I go and prepare a place

for you, I will come and receive you unto myself, that where I am you may be also.” (John 14:3). Are you prepared?

--Brad Parker

## ***Growing Spiritually and Physically***

How many times have you said or heard the phrase “Look how much they have grown” or “Look how big he/she has gotten”? Of course, we notice this from a physical perspective. It’s easy to see the growth progress of children as they reach milestones in their life; for example, standing on their own, taking their first steps, saying their first words or even starting school or starting their career. Children of all ages have growth spurts where they might grow several inches at a time or learn all the subjects in their grade. As they continue to grow in stature and once their height is achieved, the physical growing stops. Their size can be determined by their genetic makeup. What’s your genetic makeup? “This is the book of the generations of Adam. When God created man, he made him in the likeness of God” (Genesis 5:1). Do you ever learn enough knowledge?

But have you ever heard anyone say ‘Look how much they have grown’ meaning how someone has grown as a Christian? Is there a noticeable difference in their stature? Is there a noticeable difference in their knowledge? Is there a measurement that can be placed on their growth? Are they growing in knowledge or faith? Can the growth be easily noticed? Are they growing in spurts or growing steadily? Peter states, “But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To him be the glory both now and to the day of eternity. Amen” (2 Peter 3:18).

Are you still growing, or have you stopped growing in stature and knowledge?

--Kathy Parker

## ***Jesus’ Team***

Jesus knew the disciples were good men before He even met them. He went upon the mountain to pray for them. He prayed for their safety, for guidance from God to choose the right men, and for the men to make the right decision to follow Him.

“These twelve Jesus sent out, instructing them, ‘Go nowhere among the Gentiles and enter no town of the Samaritans, but go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. And proclaim as you go, saying, ‘The kingdom of heaven is at hand.’ Heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse lepers, cast out demons. You received without paying; give without pay.’” (Matthew 10:5-8).

Jesus told the disciples where to teach and who to teach. He also told them that they would be

performing miracles. I wonder if they thought that maybe He wasn’t serious. They had only seen Jesus perform miracles. They hadn’t seen plain old fisherman perform any miracles.

Just like Isaiah, the disciples not only taught, “Here am I! Send me” (Isaiah 6:8) to other people, they did it. They talked the talk and walked the walk. Jesus trusted them to do what He commanded, and they trusted Jesus. Jesus was the coach of the greatest team ever. He executed the play, “Here am I. Send me,” and they ran the play. The players had to trust in the outcome and if they ran the play correctly, they would score.

Christians can’t run the play right every time like Jesus. This team wins by praying, treating people the way you want to be treated, being helpful, leading people to Jesus, being truthful, and by loving others.

--Garrett Parker

## ***“Here Am I! Send Me.”***

Imagine if God was asking you to volunteer to give a message to his people and the message was not a happy one. As a matter of fact, what if the message was a real bad one about death and destruction? How hard would that be? I know I would be scared...but Isaiah was not scared. He said, “Here am I! Send me” (Isaiah 6:8).

We need to be like Isaiah. We need to be volunteers for God who are not afraid. “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[a] the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.” (Matthew 28:18-20).

We can all be messengers for God. God loves every one of us. And, God wants each of us to be his child. “See what kind of love the Father has given to us, that we should be called children of God; and so we are. The reason why the world does not know us is that it did not know him” (1 John 3:1).

We need to have a Bible, a story, and a love for God. The Bible will help us know what God wants us to talk about—Jesus. The story is Jesus and his saving message for everyone. And love for God is what makes us want to be a volunteer! If we carry these three things around, we will be good volunteers for God.

--Logan Parker

