

Titus010103-103011
Bridge of Hope
October 30, 2011

“The Time Is Now To Go!”

Introduction: Good morning! My name is David and I serve as the Lead Pastor here at Bridge of Hope. We are so glad that you all have come to worship Jesus Christ today!

Let's get started with our message for this time of worship. **Titus 1:1-3 (NLT)** *This letter is from Paul, a slave of God and an apostle of Jesus Christ. **I have been sent to proclaim faith to those God has chosen and to teach them to know the truth that shows them how to live godly lives.** This truth gives them confidence that they have eternal life, which God—who does not lie—promised them before the world began. **And now at just the right time** he has revealed this message, which we announce to everyone. It is by the command of God our Savior that I have been entrusted with this work for him.*

This series we are walking through is about a call of God to His family. It is about Jesus calling each and every one of us as we take our place among the community of God's people called Bridge of Hope. And it's about the family of Bridge of Hope taking our place in the larger community of God's people in the Mahoning Valley and across the world. Jesus is calling each of us and all of us, in many ways this series a like a prophecy spoken to us.

Our answer to His call is important because all are impacted by the decision we make. None of us are alone in our walk with Christ; we belong to Jesus and we belong to each other. We are in this together, but we will all have to decide if we are really in this at all. The will of God is plain and easy to understand. He calls to us all and wants us to follow Him.

Today God says, “The Time Is Now!” It's time to be the community of God called Bridge of Hope. Jesus took the seed of Calvary Assembly and grew a new community for this season of life and gave us the name Bridge of Hope. He has given us the foundation upon which to grow and expand the influence of His kingdom through us and provided all we need to get the job done. Now comes the day where He asks us to trust Him fully and take what He has patiently taught us to use it to make disciples. It is somewhat like launching a child from your home. They will carry your DNA, but look and live somewhat differently. Now is the time!

It is time to go! We have been trained and equipped and what we lack Christ will provide when we need it. Now is the time to move forward and stop standing still. To take what we know and move into what we do not know. We must be willing to move; we must be willing to stop standing still. The time has come to put out our wings and soar. A coming into manhood of sorts as we take our place among the community of God's people.

THE TIME IS NOW TO GO

- **WHERE YOU DO NOT KNOW.**
 1. There is no doubt that it is hard to move forward when you don't know where you are going, but just because it's hard doesn't mean we should abandon movement.
 2. Following Jesus requires faith and faith means that you don't always know all the details or have everything figured out when the time comes to move ahead.

- Faith in God means that we place our trust in Him.
- It is not so much about moving blindly forward as it is that our steps are directed and guided by the Holy Spirit.
- The movement ahead has purpose, but it is God's purpose and not our own.
- Many times in life I have looked back over what has taken place in life and could see how my life was directed by God.
- At the time of taking the steps I had to move forward by faith, not always knowing exactly where I was going or how I was going to get there.
- 3. There is a good example in the Bible we read in **Hebrews 11:8-9** (NIV) *By faith Abraham, when called to go to a place he would later receive as his inheritance, obeyed and went, even though he did not know where he was going.*
- 4. Right before this scripture the author of Hebrews tells us that without faith it is impossible to please God.
 - Abraham is one example of several people in scripture who pleased God because they trusted Him and moved ahead by faith.
 - One aspect of being a person who is blessed, or approved of God, is that they are willing to trust Him as they live by faith.
- 5. How many of us know exactly where we will be tomorrow and who we will be with?
 - We may have a general idea, but we do not know the specifics that are before us.
 - With each step we exercise faith not knowing exactly what the day will bring.
- 6. It might be that Jesus is asking you to trust Him for something major like He asked of people like Abraham or Noah or Paul, and that would be really cool.
 - When you look at these men, you discover that their step of faith had to do with a vision and a moment.
 - A vision of something larger than themselves and a call from God to go.
 - A moment where they faced the step in front of them and the intervention of God in that moment to take that step.
- 7. It is time to go even though you are not certain of where you are going and to step out by faith as you follow the voice of God.
- 8. The time is now to go
- **FORWARD IN WHAT YOU DO KNOW.**
 1. Going where you do not know doesn't mean that you are making this radical change, it means that each day you allow the Holy Spirit to direct your steps as you go about the steps that you do know.
 2. In essence, going where you do not know is directly tied to the willingness to go in what you do know.
 - Faith is about obedience and obedience is about love.
 - Thus, faith is about loving God and being willing to do things out of the ordinary to express that love.
 3. When I started loving a young woman named Kandy I didn't know everything I needed to know to love her.
 - It would have been silly to miss out on a love for a lifetime simply because I didn't know where it was going to lead me or that I didn't know everything.
 - So what I did was start loving her with what I did know and as time went by I got better and better at loving her because I knew her better.
 - Faith is like this. You start with what you do know, as you grow and get better at it.
 - The more you love Jesus and follow Him the better you get at a life of faith because faith is about love.

4. So what do you know? You know that we are supposed to
 - Love God which is about a life of worship.
 - Love People which is about a life together with other people through a small group.
 - Serve Others which is about a life on mission to share Jesus with those who do not know Him.
 - We know much and so we simply need to put into play the things that we do know so they can help take us through to the things that we don't know.
 - We do not have time to talk about all the things we do know, but just over the last several months we talked about some really good stuff that we now know.
 - There is much that we know . . . and doing each of these things will take us to places that we never knew we could go to.
5. Abraham understood the importance of obedience and faith working together as he trusted God for the things he didn't know while he stepped out on what he did know.
6. It is time to express your love for Jesus and go forward in what you do know.
7. The time is now to go . . .

- **AND STOP STANDING STILL.**

1. Now this one is interesting because most of us would never think of ourselves as standing still because our lives seem to be in perpetual motion.
 - Being in motion doesn't mean that you are getting anywhere at all.
 - It just means that you are burning a lot of energy and getting nowhere at all.
2. Sometimes we like where faith has taken us and we find ourselves wanting to stay there longer than Jesus intended.
 - At first it is about taking a break or enjoying the fruit of our labor.
 - But then later it becomes that which is familiar and comfortable.
 - It is a good life.
3. Sometimes we don't really like where faith has taken us and we find ourselves standing still struggling with accepting the choice of God.
 - And as hard as we try we just can't get ourselves out of that place because God doesn't seem to let us move on.
 - Our unappreciative heart keeps us from progress because we don't like where God has taken us.
4. It really doesn't matter which reason it is or if it is another reason at all.
 - Life doesn't stand still which means neither can we because Jesus made us to live.
 - There are many things that can cause us to stand still: fear, comfort, love, tiredness, emotional attachment, ease, familiarity, sin, money, people, approval, the list could go on and on.
 - The problem is that when we stand still for too long we stop advancing in life
 - And when we stop advancing, we stop growing in life; we in some ways begin to die.
5. To this Jesus calls to us and says stop standing still.
 - He wants to take us to places we haven't been, but we need to be willing to move with Him.
 - He wants to provide for us in ways we have never known before, but we need to be willing to give Him the chance.
 - He wants us to see just how intensely interested He is in us as His people. but we have to step out and discover His love.
 - Standing still keeps us from all this and more.
6. When Abraham and Lot were traveling they came to the lush plain and the great cities of this new land.

- Lot stopped and stood still in the cities while Abraham continued to move forward to a place that he did not know.
 - Neither man's life was perfect and both experienced turmoil that comes to all of us, but if I were to choose which one I would like to be like I would choose Abraham.
 - 7. It is time to stop standing still and live a little dangerously through faith.
 - 8. The time is now to go
- **WHERE JESUS SENDS YOU AND WHEN HE SAYS TO GO.**
 1. The first part of the equation is the willingness to follow Jesus by faith and go where He sends you even if it is one step at a time.
 - This is hard enough on its own.
 - And doing this requires much thought and prayer and the support of other people around you.
 - It just isn't always easy to go where Jesus sends you.
 2. The second part of the equation is the willingness to follow Jesus by faith and go when He says to go.
 - It is hard because the "when" is not always in your timeframe.
 - Sometimes the when is immediate and you have to go right now without much preparation.
 - Sometimes the when is a long way off and you have to wait for that time to come and you wonder if it will ever get here or if God spoke to you at all.
 - It isn't always easy to go when Jesus says to go.
 3. Both of these are rooted and discovered in a close relationship with Jesus Christ.
 - The closer you draw to Jesus the better you get at the "where" and "when" issues.
 - It doesn't mean that it necessarily gets easier, just that the going is much better because you are so aware of His presence in the journey.
 - The questions of "where" and "when" demand relationship with Jesus.
 4. To complicate the issue of "where" and "when" even more we can all think back to times when we choose wrong or at least we think we choose wrong.
 - When we stepped out right away and it fell apart.
 - When we waited patiently and it never happened.
 - And so we become almost paranoid at these 2 questions and find ourselves standing still totally incapacitated because we don't want to make a mistake.
 - God understands your concern and your heart to get it right and never faults any of us for trusting and trying to walk by faith.
 5. Think about it: Did people like Abraham, Isaac, David, Peter, and Paul get it right all the time?
 - That is one of the things I love about God's community.
 - It is an honest bunch that let us see when they go right and when they go wrong.
 - Somehow God handled their mistakes and blessed (approved) them anyway.
 - I don't think that we are any different and I know God isn't any different.
 6. Just like the ancient people of old you will learn and grow and get better and better at the "where" and "when" questions, but only if you are willing to live by faith and go.
 7. The time is now to go where Jesus sends us and when He says to go.

Conclusion: So the obvious next question is; Where are we supposed to go? It is a good question that I hope over 2012 to share in more detail what is in my heart. But for now let us reflect for a moment to some of what Jesus has spoken to us over the years.

Jesus spoke to us and given a vision to pastor this area where He has planted us. He has taught that we are missionaries, all of us, and that we have a purpose to fulfill. We are Bridge of Hope, a sent people who are ready to share the Gospel with people all around us. What if in the coming year we trained, equipped, and commissioned you to live out the mission in the context of community? Where you step up as a missionary to the friends around you that do not know Jesus and began to pour into them so that they could know Jesus. Do you think this would impact our area of the world and expand the kingdom.

What if you poured the grace and mercy of Christ into others in the family of God? You know stop the negative critical talk and attitudes and began to really love one another like Jesus loves you. Would those around us in both the Christian community and all the onlookers take notice that something was different?

And what if we became a people of praise and worship expressing our love to Jesus? Where we make our private time with Him a priority that impacts the worship of an entire day. Where we regularly come together prepared and on time to celebrate the love of God in our lives. Would that change us and make us different?

It makes think that I want to be like George Aliff who in prayer one day heard God speak to him about coming here to this property and walking around praying and ringing a bell. And he did for weeks, faithfully serving and loving Jesus. Wednesday he handed me the bell and said that the Lord told him to give it to me because that time and this season are tied together.

The time has come to obey in body, mind, and heart as we all move in the same direction at the same time to achieve the same goal. Are you ready to go? Jesus said to His disciples and He has said to us "*Therefore 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. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.*" (Matthew 28:19-20 NIV) Let's be disciples who are making disciples!

Jesus says to us "*You have stayed long enough at this mountain. Break camp and advance into the hill country . . . See, I have given you this land. Go in and take possession of the land that the LORD swore he would give to your fathers — to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob — and to their descendants after them.*" (Deuteronomy 1:6-8 NIV)

The time is now! Let's be a people of faith and make a difference. Are you coming with me?