

(Matthew) ch.27:32-28:20

by Zac Poonen

The sermon emphasizes the importance of understanding the true meaning of the cross and being alert to the voice of the Holy Spirit, as exemplified by Jesus' experience on the cross.

Duration: 1:00:02

Scripture: Isaiah 8:12-13, Matthew 28:11, Matthew 28:18-20, Mark 16:15-16, Galatians 4:5, Galatians 4:7

Topics: "Discipleship Training", "New Covenant Baptism"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of understanding the depth and meaning of the commission mentioned in Mark 16:15-16. While the emphasis is often placed on evangelizing and preaching the gospel, the speaker highlights the need to go beyond just belief and make disciples. Teaching others to do what Jesus commanded and showing them by example is crucial in the process of discipleship. The speaker also discusses the significance of baptism in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, and how it signifies a new relationship with God under the new covenant. Additionally, the speaker encourages believers not to be afraid, as fear can hinder their relationship with God.

Transcript

Let's turn now to Matthew's Gospel chapter 27 and verse 32. We read here of the time when Jesus, immediately after He has been falsely accused and condemned in Pilate's court and been stripped and scourged, is led away to be crucified. Verse 32.

And as they were coming out, they found a certain Cyrenian named Simon. This man they pressed into service to bear his cross. It's something interesting we see here.

The difference between bearing the cross voluntarily and being forced to bear the cross. Jesus said in Luke 9:23, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. Jesus does not compel anyone to take up the cross and follow Him.

It's Roman soldiers who compel people to bear a cross. It says they forced Him, this man Simon, because Jesus was stumbling and falling because of His weakness. They compelled Simon to bear the cross.

This has a spiritual lesson for us. What we are compelled to do is not the cross that Jesus has called us to bear. There are things we are forced to do which may bring suffering to us, but that's not the cross.

The cross is always something that we choose voluntarily. For example, you may have a difficult wife. Well, you may not be in a position where you would choose her voluntarily today, though you may have chosen her voluntarily many years ago, but that's not your cross.

You may have a difficult child. If you had your own way, you would have it differently, but it's sort of forced on you. That's not the cross.

You may have a physical ailment or a weakness. That's not something you've chosen. It's come upon you.

That's not the cross. Nothing that is forced upon you is the cross. That's not the cross of Jesus.

That's a Roman soldier's cross and it's got no spiritual value. All people in the world, believers and unbelievers, face difficult wives, difficult children, physical ailments, sicknesses and all these things. What is the cross then? The cross is that which I choose voluntarily, which I can avoid if I want to.

That's a very important principle. People talk about their wives being their cross or the children being a cross or sickness being a cross or a difficult boss being a cross. That's a lot of rubbish.

That's because you haven't understood the cross. The cross that Jesus spoke of is always something that if you want to get rid of, you can get rid of, but you don't get rid of because you want to follow Jesus. The cross has got nothing to do with that which is outside of you.

It's got nothing to do with your boss or your wife or your child or your circumstances or your illness or anything. It's got to do with your will. It's got to do with your ego.

It's got to do with your self-life, yourself. It's got to do with you, yourself. It's that which has to go down to death, and there you can choose to go to death or you can refuse to go to death.

When you are insulted, for example, it's not the one who is insulting you who is your cross. You choose in that moment whether your self and your reputation and your ego will go to the cross or not, or you can stand up for your rights or give up your rights. So nothing outside of us is the cross, for the cross is never something that we can be compelled to carry.

Jesus never compels anyone to carry the cross, but he says, if you want to be my disciple, you have to take up the cross and follow me, otherwise it is impossible. And when they had come to a place called Golgotha, it was 33, which means the place of a skull, they gave him wine to drink mingled with gall. This was a sort of a mercy that the Roman soldiers gave to the people who were going to be crucified because crucifixion was such a painful affair, such agonizing pain they would have to endure that they gave them this wine mingled with gall.

It wasn't just wine, it was wine mingled with gall, which was like an anesthetic that would dull their pain. It wouldn't put them to sleep completely, but it would dull their pain a little bit, and after tasting it, he was unwilling to drink. He didn't want to dull that pain.

He didn't want to be anesthetized on the cross. He wanted to suffer that pain. He wanted to be alert.

There's nothing wrong in taking anesthesia when you need to take it. There's nothing wrong in being anesthetized if nothing has to be accomplished at that particular time, but something had to be accomplished on the cross during those six hours. Jesus had to pray for the forgiveness of those people who were crucifying him.

He had to pray, Father, forgive them. He had to commit his mother into the hands of John. He had to commend his own spirit into his father's hands.

These were important things he had to do, and most important of all, he had to save that one thief who was going to hell otherwise, and he wanted to be alert. He wanted to be alert, to be available to the Father, and so he refused to drink. And there's a lesson there for us.

The Bible says in Luke chapter 21 that we can get drunk with the cares of this world. He said, Jesus said in Luke 21.34, he said, Be on guard that your hearts, he's not talking about our stomachs and our mouths now, he's talking about our hearts getting drunk. He said, Be on guard that your hearts don't get drunk.

How do hearts get drunk? He's talking about a spiritual drunkenness now here. Be on guard that your hearts don't get drunk with the cares and worries of this life, and that day of the Lord comes upon you suddenly like a trap. We can get so taken up with the cares of this world and with our family responsibilities and earthly cares and earthly things that burden us so much that we think about, think about, think about so much that we are not alert to bless other people, to save dying thieves, to forgive those who have hurt us, because we are anesthetized.

Jesus could forgive those who hurt him because he was not anesthetized. Jesus could bring a dying thief into the kingdom of God because he was not anesthetized. Dear friend, we can be so anesthetized by being taken up with the affairs of this world that we are not alert to the needs of people around us, to forgive them, to bless them, to lead them into the kingdom.

This is what's happening to many, many Christians, and the devil's got so many Christians anesthetized, drunk in their hearts with the cares of this world, with the riches of this world, occupied with earthly things that they are not alert to hear what God is saying to them. Think of the number of things that you have missed in your life because you are taken up with the cares of this world. You need to cast all those cares upon the Lord and say, Lord, you take care of me.

I'm going to be alert to your voice. I will not allow myself to be anesthetized to your voice by being taken up by the cares of this world. That's the lesson we learned there.

He refused to drink it. He didn't want to be anesthetized. He wanted to be alert right till the last moment, till God's purpose was accomplished.

He was sensitive to the voice of the Holy Spirit that spoke to him at that time. Don't drink it. He didn't know what lay ahead in the next six hours in detail, but he could be sensitive to the voice of the Spirit.

And they crucified him. When they crucified him, they divided up his garments among themselves, casting lots, and sitting down, they began to keep watch over him there. It's very interesting to see how the Holy Spirit has recorded the crucifixion of Jesus in all the four Gospels.

He doesn't go into the gory details like some preachers do. He just says, in three words, they crucified him. That's all.

Now today there are preachers who expound on the details of the crucifixion, the agony that Jesus went through, and people can speak for a whole hour or more on the details of the crucifixion and stir up human emotions on that basis. And there we can learn something, that that is soulish. The Holy Spirit does not want that type of stirring of the soulish emotions.

It's easy to hear a preacher expound on the physical suffering of Jesus and to weep and to cry, but that's not what the Lord wants. Jesus said in Luke chapter 23, to the daughters of Jerusalem, when they were weeping when they saw him carrying the cross, he said, Daughters of Jerusalem, Luke 23, 28, stop weeping for me, but weep for yourselves. And that's what the Lord would say to us today also.

Stop weeping for me. Weep for yourselves. Stop weeping when you think of how much I suffered on the cross.

Weep for yourselves, because you're in sin. You're not in physical suffering, but you're in a far worse state. You're in sin.

Weep for yourselves. And so that's important for us to recognize. We're not here to expound and expand on the physical agony that Jesus went through on the cross.

They crucified him. What is the thing that we need to expand on? What it says in Romans chapter 6, that we are crucified with him. In Galatians 2.20, we are crucified with him.

That's what we need to expound on. But they crucified him and they divided up his garments among themselves, casting lots again to fulfill a scripture. In Psalm 22.18, and sitting down they began to keep watch over him there.

And they put up above his head the charge against him which read, This is Jesus, the King of the Jews. And at that time two robbers were crucified with him, one on the right and one on the left, and those who were passing by were hurling abuse at him, wagging their heads. And he was silent.

We know that he told them, he said to the father, Father, forgive them, for they don't know what they're doing. They don't know whom they're abusing. They don't realize.

Very often we need to pray that too, when people abuse us, even when we are suffering. When people hurl abuse at us, it says, to say, Father, forgive them, for they don't know what they're doing. Very often they don't.

They don't realize the evil they're doing. And some people teased him, saying, You who destroy the temple and rebuild it in three days, save yourself if you're the son of God. Come down from the cross.

In the same way the chief priests along with the scribes and elders were mocking him, saying, He saved others. He cannot save himself. He's the king of Israel.

Let him come down now from the cross and we'll believe him. He trusts in God. Let him deliver him now, if he takes pleasure in him, for he said, I'm the son of God.

And the robbers who had been crucified with him were casting the same insult at him. Everybody turned against him, even the thieves who were crucified with him, the robbers, the chief priests, the people. But he was silent.

He had power, but he never used it. He didn't call the 72,000 angels to deliver him, because he was determined to fulfill the scriptures. He would rather die than disobey God.

And this is where he is an example for us to follow. Let's turn today to Matthew's Gospel, chapter 27, and verse 45. We read here of the time when Jesus was crucified on Calvary's hill.

Matthew's Gospel, verse 45. Now from the sixth hour, darkness fell upon all the land until the ninth hour. The sixth hour was twelve noon, and the ninth hour was three o'clock in the afternoon.

Jesus was crucified at nine o'clock in the morning. And for three hours he hung on the cross, and then darkness fell upon the whole land for the next three hours while he hung on the cross. And at the end of six hours on the cross, verse 46, about the ninth hour, Jesus cried out with a loud voice, saying, Eli, Eli, lama sabakkanai, that is, My God, My God, why hast thou forsaken Me? And some of those who were standing there when they heard it began saying, This man is calling for Elijah.

Actually, Jesus was quoting what is written in Psalm 22, the Psalm of the Cross in the Old Testament, which begins with these words, My God, My God, why hast thou forsaken Me? And goes on to say how evildoers had encompassed him, verse 16, and pierced his hands and his feet, Psalm 22, verse 16. This was the moment, or this was the period of time, three hours, which Jesus had dreaded in the Garden of Gethsemane. What is hell? Hell is not just a place of fire.

The Word of God uses pictures so that our human mind can understand. Jesus spoke about the worm that never dies, the fire that is never quenched, and that is true. But the worst part of hell is not the worms or the fire.

It's the fact that it is, in the true sense of that phrase, a God-forsaken place. Hell is a place where there is no sense of the presence of God, even though this world is cursed. Yet God is here, and that's why there are many mercies we experience.

But hell is a place where there is no mercy of God at all. It's completely forsaken by God. And that is the major part of hell's suffering, to be forsaken by God.

No human being, no atheist, knows what it means to be totally forsaken by God on this earth. It's the greatest agony. Any amount of physical burning in a fire or worms biting us cannot be compared with being forsaken by God.

Our human minds can't comprehend it. It's the worst thing that can ever befall a created being, to be completely forsaken by his Creator. And that is what Jesus experienced for three hours on the cross.

That's the meaning of that darkness. God is light. And symbolically, that darkness coming over the earth was God cutting off fellowship with his Son at that moment, while his Son bore the sins of humanity.

Many think of the physical suffering of Jesus on the cross. But the greatest agony Jesus endured was not the physical suffering, or even the ridicule. That was nothing, that was not even a drop in the ocean compared to this agony of being forsaken by God for three hours.

And we can say that Jesus in those three hours suffered the agonies of an eternal hell. He was forsaken. Being an infinite being unlike us, who are finite beings, he could experience in three hours the agony of eternity.

And at the end of it he says, my God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? It's not a cry of rebellion. He doesn't say, oh God, oh God, why have you forsaken me? He says, my God. In that moment of darkness, Jesus couldn't understand for a moment.

Because he had our flesh. But he still says, my God, you are still my God. Even though it looks as though you have forsaken me.

There we see submission. In the midst of that tremendous agony, the greatest agony that any human being can ever endure, the agony of an eternal hell. People standing by couldn't understand.

They thought he was calling for Elijah. And immediately one of them ran and took a sponge and filled it with sour wine and put it on a reed and gave him a drink. And of course this time he drank it.

Because the period of suffering was over. That which he refused to drink at the beginning as we considered. Because he didn't want to be dulled on the cross, his mind.

Now he took that drink. But the rest of them said, let's see whether Elijah will come to save him. And Jesus cried out again with a loud voice.

This was the time when he said, Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit, as we read elsewhere. And he yielded up his spirit. You see, it was he who yielded up his spirit.

It's very good for us to see that. He had power to lay down his life. No one was going to take it from him.

And he yielded up his spirit to the Father. At the end of that time he could again look at God's face and say, Father, Father, into your hands I commend my spirit. In the previous passage in verse 46 we saw he had called him God.

But now it was Father, as we read in Luke 23 and verse 46. And at that moment the veil of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom. And the earth shook and the rocks were split.

That veil we read in Hebrews 10.20 symbolizes the flesh in which Jesus came. Our flesh, which is the thing that hinders us from fellowship with God. And the rending of that veil, as we read in Hebrews 10.20, symbolizes the opening of a new and living way through the flesh into fellowship with the Father.

That veil in the Old Testament temple symbolized that man could not approach God because of sin in man's life. And until a way had been opened through the flesh, man could not come into fellowship with the Father. And so Jesus came in our flesh.

And in faithfulness overcame temptation. Every lust with which he was tempted through the flesh he overcame faithfully. He never sinned in thought, word, deed, attitude, motive or in any other way.

And thus every lust had been overcome completely. And then the veil was rent. The way was opened.

Like it says in Romans 8.3, God condemned sin in the flesh. Because he sent his Son, as we read in Romans 8.3, in the likeness of sinful flesh, with that veil. And that veil was rent.

And now the way is open into the most holy place. Now we can come and have fellowship with God. He can be our Father.

And the earth shook. And the rocks were split. And the tombs were opened.

Many tombs of saints who had died in Old Testament times. And then it says in the last part of verse 42, something, 52, something that happened after the resurrection of Jesus. But it is mentioned here.

It says the bodies of the saints who had fallen asleep in previous times were raised and came out of the tombs after his resurrection. They didn't come out at the time he was crucified. No, they couldn't.

Jesus had to be the first to be raised from the dead. But when Jesus was raised from the dead, they came out of their tombs. In other words, the tombs were opened at the time of the earthquake and at the time of Jesus' death.

But the bodies came out of the tombs only after his resurrection. It's important to notice that distinction. The tombs were opened, the first part of verse 52, at the time of the death.

But the bodies were raised after his resurrection. And after his resurrection, these saints who had been raised up as a sort of first fruits along with Jesus, entered the holy city and appeared. These Old Testament saints appeared to many people in Jerusalem.

It's not only Jesus who appeared. Some of the Old Testament saints appeared too. Perhaps Abraham and Moses were among that number.

Now, the centurion is coming back now to the time of Jesus' death. And those who were with him, keeping guard over Jesus, when they saw the earthquake and the things that were happening, became very frightened and said, truly, this was the Son of God. They had never seen anything like this happen at any other crucifixion.

And more than that, the Roman centurion had never seen anyone who was so calm and cool and collected at the time of his crucifixion. Many people go to their death, cursing and swearing, but Jesus went to his death, opening his palms to receive the nails and forgiving, praying that the Father would forgive those who were crucifying him. And the Roman centurion had never seen anything like this in his whole life.

And he said, this is the Son of God. There's a message here for us too. It's when people see us faithfully enduring the cross and going down and dying that they see the manifestation of a Son of God in us.

Many women were there, looking on from a distance, who had followed Jesus from Galilee, ministering to him, among whom was Mary Magdalene, along with Mary, the mother of James and Joseph, and the mother of the sons of Zebedee. And when it was evening, there came a rich man from Arimathea named Joseph, who himself had also become a disciple of Jesus, but like Nicodemus, a secret disciple. This man came to Pilate, he was obviously influential, and asked for the body of Jesus.

And Pilate ordered it to be given over to him. And Joseph took the body and wrapped it in a clean linen cloth and laid it in his own new tomb, which he had hewn out in the rock. And he rolled a large stone against the entrance of the tomb and went away.

And Mary Magdalene was there and the other Mary sitting opposite the grave. There was a prophecy in the Old Testament, in Isaiah chapter 53, that Jesus would be numbered with the transgressors. And that's exactly what we see on the cross.

He was numbered with the transgressors, Isaiah 53, verse 12. But it also says in Isaiah 53, verse 9, that his grave was to be assigned with wicked men, yet with a rich man in his depth. And there was an exact fulfillment of that, though he was numbered with the transgressors, yet it was with a rich man, in a rich man's tomb, that he was buried.

So we see, as we've often seen before in the Gospel of Matthew, a fulfillment of Scripture. At his birth and at his death, right through Jesus' life, there was a fulfillment of Scripture. He walked in obedience to the Father in everything, so that even when he died, his burial was according to Scripture.

This is the way we can follow him, in total obedience to the Father. Let's turn now to Matthew chapter 27 and verse 62. In our last study, we considered how Jesus, after his crucifixion, after his death, his body was taken by Joseph of Arimathea and buried in his own tomb.

It was a new tomb, in which nobody had been buried yet. And there was a fulfillment there of the prophecy in Isaiah 53 and verse 9, that Jesus would have his grave with a rich man in his depth. Even though he was numbered with the transgressors, it was a fulfillment of prophecy.

It's not that there is any other significance to this, except this, that God is alike the one who seeks to save the wicked and the rich. They are all in the same category before him. Verse 62.

On the next day, which is the one after the preparation, the chief priests and the Pharisees gathered together with Pilate and said, Sir, we remember that when he was still alive, that deceiver said, After three days I am to rise again. Therefore give orders for the grave to be made secure until the third day, lest the disciples come and steal him away and say to the people, He has risen from the dead and the last deception will be worse than the first. There is something very interesting that we can see concerning the burial of Jesus and the events that followed.

Jesus himself made no plans for his own funeral or his burial. His only concern during his earthly life was that he might do the will of the Father. There are many believers who are very worried about their funeral arrangements and burial preparations.

There are people who, when they join a church fellowship, want to know whether that church fellowship has a burial ground. It is one of the things they would like to know before they join a fellowship. They are so concerned about these things.

Jesus was not concerned. Yet we see how God took care of that. When a person takes care to do the will of the Father in his earthly life, God will take care of the things that he cannot take care of himself.

Seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness and all these things, including a burial ground, will be added to you. We see that in the life of Jesus. All he did was to do the will of his Father.

He had said, My food is to do the will of Him who sent me. That is all he did all through his life. It was God who moved in the heart of Joseph of Arimathea to go and ask Pilate for that body.

God moved in Pilate's heart to order the body to be given over to Joseph and for Joseph to give Jesus a decent burial in his tomb. There we see something of the wonderful sovereignty of God that where a man is honored in life, God will honor him even in his death. And there were the women there and they only saw.

They couldn't anoint the body with spices as they had planned. They came later on to do that. But we see something there too, as we shall see in a moment.

The Pharisees, meanwhile, told Pilate they were very keen to ensure that the grave was guarded. And so Pilate gave them a guard and said, You have a guard, go and make it as secure as you know how. Verse

65.

And it says in verse 66, They went and made the grave secure, and along with the guard they set a seal on the stone. This too was part of the sovereignty of God. God allowed the Pharisees to go and ask Pilate to send a guard to look after the tomb.

If that had not happened, and when Jesus was raised up from the dead, people would have thought that his disciples came and stole the body. But God was going to make sure that there was going to be a clear testimony to the resurrection. So we see that the very thing that people who don't know God seek to do against us is actually planned by God for greater glory for him.

So it's very wonderful to see here that the Pharisees were only fulfilling God's purpose. They were just enabling a better witness to come forth of the resurrection of Jesus than would otherwise have been possible. All these things are written for our instruction.

The wonderful sovereignty of God in moving Joseph of Arimathea, and moving Pilate, and moving the Pharisees, and moving Pilate again to give them a guard, and so many things, even after Jesus himself had died. None of his disciples were there. They'd all fled, forsaken him.

But God is sovereign. No one can limit him. If you honor him, he'll honor you.

And so they made the grave secure and set a seal on the stone. Then we read in chapter 28, verse 1, Now late on the Sabbath, as it began to dawn toward the first day of the week, The Sabbath for the Jews began on Friday evening at 6 p.m. and carried on till Saturday evening at 6 p.m. And then it says it began to dawn toward the first day of the week. In other words, it was early morning, just before sunrise, on Sunday morning, the first day of the week.

Mary Magdalene and the other Mary came to look at the grave. They came with spices to embalm and anoint the body of Jesus. As was the custom, as we read in Luke 24, verse 1, they brought spices which they had prepared.

And there was another earthquake. There was one earthquake at the time of his death. And here was another one.

And an angel of the Lord descended from heaven and came, verse 2, and rolled away the stone and sat upon it. Jesus had already been raised up. The stone was not rolled away to let Jesus out.

No. Jesus had a body in his resurrection, we know, which could pass through closed doors and through walls, for he appeared to the disciples when they were in a closed room. So he had no problem moving out of that grave, even with the stone covering the entrance.

The stone was rolled away, not for Jesus' sake, but for others to go in and see that Jesus wasn't there. And so, after Jesus' resurrection, he'd already come out through the closed through the stone that had covered the grave. He'd come right through that in his resurrection body.

But after that, an angel came and rolled the stone away so that people who were coming could see that the grave was empty. And at that time of the earthquake, his appearance, the appearance of the angel was like lightning in his garment as white as snow. And the gods shook for fear of him.

The gods were there, testimonies to the resurrection of Jesus Christ. And when these women came, they found an angel sitting on the stone. And the angel said to the women, Do not be afraid.

I know that you're looking for Jesus who's been crucified. God sent an angel there to tell the women that Jesus had been raised up from the dead. He's not here, for he is risen, just as he said.

Come, see the place where he was lying. That's why the stone had been rolled away, so that they could go in and see that Jesus wasn't in the grave anymore. The grave clothes with which he had been bound were all there.

He slipped through the grave clothes for he had a body that could not be limited by time and space and material things. He moved out of those grave clothes and the grave clothes were there wrapped up just as though there was a body inside. But there wasn't a body inside because he'd moved right out of it.

And the angel said to the women that empty tomb, he said, now go quickly and tell his disciples that he has risen from the dead. Behold, he's going before you into Galilee. There you will see him.

Behold, I have told you. And they departed quickly from the tomb with fear and great joy and ran to report it to his disciples. It's very interesting to see again that the angel himself could not go and tell the disciples.

God has ordained that human beings the angels would only be delighted if they were given that opportunity. But God hasn't given them that privilege. That privilege has been given to redeemed sons of Adam who have now become children of God.

Just like an angel couldn't go to Cornelius and give him the gospel. All that the angel could tell Cornelius was send for Peter and Peter will tell you the good news. Likewise here, the angel says go and tell his disciples.

He couldn't go and do that himself. He had to tell the women to do that. But he's risen from the dead.

And they departed quickly. And something significant and interesting we see here is that the first witnesses of the resurrection were women. Under the Jewish system, women had no place for anything almost concerning God.

But here we see something new in the new covenant are women. And one of those women was Mary Magdalene. That demon-possessed, evil, sinful woman who had been redeemed by Jesus Christ and transformed into a saint of God.

We read in 1 Timothy 2 that a woman is still not allowed to teach men or to exercise authority over men. But she's certainly called to be a witness. And every sister must be a flaming, spirit-filled, spirit-baptized witness for Jesus Christ to tell others about what Jesus has done, about the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

And when the disciples heard it, they came. And it says here, Behold, Jesus met them and greeted them. And they came up and took hold of his feet and worshipped him.

There are certain other events which happen in between which are recorded in John 20. But this skips over all that and comes to the time when Jesus was met by the disciples. And they took hold of his feet and worshipped him.

And then Jesus said to them, Do not be afraid. That was a very favorite expression of his after his resurrection. Don't be afraid.

Go and take word to my brethren to leave for Galilee. My brethren. They had the same father.

They had come into a new covenant relationship with God. Take word to my brethren to leave for Galilee and there they shall see me. What a wonderful relationship we have come to with God and with Jesus as a result of the resurrection.

God is now our father and Jesus has become our elder brother. Let's turn today to Matthew's Gospel chapter 28 and verse 10. Here we read of the time immediately after the resurrection.

Jesus is meeting with his disciples. And it says here that Jesus said to them, Do not be afraid. Go and take word to my brethren to leave for Galilee and there they shall see me.

We saw in our last study that Jesus called them his brethren. That was a title that he had never used in all his three and a half years with them. But here he uses that new title.

Up until then he had said that they were his servants. We read in John 15 towards the end of those three and a half years he said in verse 15 I no longer call you servants or slaves for the slave doesn't know what his master is doing. John 15, 15 But I have called you friends.

That was one step higher than servants. In the old covenant they were friends of God. Now it was one step further.

They were friends but even that was Old Testament. Abraham was called a friend of God. But in the new covenant it's even beyond that.

Beyond servants, beyond friends to children of God and brothers of Jesus. Take word to my brothers. It's a new title.

Immediately after the resurrection. We read in John's Gospel chapter 20 the same thing expressed to Mary Magdalene. Jesus says in John 20, 17 He says I have not yet ascended to the father but go to my brothers and say to them I ascend to my father and your father.

My God and your God. He often referred to God as their father. When he spoke to his disciples.

But here he uses a peculiar expression. A special expression. He says my father and your father.

He combines the two. In a way that he had never done in three and a half years. My God and your God he says.

My brothers. Now this has got to do with God's eternal purpose. As we read in Romans chapter 8 and verse 29 it says whom he foreknew.

That's us. He knew us before the foundations of the world. He also predestined to be conformed to the image of his son Jesus.

So that Jesus might be the firstborn among many brothers. In other words the eldest among many brothers. And so there we see that God's desire is from all eternity he foreknew us.

And he had predestined before the creation of Adam. Before the worlds were created. Because he knew the future.

That we might be the younger brothers of Jesus. The eldest brother. That God himself might be our father.

It's a wonderful relationship that we have come into through the resurrection of Jesus Christ. This was not possible until the resurrection. And the significance of Jesus being raised in the first day of the week is also there.

The first day of the week is the beginning of a new week. And this is the beginning of a new creation. Where our relationship with God was no longer to be like that under the old covenant.

We read in Galatians that under the old covenant people were merely servants. But now we are not servants. We are sons.

We read in Galatians 4 and verse 5. He redeemed us who were under the law that we might receive the adoption as sons. Therefore verse 7 you are no longer a slave. You are no longer under the spirit of his son into our hearts crying Abba Father Galatians 4.6 You are no longer a slave verse 7. You are no longer under the Old Testament.

You are a son and an heir of God. You are under the new covenant. All this is involved in the resurrection.

And therefore don't be afraid. Verse 10. There are many things that bring fear into the hearts of God's children.

Unfortunately. But they need not be. Be anxious for nothing.

We read in Isaiah chapter 8 verse 12 and 13 as the living Bible paraphrases it. You need never be afraid anymore. This word of Jesus.

You are my brother. You need not be afraid. If only we could hear Jesus speaking that to us it would remove so many fears from our heart.

Fear of the future. Fear of death. Fear of sickness.

Fear of so many things that people live in. And it says in verse 11 Jesus went to the city and reported to the chief priests all that had happened. And when they had assembled with the elders and counseled together they gave the guards a large sum of money and said you are to say his disciples came by night and stole him away while we were asleep.

Can you imagine a more foolish excuse? Roman guards appointed by Pilate all of them going to sleep. It's ridiculous. They were not willing to face up to the truth.

They heard from the guards that there was an earthquake that an angel came and sat on the stone but they were not willing to believe it. This is how blind and stubborn man can be. Chief priests and elders God gave them another opportunity to repent from the testimony of the guards.

But they were so stubborn and we see that even among some Christians. They hold to some view of scripture. God shows them from the scriptures themselves that this is not correct.

But they are not willing to change. They are so proud unwilling to say we were wrong in our understanding. Think of those chief priests and elders that humbled themselves and said we were wrong.

What a difference it would have made. You know there are lessons here for all of us to learn. Stubbornness, and accept the truth even when God confronts us with it.

And to twist scripture to tell lies because we want to stand for what we have always stood for and unwilling to give up our prestige unwilling for our ego to be shattered. And thereby God shows us our folly. There we see the folly of these chief priests and elders.

Imagine men who were supposed to be men of God telling others to tell lies in order to protect their reputation. It is unbelievable the depths to which man can sink when he goes against his conscience once. These people had violated their conscience when they judged Jesus unjustly God removed His mercy and grace from them and they sunk to unbelievable depths to tell other people to tell lies.

And they said if this should come to the governor's ears we will win him over and keep you out of trouble. They had influence. They had power.

It is a sad thing when people who are supposed to be religious leaders holding the Bible have influence with worldly people and have no conscience. And the guards of course took the money and did as they had been instructed. And this story was widely spread among the Jews and it is to this day.

God allows various stories to spread. False stories. He allows it to spread so that He can sift out those who love the truth from those who don't love the truth.

Let me read in verse 16 But the eleven disciples proceeded to Galilee to the mountain which Jesus had designated. And when they saw Him they worshipped Him but some were doubtful. There are always two categories of people in the world those who believe and worship and those who doubt.

And there are two categories of people even among so-called believers. There are those who believe and worship and those who doubt. And both of them are mentioned here in verse 17.

What is the result of this wonderful gospel that we have read in the gospel of Matthew? The life of Jesus the teachings of Jesus His death His wonderful message that has come through the life and the witness of Jesus to earth. What do we read at the end of it all? He doesn't say everybody worshipped and accepted. No, some worshipped some doubted.

There will always be these two categories. It's all got to do with faith. Everything hinges on faith.

Even when they saw some doubted. That's amazing that even when they saw some were doubtful. Thomas doubted as long as he didn't see.

He said unless I see I will not believe. But here we see something even worse than Thomas' case. They saw him, they worshipped him but some were doubtful.

Unbelief is so deeply rooted in the heart of man. He cannot believe even when God gives the strongest possible proof. And the reason for unbelief is sin.

Jesus said to some people in John chapter 5 how can you believe who receive honor from one another and glory from one another. John 5.44 And do not seek the glory that comes from God alone. There's a

close connection between unbelief and seeking the honor of men.

And I'm fairly sure why these people were doubtful. Deep down in their heart they sought the honor of men in some way which we don't see. That's why they were doubtful.

But if we can be free from seeking the honor of men we can join that glorious company of people who have faith and who worship. And there's something else we see here in verse 17 that if we really believe we have to worship. It doesn't say some believed and some were doubtful.

It says some worshipped and some were doubtful. A faith that does not result in worship in a bowing down before Jesus and saying you are Lord. My Lord and my God like Thomas said is not really faith.

True faith is that which leads to worship. It's what we read earlier in verse 9 too. Behold Jesus met them and greeted them these disciples and they came up and took hold of his feet and worshipped him.

Such frequent references to worship. The gospel that Jesus died and rose again must not only bring faith in our hearts it must bring that faith that brings us flat down on our face before Jesus to worship him to yield our all to him to say Lord you are completely Lord of our lives. This must be the result of our faith.

Anything less than this puts us in the category of those who doubt it. And so God uses circumstances as we have seen to test people's hearts. There are rumors that are spread but in the midst of it all there are those who come to faith to living faith and fall down at Jesus' feet and worship him.

Let's turn now to Matthew's gospel chapter 28 and verse 18. We come now to the end of the gospel according to Matthew. And in our closing study we can look at these wonderful verses which is the great commission that Jesus gave to his apostles.

And this is really worthy of very careful study because there is such a depth of content and meaning in it much of which has not been taken seriously enough. There is another commission mentioned in Mark 16 which is more well known to people. In Mark 16 verse 15 and 16 Jesus said go into all the world and preach the gospel to all creation.

He who has believed and has been baptized shall be saved. He who has disbelieved shall be condemned. And then it goes on to say these signs will accompany those who have believed.

There the emphasis is merely on the fact that we need to go out and evangelize. We need to go out and preach the gospel to every creature and that's very important. We have to do it.

And in that ministry of evangelism there will be signs accompanying that ministry. Those who believe will experience supernatural will have supernatural experiences in their life. And those who believe need to be baptized.

But here in Matthew 28 verse 18 to 20 the emphasis is not just on proclaiming the gospel and getting people to believe but on making them disciples. Jesus came up and spoke to them we read in verse 18 all authority has been given to me in heaven and earth. That's the first thing we need to understand before we ever go out with the gospel.

That we are going out to represent one who's got all authority in heaven and earth. If you've got any doubt about that then it's better not to go out. That is the foundation.

The foundation for our going out is the fact that Jesus Christ has got all authority in heaven and earth. There are many people who've gone out with the gospel because they have been told there are people in need. Of course there are people in need but that's not the reason why we go out.

The reason why we go out is because Jesus Christ has got all authority in heaven and earth and he's commanded us to go. And unless we make that the foundation our work can be just like social work that a lot of people do because there's a need. People do social work not because Jesus Christ has sent them or because Jesus Christ has got all authority in heaven and earth.

They do it because there's a need. We mustn't go out with the gospel merely because there's a need. That's not the foundation.

We look at the need. Jesus said, lift up your heads and look at the fields for they are white unto harvest. But that's not the foundation.

That's not the motivation. No. The command of Jesus.

There may be a battle going on in the battlefield on your country's border but can you go and fight there? No, you can't unless the army selects you and sends you. The fact that there's a need for soldiers up there doesn't warrant any Tom, Dick and Harry going out to the front to fight. In the same way there can be tremendous need but God has to send you.

And that's why you need to listen to God first. Not look at the need but look at God. Jesus Christ has got all authority in heaven and earth.

This word authority is something people don't understand. In the world people think of authority as something that they use to lord it over people. But Jesus said in John 17 and verse 2 that the Father gave him authority not to boss over people and lord it over them but to give them eternal life.

That's the only type of authority that we should have if we are disciples of Jesus. Authority to lead people into eternal life to partake of God's nature. Jesus Christ has got all authority in heaven and on earth which means he's got total control over everything in heaven and everything on earth.

We read in Ephesians 1 in the last few verses that everything has been put under his feet. There's no doubt about that. Everything is under his feet.

And unless we believe that it's no use going out because we'll face situations we'll face problems and we'll wonder who is in control here. The answer is Jesus is in control. If you're not sure of that don't go out.

First of all be established and founded on the fact that Jesus Christ has got all authority in heaven and earth. Then that's the first thing then secondly he said go. Once you're sure of this then you're ready to go.

We're to go into all the nations we read in verse 19. So it's not that we sit back in an easy chair and wait for people to come to us. No, we go.

We're to go. And where has God called you to go? You may be a mother with a number of children. Can you go to the middle of Africa or some unevangelized village in North India? Maybe you need to go first to your children and to your neighbors.

Go doesn't mean we've got to leave our home and the city we live in. Go to the people who are not disciples and they're all around us. Now there may be some whom God calls to North India or to the heart of Africa.

They need to go there too. But you need to see where God has called you. But every one of us has got to go.

Go to whom? To those who are not disciples around us. A mother's got children in her own home who are not disciples. She's got to go to them.

So go doesn't mean that we've got to leave our job or leave our city. But it means to go to people in every nation who are not yet disciples and give them the gospel and thirdly we read here that when you go to them your aim must be to make disciples of them. In the King James Version it says teach.

But if you read the margin there it says make disciples. That's the literal meaning of the Greek word there. Make disciples.

Disciple them. In other words tell them what it costs to be a disciple of Jesus. Those conditions are laid down in Luke 14 verse 25 to 34.

Jesus said sit down and count the cost. First of all you've got to love Jesus supremely more than father, mother, wife children, brothers, sisters and your own life. Secondly you've got to be willing to take up the cross and die to yourself every day if you want to be a disciple.

Third you've got to give up your attachment to material possessions so that you don't possess them anymore even if you have them. You've given them up to God. You don't own them.

You've given them up to God. God allows you to use them. Your relationship to your material possessions has changed.

This is a disciple. Those are the three conditions of discipleship. And the apostles here knew that.

And they were to go and make people into disciples. People who were willing to follow Jesus. A disciple is a follower and a learner.

He's not perfect. And the apostles themselves are not perfect. But they were to lead people into this way of discipleship.

Into the way of learning from Jesus and following Him. Disciple is a learner and a follower. Jesus said, learn from me.

Take up your cross and follow me. We have to learn from Him and follow Him. That's a disciple.

And it's not enough that we go to all the nations and get people to believe that Jesus died for them. No. We've got to make them disciples.

It's good to make people believe. To bring people to faith that Jesus died for them and to repentance. But that's an incomplete job.

If someone, if you're a carpenter and somebody's asked you to make a table and you just go and present four legs to him. That's not a complete job. Maybe those four legs are excellent but that's not a complete

table.

And that's unfortunately the type of evangelism that's often done. Bringing people to believe that Jesus died for them. Have you made them disciples? That's the question.

So make disciples. That's the third thing. And then fourthly, baptize them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit.

God is one. Not three gods. One God.

That's why the name is singular. One. But this one God is manifested in three persons.

Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Three distinct persons. We don't have time to go into all those things but that is exactly how Jesus told us to baptize people.

In the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Yet we read in the day of Pentecost that Peter said in Acts 2.38 repent and let each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ. What did that mean? When there are two scriptures that apparently contradict we can be sure that both are true and we need to resolve that apparent contradiction.

The contradictions are only apparent. The heathen religions have their trinities too. And when we say Father, Son, and Holy Spirit without identifying the Son as Jesus Christ it's possible in some heathen system for people to think that could be a heathen trinity.

And that's why the Son is identified as Jesus Christ. And that is why in the Acts of the Apostles in dealing with the Jews Peter and the other apostles speak about baptism in the name of Jesus Christ. In other words when they baptized people they obeyed what Jesus said but they identified the Son as the Lord Jesus Christ.

And so they baptized people saying I baptize you in the name of the Father and the Son the Lord Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit. So the name is one. God is one.

There is only one God we worship. But manifested in three persons. A mystery too deep for our human minds to fully grasp.

That's not surprising. A dog cannot understand everything about human beings and a human being cannot understand everything about God. If we could explain God fully God would have been down at our level.

The very fact that we can't understand God fully proves that this is the truth. And then, fifthly, teach them to do all that I commanded you. After you have made them disciples baptized them in the name of the Father Son and Holy Spirit you don't stop there.

You got to continue still. Teach them to do. Not just teach them.

Teach them would be give them intellectual understanding. But teach them to do means you show by your life how to do it and make them do it too. In other words it's like teaching people swimming.

You can't teach swimming on a blackboard. You can teach the theory there but then you got to get into the water and say follow me. And so teach them to do what shall we teach them to do? Every single thing that Jesus commanded.

This is the function of a local church. To make disciples baptize them and teach them obedience to every single commandment of Jesus. Not one must be left out.

And in this ministry finally Jesus says you're not going to be alone. I'm going to be with you always even to the end of the age. Right to the end of this age Jesus will be with us and with all who are committed to this ministry.

You need never go out into this ministry alone. What a wonderful comfort. Many people like to claim that verse without fulfilling the conditions.

Are you one of those who are willing to go and make disciples? Then the Lord will be with you always right to the end of the age. That's our calling. And it's a glorious calling.

And if we respond wholeheartedly to it we shall find we are sandwiched between these two statements of Jesus. All authority is given to him. That's exercised on our behalf.

And lo, I'm with you always even to the end of the age. What wonderful security to be found between these two closing statements of Jesus in this gospel.

Audio: <https://sermonindex1.b-cdn.net/8/SID8324.mp3>

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/zac-poonen/matthew-ch2732-2820/>

Grow in Your Walk with Christ

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

www.sermonindex.net