

Easter – The Beginning, Not the End of the Story

Matthew 28:16-20

Pastor Adam McMurry

Go and Make Disciples

Christians throughout the world have just come from what is rightfully considered the most significant celebration of life in the church of Jesus Christ. Easter embodies the very heart of the Good News of God—that Jesus Christ, the Son of the Living God, who was conceived by the Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary, was crucified on our behalf and resurrected on the third day by the power of God, for the redemption of sins through His blood. End of story? Chapter closed? Actually, just the opposite. The death and resurrection of Jesus Christ is the beginning of a new thing, a new covenant and a new kingdom that Jesus, through His life-giving love is working to build. And how is He doing this? Here is the shocker—*through us His followers!* Matthew 28:18-20 records the very last words that the Risen Christ spoke before He ascended into heaven. “Therefore go and make disciples of all nations...” Jesus, who had literally just torn off the grave clothes, now stands in all “authority, glory and sovereign power” (see Daniel 7: 14) and in essence passes the baton to His earthly followers. The Great Commission only goes forward insofar as Jesus’ agents, the people He has commissioned, are taking it forward.

As You Go

The eleven standing there that day understood completely what Jesus was commanding them to do. For us however, the Great Commission needs some explanation. The first thing we need to understand is that Jesus assumed that they would go. Most English bibles translate the beginning of verse 19 as “Therefore go.” Although this is the best way to translate this phrase, it is missing one nuance that is significant for us today. The Greek word *poreuthentes* is a participle that would be directly translated “going” or “as you go.” In other words, the “going” part of the Great Commission was assumed by Jesus. He knew that His agents would spread out throughout the entire world and that as they went, they would actively, intentionally; spread the news about Jesus Christ. For Jesus, it wasn’t about whether you are a professional missionary, or whether you have the spiritual gift of evangelism. Following Jesus means first and foremost living your everyday life with the sole purpose of building His Kingdom. You don’t have to travel to the other side of the world to carry out the mission of Jesus. The mission field is right in your neighborhood, right in the cubicle next door, right across the dinner table. So go! And as you go, make disciples.

Disciples of Jesus—It Takes One to Make One

But how do you make a disciple? And what is a disciple anyway? The eleven who gathered that day at the mountain in Galilee understood exactly what Jesus was talking about. They *were* disciples. They had followed in His footsteps for three years. They had dropped their nets, walked away from their tax booths, their families, their homes to follow this rabbi who invited them “come follow me.” They knew that being a disciple of the Master meant giving up everything, obeying His every teaching and command, trying their hardest to become just like Him. This is why Jesus said, teach “them to obey everything I have commanded you” (Matt. 28:20.) Making disciples is the simplest and most difficult thing you can ever do. It starts with living the life of a disciple of Jesus Christ yourself. As you live this life, begin to give it away, to pass on to others what you know and are learning about what it looks like to follow Jesus. Make a public profession of your faith through baptism, baptize others as well. Study the bible, obey it and encourage others to do the same. Remember, you can’t give

away something that you don't possess for yourself. So go! Be a disciple. And take somebody with you.

Questions for Reflection & Discussion

Impact of the Gospel for YOU

How does the message of the Gospel impact your life? How does it change the way you see yourself or your purpose on earth? Explore this. Is it just fire insurance, the guarantee of heaven or does it mean more?

God's Kingdom in my hands?

How does it make you feel that God put the building of His Kingdom into your hands? Do you feel up to the task? Why or why not? What promises from Matthew 28:16-20 does Jesus make as He commands us to go?

My Mission Field

Describe the mission field in your life? Who are the people that God has surrounded you with? What are their needs, their fears, their worries? What do they think about Jesus or the church? When is the last time you prayed for them, or asked God for an opportunity? Make a list and begin praying.

UPCOMING EVENTS

SATURDAY 04/21

Ministry Prayer Time
8am, RWLG

High School Beach Day
Depart 11am RWLG

SUNDAY 04/22

Mission Stories:
Jon & Cher Cadd
7:15pm RWLG

SATURDAY 04/28

Men's Breakfast
8am, RWGT

Family Fellowship Trip to
OMSI Meet at 10am, at
OMSI

SUNDAY 04/29

Baptism Service, 7pm,
RWLG

SUNDAY 05/06

Introducing River West
7pm, RWLG

EVERY WEEK

Thursday Night Group
7pm, RWLG
A drop-in Community
Group with Pastor Adam.
You are always welcome.
Childcare is available