

Sermon on **Matthew 28:16-20** Trinity Sunday 6.7.20

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“Then the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain where Jesus had told them to go. When they saw him, they worshiped him; but some doubted. Then Jesus came to them and said, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. 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.” (NIV 2011)

It has been difficult to hear about, watch and internalize all that has been going on these past few weeks. Who would have thought something else could penetrate our thoughts and concerns about the Coronavirus? But all over our nation, riots, protests and even killings result from a senseless death video recorded and put online for all to see exposing more division and sin in our nation. Today is Trinity Sunday. It is needed focus as we struggle with the realities of living in the End Times. God tells us who he is, what he has done, and what his plan is for us both eternally and now that we might understand the peace we have in him and that we might share that peace with the world. God is triune, and he is for us. Hold on to this gift from God: **We are Baptized and Taught in God's Name.**

“Then the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain where Jesus had told them to go. When they saw him, they worshiped him; but some doubted.” Finally, the disciples went. The risen Lord Jesus had sent word with the women who had come to the tomb on Easter Sunday that the disciples should go to Galilee. Jesus had risen from the grave and gave proof after proof, but they were so confused and doubting. He appeared to them; gave them the command to go. Now they had come to Galilee, to the mountain where Jesus had directed. In the same region where Jesus had taught them, walked on the Sea of Galilee and the disciples had pulled in miraculous catches of fish at his command, all these proofs of who he is, here he wanted them to see him again so he could impart to them great gifts that would be a blessing not just to their hearts and eternities, but to yours and mine as well.

They have two seemingly opposite reactions when they see Jesus. *“When they saw him, they worshiped him; but some doubted.”* At first it seems strange, but then we realize, these reactions are all too common in our hearts too. It is a right reaction when you meet Jesus to worship him – after all he is the Savior of the world and has risen from the grave. It is a wrong reaction to doubt. But it happened and it happens. Why is this? These five verses we look at today do not just reveal who God is. They reveal the reality of who we are too. We are sinners, born totally corrupt, even dead spiritually. The only thing we could decide was to hate God, not love him or understand him or hear him. Even after the Holy Spirit converts us our sinful nature still loves to sow seeds of doubt. Just look at the disciples, even after God had worked faith in their hearts, joy in following him, and peace in knowing his suffering and death and resurrection was for them and was real, some doubted. The old person, the sinful nature in them just kept hanging around along side the new faith-filled person in their hearts. It is the same with us, isn't it? We tend to doubt God's love when bad things happen. We are slow to follow when we cannot see with our eyes or understand with our minds how everything works out for the good. We lash out in anger, jealousy, or despair when we realize our limitations or those of others. We fall into sin because we buy the lie that another way is better than God's love and commands for us. We put God and his Word on the shelf when we do not feel the need, or when life is going ok. We doubt his love and his wisdom, and we do not deserve either of them. We need him.

And against what one might expect he is there for us, always. He did not put us on the shelf. He took on flesh to save us. He did not waver despite the devil's offers but did God's will - everything necessary to live the perfect life God demanded of us. He loved us, his enemies, and went to the cross to suffer for our sins and redeem us from sin, death and hell and rose to redeem us for living our lives for him. This forgiveness and freedom he gives us is the reason we worship him. It also casts out our doubt. God gives us more reasons.

“Then Jesus came to them and said, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me.” Who else can say this but God? Jesus is true God, and no one is more powerful than Jesus. The skies, the storms, the saints and angels, the kingdoms of this world, the rulers, presidents, kings, governors are all answerable to Him. He directs, allows, sends as he wills and deems best. He is Jesus, the Christ, the Son of God, true God in

the flesh – crucified, died, resurrected and victorious. He is God and King. He did not buy the devil's lies in the wilderness. He won these kingdoms back by his blood, death and resurrection. He is the ultimate authority. And what does he want with all this authority, power and glory?

You. **You are baptized and taught in God's name.** And your risen Lord gives you purpose too! *"Therefore go and make disciples of all nations."* Life is busy isn't it? Some of you had more time on your hands to reflect or different duties during these past few months that kept you busier in so many other ways, and some of you got even busier. Jesus knows that. In fact, the words here simply say, *"as you are going..."* Wherever and whenever you find yourself, busy or not so busy, but *going*, *"make disciples of all nations."* What Jesus had given to the disciples, what Jesus has given to you, he wants you to share and do for others. You have real peace in this messed up world even now no matter what comes. Jesus rules over all for you, and he gives you the privilege and responsibility of working alongside him to bring others to him – through your words, your actions and the time he has given you. No one has greater power and support backing them up than you do as God's child. This gift is for every human being.

How do we start? *"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."* The message of Jesus is the message we bring. We bring the Gospel in Word and Sacrament. We need to be turned from our sin and sinfulness and set free and forgiven by Jesus. God does this through baptism. Start with your own family. Have your children baptized. Scripture is clear that Baptism is a gift from God, not something we do for God to earn something. This is all gift, all Gospel. In this gift we receive spiritual life, faith, connection with Christ, membership in God's family, all the benefits and privileges of being a child of God, heaven itself – our names on the membership list. God is *Our Father*. You belong to God through Baptism.

"In the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit." Our God is triune – "Three persons, yet one God." God describes himself this way and though we may not define him fully according to our finite, human minds, Scripture has given us a glorious description of this great Mystery. "Hear O Israel, the LORD our God, the LORD is one" (Deuteronomy 6:4). Scripture is clear that our God is one God, and that he is three persons – Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Here Jesus says when we are baptized we are baptized in God's name. We are adopted by God, bought back from our sins, and we bear his name. Each person of the Triune God is active in making us his own. The Father created us, the Son redeemed us by his life, death and resurrection, and the Spirit sanctified us – enlightening us with God's Word and Sacraments, creating faith in our hearts and growing us. God is our God.

"baptizing them and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you." It is not just baptize a baby or an adult and send them on their way. It is not even confirm them and send them on their way. This is a lifelong journey of learning what God's Word has to say to us in our situation today and what God has to say for our eternity. As Christians it is vitally important that we continue in God's work of growing us in his Word. Bible Study, worship, the Gospel in Word and Sacrament are priorities in the Christian's life. God stands behind these tools. God stands behind you as you use them for yourself and for others. It is not just a main teaching or two. Continue growing in all God says. And as you grow, you will be better equipped to help and encourage others. As God has done for you, do for others. This is a large task, even impossible for us. Jesus' authority stands behind us. And he promises,

"And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age." Hey, Look, This is important! That is what Jesus says here. Understand this. The risen Christ, God in the flesh, with nail marks still in his hands – marks of his victory and his love for you – he is with you now and forever. What a comfort to the disciples as they would see him ascend later on from the Mount of Olives and then they would go to serve him in humanly impossible situations. What a comfort to us as we go out into a world that is afraid and uncertain. The risen Lord goes with us at all times and in all places. His arm is not too short. His love does not run out. His peace surpasses our understanding, but all that God has helped us understand about himself brings us peace in his forgiveness, comfort in his power, encouragement and confidence as we go with his authority. **We are baptized and taught in God's Name.** He is with us and we are his. Therefore, Go and make disciples of all nations. Amen.