

Matthew 28:11-20

The Proper Approach to the Great Commission

Alright this morning we are in the last study of Matthew chapter 28, Matthew 28 verses 11-20. This is also the last study in Matthew. It has been a long time. This is the 179th study in Matthew. We started back in December of 2015. And so off and on with the missed Sundays, it has been seven years and four months. So this is our 179th study in Matthew, finishing out this book.

Matthew chapter 28 is The Resurrection of Christ. The subtitle for the chapter is The Proof of the Resurrection.

Jesus was crucified in chapter 27. Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus came to ask for the body of Jesus from Pilate. And Pilate gave them the body. Joseph and Nicodemus took the body and put it Joseph's new tomb; that he had carved out himself, which no one ever laid except for Jesus. So when they rolled the stone in front of the door some people came to Pilate and said, "You know He said He was going to rise on the third day. Let us keep that from happening. Set some soldiers against the tomb and make sure that nobody steals the body."

So, they sent a cohort John says, that would be six hundred soldiers around the outside of the tomb to guard it. And they sealed it, the text tells us. That is, they took two ropes and put them in an X shape and right in the middle where the ropes meet they put the seal of the governor on it. So that if anybody breaks it is against the law. So they wanted to make sure that nobody took the body of Jesus. They wanted to make sure there would be no resurrection as He said. They are actually doing Jesus a favor, and doing us a favor, by making sure that everybody knew there was a resurrection with the moves that they made.

We saw last week:

- 1) After the Sabbath, at the dawning toward the first of the week, Mary the Magdalene and the other Mary came to view the tomb.**
- 2) And, behold, an earthquake took place: for an angel of the Lord had descended out of Heaven, and after he had come, he rolled away the stone from the door, and was sitting upon it.**
- 3) And the appearance of him was as lightning and his clothing white as if snow:**
- 4) And the ones keeping guard were shaken from the fear of him, and they became as if dead.**

The emphasis there is the literal translation *as if dead*. They did not die, but they were in shock, as if they had died, and they all fell to the ground.

- 5) But when Angel responded he said to the women, You yourselves - not the solders on the ground. You yourselves do not fear, for I know that you seek Jesus, the One who has been crucified.**

- 6) **He is not here: for He was raised, according as He said. Come, see the place where the Lord was lying.**
- 7) **And after going quickly say to His disciples that He was raised from the dead; and, behold, He goes before you into Galilee; you will see Him there: behold, I told you.**
- 8) **And having gone out quickly away from the tomb with fear and great joy; they ran to report to the disciples.**
- 9) **But as they were going to report to His disciples, also behold, Jesus met them, saying, Rejoice! And the ones having come near took hold of His feet and worshipped Him.**
- 10) **Then Jesus says them, Do not fear: go report to My brothers - He calls them *brothers* now - in order that they might go into Galilee, and there they will see Me.**

Verse 11 for today, starting with verse 11. **And while they were going...** While the women were going to tell the disciples. **Behold, when some of the guard came into the city, they reported to the chief priests all things which had happened.** So while they were on their way to tell the disciples, the guards recovered, and they went into the city to tell the chief priests and the elders what happened. Remember the guards fell over as though they were dead. There were not dead, but they were in shock. And when the angel gave the women a tour, and then commanded them to go, the soldiers were right there. They heard the whole thing. Even though they were in shock, they heard the whole thing between the angel and the women. When all these events ceased the soldiers got up and went into the city to report what had happened.

Verse 12, **And when they assembled with the elders, and had taken counsel, they gave a large amount of money to the soldiers - the conclusion - saying (verse 13) they told them, Say that His disciples having come by night stole Him, while we are asleep.** That lie causes a big problem for the people who were being told to report because if a prisoner escapes during your watch you die for it. And so he says, "Go and tell that the disciples had stolen Him while we were asleep." Well that is the death penalty right there. They were sleeping and not on the job. So that caused a disturbance within the soldiers.

Verse 14, **And if this be heard by the governor - that is, if he hears this story - we ourselves will persuade him and we will make you without care.** The word *care* is the word *anxiety*, or *fear*. **And they having taken the money, did as they were taught. And this report was spread around among the Jews until today.** That this is what happened.

I want to point out to you in verse 14 because the different English translations have a different phrase for the term *without care*. King James uses the word *secure*, so that you can be secure. NIV says, *so that you will not be in trouble*. But we have translated *without care* because the word *care* is the word *anxiety*, **μέριμνα** (*merimna*). And it is coupled with what is called the alpha privative (**α-**) or a negative particle that means *without*. So, "Leave it up to us to cover the bases for you and you do not have to worry about it." This is a perfect example of the use of the word except it is being used in a negative evil sense. They are telling them, "Just trust us. Trust us that we will have your back. When the governor goes to find out about this story, we will persuade him. And you do not have to worry about it."

You can see where this word *anxiety* and *worry* is a very important word in the New Testament that we have studied over the years. **μέριμνα** (*merimna*), we have translated it over the years to show you that it means *occupation of the attention of the mind*. That is what *worry* is. *Worry* and *anxiety* is *occupation of the attention of the mind*. We have a series out that we have published a couple times called Satan's Only Weapon Against the Believer. Once a person receives Jesus Christ as their Savior and the Spirit of Christ comes into them, there is no more battle over the soul. Christ has us. The battle now is Satan is fighting with the mind, in the arena of the mind. Paul calls the *mind* the *arena*, where Satan brings things. Even the necessities of life, Satan brings these to our attention, studies us, scouts us out to see what it is that will grab our attention and occupy our minds.

This is brought to us in Matthew's gospel earlier. In Matthew chapter 6 verses 24-34, where Matthew says, **No one is able to serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and will love the other; or he will hold firm to the one, and will despise the other. You are not able to serve God and mammon.** *Mammon* being *the physical world*. So God has created a human being to only have one capacity, to be occupied with one thing at a time in life. You cannot serve two masters the Scripture says.

In Matthew chapter 6 verse 25 he says, **On this account I say to you, stop being anxious for your life, what you should eat, and what you should drink; neither for your body what you shall put on. Is not life more than food and the body more than clothing?** So stop being anxious over your life, even over the necessities of life, because if you are occupied with it then you are not occupied with Christ. You are not occupied with the things of Christ. And it can be the necessities: the food, the clothing, a place to live.

Look intently at the birds of heaven; that they are not sowing, neither are they reaping, neither are they gathering into barns; and your heavenly Father is feeding them. Are you yourselves not more valuable than them? Now who from out of you while being anxious is able to add one cubit to his stature? A cubit as the distance between the elbow and the end of the little finger. So if somebody wanted to add that much height, if you were to worry about it, focus on it, obsesses with it, you cannot make yourself grow that much. You cannot make yourself grow at all. Nobody is able to, being anxious.

And why are you anxious concerning clothing? Learn from the lilies of the field how they are growing; they are not laboring, nor are they spinning; and I say to you that not even Solomon in all his glory was closed like one of these. If God this way is clothing the grass of the field, which is existing today, and tomorrow is being thrown into a furnace, will He not much more clothe you, little faith ones? Therefore you should not be anxious, saying, what shall we eat? Or what shall we drink? Or what shall we put on? For all these things the nations are seeking after: your Heavenly Father knows that you are having need of all these things already. God already knows what we need. You do not have to be anxious about them. He already has a provision. He already had a will.

But you be continually seeking first the kingdom of God, and His righteousness; and all these things will be added to you. So whatever you need will be added. You make the Lord

the one capacity that you occupy with and He will provide everything that is needed. **Therefore you should not be anxious for tomorrow: for tomorrow will be anxious for the things of itself. Sufficient for the day is the adversity of it.**

In I Peter chapter 5 verses 6 through 8 is where Peter gives us this Satan's Only Weapon Against a Believer in Christ. I Peter 5 verse 6, **Therefore be humbled under the mighty hand of God, in order that He might exalt you in time.** Be humbled. It does not say, *humble yourselves* like some English translations say. It is *be humbled*. **Be humbled under the mighty hand of God in order that He might exalt you in time. Having cast all your anxiety upon Him, because it is a care to Him concerning you.** The Lord says, "I am concerned about you. I want you to cast all of your cares, all of your anxieties upon the Lord, upon Me," Jesus says.

Verse 8 says, **Be sober, be watchful; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, is walking around, seeking whom he may devour.** Satan devours people mentally and emotionally. He scouts us. We know from Job chapter 1 that Satan sends his scouts out to scout us to see, what are the things that will get us occupied with? What are the things that will get our mental and emotional attention away from Christ? And then he bombards us mentally in the arena of the mind. So Peter says to be sober, to be watchful. Satan is like a roaring lion searching out who he can devour. So cast all of your care upon the Lord. That is the whole purpose.

And this text back in Matthew chapter 28 in verse 14 is a perfect example of how **μέριμνα** (merimna) - the occupation of the attention of the mind works, even though it is used in an evil way in this text. **That if the governor hears the story, we ourselves will persuade him. We will take the responsibility and we will make you without care.** Make you without having to worry and be anxious about getting into trouble for the body of Jesus being gone, and you being held responsible.

It is a perfect example of the message that Jesus has for all believers - is give your care to Him. Give your care to the Lord. Give your anxieties to the Lord. Not pray about it. Give it to Him. There is a difference. And the Lord's message to us is, "You give it to Me and I will cover you. I will make it so that you are without care. You do not have to worry about it. I got you covered."

So it says in verse 15, **And they having taken the money, did as they were taught. And this report was spread around among the Jews until today.** This report that somebody stole the body at night while the guards were sleeping. And of course, the leadership stuck up for the soldiers to tell the story.

Verses 16 and 17, **But the eleven disciples went into Galilee, into the mountain where Jesus appointed for them. And having seen Him, they worshipped Him.** So, He appeared to them in Galilee like He told them. Go to Galilee and I will meet you there. **So when they saw Him, they worshipped Him. But they doubted.** Some English translations say, *but some doubted*. No, they all did according to the Greek text. They all doubted.

So they had a double frame of mind going. A frame of mind that believes spiritual things and spiritual truths. But another part of your life that just says, "I don't know. This just seems to be humanly impossible." There are two sides to everything we go through. Because of our human, because of our psychological and emotional makeup, things seem to be impossible, humanly impossible. On the other hand, there is spiritual truth and spiritual things of the Lord that He does miraculously beyond the human that we notice, that we acknowledge belongs to Him.

They were saying, "I see Him. I am glad. I am worshiping Him. But there is another side of me that says, *this cannot be real.*" There is a double standard there. And we all go through that. We all doubt. We all have doubts. As long as we are in this human we are going to have doubts. But it is the Spirit of God that gives us the confidence, that gives us the proof that Christ is with us.

This is Matthew's version of when the Lord ascended up. This is after He rose from the dead. And the Bible says that after He rose from the dead He appeared, disappeared, and reappeared to many different people over a forty day period. Paul says in I Corinthians chapter 15 that He appeared to various ones of the apostles, sometimes as a group, sometimes individually. And that He actually appeared to over five hundred people at one time, many of those still alive in Paul's day to verify it. So He meets them in Galilee one of the many times that He appeared. And they worshipped Him. But they still doubted.

Verse 18, The Command of Jesus. **And having come near Jesus spoke to them, saying, All authority was given to Me in Heaven and upon the earth.** The Father did not give Him authority just on the earth, He gave Him authority in heaven. And if you want a reference John chapter 5 tells us about this authority that the Father gave to the Son. This is one of the most pointed texts that presents the deity of Christ. All authority, not just some, not just partial. All authority in heaven and upon earth. So He can direct people as He sees fit. He is God.

And then verse 19, With this authority He says, **Therefore** - please notice, I want you to notice the literal translation here. **Therefore having gone, disciple all the nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.** There is no command to go. This is what is called The Great Commission in teachings around today, where they quote old King James, which reads, "Go and make disciples of all nations." There is no command *go* in the Greek text, it is, *having gone*; or more literally *when you go*. Then the command is to disciple all nations. So what is interesting here - He is telling them that when you go, disciple all the nations. We will see that in just a moment, what that means.

In chapter 1 of the book of Acts, Acts chapter 1 verse 8, Jesus says to the disciples, **When the Holy Spirit comes upon you, you will be witnesses in Jerusalem, Judea, and Samaria, and to the extreme parts of the earth.** So I read in chapters 1 through 7 in the book of Acts, and after the stoning of Stephen in chapter 7 all the believers in Jerusalem left because of the persecution. The only people that remained in Jerusalem were the apostles. So the believing Jews had to leave Jerusalem because of the persecution. Guess where they went? They went to Judea and Samaria. And they were displaced from their homeland away from their families. But when they went, they explained to the people where they were going, "We have received Jesus

Christ as our Messiah. We follow Him as our Messiah and we are persecuted for it." So they had to go to different countries, away from home, away from family. And then from there, from Antioch of Syria they began to send out missionaries. Paul even said in the book of Colossians that the then known inhabitable world has been reached for Christ.

Now how did they fulfill the saying of Jesus? When He said "You will be My witnesses in Jerusalem, Judea, and Samaria to the extremes of the earth," how did He fulfill that? No committee. No committee meetings on how we are going to fulfill the great commission. No plan because Jesus did not challenge them to go, but rather said, "After having gone." Then how do I know when to go? The Lord will let you know. It was the Lord that caused them to go into Judea and Samaria at this time. And then from there the missionaries went out and reached the extremities of the earth. It was not a challenge. The Lord says, "You are going to go. And after you go then disciple all the nations."

So they were in Jerusalem in this great revival recorded in chapters 1 to 6 of the book of Acts. In chapter 7 the stoning of Stephen caused the believers to scatter. That is how they went into Judea and Samaria. Persecution. The Lord sent them there. It was not a man-made thing. They had no idea how, when, or where. Jesus just said, "When My Spirit comes upon you here is where you are going to go to preach the gospel." Okay. But it was God that did it. The Lord works through the circumstances to fulfill His word and His will just like He does all the time. He fulfills it. He brings it about. All authority has been given to Christ and Christ is going to send them so that when they go here is what you are going to do. There is no command. They are going to go, according to the text.

Jesus therefore said, **Having gone** (or when you go) **disciple all the nations**. So we are to disciple people. That is what he was commanding them to do. That is the only command in this text. He did not say, "Go make church members," or, "Go make Christians." Make disciples of Jesus Christ. There is only one kind of Christian and that is a disciple. There is no other kind of Christian, Biblical Christian. There are religious Christians, but they are not Biblical Christians. People can believe what the Bible says, but the point is, is a person a disciple of Jesus Christ? The word *disciple* means *learner*. A learner. Somebody who follows the Lord and learns from Him.

Then in verses 19 and 20. Again 19, **Therefore having gone, disciple all the nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit; teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I command you. And behold, I Myself am with you all the days until the completion of the age. Amen.** There are two what are called modal participles in verses 19 and 20. The word *baptizing* and the word *teaching*, these describe the mode and meaning as to what it means to disciple all nations.

The baptism, Biblical Christian baptism. There are many ways that churches baptize today, but there is only one Biblical method and reason for baptizing. That is when a person has received Christ and is saved, they are put in a tub and put under the water, which symbolizes the death of Christ. Raising up out of the tub of water symbolizes the resurrection of Christ. And then the new life is from thereafter. It is a testimony that a person has received the resurrected Christ and is a disciple of Him. That is what the baptism is for.

But then what do you do? Disciple them. Teach them what Jesus said. Let them grow in the grace and knowledge of Jesus Christ so that they can grow into the capacity to have the function and the maturity to function in that ministry that God has given. Teach, be teaching. That is why we spend so much time in the Word, because we are to disciple by teaching, so that people can be developed and grow in the grace and knowledge of Jesus Christ and function in Him as God's purpose for and plan for them. That concludes our study in Matthew.

Let's close in prayer.