

The Return of the King | Matthew 28:16-20; Acts 1:6-11

So we've come to the end of our time here and it's been great. And my hope and my prayer isn't that you leave here and go "man, that was fun! Or man, that was lame and I never want to do this again." But that you leave here differently than you first walked in. I pray that you challenge yourself to really think deep about the stuff that was said during this time and that you don't allow yourself to be satisfied with where you're at. I pray that you take your walk seriously and that you might find and follow this Jesus.

But I have one more thing I want to leave you before we part ways. And it's in Matthew 28. We said in our first session that no matter how awesome and morally upright we think we are...we're still sinners because 1) we have made God's stuff primary rather than God, 2) we have said that our way is better than God's and 3) we have the guts to ignore God altogether in our lives. And because of that we were in a lot of trouble because God is a just God that had to punish sin. And we left it at that and we came back the next day saying...but there's good news, that Jesus himself in one act as God himself became the ultimate sacrifice and absorbs the wrath that was meant for you and I onto himself and now makes a way to life everlasting. Now what was broken in the universe is now restored in the person of Jesus Christ. And we said that he chooses some of the drop outs to follow him – like me and like you. That we don't have to be perfect in order to follow him...we just follow him without meeting any kind of standard...that we just be honest with him. And the next talk we said that walking with Jesus is more than just church. That it's a lifestyle rather than something we do on the weekends. And we also said that as we walk...we're going to stumble here and there and Jesus doesn't go "that's it...you fail one more time and I'm kicking you out!" no, he continues to encourage us to follow him and he scoops us up when we're in trouble. And today...we leave off with the last piece of discipleship.

Let's read Matthew 28 first and then we'll read it backwards. "Now the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain to which Jesus had directed them. And when they saw him they worshiped him, but some doubted." Alright...does anyone else find this verse a little bit weird? I mean there's this prophecy that is told thousands of years ago of a coming messiah – a savior that will be the fulfillment of the old covenant made to Abraham and to David. A virgin becomes pregnant and gives birth to the Christ and while some were skeptics, others knew that this was the one that was going to save the world. As Jesus continues to minister it becomes apparent that he was like no other teacher nor prophet but was indeed God in the flesh. And all along he's healing people and he's fulfilling prophecies all to say "Hey! I'm the Messiah!" They beat him. They kill him and crucify him...and the crazy thing is after 3 days he comes back from the dead and eats with and fishes with the disciples. I mean, talk about blogging and paparazzi...and as he's about to leave the disciples and he's floating up into heaven verse 17 says that "some doubted." Haha...that's crazy man! Could it be that even though all the evidence is there and your heart tells you that this is true...people will still reject Jesus?

Anyways...verse 18, "And Jesus came and said to them, 'All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.'" I want to leave something with you friends really

quickly and we'll end our time together. Look at the end of the verse because it's where all the weight is. Jesus ends his final declaration to the people by telling them "I am with you always, to the end of the age." I will promise you those who will consistently follow after him that this faith that we hold on to is not easy. I'm not saying that it's miserable...but I am saying that it is hard. I'll tell you that after 9 years of ministry, going to seminary, and pastoring people for 2 years there are days where I want to quit because it seems like nothing is going right. I mean people complain and they have all these problems with you...and honestly, sometimes it feels easier to not be Christian you know? And as much as I try to plead with others to follow this Jesus they don't ever seem to listen and can I tell you what? Leaders, I need you to listen to this especially. You can't save people! It's impossible! Why? Because we're broken sinful people that God is constantly working on...but there's no way for us to change someone's heart. That's the role of the Holy Spirit...and that's why this verse is so key. Because you have to realize that in the end...you can plan awesome programs, you can have million dollar facilities...but only God can change the heart of a person. But he promises to be there...and you have to remember that it is because of Jesus that things change.

So what's the charge? He says all authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me...you see that? We're the agents that Jesus uses – he's the one in charge. I'll tell of a story that happened to one of my friends in college. They were out one night and a group of guys started to mess with my friends (and I don't remember if it was because of something in the past...but it was something stupid) and it got to the point where it was just getting out of hand. And so they just decided instead of causing a scene they would just leave the restaurant and just politely leave. But the group of guys didn't want to let it go and so they followed them out of the restaurant and started to mess with them again. And so my friend just told them "hey...look we don't want any trouble, just leave us alone." But the group of guys didn't seem like they were going to let up and so my friend (as it was told) rips off his shirt with his bare hands and stares at the group of guys and says, "C'mon!" haha...and the guys were just freaked out and they took off running. Now from what I read in scripture...Jesus holds all things in the palm of his hands and that everything in the universe is held together because he thinks it. Now my friend is ridiculously buff and that's probably why those guys ran...but imagine if it were Jesus. I mean, he's turning people into sheep, calls bears out of the ground to eat another one...it'd be one of my favorite movies if that happened. All authority and all power of the universe is in the hands of our master...and he goes "knowing all that power that I have – that I control...go and make disciples, baptizing them and teaching them"

We have to remember that discipleship isn't something that happens once. A disciple is someone you take with you on your journey in life. And so if you're a senior in here...you are to take those younger than you and show them how to live life like Jesus did. It is not the job of your pastor...it's your job. And yes, teach them biblical truth but also teach them how to talk to people...teach them how to tie a tie. And as you continue to walk and fall and learn...you teach your lessons to the generation underneath you. And I am begging you to take this charge seriously...and I don't care whether you're 11, 16, 20, or 104...the command is still there. And the best way to go about discipleship is that you are following after Jesus himself – that you take your walk seriously and that you do all that you can and you sacrifice all that you can to find more of Jesus? Why? Because it's easy? Not necessarily...I need to remind that you all but 1 of the disciples that followed after him suffered horrible deaths...but at the end of their lives,

they were able to say "I have ran my course well and I did all that I could to be faithful to my king...and I found him to be enough!" One of my favorite quotes is from this brilliant theologian by the name of GK Chesterton and he says this... "The Christian faith has not been tried and found wanting. It has been found difficult and left untried."

As a guy who've seen it all...who has grown up at church and has done every single part of religious activity one can imagine...I have found religion and following rules to be exhausting and frustrating. Jesus, on the other hand, has been a whole different story. I am begging you to take him seriously...because whether you like it or not, heaven and hell are at stake...but more importantly your joy, your life, and your freedom from the empty pursuits of this world are at stake. He's coming back sooner than you think...my friends this isn't a game, may you follow him through the good and the bad and as you constantly die to yourself...may you experience the freedom he gives you!