

Matthew 28:16-20 | David Baumgartner

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Preacher: David Baumgartner

[0 : 00] All right. Good to be here this morning. The sun is shining. Isn't that nice? We can all agree that God is good. Oh, come on. Let's do that again. God is good.

I had the honor. I had the privilege of giving the first message in Matthew's gospel account. So here it is. It's two years, two months later. Also, 77 messages later. We're now going to be finishing Matthew this morning.

If you have your Bibles, please turn with me to Matthew's gospel account, chapter 28. We're going to be picking it up in verse 16. Boy, here's a question for you. How will Matthew end his gospel account?

What will he say? As a former tax collector, is he going to bring in all these debts that people owe? What's he going to say? I'll tell you what. As I prepared for this message, I became increasingly convinced that this morning's passage is exactly where Matthew intended to take us.

And he intended all along to take us where he's going to where he's going to take us here. Why do I say that? I'll give you three reasons why. The first one is this. Jesus's authority. Throughout this account in Matthew, he spent a lot of ink describing Jesus's authority.

[1 : 47] You may recall that he began by laying out Jesus's royal lineage all the way back to Abraham. And we saw other examples. Jesus taught with authority. He possessed authority over sickness, over diseases.

He even raised Lazarus from the dead. And he had authority over the elements of nature. He had authority over demons. He had authority over Satan himself.

We're told, we learned that Jesus was even able to forgive sin. The key thing though to remember is that in our passage this morning, Jesus's authority will once again come front and center.

But this time, we're going to learn that there's a new authority that's been bestowed upon Jesus. He is now humanity's redeemer.

What a great thing that is. Here's a second reason about our text. We see how and why the church came into being. Matthew, better than all of the other gospel writers, described for us how the nation of Israel rejected Jesus as their king.

[3 : 03] As a nation, they refused to accept him, to believe him. And so, starting in Matthew chapter 16, Jesus began to prepare his followers for the coming age.

And that's the age that we're in now. It's called the church age. He said in Matthew 16, verse 18, You are Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church. And the gates of Hades shall not overpower it.

The key thing about that is that in our passage this morning, Jesus is going to issue a command that's specifically intended for the church age.

What command am I talking about? You may have heard of it before. It's called the Great Commission. Yeah. The Great Commission.

Textbooks have been written about this. Here's the third thing, though, about Matthew's ending. In all four gospel accounts, we learn that there's some 18 post-resurrection references showing Jesus appearing to various people.

[4 : 10] This is before he ascended, of course. And we're familiar with many of these. For instance, Peter and John at the tomb. Maybe you've heard the story about the two travelers on the Emmaus Road.

Or how about the ten apostles in the upper room without Thomas? And then a week later, we see all 11 of them together. And so on. We have these examples.

But Matthew didn't elaborate on these. No. He doesn't even talk about Jesus' ascension into heaven.

Instead, he chose to end his account by focusing on this gathering that takes place in Galilee. Now, you may ask the question, why Galilee?

Well, some people may say, well, Jesus grew up in Galilee. There's a town called Nazareth that's there. And he spent most of his life there. This is really interesting. Because Galilee was looked upon by the Jews as being a profane and vulgar place.

[5 : 18] It's a place of darkness. And that's because back in 722 B.C. So that's over 700 years before Christ walked this earth.

Galilee was among the first places to be invaded by the Assyrians. And eventually, that whole area became populated with mixed people.

Jews and Gentiles alike. And it became known as the Galilee of the Gentiles. You may recall earlier in chapter 4, Matthew quotes from Isaiah.

I'm just going to read this to you. Isaiah says, And here's a prophecy.

Well, that great light, my friends, is referring to Jesus Christ himself.

[6 : 26] And this applies to the Great Commission, where the darkness is darkest. So if you put all those three things together, as the supreme head of the church, Jesus is now going to issue a command for the coming age.

He says, I want my sacrificial death and all the resulting benefits to be known throughout the whole world. If you have your Bibles, let's go ahead and read from our text this morning.

Matthew 28. And we're going to pick it up 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. Jesus came up and spoke to them, saying, All authority has been given to me in heaven and on earth.

Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I commanded you.

[7 : 45] And lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age. Oh, Heavenly Father, it is so good to be able to come here and to once again be refreshed by Scripture, by these very words of Jesus himself.

Lord, how precious these words are to us. And we are grateful for our study of Matthew, your faithful servant who penned this account of our Redeemer.

We're so grateful, Lord. And we pray that just as we see how Matthew closes his gospel account, that these words would come alive to us.

We thank you. We thank you for the church age that you have brought upon us. We thank you for all how you have equipped us. We thank you for each person here, Lord. And we ask for these graces in Jesus' name.

Amen. I thought that we would begin this study here by focusing on the main verb of the Great Commission.

[8 : 55] If you'd look with me, it's found in verse 19. Make disciples of all nations. You might want to ask yourself, well, what is a disciple?

It's a very general term. And simply, it's someone who follows or someone who learns from a teacher or a rabbi. And the basic assumption is that the greater the student's submission to his master, the greater the student's likelihood that he or she would become like their master.

Well, Jesus not only wants us to follow him, we see here that he also wants us, you and I, to enable others to do the same.

In fact, he commands it. How do we do that? Well, Jesus tells us. In fact, I see five elements or attitudes that would lend toward being a disciple and helping others become disciples.

The first one is this. Simply being available. Be available. Notice with me in verse 16. It tells us that the 11 disciples proceeded to Galilee to the mountain which Jesus had designated.

[10 : 15] Now, last week, in David's message, we saw in verse 10 that Jesus had told the women who came to anoint his body, Do not be afraid. Go and take the word to my brethren to leave for Galilee, and there you shall see me.

Jesus had said that earlier at the Last Supper. He said, After I've been raised, I will go before you to Galilee. So, our passage this morning begins with these 11 apostles in Galilee on a particular mountain.

I'll tell you what's really interesting here. A journey from Jerusalem to Galilee was not like a trip down the street. No.

According to the Biblical Archaeological Society, that would be a 65-mile trip. A trip that would take three days by foot.

The main point here, though, is that Jesus said, Be there. And they came. They made themselves available. I came across this quote.

[11 : 26] I really like it. I think it applies to the church here. The greatest ability is availability. In other words, regardless of all the abilities that you or I may have, organizing, athletics, public speaking, whatever, if you're not available, then your abilities really don't matter.

Would you agree with that? Yeah. So we say, Lord, I'm available. I'm available for your purposes. I'll tell you what, as I've been here, I've always been encouraged by several of you who live far away. We live in an age where we want things convenient, right? Several of you live very far away. You live in St. Charles. You live in Hillsborough.

And I find it very encouraging that you're here. And I don't know if it's ever been said to you, but thanks for coming. It's good to have you here. So being available.

Secondly, having an attitude of worship. Notice with me, Matthew gets right into this, quoting, it says in verse 17, when they saw him, they worshiped him.

[12 : 46] I want to ask you, what did that look like? Well, obviously, somebody had a guitar. So, no, there's many ways to worship the Lord.

Amen. Yeah, we can do that through prayer, through our giving, through, you know, giving thanks to the Lord. We see this throughout Matthew's account of Jesus' life.

In the beginning, chapter 2, verse 2, wise men from the east came and they said, where is he who has been born king of the Jews? For we have come, for we saw his star in the east and we have come to worship him.

Or how about chapter 8, verse 2, a leper comes to Jesus and he bows down before him. He says, Lord, if you're willing, make me clean. How about in chapter 14, the apostles are in a boat and there's this great storm that comes upon them and Jesus stops the storm and it says that, and those who were in the boat worshipped him.

They said, certainly you are God's son. The main point here is that throughout all the four gospel accounts, people worshipped the Lord Jesus.

[14 : 05] They were so taken, caught up by who he is, caught up in what he does. What a great thing. Notice in Matthew, in verse 17, he continues with this, he says in verse 17, some were doubtful.

What's that all about? Why did Matthew include that? In what way did some doubt? Did they doubt that Jesus rose from the dead?

I'll tell you friends, I don't think this is a big deal at all. I think the answer is very simple. Here it is. Some of them just hadn't yet recognized that it was Jesus.

Here's why I say that. Notice verse 18. It says, Jesus came up. In other words, that suggests that they first saw him from a distance and then he came up and then he spoke to them.

Earlier in Matthew chapter 14, when Jesus walked on the water, he was seen from a distance. And the apostles were frightened. They didn't recognize him.

[15 : 14] You know what they said? He's a ghost. But when Jesus spoke to them, their doubts vanished. All it took was for Jesus to come near and speak to them.

I want to ask you, do you know anybody plagued with doubt? Plagued with unbelief? The cure for doubt is to draw near to the Lord. We sing that song, draw near to the Lord and he will draw near to you.

Consider his claims. Consider the accounts that we have of Jesus' life. Maybe you've heard this statement before that Jesus is either a liar, a lunatic, or he is Lord.

So, we can worship him. We can be available to him and we can worship the Lord for who he is. You know the Lord is looking for worshipers? He is.

Third thing, having an attitude of obedience. Look with me, verse 18. Jesus says, All authority has been given to me in heaven and on earth.

[16 : 26] Go therefore and make disciples of all nations. So, here's the command. Make disciples of all nations. But before we look at this, I want us to consider Jesus' authority here.

We realize in this account in Matthew that Jesus was already God. Amen. Amen. His authority was manifested throughout Matthew's account.

But notice what Jesus says. He says, I have now, I've been given authority. And I believe that he's referring to a new basis of authority associated with the cross.

I think Paul, the apostle, explains it best. If you have your Bibles, if you turn with me to Philippians chapter 2, chapter 2, verse 8, Paul has just been launching in, exhorting the Christians in Philippi about, you know, having an attitude like Christ, who is the perfect servant.

And so, Paul says in chapter 2, verse 8, of Philippians, being found in appearance as a man, he, he is speaking of Jesus, humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.

[17 : 55] Therefore, there's that word again, therefore, therefore, also God highly exalted him and bestowed on him a name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those who are in heaven and on earth and under the earth and every tongue should confess that Jesus is Lord to the glory of the Father.

Boy, I want to ask you, what is that name? I pray, I hope that you know the name of Jesus, that you can call him your Redeemer, that he is your Savior.

Jesus is now our Redeemer. At the cross, he purchased believers with his blood.

Now, here's the thing. It's on the basis of that authority that we are to make disciples of all nations.

Yeah, let me say that again.

It's on the basis of that authority that you and I are to make disciples of all nations. Let's look at this here. Go back with Matthew 28 if you would. Paul's going to use three participles to describe this process here.

[19 : 19] The participles are going, baptizing, and teaching. This is how we're to make disciples. Let's look at each of these. First, he says go.

Actually, as a participle, it could be translated as you go into the world. In other words, it's assumed that we're already going.

Where are we going? To all nations. That word there that's used is the word we get ethnic from, an ethnic group. Or Gentiles, where it's used in other places.

In other words, we're called to leave our comfort zones to represent Christ, his goodness, his grace, all the things that he gave us to represent him to a lost world.

The fact is, friends, the world is not going to come to us. And the assumption is that we're to go to them. Yeah. This is a change from what Jesus had told his apostles earlier.

[20 : 25] Back in chapter 10 in verse 5, Jesus sent out the 12 after instructing them. Here's what he said. Do not go in the way of the Gentiles. Do not, and do not enter into any city of the Samaritans.

What's the difference? Here's the difference. We're in a new dispensation. We are in the church age. Even though Israel as a nation refused to believe him, there was a small number of Jews that did believe.

And they became the seeds of the church. And they were equipped to go out. In Acts chapter 1, right before Jesus' ascension, he says these words, Do not leave Jerusalem, but wait.

You shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you shall be my witnesses, both in Jerusalem, in Judea, and Samaria, even to the ends of the earth.

the remotest parts, he says. And eventually, they went out. How do we know? You and I are proof of that.

[21 : 37] We are. If you are a believer, you are the fruit of someone else's missionary call. Chances are, you are. But it required someone to go.

And that's because the simple truth is that people need to hear the gospel. Amen? Yeah. Paul writes in his first epistle to Timothy, he says, This is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior, who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.

Now here's the thing. Not all of us are evangelists. However, each one of us has received at least one spiritual gift that can be used in the Great Commission.

Some of us, some people are called to take the gospel across cultural lines. Well, remember, Jesus modeled at first the Galilee of the Gentiles who saw a great light.

And so, we go forward both individually, both collectively, and we go on the basis of Jesus' authority.

[22 : 53] His authority legitimizes our mission. It does. If anybody asks you, by what authority do you make these seemingly outrageous claims?

you say this. By the authority of the king of the universe. The one who gave his life for you. Yeah. We're talking about discipleship here. That's what this verse is about. Discipleship begins with conversion. But it doesn't end there. What's the next thing Jesus mentions?

In verse 19, he says, baptizing them. What does that mean? You've been to baptisms before, haven't you? Yeah. That simply means to immerse in water.

In the early church, after people were converted, they'd get baptized. And these early converts were eager to do it. Why is that?

[23 : 59] It's because baptism was an entry point of acceptance into a new community. Water baptism what was a person's initial act of obedience by which he or she would testify to their faith in Christ.

See, here's the thing. You and I cannot see a person get saved. But we can see the fruit of it. We can see their obedience. And so Jesus says, baptize them.

Now, unfortunately, some people have taken this and other passages that claim that water baptism itself is necessary for salvation. I'll give you an example.

You don't have to turn there, but in Mark chapter 16, verse 16, listen to what it says. Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved. Has anybody ever thrown that verse at you?

Yeah. Well, if you just read on, it says, whoever does not believe will be condemned. Yeah. The clear teaching from scripture is that salvation is by faith alone in Christ alone.

[25 : 15] Water baptism just symbolizes our union in the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ, which is depicted by immersion in water.

Notice here, Jesus says, in verse 19, we do this in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. That's to remind us that all three persons of the Godhead are involved in our lives.

Isn't that a comforting thought? I hope that you find that comforting. The Father chooses us. The Son purchased us. The Holy Spirit seals us and unites us to Christ and all and the unfolding of all the riches of the grace that we experience throughout our lifetime.

So baptism. Third, what's the next thing we see? Verse 20, teaching them to observe all that I commanded you. Discipleship involves teaching.

And that's not just conveying facts about the Lord or facts used in trivial pursuit. No, it's helping Christians to build their relationship with the Lord Jesus.

[26 : 33] And that includes calling people to obedience. He says, to observe all that he commanded. Now, I want to ask you, where do we find Jesus' commands?

Yeah, right here. In his word, scripture. In his second epistle to Timothy, Paul writes, all scriptures inspired by God and is profitable for teaching and for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness that the man or woman, I'll say, of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work.

Let's get real practical here, because really this passage is about discipleship. We are to be disciples and we're to make disciples.

Here's the first thing. Discipleship applies to all believers. Men, women, boys, girls, every new generation of believers needs to be discipled.

And maybe you've heard this before. Every person ought to have a Paul in their life. I'm referring to somebody who's spiritually older. They also ought to have a Timothy in their life, someone who is younger spiritually.

[27 : 54] Secondly, discipleship takes many forms. It occurs at home. It occurs in a church setting, like in a building. It occurs one-on-one.

It occurs with time spent counseling or discussions over coffee. The third thing, discipleship is a process. It doesn't end until the end of a person's life.

And here's something else. Fourthly, discipleship involves transformation. Paul would write in his letter to Rome, he says, do not be conformed to the world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect.

The word that's used there is the word from where we get metamorphosis. That's referring to an inward change in one's fundamental character. And this is where the Holy Spirit is working, actively working, in our lives.

And we should cooperate with that. This transformation, it can be painful. Amen? It can be messy.

[29 : 14] But God works patiently in us. And I believe that he changes us only as fast as we can handle it. I've experienced that, maybe you have too.

And here's where the church comes in. The church ought to be a setting that promotes that transformation process. Some of you may be thinking about, well, what about this church? And what about our vision and our mission? And are we doing those things? Does anybody know what our mission statement is lately? Yeah, knowing Jesus and making him, making Jesus known. And we also have our five purposes. worship, teaching, ministry, evangelism, and fellowship. I wanted to ask you, what do you think we excel in here at Bethel? If someone were to ask you, what do we excel in? Like, do we have a teacher that's known all through the world?

[30 : 20] Do we worship? Like, do we have a huge setting of worship and prayer meetings and all that stuff? I think it's fellowship. I do.

Every meeting, we start late. And that's because everybody's just fellowshiping. And it's sweet. And it's good. Who wants to stop that?

It's funny, when I watch the kids, when they go down to Sunday school, they all say goodbye to their parents. You'd think that we're sending them to some remote island for a week.

You know, they're hugging and stuff like that. Fellowship is sweet at Bethel. Amen. It really is. All of these things make for a healthy church.

But I'll tell you what, friends. It only happens to the degree that you and I are willing to be used and not to get sidetracked.

[31 : 27] Yeah. There was a day when steam powered paddle boats used to go, they would chug up and down the Mississippi River. There's a story that's told about these two large paddle boats.

And they shoved off the docks of Memphis and each paddle boat had a crew. And their mission was to carry passengers and their luggage to their destination of New Orleans.

So these two boats left at the same time. And after a while, the crew members of each ship began taunting one another. boat and they said, complained about how slow each boat was and soon this developed into a friendly contest.

And the race was on. One boat began falling behind. Well, what do you do? Especially when you only have enough fuel to make the trip down to New Orleans.

Well, one crew member had a brilliant idea. he went down to the ship's cargo bay and he brought up some luggage. Yeah.

[32 : 39] It seems that luggage, I'm talking about clothing, furniture, and things like that, it burns quite well. And so it worked. And so they kept getting more luggage up there.

And guess what? They won the race. And they entered the dock in New Orleans. Everybody's cheering. The passengers are applauding the captain for, you know, just his great steering the vessel.

Everybody was so happy. That is, until they went to retrieve their luggage, which by now had all gone up in smoke. I think this story highlights just how easy it is to lose focus.

Churches can set out with the greatest of intentions only to find that they've neglected the primary mission for which God intended for his church.

And what is that mission? Make disciples. Make disciples of all nations. That's what we see. This is how Matthew ends his account of the life and ministry of Jesus Christ.

[33 : 52] He took us right into the church age where Jesus makes his expectations known. Jesus wants us to make disciples of all nations.

And it starts with, as we saw, being available. Just like these early disciples, deciding to live for something greater than themselves.

Amen. Yeah. Secondly, having an attitude of worship, being amazed by Jesus, giving him the praise that's due his name through everything that we do and say.

And thirdly, bringing the life-changing message of the gospel to a lost, dark world, the Gentile of the nations. All right.

Teaching one another from God's word. That's what he wants. That seems like a tall order, doesn't it? I was listening to a guy lately.

[34 : 56] He was describing how the church in North America is really in trouble. And he listed several factors that have crept into many churches. We should weep about these, friends.

He's talking about theological liberalism. He's talking about straying from the simple gospel, worldliness. Those are just to name a few of the things that have crept in.

But as it was mentioned, we're going to be studying the book of Acts, and we're going to be seeing their blessings and their struggles.

Because here's the fact, they were not alone. They weren't. And neither are we. If I could ask the musicians to come up, just to end on this one final encouragement.

One final encouragement. In verse 20, Jesus says, and lo, I'm with you always, even to the end of the age.

[35 : 59] What a great promise that is. If you've ever struggled in some area, remember the promise that Jesus gave, that he's with you, and he will never leave you nor forsake you.

Let's all stand together and sing. desde