

"Moving Through Change - Keeping the Same Mission"



Matthew 28:16-20

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. 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."

Sermon slides are available [HERE](#).

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Sermon Transcription:

Pastor Thom Rittichier 0:00

Well, it happens. It does happen. Someone says to you, You looked like a man on a mission or you look like a woman on a mission. You ever had that said? Yeah. And what does it look like, to be a man or woman is on a mission? Determine, scurrying, focused, in a hurry. You know we have an optometrist in our family. And for all of us who have gone through that experience of the eye exam, we've heard this. Which is better, number one or number two, one or two? Let me do that by putting two different pictures up here. And what I'll be asking you is based on the appearance. So ask yourself, is this person on a mission? So is it one or two? Okay, here's one. And here's two. Which one is on a mission? One, definitely one. Good. Okay, here's another set of pictures. Which one of these is on a mission? Is it one or two? Two, definitely looks like two. A man and a woman on a mission, there in this last set of pictures. Is it one or two? One, pretty evident, isn't it? You can see by the looks on the faces here. If we go back and take a look at a couple of these, take a close look at the face, you kind of see that intensity, that determination, that focus, that was talked about there. This one has quite a focus there. And so do they, evident when you're on a mission.

So this morning, we're going to take a look at Jesus and a mission. As a matter of fact, this is said about him, "Now it came to pass, when the time had come for him to be taken up, he set his face steadfastly to go to Jerusalem, Luke 9:51. That was a look, wasn't it? Definitely look, a steadfast look. And you know, this isn't the only time in the Scriptures this expression is used of a face being set, a determination, a focus, moving along. So this morning, I'm going to be asking you to look with me at what Jesus had to say, concerning mission. We're going to hear him talk about a man, about a woman, on a mission. And we're going to gain from what he gives to us here. Well, we're going to gain what will help us move through change. You know, this is the second to the last assembly that we'll be having here, as Heartland Bible Chapel, our Sunday morning worship. In our passage this morning, Jesus is about to set out on his second to the last communication that he had with his disciples before he was taken up. And in this message, Jesus sets out the mission for moving through change.

I'm going to ask you to be turning with me to Matthew chapter 28. It's his second to the last message. In our first message in this mini series on moving through change, "So Walk In Him", we took a look at the part of So Walk. This is the walk that we're to have moving through change, having been rooted and built up in him, as we were taught, we're to be established and overflowing with thanksgiving. And we took a very, very important look at this walk that we have through change. And then we looked at the In Him, the race that is set before us, looking onto Jesus, in Hebrews, that was last week. Looking onto Jesus, the one who started this, the one who will bring it to its successful conclusion. Consider him, so we don't get weary and lose it and lose this on the race before us. This morning, we're going to take a look at Matthew chapter 28. And we're going to take a look at moving through change, keeping the same mission.

Since we are in the Easter season, and since we are moving through change during this Easter season, we're going to take a look at the events of Easter. Matthew chapter 28:16-20, is about the immediate Resurrection Day events, which will be the focus for us this morning. And we read this, "But the disciples, 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. And Jesus came near them, saying unto them, '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, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, even to the end of the age'." It's the statement of the mission. In chapter 27, he's delivered up, he's tried, he dies, he's buried. Then in Matthew chapter 28, we have the Resurrection Day events, "But the disciples went to Galilee" and Jesus appears to them there. This mission, the aim of this message, the aim of what we are doing this Easter season, in moving through this change, is the mission that we're about to look at. It's to advance the mission, to be better, more effective, more efficient in the mission, that's what this is about.

The mission he gave us has these three things for us to look at. Number one, beginning with his point, that's where the mission begins, with his point, and he makes is a claim, verses 16-18. It's a claim that he has demonstrated over and over and over and over and over and over and over. I don't think I said that enough, over and over and over,

throughout his life. The mission has its source, its beginning, in his point, that's a claim. Then number two, we carry on with this mission, his plan, and it's a charge, often called the commission, verses 19-20a. As a matter of fact, we know this passage as The Great Commission. That's how we know it. John MacArthur says in his New Testament Commentary, "This passage is the climax and the major focus point not only of this gospel but of the entire New Testament. It is not an exaggeration to say that, in its broadest sense, it is the focal point of all Scripture, Old Testament as well as New. This central message of Scripture pertains to the central mission of the people of God, a mission that, tragically, many Christians do not understand or are unwilling to fulfill. It seems obvious that some Christians think little about their mission in this world, except in regards to their own personal needs. They attend services and meetings when it is convenient, take what they feel like taking, and have little concern for anything else. They are involved in the church only to the extent that it serves their desires. It escapes both their understanding and their concern that the Lord has given His church a supreme mission and that He calls every believer to be an instrument in fulfilling that mission." Looks like a man on a mission, looks like a woman on a mission. Does it look like that when you're being seen? A man on a mission, there is an appearance to that. Image one, on a mission or image two, not an admission. Which is it? And number three, holding on with his promises, it's a commitment, verse 20b.

This morning, we're going to hear what stays the same. As we move through change, this stays the same. No, not exactly the same. It's actually going to be advanced, it's going to be taken forward. That was the reason for the decision, the changes going on here at Heartland, in what we're doing. It was based on this, the beginning point that Jesus makes is a claim. It's a claim that he states, very, very succinctly, having demonstrated it to us. We need to pick up the point as being the source, the beginning, of going with him on his mission. The background to this point, this claim, is twofold. Remember, this is resurrection day that we're looking on. That's the background of this thing. It is resurrection day, chapter 28. And I want you to look with me at this resurrection day event, number one. It starts out in verse number one of Matthew 28, where there's a Mary and a Mary. "Now after the Sabbath, towards the dawn of the first day of the week". Now this Sabbath was not a regular Sabbath. This was called a high Sabbath day, because this was the Passover Sabbath. The Passover happened once a year when they would celebrate the passing over of the death angel, where God destroyed the Egyptian first born, to get his people out of Egypt. It was their annual commemoration of that. And it's a high Sabbath. It's a high Sabbath day. And on this day after, "after the Sabbath, towards the dawn of the first day of the week", which we know is Sunday, "Mary Magdalene and the other Mary went to the tomb". Now, the context is that Jesus has died, he's been buried, he's laid in Joseph of Arimathea's tomb, the tomb of a rich man, and fulfillment of prophecy. And he's there, in there, and they go to that tomb. "And behold, verse two and following, "there was a great earthquake, and an angel of the Lord descended from heaven and came and rolled back the stone and sat on it. His appearance was like lightning and is clothing white as snow. And for fear of him the guards trembled and became like dead men. But the angel said to the women, 'Do not be afraid....Then go quickly and tell his disciples that he has risen from the dead and behold, he is going before them to Galilee, there you will see him'..." And so the women are all excited, and they take off. And this is the first event on resurrection day, there is

this communication to Mary and Mary, these ladies who had followed Christ. It's the first communication about the resurrection. They're excited. And they run off to do this with a great deal of joy. And as they're going, all of a sudden, Jesus, himself, appears to them on this first event of the resurrection. And Jesus met them and said, verse nine and ten, "Greetings! And they came up and took hold of him in his feet and worshiped him. Then Jesus said to them, 'Do not be afraid, go and tell my brothers to go to Galilee, and there they will see me'." And so twice over, he communicates this, in the first events to the ladies. That's the background of what we're going to look at in a moment on the statement of this mission.

The second event on this resurrection day, there are these dudes that are present here, there are some guards that are on hand. Verse 11 starts talking to us about these guards, "While they were going", while the Mary's are going off to tell the disciples, "some of the guards went into the city and told the chief priests all that had taken place". What had happened? Now we have to set a little bit of the background here, because these guards had been placed by the chief priests and the Pharisees after petitioning Pilate, who was the governor. Slide over to chapter 27 starting at verse 62, "Now the next day", and to being clear here, it was the next day after the day of preparation. What was the day of preparation? Now, let me back up. Sabbath Day is on the Sabbath, which we know is the sixth day of the week, and the preparation day for the Sabbath would have been on a Friday. And being a high Sabbath, it had some big preparations when it came to celebrate the Passover. Okay, so the preparation day was the Friday, for the Saturday, which is the Sabbath day, a high Sabbath day. So "the next day, that is, after the day of preparation, the chief priest and the Pharisees gathered before Pilate". Do you see what's going on here? This is a Sabbath day. It is a high Sabbath day. And just before this they won't go into Pilate, when they delivered him up to them, because they didn't want to be defiled. But now, on a high Sabbath day, they are in there with Pilate, they are there before him. And these chief priest and these Pharisees, they appeal to Pilate, verse 63, "we remember how that imposters said, while he was still alive, 'After three days I will rise.' Therefore order the tomb to be made secure until the third day, lest his disciples go and steal him away and tell the people, 'He has risen from the dead'. And Pilate hears that, verse 65, and he says, 'You have your guards, go and make it as secure as possible'." Now, after that, they set the seal on this tomb, and they posted a guard, a Roman guard.

And do you know the nature of the Roman guards when not fulfilling its responsibility? If they didn't do their job, they were executed. That's what happened. It happened concerning Peter and the Roman guards that let him get away, and they were executed. That's the nature of this. So these chief priest and Pharisees, on a high Sabbath day, go and defiling themselves by going into a pagan ruler, to petition to have a guard and the guard is posted. And this is what takes place, chapter 28:11-15, "While the women were going, behold, some of the guard went into the city and told the chief priests all that had taken place. And they had assembled with the elders, and taken counsel, they gave a sufficient sums of money to the soldiers and said, 'Tell the people that his disciples came by night and took him away while you were sleeping. And if this comes to the governor's ears', " because they'd be killed, "we will satisfy him and keep you out of trouble'. So they took the money, and they did as directed. And this story has been spread among the

Jews to this day." This is really a weird thing, think of these guards, knowing that they'll be killed if they fail on their duty. And they say, We fell asleep. And his disciples came and stole him. How did they know that the disciples stole the body if they were asleep? And if they weren't asleep and they saw who stole the body, they're going to be killed for dereliction of duty by a Roman soldier. This is obviously just trying to make due. Have you ever had that experience? Still happens in international affairs. Here's these Providence's in Ukraine, and Russia says, we've got to go attack the whole nation to protect these Providence's. Can you see through that? You could see through that. So they went along with their story, and it is still spread.

But now we come to verse sixteen, the "disciples went to Galilee". Why did they go to Galilee? Because Jesus sent them to Galilee. As a matter of fact, as they were finishing The Last Supper, on the night in which He was betrayed, He told them that he was going to be delivered up. And he said, When I'm raised, go to Galilee. And he has it repeated to these guys through the women, two times. Two times, he is getting the message across. So post resurrection day events, the disciples go to Galilee. And when they come to Galilee, verse 17, they saw Jesus. And immediately they fell down and gave honor and respect to him. But the Bible says, some doubted, some didn't really think it was him. Some of them said, That's not him. Yeah, I don't think it's him. I don't think so.

So now, post resurrection day background, over. Let's talk about the exclamation, the exclamation that Jesus makes to them is this, verse 18. "And Jesus came". And the Bible says that they were there and he came near to them. And he came to them saying something very important. As matter of fact, saying this, he said it. That's the way the Bible presents this, that he emphasized to them. He emphasized this thing, "All authority...is given unto me". "All authority in heaven and on earth is given unto me." This is rather an extensive amount of authority. This is a rather all inclusive amount of authority. You see the word "all" that he uses there, it's the word that means individually, each, every, any particular authority. It's a word that means collectively, the totality of it. Each and every individual authority in its totality has been given unto me. That's what Jesus says. And when he talks about authority, he talks about jurisdiction. He talks about the power of giving direction. He talks about the ability, and the capability of managing all of this. And it's not limited authority. It's all power in heaven. When he talks about heaven. He's referring to the realm of God's rule. It's the kingdom of heaven, the kingdom of God. It has to do with all the principalities and the powers, and the council and the dominion. As a matter of fact, when the Apostle Paul attempts to present this, he says it like this, they saw that the devils were subject unto him and even unto them as He commanded them. This is the power that is not only material, but also physical power, physical power like this, the lame walk, the blind see, the dead are raised. It is power, all in heaven, all on earth has been given unto me. And he's demonstrating this. He's demonstrating that he has that power and here he is, claiming it.

It also has to do with power that is mental and immaterial. Why do you say in your heart this? The heart of the king is in the hand of the Lord. And what does he do? He turns it wherever he will. All material, physical power. No one takes my life from me, Jesus said, I have the power to lay it down. I have the power to take it up again. All power, all, each

and every, any and the totality of it in collection, in heaven, on earth, has been given unto me. When Daniel sees this he says, Daniel 7:13-14, "one like the son of man, came to the Ancient of Days and was presented before him. And to him was given dominion and glory and a kingdom, and a power that all the peoples, all the nations, all the men, of every nation and language might serve Him, His dominion is an everlasting dominion, which will not pass away. And his kingdom is one that will not be destroyed". All power, over all nations and people's and languages has been given unto me. This is a statement of an action that is passed and it's done. This is a done deal. What does a person do with such power? Rulers do things with power that doesn't match this in any way, shape or form. They invade another country, on a pretext that a junior high kid could see through, out of evil aggression, Putin, an evil aggressor. Nero, with a power that didn't match the Lord's, burned Rome to the ground, why? He couldn't watch TV at night. So he came up with his own drama, and burned it to the ground. And he said, This is why, because I wanted to see it burn. And who did he blame it on? Christians! The same thing motivates Putin. That is a religious issue. Nebuchadnezzar, who had an interesting rendezvous with this kind of power. What does he do? He builds this thing to himself for people to bow down to.

What does Jesus do with all power, in heaven, and on earth? This is what he does. He gives a plan. This is a plan. I got all this power. And the power that I have isn't just so I can boss you around. It's so that you have a part to accomplish. He does it like this, there's a background to this plan. The background is this. "Therefore", he says starting in verse 19, based on that, that I have all this power demonstrated and now clearly exclaimed to you in heaven and earth, based on that power of all authority in heaven and on earth, "Go therefore". This is a very interesting thing, because the statement that he makes here is having gone, therefore having gone, you are coming with me. That's what he's saying here. Therefore, you are coming with me. You see the disciples, they didn't go and get involved in this lie that was being passed around that the disciples stole his body. No, they instead went, like Jesus said, to Galilee, though this was all going on post resurrection in Jerusalem. And the place was abuzz! I'm telling you, if there's some scuttlebutt going on, this is higher yet, that place was abuzz with what was going on. And they went to Galilee, because Jesus told them to, and that's what he uses. You've gone with me, you're with me, you're with me on this.

And because that, being the background, and you've gone with me, he then presents this, the explanation of his plan, here's the plan. Here's what we're gonna do, here's what you're going to carry on. This is what's going to happen here. Remember, this is his second to the last message, his last message, when he's talking to them, all of a sudden, he goes up from their site, and they're sitting there staring at him travel up into the cloud, when he said, When the Holy Spirit comes upon you, you're going to be witnesses. You're going to tell what you see and what you know of me. You're going to be witnesses, telling what you've seen and know of me, in Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, and to the ends of the earth. Did the disciples ever make it there, to the ends of the earth? No, they never made it there. Some of them went to different spots, Thomas, they say went to India, but to the ends of the earth, they never made it there. But the mission did, because the mission was adopted.

The explanation of this thing, this mission, because you've gone with me, because you're going with me. It's got three parts to it, verses 19-20a, number one, disciple. He's been calling them right along, his disciples. They are recognized as the ones who have learned from Jesus. A disciple, Jesus said, is not above his teacher. But when he has been fully trained, when he's learned this stuff, as he's to learn it, then he'll be like his teacher. He'll be like him. Go make disciples, learners, who are not only picking up ideas, not only concepts like it's prominent in an education. No, it's not that, it's learning the way of life. You pick up on the way of life of this person, not only their thinking, but their way of life, make disciples. As a matter of fact, notice with me a passage where the Apostle Paul picked up on this. Turn with me in your Bible to 1 Corinthians 11:1, "Be imitators of me, as I am of Christ". Do you see that? The commission that Jesus gave, the charge that is his plan is, since you've gone with me, make learners and use this approach, imitate me as I'm imitating Christ. Now, I remember Howard Hendricks talking about this. And I'm going to mimic him for a moment. Howard Hendricks had committed his life to this thing, making disciples. And when he was doing this, sharing the challenge, he used this story frequently. He said, "When I talk to folks about making disciples, the response I get goes like this, But I'm not perfect, I'm not perfect! I've got flaws. Imitate me? Why imitate me? I'm not perfect!" Is anybody here perfect? Jesus didn't say, you have to be perfect. He gave us his perfection. That's what he did. And as his disciple, you can own your imperfections. As a matter of fact, that's how you disciple. I'm not making it on this. I've got problems here.

You know. Last week, I shared with you a little bit about this thing of discovering the meditations of my heart. I was driving along, and all of a sudden, this verse came to mind about the meditations of my heart being acceptable. And I thought, what have I been thinking on here. The meditations of my heart. So I confessed that to you. And after our lunchtime together last Sunday, dear son of mine, shows me a video, shares it with his friends and other folks there from church, and says, Hey, this is like Dad, we all agree, all the guys agree. This is like dad! And he showed me a video, a commercial of a guy who is putting it down every new idea that is brought to him. The guy says, This'll never work! This style won't last! Don't invest there! Don't go with that, it won't make it!" And my sons say that's me. They all agree. That's Dad. That's me? Oh, come on. Where's this coming from? And so this past week, I've been asking the Lord, Is that me? And, you know, one of my girls this week said something, and I immediately heard myself say these same kind of negative things. I wanted to say, I'm doing it as a joke, man. I'm teasing you. I've changed. But really, it's me. That's me. That is me. I can't lie, that is me! I can't disciple. I'm not perfect. No, that's all part of it, you see. Because this is the thing that grows us. This is the thing we're called to. This is it. This is it. Go, make disciples to imitate you. And when they point out to you, where you aren't imitating Him, do you deny it, become protectionist, defensive? No! We repent and own it. Amen.

That's the idea here, make disciples, and number two, baptizing them. This is not a formula for the ordinance of baptism. This is not a formula, it is what we should use. The idea here of baptism, the word is transliterated rather than translated, the word is immerse, immerse them. Immerse them in the name, the character, the identity of God the Father, and God the Son and God the Holy Spirit, that this is your identity. What God is and does and has accomplished. You have Christ, who's redeemed you, you have

the Spirit, who's empowering you, producing fruit in you, you have the power of the Father. There's an identity there. He is working everything, after the counsel of his own will, for the good in your life, he's doing that. Immerse them in the identity of this God who's there now, part and parcel of their life, immersed in it, immersed in it.

And he says this, number three, teaching them, passing on to them, everything I've directed, everything, everything. Everything that Jesus emphasized. You know, this thing is not about conversion only. I'm saved. When I was a kid, I went forward. They baptize me. They gave me a Bible, wrote my name in it and said, Once saved, always saved. And I'm good. JD Greer talks about that in a book called "Stop Asking Christ Into Your Heart". And his point is, that this is a work of God. And he tells a story about a guy he was playing basketball with, who was bragging about his drinking bouts and his riotous living. And Greer starts talking to this guy about Jesus. And the guy said, Hey, you trying to witness to me? And JD said, Yeah. Then the guy said, You don't need to witness to me. I know all about that. You see, as a kid, I went forward, and I got a Bible. And I got baptized. And they told me, Once saved, always saved. So afterwards, I found some other things that were pretty good. But I'm good. So you can go on.

I want you to know that if Christ is genuine, He changes your life! And his mission and carrying this out, because it's his charge, and he has all of this authority, becomes very important to you. Amen. It becomes immersed in the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. And the Father is working everything together for good in my life, after the counsel of his will, and the Son has redeemed me. I just trust Him. And the Spirit is producing this fruit and causing you to grow and to change. And we're in on this. We're in on this teaching. This by the way, is an on going direction.

End of story is this. Hold on to the promise. The background of this promise is this. Make disciples, who can do that? I'm not perfect. I want you to look at this, verse 20b, "Behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age." I am with you. I'm with you. Look at this. I'm with you. It's not you. It's never been about you. It's always been about what I'm doing, with you immersed in the Father, the Son and the Spirit. When you're born with me. You go with me. You join me in what I'm doing. The disciples did that. They went to Galilee, the rest of the world was abuzz with a lie. They went to Galilee because they went with him. I'm with you. I am with you. When it seems pretty bleak. I'm with you. When this thing gets hard, when you think, I'm just not cut out for this, I am with you. I, who has all the power in heaven, and on earth. And the extent of this promise? I am with you always, literally, all the days, day after day after day, even unto the end of the age, until this is over. Until like John Walvoord says, There is a shout...He's here!...of the Archangel. There's a trump of God. And the voice of God says...Come up!...and the dead in Christ rise, until that day. And by the way, whether you're a post trib or a pre trib, whether you're an all mill or a pre mill or a post mill, this is going to happen. There's going to be a shout, there's going to be that Archangel sound, there'll be a trumpet of God, and then there'll be the command of God, Come up here. And then it's done. Until then, we're folks on a mission, you look like a person on a mission. You going like you have a mission. Surely, you see you're in on this, right?

You know, folks, if you've been a believer, and you've accumulated a bit, this is our mission. I've had folks who've been in church, went away from the church, wanted to come back to the church, came to the church, and said, You know, I was around the church, and I've been taught, I know. That confession puts you in a place that you're in on this. There's other people not as far along. And you can come alongside them and aid and guide and encourage and direct. Definitely parents with children. Definitely as opportunity arises for grandparents with grandchildren. Definitely for other members of the church, as you look for opportunities to encourage, to take forward. This change we're going through has this same mission, connecting to God and others, changing into Christ's likeness, continuing this work of serve service.

Father in heaven, we come before you, because we've put our hand to the plow and we don't intend to look back. We want to look forward to what you're doing and opening up vistas of opportunity to come alongside, to be of service, to aid and guide and encourage until it's over. The trump sounds, the Archangel shouts and God commands, Come up here. Right now is our time in this city. In Jesus name, Amen.