

# Matthew 28;16-20

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[ 0 : 00 ] Keep the Bibles open at Joshua chapter 1 initially. The text, if I was going to take a text for tonight, would be in the last chapter of Matthew.

Matthew chapter 28. In the last four verses, which I'll just read to you. Then the eleven disciples went away into Galilee, to the mountain which Jesus had appointed for them. When they saw him, they worshipped him. But some doubted. And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, All authority has been given to me in heaven and in earth. 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 things that I have commanded you. And lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age. Amen. Just staying with Joshua, we read there in Matthew that the disciples gathered at the mountain in Galilee, where Jesus had appointed. [ 1 : 14 ] And he spoke to them, and he worshipped, but some doubted. And here we are, Joshua, at the beginning of this book.

And you can read in Deuteronomy that Moses died on Mount Nebo. And all that God had done through Moses. And here was God come to speak to Joshua. And the first thing he says to him, my servant Moses is dead. He had just spent 30 days mourning. Moses, and here was God reminding Joshua that Moses had now died. And Joshua needed no reminder. He had been Moses' right-hand man. He had been faithful in his service to Moses. And now Moses had died. 30 days of mourning had passed. And the first recorded words from God to Joshua, and my servant is dead. [ 2 : 28 ] That's it. It's finished. Moses is gone. Now therefore arise. And go over to Jordan. Joshua is given that command.

Now therefore arise. And go over to Jordan. We read in Matthew that some of the disciples doubted. Do you think there was any doubts in the mind of Joshua when he was given that message? Reminded that the one that he had worked under was now dead. And now God was saying to him, Now therefore arise and go over to Jordan. You and all those people to the land which I am giving to them, that is, the children of Israel, every place that the soil of your foot will tread upon. I have given you, as I said to Moses, and not only had these words been spoken to Moses, but they had been spoken to Abraham before when Abraham left his home, back in Genesis chapter 12. [ 3 : 42 ] Joshua had witnessed some significant events as a young man, as a young boy growing up. He would have heard of the different stories of Moses, the burning bush, the meetings that he had with Pharaoh, the crossing of the Red Sea, the many battles that he had been involved in, the provision of food every morning, the holding up of the serpent, the serpent, sorry, in the wilderness, the water from the rock, and the ten commandments to be given to the people. And here was God coming to Joshua and saying, Now therefore you arise and take these people across the Jordan. Now we can see that Moses was a giant in the faith. It's recorded again in Hebrews. He'd been faithful in his walk with God, but we also read of his doubts and his lack of faith when we think back to the burning bush. There was times when he was exasperated and he smote the rock. Common faults in each and every one of us, our doubts and sometimes our anger with the way that we react to things. But Moses was faithful to God and the calling that had been put upon his life. And now Joshua had to step into that mantle and follow the people.

[ 5 : 17 ] And while God gave him the command that he was to go, he also gave him a promise. And you read David verse 5, No man shall be able to stand before you all the days of your life.

As I was with Moses, so I will be with you. I will not leave you, nor forsake you. Be strong, or of good courage.

For this people, for to this people, you shall divide and inherit the land which I swore to the fathers to give them. God gave him a promise.

Moses was dead. It was time to get up and move forward. But you're not going on your own. As I was with Moses, I will be with you.

I will never leave you, nor forsake you. No man will be able to stand against you. So whatever fears you may have, before Joshua could even say a thing, God knew what was going through his mind, and God gave him the promise.

[ 6 : 30 ] As I was with Moses, so I will be with you. I will not leave you, nor forsake you. Be strong, and of good courage. If we turn to Matthew 28, thinking of these things, of the promise that God gave to Joshua, and then of the words that we have here, that Jesus spoke to the 11 disciples on the mountain at Galilee.

Then the 11 disciples went their way into Galilee, to the mountain which Jesus had appointed for them. When they saw him, they worshipped him, but some doubted.

And Jesus came 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 of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things as I have commanded you. And lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age. God spoke to Joshua after Moses had died.

Here was Jesus speaking to his disciples as he was getting ready to leave them for the last time. And his command to them is, All authority has been given to me in heaven and on earth.

[ 8 : 08 ] Go therefore, and make disciples. It wasn't to lead a people into a foreign land, but it was to go and make disciples.

Make disciples of Jesus, and for Jesus. And that command, and that promise, sorry, that command was followed by a promise.

We have here, but some doubt it. And Jesus said, Lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age. The command was to go.

Where were they to go? They were to go. They were to go and make disciples. They weren't to do it sitting at home.

They were to go out and make disciples. Yes, there would have been much prayer, but they were to go and make disciples. And how thankful each one of us here tonight are that they did go and make disciples.

[ 9 : 16 ] That they did go and share the word, the good news of Jesus. Because if they hadn't answered that call, and they hadn't been out and made disciples, there's every likelihood we wouldn't be sitting here tonight reading God's word and sharing in the joy that there comes from singing God's praise and joining together as Christian brothers and sisters.

So they answered the call and they went. And that call was there for each and every one of us here. But as Christians, I'm sure each one of you will know that this last four verses in this chapter, that it was a commission that was given to the disciples, is referred to as a great commission.

The great commission that's given to each and every one of us as disciples of Christ. And if you doubt this night, you have that promise that as you go, Jesus is with you.

He is with you always, even to the end of the age. What is a disciple? What is it we have to go and make?

Looking up the dictionary for the definition of the word disciple. A disciple of Christ is one who believes his doctrine, rests on his sacrifice, imbibes or drinks in his spirit and imitates his example.

[ 11 : 02 ] Ask yourselves a question as I ask myself. Do we fully believe the doctrine, the teachings of Jesus? Do we rest in the sacrifice that's been paid for each and every one of us on the cross of Calvary?

Do we seek to learn more of Jesus through his word? Do we drink in his spirit so it becomes the very part of us? And one of the most difficult ones, do we actually imitate Christ?

Do we imitate Christ in everything that we do? In our walk and in our talk? Do we seek to imitate Christ?

A very difficult question answered yes to when we know that each and every one of us has weaknesses and we have faults. But our desire is to meditate on God's word, to learn more of God, to walk closer with Jesus and to try and reflect him each and every day.

Not seeking glory for ourselves but seeking to be more like Christ. What's your response to the command to go and make disciples?

[12:31] Yes, I hear what you're saying but that's not for me. The passage does not tell us that he singled out some of the disciples. There was times where he took Peter and John and James aside and spoke to them.

For on this occasion he spoke to the other disciples that he had before him and he told each and every one of them to go. He'd asked them to be there, he went and he met them and he said to them to go and go and make disciples, each and every one one.

So that command comes to us as well as it went to them. If you're a Christian here tonight, what's your response to that command to go and make disciples?

It doesn't mean that we have to leave home. Remember I swear in Scripture where it says in Acts that you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you.

And you will be my witnesses both in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria and even to the remotest part of the earth. Some are called to be witnesses at home.

[13:51] Some are called to go further afield. Some are called to go to the ends of the earth. But do we all answer the call that's given to us? Do we think the responsibility is on somebody else?

It may be that you'll come into contact with somebody through your work, through sitting on a train or a bus, depending on where you're going, and you'll be the only person as a Christian that meets the person sitting beside you.

Do you reflect Christ in your interaction with them? Do you share Christ? Or are you ashamed of Christ that you're too timid to share God's work?

I must admit I was really challenged. A week past on Friday. There was one or two from the congregation here as well in the community centre in Tarbert, when the missionary came to share testimony and of his work in the Middle East.

Christ. But the one thing that really resonated with me was when he spoke of the time of his conversion and how he described the Bible as a book of light and a book of light.

[15:07] It speaks of the light of the world. It speaks of the life that is an offer to those that come and call upon Christ as Saviour.

Quiet with sharing it. The world is in darkness. This man had been a convert from Islam. And he was telling us how the Koran that they use as the Bible speaks of God as somebody that should be feared.

as a God of judgment. Not a God of love. Not a God that offers eternal life. And he actually challenged us not to be timid about speaking about God.

Not to be afraid of offending people but to actually pick it up and share God's work. And share it because of the love that you have for Christ.

Because there are people that are out there hungering and thirsting. And they're trying at broken systems. And they need to find Christ. And who will or how will they find Christ if there isn't somebody there to tell them?

[16:20] And as I say, we don't need to leave home. There's a mission field in our own doorstep. We can't speak to the person that lives next door to the desert of Christ. How do we think we're going to be able to go and speak to somebody in Africa?

If you have desired us to see other people come to know Christ, you have to be willing to go and share it. Because it's the only chance that some people will get to actually hear of Christ and be able to come to know if we're able to speak of them.

And it's not something we do by ourselves. It's not something that we have to think, oh, I don't know the words to say. Jesus has promised that he will be with us and he will uphold us.

And he won't just be with us for five minutes or ten minutes. He'll be with us to the end of the age. And if we put our trust in him and we are faithful to him, the call went to Joshua and God said that he would be with him.

He told him to be strong and he told him to be courageous. He wasn't to rely on his own strength, but he was to trust in God.

[ 17 : 45 ] We know that God was with Moses. Joshua knew that God was with Moses. And God gave him that promise, as I was with Moses, I will be with you. And Christ left his disciples and leads us through God's word with that same promise, I will be with you until the end of the age.

So I ask you again, what is the response to that call on your life to go? I have four daughters. I'm not here tonight so I can say whatever I want.

I have four daughters. responses. And I know that if I ask him to do something, I will get four different responses. I get one that will say, okay.

I get one that will say, in a minute. I get one that will say, I did it the last time. And then you'll get another one that will say, I'm too small. But when God asks us, what's our response going to be? Are we going to answer, yes, I will go? Are we going to say, in a minute, I'll do it later? Are we going to say that it's somebody else's turn?

[ 19 : 07 ] Are we going to say, I'm too small, I'm too young, I'm not ready? We don't look to our own strength. We must look to the strength that we get through Christ.

We carry many burdens with us each and every day. Sometimes they overwhelm us. And we're told that we are to come. We've come to the one that is a great burden to carry, and to cast our burdens before him.

But his yoke is easy and his burden is light. You've all seen the example before of the older cow being yoked with the younger one to guide it.

And the older one, the bigger one, carries most of the weight. And the younger one gets pulled along and kept in the yoke. the younger one. And the younger one gets pulled away.

And the younger one gets pulled away. We're not carrying the burden by ourselves. Christ carries the burden for us. But we must stay close to Christ and get strength from him and be guided in the path that we are in.

[ 20 : 26 ] we've been given a promise that if we trust in God, our sins will be forgiven, that there is a place for us in heaven.

there are many people wandering this earth that have never heard that. We were reminded this morning in our own service that there are generations now been born that have never heard Christ's name other than our curse.

And even in our own community, there are generations of families now been born that generations before them have never gone to church. how are they going to hear if we don't tell them?

If we don't share Christ? Sometimes we don't have to open our mouths. Sometimes it's better if we don't. But by our walk, by our talk, are we reflecting Christ?

In the way that we do things, in the way that we share things, in the way that we look out for people. We may not be confident in speaking, but we've each been given abilities in different ways, that we can share Christ without even opening our mouths.

[ 21 : 54 ] As disciples, we have to be imitators of Christ. at the end of this month, I've already had a request list put in.

Kids will be going to fancy dress parties, wanting to dress up as maybe their favourite hero from a Disney programme or something else. Christ.

They want a wig, they want some make-up, they want a dress, just so they can look like this person that we've seen.

We don't need a mask or a wig or anything else to look like this.

We have his word, the more we meditate on it, and I speak to myself in this as well, the more we meditate on it, the psalmist said about how he meditated on God's word day and night.

[ 22 : 56 ] And through God's word we become more like Jesus, we learn more of Jesus, and that's what's called for each and every one of us. And only in doing that do we render the strength to go out and make disciples.

Jesus came to save sinners, but we're telling people that. We're called not to judge people, and people don't like to be called sinners.

each and every one of us knows that Jesus came to save us, and he came to save sinners. Are you going to answer the call to go and make disciples, or are you going to leave it to somebody else?

Because there may not be somebody else passing by. Those three men saw the man lying at the side of the road that had been mugged by the thieves and the robbers.

The first two everybody may have expected to have helped him. died. But it was only when the Samaritan came along that Samaritan stopped, went out of his way, went out of his comfort zone,

and did more for that man than many could have expected.

[ 24 : 30 ] who are you going to be a Samaritan for? Who are you going to step outside your comfort zone for and speak to of Christ?

You're never too young, you're never too old. Who are you going to write a letter to? Who are you going to share Christ with? Somebody that's going to lay it upon you apart.

Don't leave it until it's too late. The command is that we go. And by going, we have to get up. We have to do something. We have to go and make disciples.

There's no instruction manual. There's no two people that have converted the same way. But they first have to know that there's something else for them to look for.

And that can only be done by somebody sharing. If you're here tonight and you're not a Christian, and you've sat and you've heard God's word preached, what's stopping you from going?

[ 25 : 41 ] And accepting the promises of God. And accepting that promise that wherever you are, wherever you are going, that you don't have to go alone.

that Jesus is with you. No matter what you're struggling through, the decisions you have to make in life, what direction your life is going to take, hand your life over to Jesus.

Because he has promised that he will be with you always, even to the end of the age. It's not something that you have to face on your own.

It's very often when we try and do things ourselves without instruction manual, we end up making a mess. And it can be very difficult to repair when we've put something together in the wrong way.

And we haven't followed the right path. Jesus has walked this earth before us. And he has promised to go before us and to be with us.

[ 26 : 48 ] So if you don't know Christ tonight, think about it. Do you want to be one of his disciples? Do you want to feed upon his word?

Do you want to hand your life over to him? So that he will be with you always, even to the end of the age. The command is for us to go, to go and make disciples.

Not to leave it for somebody else, but to speak to those that God puts across our path. Our heart's desire is that more will be added to the number daily.

That we will be able to share with the angels in heaven as they rejoice over sinners that repent. God will take you to different places, whether it be in holiday, whether it be through your work, whether it be through various different circumstances.

Are you ready and willing to speak for him? Because being ready and willing, he will equip you and he will use you.

[ 28 : 01 ] And he will use you mightily beyond what you can even imagine. a word spoken for him. He has promised that his word will not return unto him void.

And you never know the blessing that he'll bring to another. Because remember the Philippian jailer. he was there and Paul was probably in one of the darkest moments in the belly of the prison, chained.

But God put a song in his mouth, a song to sing praise. And what did God do? He shook the prison. The chains fell off and the jailer woke and he came running.

What must I do to be saved? And the beauty of that passage is that it wasn't just the jailer that was saved. The blessing came to his whole family.

And that's the thing that each and every one of us must remember. that it's not just the witnessing to one. It's the fact that that blessing can then be shared.

[ 29 : 15 ] Shared beyond what we can even imagine. We spoke earlier of the blessing that was given to Abram. How Abram was told he was going to be a blessing.

Each one of us as Christians has been blessed in coming to know Christ. Let's go out and share that blessing with others. So that more we come and share this place.

Amen.