

# **Matthew 28:16-20**

## **Healthy Discipleship**

**1/20/19, Clint Pressley**

*16 Now the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain to which Jesus had directed them. 17 And when they saw him they worshiped him, but some doubted. 18 And Jesus came and said to them, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. 19 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, 20 teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age."*

(Pastor prays)

Nine years ago this Sunday I became a member of the staff here at Hickory Grove. Eight years ago about this time I became the Senior Pastor and I started preaching about who we are and where we're going and what we believe. I used three pillars: Exalting Christ, Making Disciples and Passing the Torch.

Eight years ago I preached on this passage about making disciples. It's what we do. What we believe is that Jesus died on the cross. He died in the place of sinners. God raised Him from the dead. And that to be a Christian, you must believe in that. That is faith; not religion. It's faith in what Christ has done. I believe that it's part of who we are. We understand that what we do is gather together as a church on the Lord's day to worship. We talked about that last Sunday, but that's not all we do. In this passage, the resurrected Jesus appears to the women and now the disciples are seeing Him, and this is the last marching order He gave. It's the only imperative in this entire passage and that phrase is "make disciples." That is the command from the Lord Jesus and certainly, we as the church of Jesus must follow that command. We as a church understand who we are, where we're going and what we do. We understand discipleship. So I'll say it like this...

### **Discipleship is Normal Christianity**

Normal Christianity is not some faint belief in some far-off God. Discipleship is you learning and growing becoming who God has designed you to be. That is normal Christianity. Let's go to the story and see if we can unpack a couple of things. I would like to draw out some things in this passage that you maybe have not thought about before. The first thing I want you to notice. It's in verse 16.

### **A Disciple Often Learns in Pain**

We know that God teaches us by His word but He also teaches us by life experience and often those life experiences are terribly painful. By the time we get to Chapter 28 verse 16, those disciples had been through a whole bunch. In fact, Matthew writes it down for us like this. You see that in verse 16 now the 11 disciples went to Galilee. That is the mountain in which Jesus had directed them. Look at the first part of that verse. Now the 11 disciples. If you know anything about Christianity, anything about the disciples, you know that 11 is an odd number. It should be 12. This is the first time you see that phrase “the 11 disciples.” Back in chapter 26, there you find the name is Judas. We know him as a betrayer because we're on this side of history, but when you're living in it, it is something completely different. Judas and the other guys met with Jesus to celebrate the Passover and that Lord's Supper what would become known as the Last Supper.

So many terrible things happen sitting around the table. Jesus said to them, one of you is going to betray me. In chapter 26 it says they were all sorrowful to think about one of those brothers is going to betray Jesus. You shouldn't be treated that way by your friend. People who are enemies can't betray you because your enemies. It's your friends who can betray you and that's why it hurts so bad.

It was sorrowful. Each person started asking the Lord, “It's not me, it's not me is it?” He looked at Judas and Judas says, “It's not me.” They are sitting at the table, the 12 are together, and Peter says, “I'll die with you Jesus.” Jesus tells them “look, when I die and am risen from the dead, you meet in Galilee.” That's the first time we have that command back in chapter 26.

Chapter 27 is the dark chapter, it's in the garden of Gethsemane where Judas leads that group to come get Jesus. In that story, Peter is outraged and goes into battle mode. Jesus calms him and says, “don't do that.”

Judas with a kiss, betrays his savior. They run Jesus through a mock trial at the kangaroo court. Judas sees what happens and with the guilt, Judas hanged himself; committed suicide. These 11 brothers have to watch this. One who is so close to them kills himself and now the one they worship is being hanged on a cross. They are rattled. They are learning that to be a disciple, sometimes it hurts. Jesus told him to meet Him at Galilee on the mountain. There is Jesus on the mountain and that should remind you of Exodus. Moses goes up to the mountain there he meets with God and God gives him the Ten Commandments, the Law of God; that law that we cannot keep.

Now Jesus the resurrected Lord is standing on another mountain, giving us grace. I don't want to go to the mountain Moses stood on, I want to be on the mountain that Jesus stood on. I want to be there on that mountain where grace pours from the cross of Jesus. That's where I want to be. The resurrected Lord is meeting with the disciples -

the 11. A disciple often feels the pain. Some of you know what it is like to be betrayed or to be hurt so deeply, not by somebody dying, but by somebody who's living. It hurts. Jesus comes to us; the resurrected reigning Lord meets His disciples in pain.

Something else you might want to consider looking at in verse 17. It's not just how we learn in pain but in verse 17 you'll notice that...

### **A Disciple Learns Hard Worship**

I get so tired of seeing commercials for churches that tell you to come to church and have fun. Look, if you want to have fun, go to Carowinds. You come to church to worship Jesus. It is a hard worship. The Bible says that when they saw Him, they worshipped Him. That's what the women did when they saw Him back earlier in the chapter. When they see the resurrected Jesus at the tomb, they grab His feet, they worship Him. Here they are, and the right response to Jesus is to worship Him.

You see it in the text, but notice what Matthew tells us. They worshipped but some of them doubted. Don't rush past that. We all know the Great Commission and want to get to it in verse 18, but notice the drama here. They worship, but some of them doubt. There's not but 11 of them. Look, you need worship, even when you doubt. That word doubt is not saying that they didn't believe in Him. That word out there is *cognitive dissonance*. Look it up later - cognitive dissonance. This is: they know the truth, they believe that He is raised from the dead, they recognize that it's Jesus and yet their life is telling them there is pain. So it's important that they recognize Jesus, they believed that He died on the cross, God raised Him from the dead. They put their faith in Jesus.

All of that is secure but there is this back story of the loss of a great friend, Judas. This is the story of every disciple. Every one of us could probably recite the creed. We know the truth of the Gospel; we believe in God; we believe in Jesus His son, but the problems we have are what we face every day. That is why worship is so important. Often, when you've gone through a terrible thing, you have had a terrible week and you've been hurt so terribly that you think it's right to skip church and stay all by yourself. You are not designed like that. You are designed for hard work, to get here and be with God's people; to be here where the spirit of God will minister to your heart to remind you you're not alone.

I think about the disciples, all they've been through. Judas betrayed them and then he kills himself. Jesus is crucified and they watched him die. The women told them that Jesus was alive. They would watch Jesus die and then an earthquake hit and the rocks were split. Go back and read the story. Did you know that dead people got out of their tombs and walked around when Jesus was crucified? That's enough to make the headlines right there. So they've been through a whole lot and now 'He's raised from the dead, and so they want to believe it, they do believe it, they see it with their eyes.

They just know what they've been through. I'm asking you not to base your belief on your experience. I'm asking you to put your faith in Jesus.

The hard worship. You need worship. Those of you who are Christians let me just say this to you: You need worship when you're not sure. You need worship when you're not sure how it's going to turn out. You need worship when you're not sure how to interpret what you've been through and what the actual next step is. Jesus is gonna give them the next step. You need to be able to worship. A disciple learns hard worship.

There is a third thing to consider before we take The Lord's Supper.

### **A Disciple Clings to Sovereignty**

I hope that in the course of my career, I hope that the people of Hickory Grove have grown and they have a bigger vision of who God is. Because I think that is going to be the antidote to work. Believing in the sovereign God. I'm going to show it right there in verse 18 - and Jesus came up to them. I'm gonna stop there. Isn't it nice that Jesus came to them? He called them and they obeyed. They went to Galilee and He sees them. Jesus initiates. Jesus re-establishes the relationship. Peter had broken it. All of the other disciples had fled. Go read the story. Judas has been hanged and Jesus initiates. He comes to us. I love that little praise "Jesus came to them."

Notice what Jesus says when He comes to them. In verse 18 Jesus came to them and this is what He said, <sup>18</sup> "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. <sup>19</sup> 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, <sup>20</sup> teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age."

You need to drink some of that. I want you to put your lips up to this right here and drink. Do you understand that God the father has given to Jesus the son comprehensive universal authority? This universal authority puts us on the universal mission. One of the things I'm asking you to do is *trust*. When you see God through Jesus, I'm asking you this morning to *trust* what Jesus has said here: All authority in heaven and on earth.

Those of you who like prophesy, go back and read Daniel 7 about the Son of Man. Daniel looks forward to the Son of Man coming and that Son of Man will have all dominion. Look, don't walk around saying that you made Jesus Lord of your life. We don't *make* Jesus Lord. He *is* Lord. And I want you to know that He has control of all that pain you are walking through. He's bringing you through it for a reason. He's teaching you to trust Him more, to cling to Him or to believe Him more, to love Him. Today we have The Lord's Supper and I want you to think about the body and the blood of Jesus. Jesus dying on the cross in the place of sinners, dying on the cross in the place of you, a sinner. Now we're going to take our congregational worship and turn the

spotlight on the cross, and there—where you should have been— Jesus took your place. Verse 18 actually is the confidence that we have in missions, because Jesus has authority in Heaven and on Earth. A disciple clings to sovereignty. I'm asking you today to trust that God is in absolute control of your life and 'He's doing the things in your life on purpose. He is carrying you somewhere, bringing you closer and closer to Jesus. He's working in the good and the bad; in the smiling providences and in the hard providences when you can't hardly get up out of bed.

Let me give you a fourth thing that I think you probably could expand on. This is the Great Commission. This is what Jesus said. I'll go through it quickly.

### **A Disciple Loves to Learn**

How can you call yourself a disciple if you don't love to learn about Jesus? Let's go to the passage in verse 19 and 20. *19 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, 20 teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.*"

I'll give you a couple of things. 'Let's just break it up. A disciple learns to love people. You see it right there in the text. Make disciples of all nations. That phrase "all nations." We get the word "ethnic" from this, but sometimes when we see the words "ethnic groups," we think about nations. We think about France and Russia and Germany - nations.

I want you to think closer to Earth - ethnic. A disciple learns to love people. It doesn't make you colorblind. Saying that when you become a Christian become colorblind doesn't make any sense. Being a disciple makes you love people of color and background, classes and races. The Gospel teaches us to love - go and make disciples of all ethnic groups, all kinds of people. Not only that. Notice what a disciple does. You make disciples, and then you baptize them. Why do we baptize? Well one reason is we baptize people because Jesus told us to. The second reason is your baptism identifies you with Christ. He himself was baptized. And the third reason is you're baptized into the church. Because this makes you a part of this body of believers.

Baptism is a surrender. It is an act of humility saying, "I submit." I have died with Christ and been raised to new life. There's something else here. It's doctrine. Jesus himself is saying this: Baptize in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. There is one of the greatest trinitarian formulas in the entire New Testament coming out of the lips of Jesus. It's important that we live out our ethics, but it's important we know what that doctrine is and that behind every doctrine is the drama of the Bible.

This is put right into the context before Jesus ascends into Heaven. Notice what we teach. Jesus said, when you're making disciples, baptize them in the name of the Father, Son and the Holy Spirit. And what we do is we teach people everything that Jesus commanded. That there is not just grace that saves us there, there is a Christian ethic. There is a way of living. There are things imposed on us by the Bible that make it so that we are carved out and different now. That we don't float on the whims of a culture. We are anchored to the rock of what Christ has said.

There's one little thing that I often forget. Jesus told His disciples as He taught them: you are going to make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, Son and the Holy Spirit. Teach them all the things that I have commanded you and — you see that last little bit — maybe this is just for you today. I am with you.

Maybe you just need to be reminded that risen Christ is with you. What did God tell Jacob? I am with you. What did God tell Moses? Moses, I am with you. Joshua? I am with you. What did God say to His people through Isaiah? When you walk through it, I'll be with you. What did the risen savior say to the disciples? I am with you. Today we celebrate The Lord's Supper, and one of the things about celebrating The Lord's Supper is that it is a tangible, tactile reminder that Christ is *with* you.

*(Pastor prays)*