

Matthew 28:18-20 // Go

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[0:00] But today, we are going to be in Matthew chapter 28, verses 18 to 20, skipping ahead a bit, quite a bit, in where we are normally walking through Matthew. It's primarily because of graduation, but if we're really looking at this with open eyes, this passage, these little verses are for absolutely every single one of us here, and it's important.

Matthew chapter 28, verses 18 to 20. There's a couple of things we have to look at with this passage. There's an authority.

There is an activity. And there's a promise of never being left alone, never having to walk this life alone. And so I want to look at each of these individually.

So let's start with verse 18. And Jesus came and said to them, all authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. The entire gospel of Matthew shows the authority that the disciples walked through and with.

And I want to say by extension, the same as us. They had an authority in teaching, in healing, in forgiveness. There was an authority in Jesus, not in themselves, that they walked with.

[1:17] Jesus has authority over Satan, the enemy. And he delegated this authority to the apostles, to the disciples, and to us. Because in Jesus' name, he is the authority.

He sits on the throne. God sits on the throne in heaven. And as you'll read in Revelation 1, there's a throne in heaven and it is occupied. And that means something really, really important for the rest of us.

That that throne, our king, is on his throne. And as his subjects, as his servants, as his people, we walk with his authority under his protection and guidance.

Jesus has all authority. And this means we can obey him without any fear. We can trust him without any worry. Because he has all authority.

Not just some. I've said it before and kind of jokingly, but I mean it actually quite seriously. Is that if you are into etymology or anything, you look into the meaning of the word all when it comes to this context in the word.

[2:20] It means all. All. Not some. Not in part. All authority has been given to him. All authority. So no matter where he leads us.

No matter what path life takes us down. No matter what doors are open to us and we step through. Maybe even doors are closed and we're trying to figure out what's next. We know that God is guiding us through those things.

He is on the throne. And he is on the throne of our lives as well. Now the very nature and character of God tells us to go. He doesn't want anyone to be separated from him.

There's been moments where I've been like, Lord, why are you taking so long? Like any time now, buddy, the world's getting pretty crazy. I've had that kind of candor and conversation with him. And then he just keeps reminding me.

It's like, what if I came back the day before you met Jesus? Oh, right. Because I'm sure glad he didn't. So we don't know exactly why he waits, why he tarries, if you want to say it that way.

[3:31] But I do know it's out of grace and mercy for his people because he doesn't want anyone to perish or be separated from him. None. 2 Peter 3, verse 9 says, Jesus' death on the cross was for the whole world.

Not just some of us. Not just a particular region of the world. All. Christ died for all of us. For everyone, everywhere. All his children, we share in this nature.

And we should want to tell the whole world. It should be bursting from the seams. We can't, we're saved. We can't contain it. It should be that kind of excitement. And I know sometimes we wake up and it's just not like that.

It's more like, Father, this is Monday. You know, I just had graduation stuff all weekend. And some of these guys have heard your schedules. And I'm amazed you made it through here to this morning. And yes, way to go, grads.

You made it. I know a lot of adults are suffering just from the sheer scope of the schedule. Yeah, here you are. Right? It's that same kind of passion we have to take in. And even though we may feel tired on Monday, right?

[4:47] There should be a part of us that's like, okay, Lord, who is it that I talk to today? What would you have my hands and feet do for you today, Lord? I think that's where we're heading with this passage.

Because when we get into the book of Acts a little while, we're going to see how the early church ran with this, with this idea of go and tell. They ministered in his name.

They depended on his power and guidance, not their own. In fact, I can tell you right now, I'm pretty sure all of us can agree and be in agreement that when we do things on our own steam, it runs for a little while, and maybe well, and then it runs out.

Because we need the Lord. We need him to be fueling everything. And my greatest failures in life, inside and outside of the church, is when I have tried to copy the success of other people.

We have to walk our walk individually with him and have him work through us and guide us and not copy the success of other people.

[5:54] Because that's their journey with the Lord. And ours is different. And grads, yours is singular and individual and special. The Lord has some amazing, amazing things for you.

I have no doubt in 10 years we're going to hear some pretty incredible stories. But it's for you and nobody else. Verse 19 to 20.

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 have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always to the end of the age.

There's work for us to do. This isn't just a vacation, right? Our faith is not a vacation. There's work. And the only command in the Great Commission is to make disciples.

The word go there, if you actually boil it down, means while you are going. So in other words, while you're going to school, while you're going to work, while you are parenting, while you are friends with so-and-so, while you are doing fill-in-the-blank, make disciples.

[7:02] Be an example yourself of what Jesus looks like. Teach people. Teach those around you. And what I often say is draw a circle around your life.

See the people that you care about. Start with them. Be an example to them and make disciples.

Sometimes that will be something formal where you sit down and you meet on a regular basis. Awesome.

I still have mentors. I'm 55 years old. I still have people I answer to and mentor me. Because it should be an ongoing process, no matter how young or old we are. Sometimes you need someone to say, buddy, you've got to kind of fly right.

You're doing a bit of a wobble. Roger's not here, I don't think. So I can say that freely because I know what I'm talking about, but he's a pilot. So while you are going, no matter where you are, no matter what you're doing, make disciples.

Make disciples. Not converts. Notice the difference in the language there. It isn't just about having a thousand people to come to Jesus. Though, hey, that is awesome. The next step is equally as important.

[8:09] Equally as important. Make disciples. Walk with people. You know, I mean, we have the blessing that I think few have in this church.

And I'm going to brag about it just for a second. Because before we moved down here, we got to observe the summit. Okay? There was a video that was made, right? And the first moment is I see Jamie sitting there or, you know, standing in the kitchen talking.

And I'm watching this. And I'm seeing this. And I'm seeing the heart that was for the summit, for the youth, for this church. And we're seeing this from, you know, 28 hours away or whatever it is, right? And we're seeing it. We're just thinking, this. These are our people. Not our people. We're a part of these people. That heart, you know? And I could see the summit.

I could see the heart for the youth and everything like that. And I thought, and when I got here, you know, the question always is, is it as real in real time? So we started watching the summit.

[9:08] It started going there and stuff. And I'm thinking, man, the passion and the love for this is so real. It's incredible. So that's why with Baccalaureate, you know, like there was a couple of us, we were talking about it.

I said, you know what? Jamie's earned the right to speak into these lives. He should be the one that does the message. And you did an amazing job. You know why? Not because you're an amazing guy, though you are, but because you know the lives that you're speaking to.

You pastored these guys. You pastor them still. Right? There's a beauty in there. It's very, very, very, very, very, very, very, very, very real. And I see that at summit. So you're making disciples. You know what the trick is? You guys who have been discipled by him and baptized by him, go and make disciples. Right? There's a line that goes on there. Go and make disciples.

Do what Jamie has taught you to do. Teach people about Jesus and help them teach others about him. Acts chapter 11, verses 19 to 21.

[10:10] Now those who are scattered because of the persecution that arose over Stephen traveled as far as Phoenicia and Cyprus and Antioch, speaking the word to no one except Jews, but there was some of them, men of Cyprus and Cyrene who were coming to Antioch, spoke to the Hellenists, also preaching the Lord Jesus.

And the hand of the Lord was with them. And a great number who believed turned to the Lord.

Disciple was the most common, most popular word used for a Christian in the first century.

Disciple. How have we lost that? We talk about our denominations. We talk about our affiliations.

We talk about all this kind of stuff. I don't hear the word disciple often enough.

And maybe we need to get back to using that. Because that's exactly who you and I are. We are disciples of Jesus. And we disciple one another. It's not a negative term.

It's not a religious term. It's a practical term. Discipleship. And being a disciple meant more than just being a convert. It's not someone who just simply attended church.

[11:17] It's someone who lived the life of Jesus and showed others how to do it, even when it was difficult. Discipleship learns not only by listening, but also by doing.

Mark 3, 13. And he went up on the mountain and called to him those whom he desired. And they came to him. And sadly, in a lot of churches, we have lost this process.

Where Jesus calls people. And sometimes what we do is we say, send you away. And maybe they need to go away in order to learn what they need to learn. Maybe they need to go far away for a long time.

Maybe they need to stay right here and learn what the Lord has for them before they go away. It's individual. Like I was saying, it's singular. It's between the person and the Lord. But we have lost it. Because now what we do is we hire a pastor to preach. A pastor to save the lost. And a pastor to do all of these things. And, you know, I'll tell you frankly, if that's what it is, then I'm failing miserably.

[12:20] I really am. My job is to raise others up to do the stuff that will raise others up to do the stuff. That's what I see the role of a shepherd or pastor.

Or however you want to look at it. If you were looking for a priest, you got the wrong guy. Because a priest has all people come to him. And all people come to him for life, absolving of sin, all kinds of stuff.

And it doesn't work that way. I had this one guy, I told this story earlier, who was in my youth group. And he and I used to meet once a week. And there was a little while where he didn't meet with me for a few weeks.

And I thought, this is something weird. I mean, I love the guy. He loved me. We were good friends. And he came to me and we were sitting there. And he says, you know, I feel stuck. I feel like there's just a wall between God and me.

And I said, okay. I said, well, what do you think that is? Because, see, a good mentor never tells them, right? You ask questions. You let them tell you, right? And I said, well, what do you think that is? And he said, well, sin. I was like, okay.

[13:21] I knew exactly what I was talking about, but I wanted to hear him say it. And I said, well, what do you mean by that? And he said, well, you know, I'm sleeping with my girlfriend. I said, okay. What do you need to do about that?

I need to stop. Okay. So let's pray. You know what happened? He stopped meeting with me. To this day, they're living together. They have multiple kids. You know, it's not like he didn't fulfill his responsibility, but there was this wall that he saw.

He identified a situation through it. He just didn't want to pay that price. He didn't want to walk through that with the Lord. He wanted to do it on his own. That can be a frustrating place. And you know why? Because there was so much potential on this guy. To say that he was a pastor in the making was an understatement. You know, there was so much for him. And there still is. But I think he's still facing that wall and unsure what to do with it. Because there did come a time where I was like, would you just marry the girl? Right? You know, would you just marry her?

[14 : 24] Anyway. No, it's not the pastor's job. There are other people that were around him that could have, of course, corrected him. They chose not to. When I have someone come to me and say, well, how's so-and-so and how's so-and-so?

My first reaction is, you ask. Why don't you ask them? Or, hey, if somebody needs prayer, it's like, go ahead. Let me know how you need help. I will pray for sure.

I'm not trying to dodge that. But that's the beauty of it is that when we have times where we pray for one another, you don't need to come to me. You can look next to your next-door neighbor, the person in the pew in front or behind you, and say, hey, can you pray for me right now?

I think that's a wonderful aspect of the body. I think that's something we need to focus on a little more when it comes to discipleship. Because we're not fans. We're not cheerleaders in this.

We're participants in this faith. We have work to do. To go and make disciples means it starts right here. You may be called across the world to do that. You may be called to Ireland to go and do that.

[15 : 23] That's great. You might be called to go two blocks down the street and do that. That's great, too. That's between you and the Lord. I think our churches nationwide would be happier, healthier, and stronger if everyone was being disciplined and discipling someone else.

I really do. We need a systematic discipleship approach based on the early church in Acts 2. And you know what? I'm really happy to say we have one.

I've been doing this for a lot of years. And there's some things that we're going to start. And if this is a shock to anyone, I'm not really that sorry.

But 6.30 a.m., Monday to Thursday, I'm opening the church doors. Come and pray. You don't even have to talk. Some of you, I know myself, it's like I'm not even speaking English very well until before 9 a.m.

But I'll just say this. The doors will be open. Come and pray. And as a group, lift up whatever you have on your heart. Maybe it's to read a passage. Maybe it's to sit in silence while you pray before the Lord.

[16 : 29] This is going to be a house of prayer and continue to be so. So Monday to Thursday, 6.30 a.m. to 7 a.m. If you want to stay longer, stay longer. But, you know, we all have work. We're going to start doing that on Monday.

Mari and I are going to open up a Bible study in our house. I'm not too sure what that's going to look like just yet or the frequency of it. But I would like to do it once a week. And because I want to see home Bible studies again where the pastor is not interfering with them.

I want to see people express and be expressive with the Lord in their homes. And reading from the word. And discipling others. And inviting neighbors over. Because that's important too.

How can we love that circle we draw around our lives? And sometimes the person next door is the perfect place of mission for you. But that's where we're going to start. I'm also looking at doing an evening service here.

And I apologize for anybody who that's a surprise to. It's going to be unplugged. So if you lead worship or do anything sound, don't worry. I'm not committing you to more work. Unless you feel called to come help.

[17 : 34] Right now, it'll be an evening service where we continue this. And we continue seeking the Lord. And if you can't make it Sunday, we're going to have an evening opened up too. I don't know what even yet. But that will come soon.

I believe so wholeheartedly in discipleship that I want to create more opportunities for people to come and lead worship. To teach. To share the word. To pray for one another. I don't want to have it just contained to Sunday.

I want it to explode out of it. Okay? So discipleship is something that is going to be very important moving the next little while forward for this church. Because I believe wholeheartedly that we have such a group of beautiful and amazing people.

We really, really do. Like you're some of the best people that I've ever done church with. And I'm on 27 years of ministry, I think now. And I don't say that for any kind of accolade or any kind of like, you know, thank you.

I'm saying that because it's truth. And my one thing I wish more of is that y'all would be that towards one another even more. And then your neighbors.

[18:35] And then their neighbors. And then their neighbors. And we start reaching out. So we got some things we're going to start with. Luke chapter 24, verses 44 to 45.

And then he said to him, these are my words that I spoke to you while I was still with you. That everything written about me in the law of Moses and the prophets and the Psalms must be fulfilled. And then he opened their minds to understand the scriptures.

We share Jesus. We teach those people how to share Jesus. Anybody I work with on a discipleship level, one of the first things we do is we get into reading the Bible together.

And my question is always, what has the Lord shown you in this? And you know what? You just let that hang. If there's silence, you just let the silence hang for a while until the person answers.

You get okay with that because some people don't want to share immediately. And then if there's nothing, you read it again. You say, okay, let's read it again. And the Lord just reveals something to us.

[19:39] And you ask again, how did the Lord show you something through this? What is it? I think a good mentoring discipleship relationship is always going to be the mentor learning as much as the disciple.

It's always going to be a two-way street. I like how Paul said it. Come and follow me as I follow Jesus. It wasn't come and follow me.

I'm going to do a book tour. And I'm such a fabulous speaker. And I'm all of this in a bag of chips. And I'm just like, you know, like just the greatest pastor known to the world. Not saying that about myself.

I'm saying this in comic relief. Okay. But, you know, all of that. So come and follow me. I don't really want to get to know you, but just fill the seats of the church. No.

See, the discipleship model is come and follow me as I follow Jesus. There might be ten people that follow you. There might be ten thousand people that follow you. Who cares? It's up to the Lord.

[20:35] So. Verse 20. Teaching them to observe all that I have commanded. And behold, I am with you always to the end of the age.

We're given the strength to walk this out. We're given the courage to be able to go forward. Even when it's scary. Even when it seems like everything is black in front of us.

We don't know what direction to take. We don't know what door is the right one. He goes before us. And we follow him. And we can do that in trust and without fear. Because of who he is and what he has done.

That's how we can walk forward. And he gives us that. Jesus is with us when we go out into the world. Whether it's across the nation and down the street.

And grads, he's with you now as you've grown up in Texoma. And he will be with you then. When you look back at this as a place in your history book. Okay. The Holy Spirit is here.

[21:36] He will be with you wherever you go. But you've got to not treat him like the friend you ignore. You've got to treat him like the friend where as soon as that notification happens, you just can't wait to read it.

You've got to treat him like the friend who is there and that he's all that you're about. Wherever he goes, I go. Because he's my friend. That's how we need to look at him.

One of my favorite verses or a couple of verses as a pastor, I want to read in closing here. Because this is a time when Paul went to Corinth. And it was a particularly difficult city.

He was leading people to Jesus. He was baptizing them. On the surface, the church looked like an incredible success. But there were people that were just down the street that were hating on him so bad that even Paul became discouraged and distressed.

Even Paul came to a point of doubt. And you know what happened? Jesus came and hung out with him a bit and said this.

[22:44] And the Lord said to Paul one night in a vision, Do not be afraid, but go on speaking and do not be silent, for I am with you. And no one will attack you to harm you, for I have many in this city who are my people.

Our Lord has authority over all. If you will it, if you choose it, he has authority in your life. Let him sit on the throne of your life today.

And there's work to do. Every man, woman, and child in this room, there is work to do for him. It's work following him.

It's work trying to be like him. Lord, may people see more of you and less of us at FCC. That's work.

And we're given the strength in him to walk this life out.

He is never going to leave us alone. And I'm not meaning that in a stalkerish, weird way. I'm meaning that in the sense that even when you're at the mountaintop and all is well, he will be the first one there cheering you on.

[23 : 51] And when we've hit the rock bottom and we're in the valley, he'll be the first one giving you a hand saying, let's get back to work. Let's pray.