

Claim, Commission & Comfort

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[0 : 00] Let's turn back to Matthew chapter 28, Matthew 28, reading at verse 16. Now the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain to which Jesus had directed them.

And when they saw him, they worshipped 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. Now these words that we have here, where the Lord Jesus Christ meets with his disciples, the risen Lord, are words that have been a source of encouragement and inspiration to us down throughout the years.

And it's good for us to remind ourselves and to be reminded from God's word who actually is in control. Who has actual authority and power.

Who has our future in the hollow of our hands. And it's a great thing at the beginning of a year just to stop and to reflect and to remember.

[1 : 24] In all the rush and the hustle and bustle and often when we look out in the world and wonder what's actually happening. Where are things going? What's going to happen to me?

To know that God is in control. That the Lord is Lord over all. Now in education we talk about the three R's.

People have often talked here about the three C's in the last three verses. Because in verse 18 we have the claim of Christ.

Where all authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Verse 19 we have what is called the great commission. Where we're told where Jesus says to go and make disciples of all nations. And then in the last verse the great comfort that Christ gives the church. So let us remember that that while in education there are the three R's.

[2 : 23] That here we have the three C's. The claims of Christ. The commission of Christ. And the comfort that Christ gives his church. Now back in verse 16 we find that the eleven disciples went to Galilee to the mountain to which Jesus had directed them to go.

Now whether this direction was the direction that... Because it's interesting that it's not simply here that the angels have given the message.

Christ himself gave the message. And we read that in chapter 28. The chapter we've read. Where the angels spoke to the women.

And they told in verse 7. Then go quickly and tell his disciples that he has risen from the dead. And behold he is going before you to Galilee. There you will see him. And then Jesus met with the women. And he in verse 10 told them to go to Galilee.

And to tell my brothers to go to Galilee. And there you will see me. However way back before Jesus was put to death. We read about it in chapter 26.

[3 : 30] Jesus said to his disciples. But after I am raised I will go before you to Galilee. Now it could very well be that on that occasion he told them the actual mount.

Or where he might have told them specifically where they were to go. We've got to remember that everything that Jesus said is not recorded. John makes that very point.

He says if I was to tell you all that Jesus said. And all his teachings. And all his miracles. And all that he did. And if we were to spell that out in detail. He said the world wouldn't contain all the books.

So in a sense we have just like a bare minimum of what took place. And of what was said recorded for us. In the scripture. So there's no doubt but that on one occasion.

On one of these occasions. Whether it was after Jesus rose from the dead. That he gave the instructions where they were to go. Or whether it was back before his death.

[4 : 30] When he told them that after he was risen from the dead. He would meet them in Galilee. The point is Jesus made these instructions quite clear. Now certainly if he told them this before he was put to death.

They wouldn't have understood then. And I tend to think that Jesus would have told them before his death. Because it was after his death and his resurrection.

Well it was after the resurrection. That everything began to fall into place. They were beginning to understand things. They were piecing together. It was like a jigsaw. It was almost like a jigsaw. If you had a jigsaw with all the pieces upside down. It would be total confusion. Can you imagine the time you would spend trying to make a jigsaw. When it was upside down.

Just spending so long trying to fit fine pieces. That would fit in one with another. It would be almost impossible. But once the pieces are turned over. And it's just a matter.

[5 : 30] And particularly if you have a picture beside it. You begin to work. And gradually bit by bit it comes together. And in a sense that's what it was like after the resurrection. The picture all of a sudden became clear.

They began to understand. Things began to fit into place. And you know my friends. It's going to be like that for ourselves as well. Because there are many things just now.

That in our way of seeing it. Don't measure up. We just do not understand. Many a time. You have said. Lord I don't understand.

Many a time you've had a broken heart. And your world has collapsed. And things have come into your life. And they have pained you.

And they've hurt you. And they're hurting you to this very day. And you don't understand. Well that is true. But you know there will come a day for all God's people.

[6 : 32] When they will see things differently. They will see with a perfect eye. And they will understand. And all the mysteries will be unraveled.

With regard to the providence of this life. The mysteries will be unfolded. So that you will see. And even things which were painful.

You will see how God worked them for good. You know that's what God says. That he works all things together for good. The evil sore things that have come into your life. They're still sore.

They still hurt. And in and of themselves they were not good. But the amazing thing is that God works it for good in your experience.

The sore, the bad things, he works. Turns it round for good. And it's then that you will see this is all part of a perfect plan.

[7 : 30] And that in an amazing way his name is glorified through it all. And that's why Jesus said to his disciples on another occasion. He said what I'm doing now you don't know.

But you will know afterwards. You will understand afterwards. And that is so much part of our experience. So anyway we find the disciples on the way to Galilee.

And then we're told in verse 17. When they saw him they worshipped him. But some doubted.

When they saw him they worshipped him. That's always the response of the heart.

When we see Jesus. When we see the Lord. If the Lord draws close to us. There is an immediately there's a response. In our heart.

And you know it's one of the most wonderful things. When we are. When we are in an act of worship. Whether it is in your own private time. Or whether it is together like we are just now.

[8 : 29] And you are in any gathering. In any circumstance. And you are aware. Of the Lord's presence drawing close. These are wonderful moments.

And there is an automatic response from your heart. It's not. You do not begin to say. You know I think I should actually worship the Lord. Now it's natural.

It's spontaneous. It happens. And that is part of what will make glory so wonderful. Because you see. Here we worship by faith. And there's nobody here today who's worshipping by faith.

But is longing for the day. When you'll be able to worship by sight. And you will see Jesus. You will behold the King. That's your desire.

It's a natural longing within the believer's heart. For the day to dawn. When they will actually see Jesus. See him. Face to face.

[9 : 29] Here we see but through a glass darkly. But even so. There is still the spontaneous desire for worship. And that's what we have here. When they saw him.

They worshipped him. And you could almost hear this. I would love to have been there. And there would be songs of praise. There would be their heart pouring out in adoration.

It was a moment. As people have said. This was a moment of heaven on earth. Where the risen Christ has come to meet. With his people up on this mountain.

Then we see these words. But some doubted. A lot of people have problems. With this particular phrase. And they're saying. Well how could they doubt?

Now I don't know. There's two or three things. That we could say. It is possible. That when Jesus said. Go and tell my brothers.

[10 : 27] To go to Galilee. That in verse 10. That although the 11. Are specifically mentioned here. It may include more. Than the 11.

Because it's very clear from scripture. That many many many people. It wasn't just the immediate disciples. That saw Jesus. When you read. Through the New Testament. Paul makes it very clear. And the Bible makes it very clear. That a lot of people. A lot of the believers. Saw the risen Christ. So on this occasion. Certainly there were the 11.

But there may have been more. Than the 11 as well. So it might have been amongst that group. That some of them doubted. Again. It could be that. At that particular time.

When they first saw him. That they didn't all. Recognize him. Because he was still a distance. Away from them. Because verse 18. Makes that clear. It says. And Jesus came.

[11 : 24] And said to them. So you see. In verse 17. When they saw him. Remember. Jesus said. Told them the location. To where to go. They have gone there.

And then Jesus appears. He's still a distance from them. So it could be. That some of them. Initially doubted. Is that really him. Until.

Jesus comes. Close to them. And again. There's one other factor. That we've always got to bring. Into the equation. And that is. The satanic. It's the.

It's a factor. We so often. Leave out. Or omit. Or forget. It. Every time. All the time. We're forgetting it. We're wrestling.

Against principalities. And powers. And rulers. In dark places. The enemy. Of your soul. Remember. Is out to get you. He's always.

[12 : 22] Out to get you. Not just. Now and again. And the closer. You are to the Lord. The more. You're a target. For the enemy. The more. You do. For the Lord. The more. You're a target.

For the enemy. You know. Some people think. They look at Christian leaders. And they say. Oh well. Look at me. He doesn't need prayer. Need prayer. Needs more prayer. Than anybody. Because that person.

Is a target. For the enemy. And let's remember. That Satan. Is far more powerful. Than any human being. Our only defense.

Is what the Lord. Alone. Can give us. Our only hope. Is. The Lord. Working within us. And so. We've always got to remember. That Satan.

Is at work. And it might be possible. That he actually. Was beginning to. Bring doubts. To play. In the minds. Of some of the followers. Of Jesus. Saying. Oh yeah.

[13 : 18] We. Did we really see. The risen Jesus. Jesus. Beginning to doubt. The very experiences. That they had. Are you like that? I'm sure.

There are times. You've doubted. Your experiences. You may be. Even here today. Saying you know. I've been following the Lord. For a long time. But you know. I'm not sure. If I began right. I'm beginning to doubt. Whether it was. Was that. Was that. What really happened? I'm afraid. I got it wrong. At the beginning. Satan's a master.

Of coming like that. And trying to. Upset the apple cart. Of beginning to. Shift. It. So that you feel. That you've gone. From a rock. To sinking sand.

Always remember. He's out to get you. So I'm quite sure. That. While Jesus. Was on the mountain. And the disciples. Were on the mountain. Satan was on the mountain. As well. Anyway.

[14 : 15] It tells us. That some doubted. But they wouldn't have remained. In doubt. And then we find. That Jesus then. Gives this claim. Just look at this. Just. A couple of minutes.

At each. Jesus tells us. That all authority. In heaven. And on earth. Has been given. To me. All authority. Has been given.

To me. This authority. Was something. That was. Given. To Jesus. Remember. In Philippians. That same thing. Is told us. Where.

We're told. Very clearly. There. That. Jesus. Received. This authority. As it were. As a reward. For his work.

And for his obedience. Remember. These words. God. Has highly. Exalted him. It's God. Who has done that. Highly. Exalted him. And given him.

[15:06] A name. As the father. Has done this. Given him. A name. That is above. Every. Other name. So that. The name of Jesus. Every knee.

Will bow. Before his authority. Every knee. Will bow. In heaven. And on earth. And under the earth. Isn't that amazing?

Today. Not everybody. Is bowing. Before the authority. Of Jesus. One day. They will. All. Created humanity. Even the devils.

Who will be brought. Before a final judgment. Will have to bow. In that. Bow. Before his authority. All those people. Today. Who have never. Bowed the knee. Before Jesus.

And never. Confessed. That Jesus is Lord. Are going to be forced. One day. At that. Awful.

Awesome. Day of judgment. When it's too late. For them. They're still going to have to.

[16:03] Confess. That Christ is Lord. They're going to have to. Bow down. Before the authority. Of Christ. That's why it's so important. That people will do that. In life.

Under his mercy. In the day of opportunity. That's when we've got to do it. And if we do it then. If we do it now. It's going to be a wonderful day.

When we have to stand before him. And confess him. But it'll be an awful day. When we're going to hear. When people will hear. After they've had to make that confession. That Christ is Lord.

The words depart from me. Because that's what will follow on. So this authority has been given.

And we see where? In heaven and in earth. In other words. Everywhere. This authority belongs to Jesus.

And what is authority? Well in a sense. You could see that authority. On the one hand is power. And side by side with that.

[17:01] Is the right to use it. So that you have both. The power. But you also have the right. To use that power.

And that's. Who Jesus is. All rule is his. Remember we're told in. In. Isaiah chapter 9. That wonderful prophecy.

About Jesus. One of the things that's said about him is. That the government. Will be upon his shoulder. Governments throughout the world. Come and go.

His government is forever. His rule is forever. And let us thank the Lord. That that is so. There are so many people today. Who are worried.

About the way the world is going. They're looking at it in every way. They're looking at it. With regard to global warming. They're looking at it. With regard to all our natural resources. They're looking at it. With regard to financial structures.

[17:58] They're looking at it. And they're filled with despondency. And despair. And pessimism. And they're saying. What's going to happen? Well you know. While many of these things.

May be true. For the believer. There is this great. Peace. Joy. Satisfaction. Assurance. To know. The Lord is reigning.

And ruling over it all. And everything is on course. Because the world is not going to continue forever. You see the determination in people. It's like.

They're wanting the world. And yet people will. Even leading scientists say. There's going to come a day. It cannot. It cannot go on forever. And the Lord has made that clear. There's going to come a day.

When the earth is going to. Burn up with fervent heat. We're told that. In Peter. There's going to be a day. When there will be. New heavens. And a new earth. But. As we know it.

[18:54] It's all going to change. Isn't it wonderful to know. That the Lord has a government. And the future. And everything. In his control. And then.

Just in our world. We have the great commission. Jesus says. 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. The main emphasis of this. Is to make disciples. In the great commission. Yes. There is baptizing them. Yes. There is teaching them.

Both. But the primary purpose. Of the church. Is to make disciples. That's the main thing. Now a disciple.

Is a pupil really. But not only a pupil. Not only one who is learning. From the teacher. But one who is seeking. To imitate the teacher. It's both. You know when.

[19 : 50] You're in school. You want to learn. From the teacher. But. In all. Probability. You aren't necessarily. Wanting to imitate. The teacher. In life.

But with Christ. You want to learn. From him. And you want to imitate. The follower of Jesus. Is really somebody. Who should be an imitator. Of the Lord Jesus Christ.

The great work of the kingdom. My friend. Is to make disciples. Let's remember that. That's what the church. Must be about. That's what you must be about.

That must be your great goal. In life. Is to bring Christ. To other people. And that is a great. Future. Future. And you know.

Those who do that. The eternal glory. And reward. Remember how it tells us. In Daniel. Those who turn many. To righteousness. They will shine. Like the stars. Forever and ever.

[20 : 49] That's what it's about. It's making. Disciples. Medus. Seek. And surely. That is. That is a great aim. In everything.

In all the different things. That go on. With all the different activities. With the young people. Whether it's in our Sunday school. Whether it's in our youth. Fellowship. Whether it's in our campaigners.

Whether it's in the youth club. Always. It's within. The church atmosphere. But always. There's a word. Always the word. The word is given. The word is shared. And prayed over.

That people will come to know. In all the different activities. And groups. This is what it is. And it must be in your heart. As well. To share Jesus. To live Jesus.

And if you are an imitator of Jesus. You will be making disciples. Your impact. The closer you live to Jesus. And the closer you walk with Jesus. The greater your impact will be.

[21 : 46] Upon people. Make no mistake about it. That will be true. So we're told that this is what the church is to do. To make disciples. And there's to be baptizing.

In the name of the Father. Son. And Holy Spirit. And the actual word here. Is in the singular. The name. Not the names of the Father. And of the Son. And of the Holy Spirit. Name. Speaking here about the unity.

Of the oneness. Of the Trinity. And straight away. It is showing. The Godness of Jesus. Because the name. It's all one.

Father. Spirit. God. But so is Jesus. God. In the name of the Father. Son. They are all one. And so to baptize.

And teach. Baptizing. Is a sign of ownership. The sign of the covenant. Wonderful thing. To teach. To teach everything. That Christ has commanded.

[22 : 43] In his word. This is what's to be done. To make disciples. In all nations. How little the disciples. Could have understood.

That day. As they stood on the mountain. With Jesus. And here they are. This little group of men. And Jesus is saying. Go out. Go to all nations.

All the nations. Here we are. And remember. These men. Were so blinded. By their Judaism. They couldn't see. Beyond their own borders. Other nations.

This is new. Well. Surely. It's just our land. And you know. When you go into the book of Acts. We realize. That the actual church. Had difficulty.

Peter had great difficulty. With bringing the gospel. To the Gentiles. They were brainwashed. Into this way. That everything. Was just for them. Jesus has broken down. All the barriers.

[23 : 40] The frontiers are open. Out with the gospel. Into all nations. Little could they have understood. That day. The global spread. Of the gospel.

As the gospel. To this very day. Is flourishing. Growing. At an incredible. Rate. In some lands. We believe that. In the likes of China. Communist China.

And we. Which is so often. In the news. And yet. We read that the church. Is growing. At an incredible. Rate there. And then we see. Finally. The comfort. That is given.

And where Jesus says. And behold. Lord I am with you always. To the end. Of the age. See the disciples. Had lived. In the presence of Jesus. For three years. He had been a comfort. To them. He had been a help. To them. An inspiration. To them. Everywhere they were with him. And they felt safe. And now he was going. But he says. I am going. But I am not going. I am going. But I am going to be with you.

[24 : 37] And I am always going to be with you. Isn't that a wonderful thing? And what Jesus said. To his disciples. On the mount. These words carry. They ripple down to us as well today. Because it is true for us as well.

And how encouraging that is. Because it is a hard work we are called to. It is hard to live. For Christ in a world that does not want Christ. You know sometimes.

As we live in a country. That is becoming more and more opposed to the Christian faith. We need not be too surprised. As gospel influence.

The influence fades more and more. Because in the natural heart. There is an opposition to Jesus Christ. It is natural. And that is why it is going to be tough.

And that is why it is tough to live. For Jesus Christ in this world. The world never wanted Christ.

They couldn't wait to get rid of him. And let us be persuaded. That that spirit will still be there.

[25 : 37] Don't be surprised when it rises up. And shows its face every so often. Because it is deep rooted. It is there. But the wonderful thing is.

That we will be energized by Christ. We will be kept by him. And he is going to be with us. And this promise. Behold I am with you.

Is an incredibly emphatic promise. It is as if the pronoun I is very emphatic. It is as if the Lord was saying here.

No one less than I myself am with you. That is really what he is saying. No one less than I myself am with you.

Always. Isn't that wonderful? It is very interesting when you go through the gospel of Matthew. This we conclude. At the very beginning of Matthew. In chapter 1.

[26 : 31] It speaks to us about the Lord being with us. Remember the great promise that was given. Behold the virgin shall conceive and bear a son. And they shall call his name Emmanuel.

Which means God with us. Right at the very beginning of Matthew. God with us. In the middle of Matthew. Jesus says this. Where two or three are gathered together in my name.

There am I among them. And here with his very last words. At the end of the gospel he says.

Behold I.

Remember what we said. No one less than I myself am with you. To the end of the age. Always and ever with us.

To keep us. To help us. To protect us. To defend us. To guide us. To forgive us. To pardon us. He's with us by day.

[27 : 27] By night. In our summers and winters. In our life. And in our death. I hope my friend. He is with you.

If he's your Lord. He is. And will be with you every day and every night. And he'll be with you down into death. Dark veil. And take you up the other side. To be with himself forever.

Never ever ever let you go. Once Jesus comes. There's never a parting. Never. Not. Ever. Ever more. Throughout an endless eternity. From day one forever.

That's it. I hope. You're not on your own. If you are. Deal with it. By asking this Jesus. Into your heart.

Even now. Let's pray. Lord. Our God. We. We pray to. Help us to. Understand. More and more.

[28 : 24] Of. Just what. The Christian faith is. So often. We feel that. We're stuck. In particular. Places. We want to develop.

We want to grow. We want. Our vision. To be. Enlarged. We want. Our heart. To be opened up. More. In order. To understand. And receive.

More of Christ. We pray. Then. To bless us. Do us good. We pray. Guide us. And keep us. And take every one. Of us home. Safely. And we pray. Thy blessing.

Upon the cup of tea. Which will be. Served afterwards. In the hall. And we pray. Lord. To bless all.

And each one. Take away from us. Our sin. In Jesus name. We ask it. Amen.