

What On Earth Am I Doing?

Scripture Text: Matthew 28:16-20

Introduction

What on earth am I doing? Have you ever asked that question? Usually we will ask that question when we realize we are doing something that is not good or something that might hurt us. We might even ask that question if we are *not* doing something we ought to be doing. It is good to reevaluate what we are doing, particularly if what we are doing is not what is best. But, what on earth is the Church doing? We have a God Who loves us and Who demonstrated His love by giving us His very best. God gave us His one and only Son as a substitute for the punishment we justly deserved. We have the most glorious hope in the whole world — forgiveness and eternal life — yet, many Christians live their lives as if they do not have this hope. Many Christians live their lives as if nothing is really different in their lives as a result of Jesus Christ. How should we be living? How has the resurrection of Jesus Christ impacted your life?

Last week we celebrated the resurrection of Jesus Christ. Easter is a special time when we remember and celebrate the day our Lord and Savior rose from the grave after being crucified for the sins of the world. However, we celebrate the resurrection of Jesus Christ every Sunday we gather for worship. The songs we sing, the music we play and hear, the preaching and hearing of God's Word are all a celebration of the resurrection of Jesus Christ. But after Jesus was raised, what happened then? What did His disciples do? Right after the resurrection, though, Jesus spent forty days with His disciples, teaching them about the kingdom of God. Then after spending that time with them, He went back to Heaven to be with His Father and to prepare a place for all His followers. But right before Jesus ascended into Heaven, He gave His disciples some instructions. This "commission," as it is often called, was really a command that Jesus gave His Church right after the resurrection and just before He ascended into Heaven. Let us look at what happened.

Submit to the Authority of Christ

Earlier in Matthew chapter twenty-eight, after Jesus' resurrection had occurred, an angel told the women who went to Jesus' tomb to tell His disciples that He would meet them in Galilee. Knowing that Jesus was just killed on Friday, this was unusual news. Some did not believe Jesus has been raised to life. However, Jesus' disciples went to a mountain in Galilee, as they were instructed, and saw Jesus there in the flesh. Now, imagine you were one of the disciples who had spent years with Jesus, learning from Him and observing the various miracles He performed. Also, imagine that you had just witnessed Jesus' cruel death and believed Him to be gone for good, only to see Him alive and to realize He was Who He said He was — the Son of God. How would you respond? What would you do if you had seen the resurrected Lord and Savior that day? Hopefully you would do exactly what Jesus' disciples did. Look at the following verses.

Matthew 28:17–18 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.”*

The first thing the disciples did when they saw Jesus was to worship Him. That is exactly what the women did when they saw Jesus. (Matthew 28:9) Jesus had defeated death by rising from the dead. The disciples saw their risen Lord and Savior and they worshipped Him. The appropriate response for anyone who comes into the presence of the risen Lord and Savior is to worship Him. If we are not doing that, then we are missing the point of being His Church. God’s people come together to worship Jesus Christ, to make much of Him, and not themselves. That means what we do is, or should be, all about Jesus. However, worship is not just what we do on Sunday morning. It is a lifestyle. It is what we do every day of our lives. Whatever we do, we ought to ask ourselves, “Does this bring glory to Christ?” If it does not, then we ought to not be doing it. How has the resurrection impacted you to worship the risen Lord and Savior?

This leads to something Jesus said. He said, “All authority has been given to Him.” God the Father has given all authority to His Son Jesus. Not one thing in all of creation is outside of Jesus’ authority and power. This means Jesus is the One in charge. Jesus is the boss. Jesus is Lord. He is the King and this is His kingdom. The text says, however, that some people doubted. That is interesting. Did they doubt the resurrection had happened? Did they doubt it was really Jesus? Did they doubt that He was worthy of worship? Whatever the source of their doubt, it hindered them from worshipping Jesus. They did not see Jesus for Whom He was. Is that you? Do you doubt Jesus? Do you sometimes doubt Who He is or what He has done? Is there something in your life hindering you from worshipping Jesus as Lord with all authority? The Church needs to recognize the authority of Jesus and willingly submit to it. If we do not submit to King Jesus, can we really say we are following Him?

Disciple Others to Know Christ

The Church should take comfort in Jesus’ authority — it is His authority that empowers us to fulfill everything He has called us to do. Because Jesus has complete control and authority over everything, we can (and should) fulfill our calling obediently, purposefully, and joyfully. We are under the authority of Someone Who is above all nations, rulers, and governments. There is nothing that should stop us from serving King Jesus. But, what has Jesus told the Church to do? What on earth should we be doing? We see in this passage that after the resurrection, Jesus gave the Church a specific mission.

Matthew 28:19–20 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...*

Some people assume the command in this passage is “go”. The real command, however, is “make disciples”. If we are truly submitting to King Jesus and are obeying His command, we will be making disciples...*as we are going!* If we are truly His disciples

and we are following Him, we will be doing this. But what does “making disciples” mean? Jesus defined “disciple making” as baptizing believers and teaching them to observe all that He commanded. We make disciples by going about our lives sharing our faith, baptizing those who believe and profess Christ as Lord, and teaching them everything that Jesus said. We do not make disciples by getting people wet and putting their name on the church roll. We make disciples by getting involved in people’s lives.

Also, making disciples is not about just sharing information with others. It is not *just* teaching what Jesus said. It is about obeying Jesus. Jesus commanded the Church to make more disciples by teaching them to *obey* all that He had commanded. Disciples are to obey what Jesus has told them to do. They are to follow Jesus by obeying everything He has told them. The heart of Jesus’ Great Command to the Church is to make disciples of everyone by going out into the world, sharing our faith, baptizing new believers, and having intentional and personal relationships with followers of Christ where we teach them to obey all that King Jesus told us to do. That is discipleship.

But, was Jesus Great Command just for the first disciples? Does it also apply to us? Is it something just for the pastors, missionaries, and evangelists to do, or is it for all of us? Think about this, to whom did Jesus give this command? His disciples. What did He tell them to do? Make more disciples. So...what are you? A disciple is someone who follows someone else. If you are following Jesus, then you are His disciple. If you are His disciple, then what should you be doing? You should be making more disciples. Basically, Jesus commanded all of His disciples to make more disciples. The Church’s mission is to produce more followers of Jesus Christ. But this means that we care for those who do not know Christ. If the resurrection has truly impacted us, we will see other people differently. We will be concerned for those who are lost. We will want to see them come into Jesus’ kingdom, no matter what church they attend. We will want people to know Jesus (not us) and be in His kingdom (not here). Do you?

Trust in the Presence of Christ

What would empower us to do what King Jesus has told us to do? It should be enough to serve our Lord and Savior and to do what He tells us to do. Sometimes we need a reminder of Whom we serve. Thanks be to God, Jesus is not an absentee Savior. He is not a King Who orders His troops to battle while remaining behind in His castle. Some kings did that, but not King Jesus. The last statement Jesus made in this passage is one of comfort. Jesus’ Great Command is preceded by a reference to His complete authority over everything and is followed by the promise of His spiritual presence among us. Both are necessary if we are to fulfill our God-given mission.

Matthew 28:20 ²⁰ *...And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.”*

Jesus concludes His command and Matthew’s account of the Gospel with a crucial element of discipleship: the presence of the Master. This reminds me of something mentioned in the very beginning of the Gospel According to Matthew. What did the Angel of the Lord say to Joseph in a dream about who Jesus was going to be? The

angel said, “Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall call his name ‘Immanuel’, which means, God with us.” (Matthew 1:23) Jesus is “God with us”. He is still “God with us”. He might be sitting next to the Father, but He is also with us now. That is a very reassuring promise for those days when you wonder where God is.

Knowing that He was about to leave them, Jesus comforted His disciples by telling them that He would always be with them as they were making more disciples throughout the world. That is something that should comfort us as well. As we fulfill Jesus’ Great Command, we are assured that Jesus is right here with us. We are never alone. We have hope in what He has called us to do because He is with us. If the resurrection has really impacted us, we will live boldly for Christ, because our God goes with us. There is no place we go that our risen Lord and Savior is not with us. So, as you are going and making disciples, you have nothing to fear. When we leave this place, when we go to work, wherever we go, He is with us. Has the resurrection of Jesus Christ given you hope in the presence of God? Has it empowered you to live boldly for the Lord?

Conclusion

So, what on earth are we doing? Are we living as the Church? Easter has happened. Jesus is risen. The tomb is empty. How has that changed us? Are we submitting to the Lordship of Christ? Is there any area of your life that you have not brought into submission to Him? Do you worship Him as Lord or doubt His authority over your life? Remember, it is all about Jesus, not about us.

Are we following Jesus closely? Are we making more disciples of Christ teaching them to obey all that Jesus commanded? Do we care for others? Do we see the lost world as God sees it? We should pray that we do. Jesus gave the Church authority to proclaim His message of hope and peace to the whole world. So, what is stopping us? When you leave this building, wherever you go, you are entering the mission field. So, go make some more disciples.

Do we live boldly for Christ or do we live in fear — fear of rejection, fear of failure, fear of losing control? Do we really believe that He is with us or do we live as if we are alone? We prove the resurrection is true by showing how it impacts our lives. If the resurrection has changed us, if we have this glorious hope, then we will live boldly for Christ. We will live differently than before. The first Christians turned the world upside down for Christ. May we do the same. Thanks be to God. Amen!