

“In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit ... I am with you always”
— May 18, 2008 – Trinity Sunday – Matthew 28:16-20 – Pastor Scott Hirssig –

Matthew 28:16-20 (ESV)

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.”

I greet you with, grace, mercy and peace from God our Father and Jesus Christ our Risen Lord and the Holy Spirit who lives within us as believers, and empowering us.

Throughout our world there are many people who wonder who God is and what He wants. Every religion attempts to answer those fundamental questions. In the Bible, through the Holy Spirit, Peter in his 2nd Epistle answers that question, and reveals to us the desire of God where it says,” ⁹ **The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. He is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance.**” 2 Peter 3:9 (NIV) God is patient with each person, not wanting you to suffer in hell, but grant you salvation. It comes through a repenting, or turning to God. Paul through the Holy Spirit reveals the same desire of God in 1st Timothy, saying, “³ **This is good, and pleases God our Savior,** ⁴ **who wants all men to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth.**” 1 Timothy 2:3-4 (NIV) There is a desire to save mankind, to save each and every person, not leaving anyone behind. This salvation comes through the truth, and that truth is from the Holy Spirit. We have that same message from our lesson from Matthew, although our Lord Jesus reveals more to us. God’s desire to reach those yet to believe is a mission given to you. You are the one He is calling. Your mission field is where ever the Lord places you. Who can you pray for? Who can you encourage in the Lord? Who can you talk to about the Bible? Who can you read the scripture with together? Who can you talk about the things of the Lord, about what He is doing and who He is to you? It can be your children, your spouse, your family, your neighbors, who you work with? These are people in your life. It is not something you have to feel guilty about because you haven’t not done more or concerned about someone else who you think should do more. Those two responses are just your flesh or Satan dividing the body and interfering with you and the Lord Jesus. Start with prayer and continue with prayer, the Holy Spirit will guide you through the word. It is His work, not yours, so grow in your faith as God reaches you through the means of grace, the word, communion and baptism. He will guide you. That is how it happened in our lesson for these early followers of the Lord Jesus. We see three principles at work in the lives of those in our lesson, they were willing and available, they were submissive, and they were empowered. Recognizing that Jesus' way is the way that truly brings the joy and contentment that the

world promises but can not deliver. Remember, you are not earning or working something here, the work is the Lord's. We are simply receiving and living what He provides.

AVAILABILITY – (verse 16)

Our first principle from the lesson is being available. Our lesson starts by telling us that “**the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain to which Jesus had directed them.**” (Matthew 28:16 ESV) They went as the Lord had told them. He told them both before and after the resurrection to wait at Galilee. (Mat 26:32; 28:7,10). They gather. The gathering also was probably more than just the eleven. In fact it is the general belief of many scholars, although not stated in the word, that this is the over five hundred that saw the resurrected Christ at one time that is mentioned in 1st Corinthians 15:6. These words in Matthew are what we call the great commission, and are for all believers, for the church, and may have been given to over 500 people. They were there and they received. It started with being available.

SUBMISSION – (verse 17-20a) Worship – Authority – Discipleship – Baptism – Teaching – Observing

Along with being available, being ready, there was willingness, a submission to the Lord Jesus. You get the sense from our lesson that this group of people is on the mountain, and then they see Jesus. It is likely that He just appeared. What is even more shocking is the lack of faith on the part of some. Some know that Jesus is God, while others are not sure. There is worship -- genuine worship out of an understanding of who Jesus is. Today is Trinity Sunday, and we proclaim what the Bible teaches about God. We have verses that refer to the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit by names given only to God, characteristics of God, works of God, honor and glory of God, yet at the same time verses that proclaim one God, not three. It is reasonable to teach one God, three persons, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. We use the term person since this denotes will, thinking, and understanding. The wind is very powerful, but you cannot carry on conversation with the wind. The wind does not think. The Holy Spirit is more than power or influence, but a person. We, also, have instances of one or more being present at the same time. It is not just the same God appearing as the Father, Son, or Holy Spirit, or simply taking on different roles or functions. This is delineated more fully in the Athanasian Creed, given since people were denying part of the doctrine of the Trinity. A favorite verse of those that attack the trinity, is John 14:28 where Jesus says, “... **the Father is greater than I.**” John 14:28 (NIV) They say, 'See, how can there be equality when Jesus says that? You are teaching against Jesus.' They fail to look at other verses, and see that Jesus is the God-man, fully God, fully man, equality in regards to deity, less than in regards to humanity, just as the Creed proclaims, and the Bible teaches. You always take scripture in light of the

entire scripture, scripture explains scripture, and not of private interpretation. Here in our lesson Jesus is worshiped as God. He has been granted all authority. He is in charge. Are you listening to Him? You need Him in discipleship. These verses include infant baptism as part of all nations. Lenski in his commentary writes about what this discipleship means, saying, "Two participles of means then state how all nations are to be made into disciples: by baptizing them and by teaching them. The order in which these two participles appear is not accidental. Jesus sees beyond the first missionary stage of the gospel work when adults must be taught before baptism can be administered to them; he sees his church being established among the nations and children thus entering it in infancy, and this by means of baptism." (Lenski, Matthew, pg 1173) Baptism is 'in the name', and is not 'into', but carries the idea of being connected, in the name. Lenski writes, "Baptism is thus pure gospel and by no means a legal rite. It enriches the person baptized by the gifts of the gospel, it is not a mere act of obedience to a command on the person's part. Hence again, children may be baptized as well as adults; both can be equally blessed with the contents of God's blessed revelation" (Lenski, Matthew, pg 1175-1176) Our life in Christ begins with the Holy Spirit granting faith. For most of us that first happened as we were baptized as infants in the name of the Father, and of Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Others came later in life, as the Holy Spirit granted faith. We know from Romans 10 verse 17, "**So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.**" Rom 10:17 (KJV) This salvation is all by grace through faith, and not of you. (Eph 2:8-10) Jesus is calling to you to come and receive his life, and live in that life He provides. Each of us is being taught our entire Christian life and observing what Jesus has commanded as He works in us.

POWER – verse 20b

Finally our lesson closes with "**...behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age**" (Matthew 28:20b ESV) If you missed everything in this message, know that Jesus, who can not lie to you says, "I am with you always." Jesus is with you always. Isn't that great?! He is not leaving. Oh, you may wander away, but he is right there. He is taking you through each step that this life provides, during the times of rejoicing and the times of sorrow. He is there. He also knows everything, still loves you, and wants to forgive you. Isn't that great news?! You might as well stop hiding and embrace Him. You just mess up life. Real living is Jesus living through you as He brings you the knowledge that He loves you. He lives through you to reach your world, and that He is with you always.

In His name we pray, AMEN May the peace of God that passes all understanding, keep your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus. AMEN.