

Hey, everybody. Matthew 28 is a wild chapter. The crucifixion has happened already. And Matthew 28 opens with an earthquake. And you see an angel dressed in lightning who scares people to death and tells other people not to be afraid.

Yeah, right. And so then what happens is this same angel has a message for the disciples. It's to meet Jesus in Galilee. Now, Matthew isn't done with his chapter. He's going to drop in some bribery, some nefarious reporting, and the original fake news.

That'll all happen. We will pick up the story in Matthew chapter 28, verse 16. It'll be on the screen. You can turn and read it with us as well. Then the 11 disciples went to Galilee to.

To the mountain where Jesus had told them to go. When they saw him, they worshiped him. But some doubted. Now, we're going to pause there, because the thing that you missed is from Jerusalem to the mountain is about a hundred miles. And so what the disciples did for 100 miles was carry the expectations that were lost in the crucifixion.

They carried hope for what Jesus could have been. And ironically, they walked past all of the places that they had already previously traveled for years with Jesus. From Jerusalem, through the Judean countryside, around Samaria, through southern Galilee, through northern Galilee to about 10,000 vertical feet, a mountaintop that they knew. So we're going to give the disciples some grace for verses 16 and 17 when it says they doubted. The Greek verb means hesitation.

Essentially, these men had no clue how to handle the experience that they had had over the past few weeks. The verse continues. Then Jesus came to them, meaning they went alone. And now Jesus shows up on the mountain. All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me.

Therefore, go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything. I have commanded you, and surely I am with you to the very end of the age. Now, this is the final line of the Book of Matthew. But it's not the final time that Jesus is going to talk to these disciples. In fact, what he's going to do is he's going to say, hey, from the mountaintop, I need you to head back down.

I need you to go through Galilee, through Samaria, through the Judean countryside, and back into Jerusalem, aka I'll see you in about 100 miles where I'll meet you and we'll have dinner. And that's Acts, chapter one. In verse eight, he says this line you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you. And you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and all Judea and Samaria and to the ends of the earth.

You guys see, I have brought some props with me. The Great Commission, which is what our passage is for today, it is not a slogan. It is an

unfolding story that has been told all through the pages of Scripture. It's been the mission of God ever since he began. On page one one, the Great Commission as a.

As a. What is its definition that I've been holding over the past few weeks to orient myself is this. The Great Commission is a narrative roadmap for the mission of God. With the Holy Spirit's work and the Church's witness, I think we can find ourselves in that definition today. Since day one of this book, the mission of God has been to call the earth.

Let me see, what do I have here? To call the earth good and to make humanity in his image. And he calls humanity. Very good. So I'll draw the world right here.

Ish. You guys will understand what it is if I tell you what it is. That's Florida. So everything else, you can go from there. Everything else you can find out from there.

He gives people a mission. He gives people a mission, and he says this. I want you to fill my earth because I have put my image in you. And so this is the heart of God for his heart, for the world, and for people to be his image on earth. And this is the story that we see all through Scripture says that in the garden, you guys know the storyline though.

Sin comes into the world, violence erupts, and a catastrophic flood happens for everything except one family, because the image of God is in them. The words that God gives to Noah as he steps off the boat is, be fruitful and multiply fill the earth. It's the exact same mission. By Genesis 12, humanity has unraveled again. And so God calls Abram.

And this time, Abram, the call to him is to go, because God is going to bless him, and he, his family, will bless all nations. So not only is it to fill the earth, but is now to fill the earth with the heart of God, the blessings for all people. From there, the entire rest of the story is going to try and answer this one question. Not what is the mission of God, but will the people of God step into that story and help fulfill it or not? So through the law and the prophets and the psalms, there's always this commissioning language, this inviting and this sending.

And so when Jesus Shows up. It's not to start a new story, but to fulfill the old one perfectly, to show you and I how to live out the mission. There's all kinds of commissioning verses. In John 20, Jesus says, as I was sent, so I sent you. Mark says, go into all the world.

Luke says, teach repentance and forgiveness to all nations. The Great Commission has to be more than a standalone verse in your world. And so it becomes a roadmap, literally, geographically, but also

theologically. And I'm going to tell you that story tonight or this morning through the story of Acts. Acts 1 through 7 is this storyline, let me make it here, is this storyline of the church in Jerusalem attempting to understand how to live out the mission of God.

Jesus promised the Holy Spirit and that, and he functionally showed up 50 days after the crucifixion in fire. Now, fire was a visual representation all through the story of Scripture, of God's power and authority and presence. And if you remember the Great Commission verse, all authority on heaven and earth has been given to me. This is the authority of God showing up. People then begin to hear the story of God miraculously through this Spirit's power and authority in their own language.

And so they look around, and all of a sudden, we have the Great Commission being lived out. People are telling the story of God to one another of all nations, in different languages. The Holy Spirit is at work. The church witnesses, and they all ask Peter, what are we supposed to do? And Peter says, repent and be baptized.

As people step into the water, what they're doing is they are acting out the resurrection that Jesus previously experienced. They go into the water symbolically as a death to their old life. And as they are raised out, they become new creations with the fire, the presence, the Spirit of God, the one who can raise someone from the dead within them. And so now all of a sudden, new life is being spread. Here's the bad news.

There is a reason that they are all in Jerusalem at this time, and it's for a party. Now, that doesn't sound like bad news, but I'm going to use the volleyball here to help teach the problem. See, if you wanted to know the God of the Old Testament, Yahweh, in his heart, you often had to come to Israel and to adopt their. Their dietary practices and their sacrificial system, because the whole story of God had been about the dietary laws and the sacrificial system. How do you become God's people?

The answer was in an Old Testament story called Passover. Passover the Jewish people were slaves in Egypt. And so how does God draw his people out of Egypt? It is, let my people go, the 10th and final time. And.

And he. And he sends an angel to kill the firstborn so that way, Pharaoh would release his people. The question for us is, how do. How does the angel know who's God's people and who is not? The answer is, there is blood that is painted on the doorways.

And so Passover is a feast remembering that. And that is the day that Jesus was crucified during the Passover, the spotless lamb. And then all of a sudden, we have this. 50 days later, it's Pentecost, when the

Holy Spirit comes into Jerusalem. And now, all of a sudden, there's a new feast happening.

People, Jews from all over the world, were coming into Jerusalem to celebrate this feast. And it's the feast of Pentecost, which was Sinai, when thunder, earthquakes, fire descends on the mountain at Sinai. And the law comes. Why did the law have to come? So slaves would learn how to be in the family of God, how to be his image in the world.

So, Josh, you're like, that's not that big of a deal. But here's what happens. As the Jews, the. The. The devout Jews who would come to Jerusalem, they all of a sudden had to come to Israel, come to this particular city to take on these practices to know if they were in or out as the people of God.

That is a little thing physics likes to call centripetal force. Centripetal means center seeking. We have a puppy named Judd, and Judd doesn't speak English. So when I say come, it means nothing to him. And so I have this leash that I gently give him attention on as I yell, come, come, come, come, come, come, come, come, come.

And he gets excited to come to me, and he learns English. It's like this. This volleyball. If you've ever played tetherball, whenever you hit the ball and it goes around in a circle, centripetal force is the line that brings it towards your opponent's head. That's centripetal force.

It doesn't go this way. That's how. That's how Jerusalem was in the Old Testament. If you wanted to know Yahweh, you had to come here in order to participate in that story. But now, all of a sudden, the story's changing.

Evangelism is changing, and it's not. You have to come here. Sorry, Jenna. But for south volleyball, all of a sudden.

All of a sudden, the force is now eccentric which means one force on the ball and we're going, what is the force that sends evangelism into the world? Costly obedience and often persecution. This is the hard news. Instead of, you come to Israel, to Jerusalem. Now, all of a sudden we have Acts chapters eight through 12, where we get these stories of there is a cost to being a disciple and obeying the call of the Holy Spirit.

I'm tell you two stories. They're super fast. The first one is a man named Philip who was praying one day and the Holy Spirit was at work. And he said, philip, go. And so chapter 8, verse 30 said, so Philip ran.

That's Philip running. Where does he run? Into the desert towards

Gaza, modern day. And it's a good thing that Philip ran, because as he was in the desert, he approached a stopped chariot. And there was a man in the chariot who was reading the book of Isaiah and particularly Isaiah 53.

This is really important because Isaiah 53 is one of the clearest representations of Jesus in the entire Old Testament. And Philip looks at the man and says, do you understand what you are reading? And the man says, how can I unless someone tells me? Philip tells him the story of the resurrected Jesus and the Holy Spirit falls. And the man says, what shall I do?

And is baptized. Perfect timing. Philip running into the desert. There's a second story that I'd love to tell you, and that is Peter and Cornelius. This is Acts chapter 10.

One day Peter is praying. That obviously looks like someone praying. And as he's praying, it's not a command to go, but it's a command to eat. And a sheet is lowered out of heaven. And a person who has spent his whole life not touching pork is told to eat.

Bacon like this is earth shattering for Peter. And he says, never. I've never done this. He needs to hear this vision three times in order to. I forgot the ears on the pig.

There he is now. He looks like a pig. He needs to hear this vision three times in order to obey it. And what happens next? There is an ominous knock on the door.

As soon as it is over. There's a centurion named Cornelius who has also been sensitive to the Holy Spirit, who has been at work and needs Peter to come. Peter shows up to Cornelius House and says, what do you need? What do you want? Cornelius says, I've been devout.

The Holy Spirit has been at work, and the entire family, as they hear Peter tell the story. And witness to the story of God, his heart for the world, they're all baptized. Here's your Teaching idea. You can choose to make every step of your life an obedient missional moment or not.

Like baptism is great. Praying the prayer is great. You can choose now to be obedient and pray and ask God to take your life somewhere or not. The mission is eccentric, it's not centripetal. It doesn't end with you.

It's not pulling back to you. It's a call for you to go out. And the reason that I love telling Peter's story over and over is that Peter gets it wrong so many times. He is the guy that has climbed the mountains with Jesus. He has traveled to for hundreds of miles with Jesus.

He has walked on water with Jesus. He is the one who has denied Jesus. He is the one who has said no, you can't go to the cross Jesus and he will be the one who messes up these dietary laws again in the New Testament.

And yet he is called to feed the sheep.

I mean I tell that story and I'm reminded of my sin. I know who I am. And so it's so sweet to understand the disciples as men and women who have doubt in their life, who have mess ups ahead of them, and yet to know that God still uses them. Here's how I know that. Because the book of Acts is not over.

And so from Acts 13 all the way until Revelation 7, there is a story of how the church comes alive, taking the good news, the hope to the ends of the earth. Revelation says this after this I looked and there before me was a great multitude that no one could count. And from every nation, tribe, people and language, standing before the throne in front of the passover lamb. I added that, but you understood the illusion. So Josh, what do we do?

In the exact same way that the people here in the early church said, so what do we do? I hope you're holding that same question. And I've got a third panel I've got to draw. So obviously we're going somewhere here. Number one, you got to recognize that the Holy Spirit is still at work.

The Holy Spirit is still at work in God's world that he loves and in the people that he loves. And that is you. So the question is, are you able to begin to walk through the world?

Yah wah. There it is. Are you able to begin to walk through the world with the heart of God? And the natural outcome of the Holy Spirit at work in your life would be your baptism. Like, do you know this story personally, that Jesus is Lord of your life, that he is the author of Your life story, your story will only find its true mission and its significance when you are attentive to the Holy Spirit in you and around you.

And you begin to be obedient to wherever he calls you to go. Okay, that's cool. So then the Spirit, you need to know this also still sets people apart for the hard, costly work of the gospel. Not everyone has heard the hope of Jesus. The story of God's heart for his world and his people see the ends of the earth is not poetic alliteration.

There are 5 billion people who do not have access to the story of Jesus or a church to bring it to them. And I know 5 billion is too big of a number to understand. And so 5 billion is like this. You start to count 1, 2, 3, 4, every second for 31 and a half years, never taking a

break or getting caught in mouth. And that's when you get to 1 billion times 5.

And when Jesus says the ends of the earth, that's not a cute saying. That's not an individual in every country. That is the desire of God's heart to bring all people into his kingdom for societies to be transformed with the hope and the resurrection power of Jesus.

Guys, this changes my life. When I say those words out loud, all of a sudden, the world that we are brought into, to being with is. Is filled not with just itself, but is now all of a sudden, it has names, it has hopes, dreams, loss, fear. And so we have to become people who see it. My friend Sean, you may have heard of him, Green, he says, do you see yourself as an ending point of the gospel?

Did. Did the good news of Jesus come to you? Yay. I added that. He didn't add that.

But here's the question he wants to know. Is the good news of the gospel for every home in your neighborhood? My friend Elan says God knew that you probably were gonna be lazy. Elon just called you out. He's up in International Coffee Hour right now, so don't tell him this part, but he said it, not me.

And he said this. He said, we probably won't go. So God brings the entire world to Bloomington. And not only that, he said, you probably won't want to pay your own money. So they flew there, flew here by themselves on their own dime.

Will you look outside yourself to the nations that are here? My friend Brad says that there is a call to ministry for our church. Not to be the end, but a piece of the global church and to play our role. And I gotta say, guys like these Tears that you see in me, I feel so insignificant. Teaching, recruiting, sending missionaries, I feel so insignificant.

And then I remember it is God's mission, and my job is to witness to it and to make disciples. He is already at work, and that is the big hope of the Great Commission. You remember that very last line in Matthew 28, and I am with you even to the ends of the age. Let me tell you what that means, using my name. But then you put your own name into it.

And be sure of this, Josh, I. I am with you always, even to the ends of the age. Jesus is saying, as you go and attempt to make disciples, he will be with you as you go and you attempt to tell this story, no matter how halting it is, or I'm fearful of the questions that I get asked. No matter how you tell this story, he will be with you when your heart is his, to make disciples. His Spirit is before you, already at work. Your job is to witness.

His Spirit is in you because you have his baptism and his covering. And now you move, and his Spirit continues working even when you're gone.

The action steps here are to begin to think like an everyday missionary. Just begin to think it.

This is as simple as praying and saying, spirit, where are you leading me today? Some days it'll be a go, some days it'll be for bacon. For me, it's usually go to Panera and grab coffee, guys. In the past week, literally this past week, as I've been writing this sermon and praying for us and our time together, I've also had coffee with a Muslim imam, the guy who on campus teaches the Islamic faith to college students. He and I are buds.

I invite his family over to milkshakes at our house. No bacon. And what we do there is I get to know his story. He has three daughters, I have four. So it is a match made in heaven.

I also have had coffee with a Chinese immigrant, and I tell her the story of scripture as I hear her story. And I also had coffee with a Korean pastor on campus. And I also was on my computer and I was talking to missionaries in Thailand and the Czech Republic. I was preparing to teach Indian pastors for their upcoming revival. They're in the middle of it right now, and I get to have a place where I greet them the way Paul greets the scattered church.

I get to emulate the image of God in me, gets to speak the words of scripture to a global audience because that's my call. It's the way that he has moved me in the world.

Every moment has the opportunity to be missional. If you have the Holy Spirit and you are obedient to his voice and you begin to be his witness. I'm gonna invite Brad up to pray for us. Brad is our mission pastor. I definitely referenced him just a second ago.

Here's my closing idea. God wants you to be his church. To carry his image in a spirit filled, witnessing way full of hope for our neighbors, for our campus, our city and to the ends of the earth.

Let's pray together.

Our loving Father, we thank you for inviting us to be part of your. Your story. To be part of your great plan to bring redemption to the whole world.

We feel small, especially when we hear the 5 billion number. What can we do? Father, I pray that you'll give each one of us confidence in you, that you have called us, that you live in us. Give us eyes wide



open to see those people around us who need to understand and experience your love and your grace. Give us compassion.

Help us to care. Help us to care for the people who live next door. Father, we thank you for our mission partners who are. Who are reaching the unreached in places that will never go, places that are dangerous. But we hear about big numbers of people who are coming to you in the Muslim world, Buddhist world in India.

Bring them to our minds, into our hearts. We can't be there, but we can pray for them. Pray for their protection. Pray for your Holy Spirit to be alive in them and in their ministries most of all. Lord, use us humble as we are, insignificant feeling as we are.

Empower us. Give us your eyes and your heart so that we can be your witnesses to those around us. We pray this in Jesus name. Amen. Thanks.

There's one more story that we participate in as a church, in its communion. It is the moment where we take the bread which represents Jesus body that he gave on the cross at Passover for us. And then his blood covers our sin. That's the cup. This is time to not rush, but.

But to really allow the Holy Spirit to be at work in you. And then when you're ready, come and grab communion. Let me pray.

Father, we are your people. We are your church. Make us more like Jesus. Amen.