



At Home Worship for Faith and Hope

Fourth Sunday of Easter

April 25, 2021

*"Therefore, go and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the
name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit."*

Matthew 28:19 (NLT)

*Call to Worship

*Jesus, our Savior,
in response to your call to be your faithful disciples,
**we are baptized in the name of the Father,
the Son, and the Holy Spirit.***

*Open our lives
and teach us how to follow your great commission
to make disciples of all nations,
to baptize and teach them your ways.
**Let us know the full blessings of our God—
Creator, Redeemer, and Sustainer.***

*Opening Prayer

Miraculous God, come to us now, even as your Son came to those first disciples on the shores of Galilee. Speak your peace to our hearts. Touch us with your Holy Spirit. Reveal your word, that we may hear your message this day, and live as your disciples in the days and years to come. In Christ's name, we pray. Amen

Share How You Can Present Your Offering to God

Make your offering personal...through a donation or an act of service...bring to God an offering of praise and gratitude!

Sing the Doxology Together

Praise God, from whom all blessings flow; praise him, all creatures here below; praise him above, ye heavenly host; praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Amen.

A Prayer for the Easter Season

God our Father, in your love you welcome us as your children, through your care you have shaped the universe, with your mercy you hear our prayers. Hear us, your children, as we come before you in worship. Jesus, our risen Master, in our weakness, you call us, in our confusion, you teach us, in our troubles, you offer us peace. Meet us, your friends, as we come to hear your word. Spirit, Living One, in the beginning, you breathed life, in chaos and darkness, you brought hope, in many tongues, you spread good news. Transform us, your people, as we open our minds and hearts to you. God, Loving Father, Son and Spirit, we come. Yet we know we come with doubts and fears. We know we come in ignorance. We know we have failed you, your creation and your people, in many ways. Trusting in your love, we turn again to you. As we open our hearts to your mercy and forgiveness, grant us your peace. Accept these prayers, accept our worship, accept us, through your love, Amen.

The Lord's Prayer

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name; thy kingdom come; thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.

God's Word

Matthew 28:16-20 (NLT)

(see below)

The Word of God for the people of God...Thanks be to God!

Message

"Go Into the World"

Pastor Clark

...what it means to be a Kingdom Ambassador

See Message Below

Pray for Our New Members Received Today

Matt and Debbie Fields and James and Heather Martin with Rylie Grace

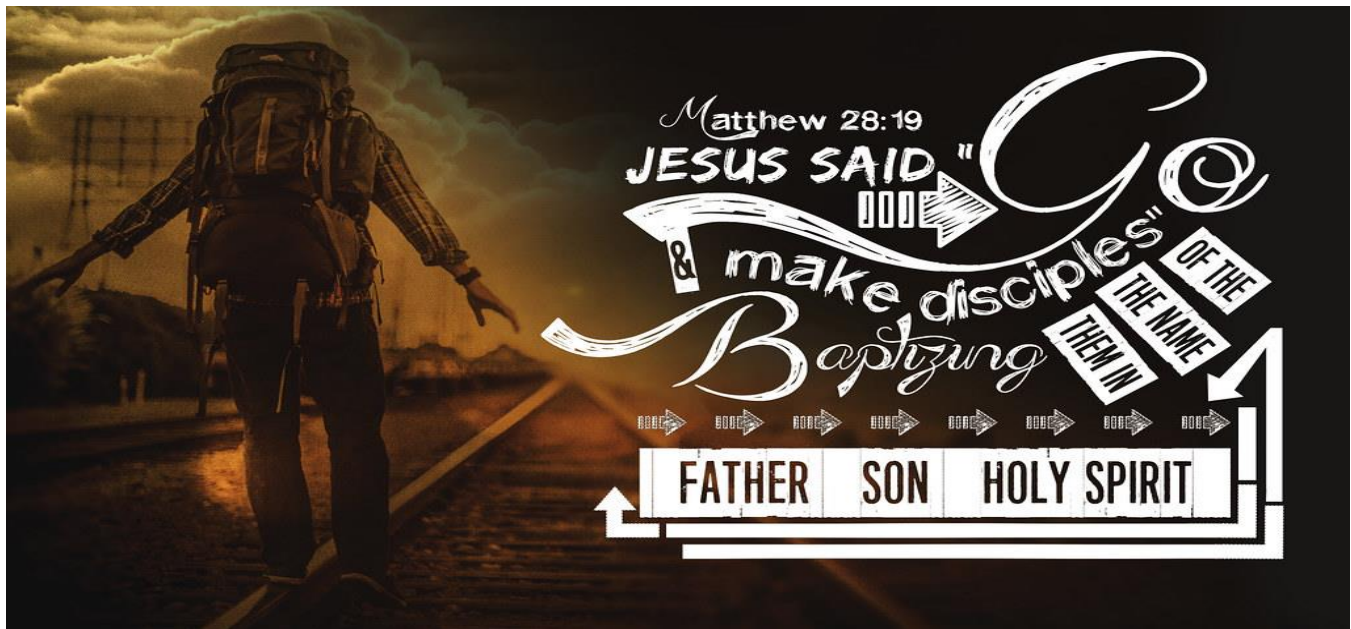
*Hymn of Faith

"Here I Am, Lord"

UMH 593

Blessing

*As people of faith we have gathered for worship.
As people of faith we now return to the world.
Go out to share the story of faith,
the story of life, with the world around you.
We share the faith in word and in deed,
in speech and in action.
As you go out to give a living witness,
as you go out to testify to God's love active in the world,
go knowing that God goes with you,
sharing the laughter and the hope, the fears and the tears.
Thanks be to God! Amen.*



O For A Thousand Tongues to Sing

*1. O for a thousand tongues to sing
my great Redeemer's praise,
the glories of my God and King,
the triumphs of his grace!*

*2. My gracious Master and my God,
assist me to proclaim,
to spread through all the earth abroad
the honors of thy name.*

*3. Jesus! the name that charms our fears,
that bids our sorrows cease;
'tis music in the sinner's ears,
'tis life, and health, and peace.*

*4. He breaks the power of canceled sin,
he sets the prisoner free;
his blood can make the foulest clean;
his blood availed for me.*

*5. He speaks, and listening to his voice,
new life the dead receive;
the mournful, broken hearts rejoice,
the humble poor believe.*

Here I Am, Lord

*Here I Am, Lord
I, the Lord of sea and sky
I have heard my people cry
All who dwell in dark and sin
My hand will save
I who made the stars of night
I will make their darkness bright
Who will bear my light to them?
Whom shall I send?*

*Here I am, Lord
Is it I, Lord?
I have heard You calling in the night
I will go, Lord
If You lead me
I will hold Your people in my heart*

*I, the Lord of wind and flame
I will tend the poor and lame
I will set a feast for them
My hand will save
Finest bread I will provide
'Til their hearts be satisfied
I will give my life to them
Whom shall I send?*

*Here I am, Lord
Is it I, Lord?
I have heard You calling in the night
I will go, Lord
If You lead me
I will hold Your people in my heart
I will hold Your people in my heart*

Go into the World

Matthew 28:16-20

Introduction

Six years ago, the world was taken by storm. Everyone was talking about it, everyone was posting about it, and unless you lived in an extremely secluded location, it probably seemed like everyone was playing it. [Pokémon Go](#), a smartphone game that has taken the premise of a decades-old animated series and used emerging technology to catapult it into popular culture, global stock markets, and your front yard, was the newest craze. The game creates an **"augmented reality"** in which users walk around outside following a digital map superimposed with digital figures from the hit Pokémon television/videogame series.

The game shattered mobile app records, and sent parent company Nintendo's market capitalization ***soaring a nearly unfathomable \$9 billion in a matter of hours***. In just a few days, the app surpassed the daily active users of social media mainstay Twitter. ***It almost instantaneously got millions and millions of kids, teenagers, and adults to get up off of their couches and go fulfill the objectives of the game.***

Whether you support this new technology and its effects or not, the impact in such a short amount of time is incredible. ***It makes you wonder what might happen if the members of the church suddenly got up and left their homes in droves to pursue their own commission.***

Some are not even aware that Jesus left the church with a commission to fulfill...let alone the Great Commission, the ultimate commission, the most important endeavor in all humanity. But he did. Jesus entrusted to His followers to carry on where He left off after His death, resurrection, and ascension.

I think I know why...with an assist from Paul David Tripp. We have a dichotomy in our lives. We have our little private lives that belong to us. We then step out of our private lives into moments of church or ministry life. When that is completed, we step back into our private lives. This allows us to live comfortably as Christian consumers.

But since we have been redeemed by Christ's blood, we are not our own. Our allegiance belongs to Jesus Christ. We are both ***recipients*** of God's grace and ***participants*** of sharing that grace with others. There is no real separation between life and ministry. That means we live, work, relate, play, relax with a ministry mentality. It means I am always thinking about how to be part of what God is doing in the locations where God places me.

It sounds so foreign to our ears. Like this must be one of those extra-credit projects for the spiritual elite. It seems so out of reach for ordinary Christians. I know this sounds a little harsh; but we have

grown too comfortable just hanging around doing church that we have all but forgotten this mandate. What would it look like to **recapture the passion** and **rekindle the fire** for this Christ-appointed mission? We can reimagine this for our day, starting where we are as the Church. Let's hear it again, because I believe imbedded in this Christ-commission are clues for how we can live it out in today's challenging world.

¹⁶ Then the eleven disciples left for Galilee, going to the mountain where Jesus had told them to go. ¹⁷ When they saw him, they worshiped him—but some of them doubted! ¹⁸ Jesus came and told his disciples, “I have been given all authority in heaven and on earth. ¹⁹ Therefore, go and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. ²⁰ Teach these new disciples to obey all the commands I have given you. And be sure of this: I am with you always, even to the end of the age.” Matthew 28:16-20 (NLT)

Prelude: Our Inner Mission

“Then the eleven disciples left for Galilee, going to the mountain where Jesus had told them to go. When they saw him, they worshiped him —but some of them doubted!”

When asked what one word most described Jesus' ministry on earth, Dallas Willard said, **“relaxed.”** Really? Jesus was never in a hurry. **Jesus has three years to save all humanity. And yet...does Jesus ever seem busy? Does he ever seem to be in a hurry?** I confess I don't live my life as a pastor in the relaxed mode. All too often, I am beyond busy. I agree with Alan Fadling, *“when I am most hurried, I know I miss much that God is trying to show me, give me, and lead me into.”*

There are actually two commissions here! (Paul Jensen) An **inner commission** precedes the outer one. We have to have both or our lives and ministries get distorted. Jesus directed his disciples to go to the mountain—to meet him, see him as the risen Lord, worship him, and to experience his unconditional love...even to doubt him. This helped them align their hearts under his authority. This personal experience prepared them for everything that followed. Part of why the Great (outer) Commission seems so overwhelming, is that we have not tended to the inner commission.

#1 A Staggering Declaration

“Jesus came and told his disciples, ‘I have been given all authority in heaven and on earth.’”

Where we begin largely determines where we will end. If we start with ourselves, if we start with the sobering condition of the world, we will never get far in engaging the Great Commission. We have to start with Jesus. Again, if we don't approach the Great Commission by tapping into this stunning declaration, this stunning power source, then we will give up in the challenges of living the GC today.

Listen to the writer of Hebrews who shares this about Jesus:

*"The Son radiates God's own glory and expresses the very character of God, and he **sustains** everything by the mighty power of his command." Hebrews 1:3 (NLT)*

The Greek word for that is translated "sustains" is a term commonly used in the NT for "carrying" or "bringing." The friends carried the paralyzed man to Jesus, and the servants brought wine to the master of the wedding. They sustained the man and the wine. They guaranteed the safe delivery. To say Jesus "is sustaining all things by His powerful word" is to say Jesus is directing creation to a desired end. Jesus has been given authority for this. The use of the present participle implies that Jesus is continually active in His creation. Jesus exercises supremacy over all things.

The **Great Commission** is possible because there is first a **Great Assurance**...from a Great King...a King we have the sheer delight in serving! We have the privilege of serving as ambassadors of this King.

When you think that Matthew is writing his Gospel perhaps one generation after the crucifixion of Jesus, and here a man crucified as a state criminal by the Roman authorities claims to be the one to whom Caesar himself will bow the knee; that he is the Lord not just of the church, he is the Lord of history, he is the Lord of governments, he is the Lord of nations, he is the Lord of the universe...this is indeed a staggering declaration!

Take a moment to worship with me drawing on the words of the Chris Tomlin praise song:

"He Lives"

*From heaven to earth our Savior came
For us on a cross, He bled and died
And from the cross to an empty grave
He rose to life, He rose to life*

*He lives reigning in power
He lives, name above all names
Hallelujah now forever
Hallelujah Christ is risen!*

*All glory to Him upon the throne
Forever exalted and seated high
The Lamb of God He has overcome!
He is alive, He is alive!*

*He lives reigning in power
He lives, name above all names
Hallelujah now forever
Hallelujah Christ is risen!
He is risen*

#2 A Compelling Commission

"Therefore, go and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. Teach these new disciples to obey all the commands I have given you."

First note this: there is **only one verb** in the Great Commission, and that is the verb **"make disciples."** That is the imperative. So, our English translations mislead us because they begin with the command "go." In Greek, it's a present participle, which strictly speaking should be translated, **"Therefore, as you're going, make disciples of all nations."** So, the emphasis is not on the going, it is on the making of disciples.

I see an amazing insight here. As we are going about our daily lives, in all the interactions we have with others, at all the intersections we have with them, we are to be about making disciples for Jesus Christ. Like the story I shared last week about Jeannine Brabon who in all her goings over one weekend trip to remote parts of Columbia, made disciples (twenty children, youth, and adults came to faith in Christ on that weekend!)...with the doorman at her apartment, with the cab driver, with people she encountered on her way via a plane flight, car ride, long hike. It reminds me of The Message translation of Romans 12:1-2:

"So here's what I want you to do, God helping you: Take your everyday, ordinary life—your sleeping, eating, going-to-work, and walking-around life—and place it before God as an offering. Embracing what God does for you is the best thing you can do for him. Don't become so well-adjusted to your culture that you fit into it without even thinking. Instead, fix your attention on God. You'll be changed from the inside out. Readily recognize what he wants from you, and quickly respond to it. Unlike the culture around you, always dragging you down to its level of immaturity, God brings the best out of you, develops well-formed maturity in you."

Eleven disciples to whom Jesus is speaking here were all Jews who had left their jobs, everything that they owned, **to attach themselves to this man, to become apprentice to him.** That's what a disciple means, an apprentice or a student. Now, says Jesus, **just as you have apprenticed yourself to me and learned from me during these past three years, now you invite the non-Jews, the Gentiles to also do the same.**

Now, how are they to do it? Well, he goes on to say **by baptizing and by teaching.** Baptizing them into the name of the triune God: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. In the ancient world, to be baptized into the name of somebody meant to come under the allegiance of that person, to surrender ownership to that person. You became in a sense that person's property. To be baptized into the name of the triune God means that now your **supreme loyalty** is no longer to your biological family, culture, ethnic group, or your nation's state, it is to the triune God. You belong to the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. That is where discipleship begins.

#3 A Stunning Promise

"And be sure of this: I am with you always, even to the end of the age."

Jesus knows that left to our own resources and ingenuity we are helpless. Jesus makes a stunning promise: I am with you always! This of course is accomplished through the agency of the Holy Spirit.

Only we don't give much attention to the Holy Spirit in our practice today. It reminds me of the story of the British pastor who was quizzing a boy's class on the Apostle's Creed. Each boy was to repeat one phrase of the Creed.

The first began, *"I believe in God, the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth."* The second one said, *"I believe in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord."*

The recitation continued until one spot...and there was silence. The pastor looked up to see what caused this silence. One of boys spoke up and said, *"But the boy who believed in the Holy Spirit is absent today."* Unfortunately, many are absent when it comes to appropriating the promised gift of the Holy Spirit.

God's Presence through the Holy Spirit makes all the difference in the world.

- ❖ Divine power expressed through our human weaknesses
- ❖ Divine protection when the enemy seeks to hurt us
- ❖ Divine wisdom when our earthly wisdom is insufficient
- ❖ Present tense encouragement when we are discouraged and about to give up
- ❖ Companionship when we are tempted to think we are facing it all alone

Joseph's story in Genesis tells his harrowing life journey. Sold into slavery by his jealous brothers. Falsely accused by Potiphar's wife. Thrown into prison for two years. Forgotten by a friend. How did he ever survive? How did he not give in and give up? How did his life ever turn around? The secret: *"the Lord was with Joseph."* It is repeated three times through his ordeals. God's Presence makes all the difference in the world!

God's presence can make all the difference in the world for us too! Where do you need God's Presence most in your life right now?