

THIS WEEK'S MESSAGE

JAN 6TH-7TH, 2021 // BOOK OF MATTHEW
EMPTY (MATTHEW 28:1-10)

IT WAS EARLY SUNDAY MORNING

On the day "after the Sabbath," the two Marys went to grieve Jesus now that it was permissible. V2-4 mentions the earth quaking because of the angel. This happened before they had arrived. When they got there the angel was sitting on the stone shining "like lightning."

- The brilliance of the angel terrified the soldiers and they fled.

THE STONE DIDN'T HAVE TO BE MOVED

Jesus could've passed through stone (Jn. 20), but it was moved away so people could witness that Jesus was gone. This is why the angel invites the women to look inside.

- This brings us to the complicated issue of the eye-witness accounts. **The 4 gospels have slightly different accounts, but all of the main points are in harmony.**

"HE IS NOT HERE. FOR HE HAS RISEN..."

Once the ladies were convinced that Jesus was resurrected, they were instructed by the angel to go and tell the other disciples that Jesus would meet them in Galilee.

- Jesus had told His disciples this before His crucifixion (26:32), **showing us again that Jesus was always (and still is) in control.**

FROM FEAR TO HOPE AND JOY

Matt and John's accounts of Mary seeing Jesus are slightly different. Matt writes that as the women were returning, they encountered the risen Jesus and worshiped Him. John's account tells about Mary mistaking Jesus for the gardener and thinking His body had been stolen.

- Though I think these accounts can be reconciled, the real point is the risen Savior.

MAKING MINOR THINGS MAJOR DIVISIONS

If there are valid minor differences in the gospel accounts, it still does not take away from the integrity and major components of the Word.

- One of humanity's greatest problems is making non-essential things divisive issues. **We must make sure we have the majors of the faith covered so we don't get distracted by the minors.**

"GREETINGS...DO NOT BE AFRAID."

When the women encounter Jesus His voice is both warm and authoritative. **We are reminded that Jesus is our strength, security, and that He is righteous and calls us to live in obedience to His commands.**

- **Living in the proper posture of love and fear of God puts us in a position of security that casts out any reason to be afraid.**

ACCOUNTABLE TO A LIVING LORD

Matt. 28:1-10 serves as proof to the Marys, the disciples, and to believers throughout all time that Christ is alive. This implies that all people will be held accountable to Christ.

- Before we pass into the life to come, we will either meet **Jesus our Savior or Jesus our Judge. How we view Jesus now determines our eternity.**

THE COVER UP (MATTHEW 28:11-15)

REMEMBER THE SEVERITY OF A SOLDIER'S MISTAKE?

If one knows just how severe the penalty was for Roman soldiers that were "sleeping" on the job, they would never believe the Jewish authority's lie.

- This is probably why the Roman soldiers reported to the Jewish leaders rather than the Romans. They were probably trying to save their own lives.

SOME MONEY AND A GUARANTEE

The Roman soldiers were offered a "large sum of money" and told to tell people that the body was stolen while they slept. The guards were also assured that if the news got to Pilate they would handle it.

- Notice they never denied the story of angels opening the grave. The cover up gives more validity to the resurrection than it disproves it.

STILL TOLD TO THIS DAY

Matt writes that the story of Roman soldiers falling asleep and Jesus' body being stolen is still used as a way to discredit Christ's identity.

- Jesus' body has never been recovered and no evidence has led to any explanation of what happened to Jesus. **To be fair, it boils down to a desire to know God, faith in His Word, and experiencing His power.**

THE GREAT COMMISSION (MATTHEW 28:16-20)

40 DAYS OF HANGING WITH HIS PEEPS

After the disciples went to a mountain in Galilee that Jesus told them to go to, they saw Jesus and worshiped Him, "though some doubted."

- This is where the other gospel accounts really add richness. Luke 24 has the Road to Emmaus account, and John 20 tells us of doubting Thomas. Matt omitted some details to get us to his main point.

MATTHEW DOESN'T MENTION THE ASCENSION

Again, all of the gospels have different audiences and slightly different objectives. The ascension (Lk. 24) and Peter's restoration (Jn. 21) are important, but not imperative to Matt's purpose of sharing the identity and Great Commission of Jesus.

- **Matt. 28:19-20 is one of the most important passages in the entire Bible.**

"ALL AUTHORITY HAS BEEN GIVEN TO ME..."

Before Jesus tells His followers what they're to do, He reminds them of Who they're following, the all-powerful God of the Universe.

- **Without the Savior's authority the mission of Jesus' followers would be destined to fail.** This is why we see the endeavors of the world constantly fall flat. **Humanity alone has no true power.**

"GO..."

The command to move is vitally important. **The life of a Christian should have purpose, meaning, movement, and intentionality.** We're not called to coast, but to **be active in pursuing holiness and fighting evil.**

- **We're also called to go to the unbelieving world around us in order to show the love and power of Jesus to them.**

"...AND MAKE DISCIPLES"

The heart of Jesus' mission was to save souls and usher them into His kingdom. We are called to go out and share the gospel and do everything we can to bridge the gap between the lost and God.

- **Discipleship starts at "hello," but we also need to intentionally build relationships that eventually lead to Jesus.**

"...BAPTIZING THEM"

True disciples reach a definitive point of commitment. Baptism is the most visible way to show that we have chosen to follow Jesus, and disciples of Christ are to be encouraging others to publicly commit to the faith.

- Baptism can never lose its importance! Paul wrote that **baptism is the death of the old self and the birth of the new.**

"TEACHING THEM TO OBSERVE EVERYTHING I HAVE COMMANDED"

Here is where we drop the ball most often. We are not only to accept Christ and respond in baptism, we are to learn the teachings of His Word and live them out everyday.

- **Relationship and life change happen when we apply the principles of God to our lives. This is what a TRUE Christian does.**

"AND REMEMBER, I AM WITH YOU ALWAYS"

The Great Commission is not easy, nor is simply living the Christian faith, but with **God's help and the infilling of His Holy Spirit we can live out the commands and mission of Jesus.**

- **The key is desire and obedience! Though we will make mistakes, if we want to live righteously, God will graciously help us.**

IT HAS BEEN BUILDING TO THIS

- The entire book of Matthew leads up to, and equips us on how to live the Great Commission.
- We learn that the foundation of life and passage into the afterlife is found in the true identity of Jesus. **It is only by knowing Who He is that we learn who we are.**
- As a Christ follower we must know His commands are unbending but His grace is unending.
- We must understand that Jesus holds all authority, and He gives us authority in His name to do His work. **We can lead and enact change if we live in God's power and authority.**
- We must believe that **Jesus is the only hope for a broken world headed for destruction. But, in order to present Christ, we must make His teachings the basis of our character.**
- Jesus tells us how to carry out **the mission of living righteously and teaching others to do the same,** and there will be a great reward for the faithful.

TAKING AN HONEST INVENTORY

- Do we know and have a relationship with the biblical Jesus Christ?
- Are we living by the principles and commands of the Bible?
- Do we trust in the power and authority of Jesus and His Word?
- Are we disciples of Christ making more disciples of Christ?