

THE KING IS ALIVE—GO TELL

Matthew 28:16-20

Intro. Have you ever seen or been involved in an event which quickly and unexpectedly turned from defeat to victory? We have watched televised coverage of storms and earthquakes when an unexpected survivor was unearthed. We can only image the relief and profound joy. The agonizing defeat of Golgotha is transformed into the Triumph of Galilee. These verses offer magnificent conclusion to the Gospel of Matthew but it is, in fact more of a beginning than an end.

This final section picks up two themes which are at heart of Matthew's Gospel. In 1:1-17 Jesus was presented as successor to royal dignity and 2:1-12 portrays him as true "King of the Jews." In due course he entered Jerusalem as her King (21:1-11), but that claim sent Him to the cross, where it was repeated in ridicule (27:37). But now we know the rest of the story.

The crucifixion and resurrection are the prelude to the greatest story ever told or conceived—that the message and rule of the resurrected King will be extended to all nations on earth. But wonder of wonders you are part of that unfolding story.

1. Obedience—the Prerequisite of Mission (16)

Perhaps you noticed the focus on "11." Attention is called to the tragedy of Judas. The betrayer is no longer among them. His fate was sealed by his unbelief and disobedience.

But don't become distracted, the focus is on the 11 who have made their way to Galilee, to the place "where Jesus had directed them." (See 36:32 and 28:10). In spite of their grief and their doubt (note v. 17), they still obeyed Christ.

We are sometimes deterred in our mission because of our fear and doubt. We wonder whether our neighbor is just too hard for God. Will our witness make any difference? What will my little effort matter? We are witnesses and thus we must make a radical commitment to be obedient to tell our story.

2. Worship—The Impetus for our Mission (17)

Their first impulse must be ours—"they worshipped Him." Bible is brutally honest—"some doubted." Greek word does not indicate a settled unbelief but a state of uncertainty or hesitation.

Worship proceeds from understanding of who God is—He is the resurrected and rightful King and thus deserves worship. He alone is worthy of our worship. It is the profound privilege of worship that lays the foundation for our mission. The knowledge that He is sovereign God, the only rightful King compels us to tell the nations.

3. All Authority—The Basis of our Mission (18)

This is the first “all” statement. It will be followed by three similar ones. “All nations,” “teach them to obey all things,” and “I am with you always.”

The verb tense is ingressive aorist, “has been given.” The prophecy that the Son of Man would be enthroned as ruler of the world has not been fulfilled by virtue of the resurrection. You may recall that Satan once offered him “all the kingdoms of the world and men’s glory.” Now, by virtue of His obedience He has received far more than Satan could offer—He has received all authority in heaven and earth.

It is this authority that is the basis of our mission. In Eph. 1:14-21 Paul prays that the church will come to comprehend the authority and empowering made available through the cross.

4. All Nations—The Scope of our Mission (19)

The universal lordship of the King mandates a universal mission. The kingdom of the Son of man described by Daniel (7:14) requires “disciples of all nations.” This has been anticipated throughout the Gospel—a people of God where membership is not based on race or ethnicity but on a relationship with God through His Messiah.

The imperative is to disciple the nations. Baptizing and teaching translate participles which specify what is involved in the disciple-making process. John’s baptism had been a preparatory one and now Jesus institutes one with a greater allegiance. It is “into the name” of The Father, The Son, and the Holy Spirit. The experience of God in all three persons is the essential basis of discipleship. Interestingly “name” is singular which underlines the unity of Father, Son, and Spirit.

Up until now Jesus alone has been the teacher. Now disciples are to take over His role as teacher. Our teaching is not abstract—it is “observe all that I have commanded you.” Making disciples is not complete until it leads to a life of observing Jesus’ commands.

Are you involved in discipling the nations? Are you discipling your children? How?

5. The Promise—Eternal Impact

The promise is not simply His presence, it is His eternal presence. Don’t miss this! Ezekiel ended his prophecy with the assurance of Jehovah Shammah—“The Lord is there” (Ezek. 48:35). Gospels open with Immanuel—“God with us” (Matt. 1:24). Assurance of resurrection and ultimate victory of His kingdom is promised to His disciples. Now look at Revelation 21:3-4 and 21:22-27.

Do you understand the impact of this promise? By praying, going, giving, and sending to the nations, you can live this life with eternal impact. What are you doing today that has eternal significance?

Invitation.

