

Jesus Sends on Mission

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So What: Why the Resurrection Matters | May 3, 2026 | Acts 1:6-11; Romans 8:11; John 20:21; Matthew 28:16-20

Prepared from the spoken message and lightly edited for readability. Scripture quotations and spoken phrasing are preserved as delivered.

All right, I want to invite you to take God's Word and turn to Matthew chapter 28. As you're turning there, also find Acts chapter 1. We're going to look at these two passages in detail today.

We're concluding this message series, So What? Why the Resurrection Matters. I'm very excited about this particular message because it's the culmination of everything that we've talked about up to this point. All of the various messages that we've listened to over the last five or six weeks really flow into this one.

So far, we've talked about the resurrection of Jesus. By the way, the resurrection of Jesus is the greatest, most significant event in all of human history, okay? Nothing else comes even close. We understand this, right? The resurrection of Jesus is everything. It's what distinguishes Jesus. It's what sets Him apart from every other religious figure who has ever lived.

Jesus is the only man who claimed to be God and demonstrated His deity. He proved it by getting up out of the grave, and that's a glorious thing.

Muhammad never claimed to be God, and he certainly didn't get out of the grave. You can go to the Prophet's Mosque in Medina, Saudi Arabia, and there you will find his bones.

Buddha never claimed to be God. You can go to what are called stupas - think monuments - that are scattered all over India. In different monuments, they have the cremated remains of Buddha. He's there if you go.

Confucius never claimed to be God. Yet you can go to the Shandong province in China, where he grew up, and you'll find his remains.

We could go on and on and on. Any religious figure, every religious figure who claimed to be a prophet or close to God, you go and you will find their bones. Joseph Smith, representing Mormonism; Charles Russell, representing Jehovah's Witnesses - you go and you will find that these were mere mortals. Their bones are still there.

However, you go to the Holy Land like we do from time to time. We're not going anytime soon, but when we go back, we'll go to the traditional place where Jesus was buried. And heads up: nobody's there, all right? When I say nobody, I mean no separate-word body. No body is there.

Jesus was raised from the dead. According to the Scriptures, more than 500 people saw Him after He beat death and was raised from the dead. Depending on how you count them, we have 10 to 12 post-resurrection appearances of Jesus in Scripture. Each of them teaches us something about Jesus, and they teach us

something about ourselves.

Each week, we have seen how the risen Christ meets people exactly where they are. He met a grieving Mary in the garden, and we saw that Jesus is hope. He met a couple of disciples on the road to Emmaus who were confused, and He brought understanding. He met Thomas in his doubt and disbelief and gave him peace for his troubled soul. Last week, Pastor Emery Coffin did a great job of showing how Jesus showed up in Peter's life at a time of failure, and He extended forgiveness and restoration.

In today's passage of Scripture covering this post-resurrection appearance, we're actually going to look at two of them in detail. He doesn't simply meet a need in His followers' lives. He gives His disciples - and, by extension, me and you - a new purpose, a new assignment. He gives His followers a mission.

That's the title that I'm taking for the message today: Jesus Sends Us on Mission.

Champion Forest, this is the purpose of our lives, and it's the purpose of this church. The resurrection is more than an event in history. It changes our here and now. As a result, it should influence and affect the future of every single person we come in contact with, because as we go, we should be living on mission.

We can live on mission with a purpose because Jesus gives us His presence. The resurrection secures this. He gives us His power. The resurrection unleashes His power in our lives. We'll see this in just a moment. And we have His promise. The resurrection settles this promise in our lives.

Let's look at it together. Matthew chapter 28, starting in verse 16, says this:

Now the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain to which Jesus had directed them.

— Matthew 28:16

It's very important when you're studying the Scripture to look at context. Jesus often did incredible things on mountains. This is what I wrote my first book, *The Mountains Are Calling*, about - mountaintop experiences in the Bible.

Think Abraham and Isaac at Mount Moriah. Think Moses giving the Ten Commandments at Mount Sinai. Think Elijah and the battle of the gods at Mount Carmel.

Turn to the New Testament. Jesus preached His first sermon not in the temple in Jerusalem, but on the mountainside there in Galilee. At the Mount of Transfiguration, who Jesus was on the inside was manifested on the outside for the very first time. He died at Mount Calvary. He promises to return to the Mount of Olives.

A lot of things happened on mountains. When Jesus takes His people to a mountain, just get ready, because He's getting ready to do something special, teach something special, or reveal something about Himself.

Here, He takes them to an unnamed mountain in Galilee. Listen to what it says in verse 17:

And when they saw him they worshiped him, but some doubted.

— Matthew 28:17

That verse has always amazed me. I love the humanity and the honesty of the Scriptures. Many are worshipping the resurrected Christ there, but the Bible plainly says there are some who just can't wrap their minds around it. They're thinking, "Is this a reality? What am I seeing here?"

Verse 18:

And Jesus came and said to them, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me.

"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,

"teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age."

— Matthew 28:18-20

Now, very quickly, turn to Acts chapter 1. We'll look at another post-resurrection appearance of Jesus. This doesn't take place on a mountain in Galilee shortly after the resurrection. This takes place on a mountain near Jerusalem, the Mount of Olives, 40 days after the resurrection.

We'll start in verse 6 of Acts chapter 1:

So when they had come together, they asked him, "Lord, will you at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?"

— Acts 1:6

The disciples are still thinking about Jesus establishing an earthly kingdom reign and rule, and He will one day, but not this day.

Verse 7:

He said to them, "It is not for you to know times or seasons that the Father has fixed by his own authority.

"But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth."

And when he had said these things, as they were looking on, he was lifted up, and a cloud took him out of their sight.

And while they were gazing into heaven as he went, behold, two men stood by them in white robes, and said, "Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking into heaven?"

"This Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will come in the same way as you saw him go into heaven."

— Acts 1:9-11

So, two different appearances at two different times, both revealing pretty much the same thing: We have a directive. We have a commission to go into the world and be witnesses for the Lord Jesus Christ.

Now, one more post-resurrection account. We're not going to look at it in detail. It came right before Jesus

showed up with Thomas. If you remember, Thomas was not there when Jesus had come the first time to the disciples. In that first appearance to the disciples right after the resurrection, Jesus said this:

As the Father has sent me, even so I am sending you.

— John 20:21

In three of the post-resurrection appearances of Christ, we have this mission that Jesus gives us: "I am sending you into the world." He doesn't just invite us to follow Him or to believe in Him. He invites us into a relationship in which He sends us the same way the Father sent Him.

The Scope of the Mission

I want you to notice the scope of the mission that God gives. In Matthew 28:19, we are told to go and make disciples of all nations. It's the word *ethne*, where we get our word *ethnic* from. It literally means people groups.

We are to go into all of the world as disciples of the Lord Jesus Christ, and we are to make disciples of all nations, of all people groups.

If you're interested in this kind of stuff, I would encourage you to go to a website called the Joshua Project. The Joshua Project is made up of missiologists who work with different missionary organizations all over the world. According to their numbers, there are some 17,000 to 17,500 people groups. These are individual people groups, made up of different numbers of people, that share a language, dialect, customs, and culture.

Of those 17,000 to 17,500 people groups, according to the Joshua Project, 7,000 remain unreached. That means there's less than a two percent evangelical witness among them, or no witness at all. That totals about three billion people who, get this, have never heard the name of Jesus.

The resurrection that we've been highlighting over these last five or six weeks in this series - they've never heard of it. According to the Great Commission in Matthew 28, Acts 1:8, and John 20:21, this is part of our target audience that Jesus has told us to go to.

In fact, look at Acts 1:8. He said:

But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.

— Acts 1:8

I'll show you an image on the screen here. It's almost like concentric circles that just go outward. If you read the Acts of the Apostles, that New Testament book, this is an outline of what happens in that book. The gospel starts to spread in Jerusalem. Then, because of persecution, the disciples are forced to go out. They go to the surrounding area - Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria - and by the time you get to the end of Acts, Paul is taking the gospel to the known world.

We're told that we're to be His witnesses. This isn't just about geographic zones, okay? This is about cultural and societal zones as well. We are to cross whatever lines we have to in order to intentionally take the

message of the gospel to people, even people who don't like us and even people who don't look like us.

Are you kidding me? Jesus says, "To Samaria?" For a first-century Jew, that was enemy territory. And Jesus says, "You go here."

As God's witnesses, we are to walk across the street and go across to the nations, taking His good news wherever we go. We cross racial lines. We cross political lines to people who don't think like we do. We follow Jesus on the mission that He gives us to our neighbors and to the nations.

The scope of this mission is huge. On its surface, it's overwhelming if you really think about it. I'm sitting here talking to you today, but just think about that message that we're to go. What does that even mean?

For the stay-at-home mom, what does it mean for you to be a witness to the nations? For the middle school student or high school student, what does this mean, that you are to go with the gospel to the world? What does it mean for the young professional just getting started in a career, for the retired couple, or for the dad working two jobs to make ends meet?

God is calling me to go? How does that work? What does that even look like?

Let's first begin by defining what a witness is. I think sometimes we complicate these things and make them more complex than they ought to be. I don't have a screen note for this, but just write this down if you're taking notes: A witness, biblically defined, is someone who testifies to what they have seen and what they have heard.

That's the biblical definition of a witness. Someone who testifies, just like if we were having court in session today. A witness gets up and testifies to what they've seen and what they've heard.

What had the disciples seen? The resurrected Christ. What had they heard? According to Acts 1:3, He was teaching them for 40 days before He ascended about the kingdom of God. They were to witness to what they had seen and what they had heard.

The same extends to me and you. We've never seen Jesus, the resurrected Jesus, with our physical eyes, but we have seen Him by faith. So we testify to what we have seen - the grace of God in our lives - and to what we have heard, the message that is communicated in the Scripture.

This is what a witness is. We are to go from our Jerusalem to Judea to Samaria, wherever we go, being a witness for the Lord.

No doubt, of course, God calls some people to uproot their lives and their families. That's a special calling on their lives to go overseas and give their lives somewhere where there is little to no witness.

Champion Forest, you have historically supported, and we still do to this day, missions in a big way. Part of your giving goes to support missions. In fact, over the last six years, we've given nearly \$12 million to worldwide missions.

When you give, it's very important that you know part of your giving is going to support those who have

uprooted their lives, gone to the nations, and are literally doing exactly what Jesus commands here. It's part of what your giving goes toward. You ought to be very proud of that. I want you to have confidence in that, because even if you aren't physically going, you're supporting it when you give.

It's a special calling, and I need to do a better job of calling out the called, because there are some of you right now whom God could be speaking to. Maybe you just went through Experiencing God with us, and there's this burning in your heart. Or maybe you're a student, and every time you hear God's Word, the message just burns in you. You want to share it with someone.

I have no idea what God is speaking to hearts in this room, but there are some of you who know we can't get preachers and evangelists into some of these nations God calls us to go to. We're not allowed to go as preachers and evangelists, but they'll take schoolteachers, doctors, and businesspeople all day long.

You could go with the gospel through your area of expertise. Students, you could go to college, get that degree, and use it to get to the nations so that you can share Jesus with people who have never heard His name.

That is a special calling. If God is working in your heart, we want to be a part of that process. Come talk to us, and let us pray with you and discern what that looks like.

But most of us are going to be missionaries right here in Jerusalem, where we live. We ask God, "Lord, give me that missionary heart so that I can be a witness for You wherever I go, wherever I live, wherever I work, and wherever I play. I want to be a sent one for You."

Charles Spurgeon said, "Every Christian is either a missionary or an impostor." What he's saying is exactly what we're communicating today: When Jesus got out of that grave, part of the reason He got out of the grave was to commission us and be with us as we live on mission for Him.

I've preached on the Great Commission and Acts 1:8 so many times. In fact, when I was writing this sermon this week, one of the first things I did was go to my sermon file and pull every sermon I've ever preached on this topic. I can promise you that I have preached more on the topic of the Great Commission and Acts 1:8 than any other subject I have in my sermon file.

I was just pulling them out and reading: "What did I say about that last time?" I saw one point where I did an illustration. Some of you remember this. I brought a peanut butter and jelly sandwich up onstage. Do you remember this? Some of you who were here do.

I love peanut butter and jelly. Can I get a witness? It's getting close to lunchtime, all right?

Early on, I'd come home after being married, and Debbie had made dinner. I'd say, "Oh, that's all right. I'll just make a peanut butter and jelly sandwich." I did that twice, all right? I never did it after that.

I like peanut butter and jelly, and I call the Great Commission the peanut butter and jelly verse of the Bible, all right?

If you look at Matthew 28:18, you have the peanut butter:

All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me.

— Matthew 28:18

If Jesus gets out of the grave, He's in control. He gets a say in our lives. Can we agree with that? I mean, if you beat death, You're the Lord. He says, "All authority has been given to Me." That's verse 18.

The second part of verse 20 is the jelly:

And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.

— Matthew 28:20

We go under the umbrella of God's authority. "All authority has been given to Me" - peanut butter. And we have His presence with us. He's never going to leave us. He's always with us. You put that together, and you've got peanut butter and jelly magic right there, all right? It's the Great Commission.

We can go wherever He sends because we go under the umbrella of His authority, and we have His presence in our lives.

I want to unpack that here in this moment. There are three facts from Scripture that should encourage you, motivate you, and steady you on this missionary calling God has us on.

We Have His Presence

Number one, we have His presence. The resurrection secures this. When He sends us, we don't go by ourselves. He is with you.

And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.

— Matthew 28:20

I want you to think about that statement. As you go into your Jerusalem tomorrow morning, or when you leave this parking lot, what does the sign say? "You're entering your mission field." That's your Jerusalem. As you go, you go on mission.

When we think about being witnesses for the Lord, sometimes fear creeps in. But I want you to think about the fact that Jesus is with you.

If you knew that Jesus was with you, right beside you, what conversation would you fear having with someone about spiritual things? If He was right there beside you, you wouldn't fear at all.

What about rejection? Would you fear rejection when being a witness for Christ, testifying to what you've seen and what you've heard with a work associate, a friend, somebody you're working out with, or a neighbor? Would you fear that at all if Jesus was right there beside you?

What if you're looking at your budget, and you want to give up a certain amount so that you can give it to missions? You want to give so that the name of Christ, which is not known somewhere, can be known there and so we can be a part of this world-saving mission that God has called us on.

Would you fear anything if Jesus was right there with you, looking at your checkbook, seeing how you're doing things, and looking at what's in your account? Would you fear your needs not being met or wonder whether you could make this sacrifice if Jesus was right there with you? Of course you wouldn't.

Well, the reality is that Jesus is right here with you. It's not a feeling that you have to muster up. This isn't some metaphor. God's presence is a reality in our lives because of the resurrection.

The same Jesus who appeared to Mary in the garden, the disciples on the road to Emmaus, Thomas when he was doubting in the upper room, and Peter when he was out on the Sea of Galilee soaking in his failure - the same Jesus who appeared to all of them is right here with you.

It's an incredible thought that He is with us. If you knew He was with you, you would have no fear about being a witness.

In 1855, there was a Sunday school teacher who had, I believe, a 17-year-old kid in his Sunday school class. According to this Sunday school teacher's own admission, the kid was not very close to the Lord. He would see him struggling to find the book of the Bible that he was being asked to turn to, and the teacher just got a heart for this kid.

The kid worked at a shoe store in Boston. One day, this Sunday school teacher felt impressed to go to that kid's place of employment and share Jesus with him.

Edward Kimball was the Sunday school teacher's name. Listen to what he said: "I have seen few persons whose minds were spiritually darker than was his when he came into my Sunday school class."

So he went to this shoe shop to visit him. He said, "I went up to him and put my hand on his shoulder, and then I made my plea. I feel it was really a very weak one. I simply told him of Christ's love for him and the love Christ wanted in return. That was all there was of it. It seemed that the young man was just ready for the light that then broke upon him, for there at once, back in that shoe store in Boston, the future great evangelist gave himself and his life to Christ."

Do you know who that 17-year-old kid was? It was the great evangelist D. L. Moody, one of the greatest evangelists of the 19th century. He shared Jesus all over England and all over the United States.

He trusted Christ in Boston and made his way to Chicago. His church in Chicago later renamed itself in his honor. We have Moody Bible Institute, Moody Church, and Moody Publishers. That D. L. Moody was the 17-year-old kid whose Sunday school teacher came, tapped him on the shoulder, and, because God was with him, was a testimony and a witness to this kid.

This past week in Boston - again, y'all pray for my wife because she's married to this right here, all right? - I said, "There is a sign somewhere in Boston because I'd read somewhere about D. L. Moody."

So we didn't go visit the Freedom Trail or the American history sites. We went looking for this D. L. Moody sign, and I found it, all right? It's on the side of a building. You have to be looking for it. This is the place where his old shoe shop was and where he trusted Christ.

Listen to what D. L. Moody said: "If we are true Christians, we should all be missionaries. Christ came down from heaven on a mission, and if we have His Spirit in us, we will be missionaries too."

We have His presence. When He's with us, we have nothing to fear.

We Have His Power

Secondly, we have His power. Again, the resurrection unleashes this in our lives. Romans 8:11 says that the same Spirit who raised Christ from the dead lives in you. That's power.

We have His power. This is the secret to the mission. God doesn't just go with us. He's living in us.

Do you remember Acts 1:4-5? Before He ever says, "Go and be My witnesses," He says, "You wait in Jerusalem." What were they to wait on? Power from on high. They were to wait for the promise, the Holy Spirit.

You will be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now.

— Acts 1:5

They were baptized when the Holy Spirit came with power. It's the word *dunamis*, where we get our word dynamite from. It means force. It means energy.

The power of the gospel and the Holy Spirit in one who witnesses the gospel to others is dynamic in its working. Wherever we go, Christian, according to Jesus in John chapter 14, we have the Holy Spirit, the Helper, who is there with us.

When we go, we are simply testifying to what we have seen and what we have heard. You are a witness.

A testimony is: "This was my life before Christ. This is how I met Christ. This is what my life has been like since I came to know Christ."

If you're a believer in the Lord Jesus, every single one of you has a testimony. Every single one of you has the Spirit. You put that together, and there's great power in it.

The Acts of the Apostles really should be called the Acts of the Holy Spirit Through the Apostles. As they went witnessing, sharing their testimony, and testifying to what they had seen and what they had heard, God the Holy Spirit did amazing things.

Last Sunday, we went to Hope Fellowship Church in Cambridge, Massachusetts. It's a church that we helped plant when I was serving with my church in Dallas. Three times a year for 10 years, we went to help this church get started in Cambridge, Massachusetts, right on the heels of Harvard University.

It was starting from the ground up. At that time, there were little to no evangelical churches in Boston. The pastor's name was Curtis Cook. We're about the same age, and he's like an older brother to me. We just became friends.

For 10 years, three times a year, we would go up there. We would serve, do outreach, and try to tell people about the church. It was a joy for Debbie and me to go back this past Sunday and see two services packed.

They've planted nine churches in the last 20 years in Boston. They have granddaughter churches that have now saturated the city.

How did this happen? Let me tell you something. It's not because of Curtis Cook, as great a pastor as he is. He's a graduate of Oklahoma State University, all right? That doesn't happen at Harvard. Are you kidding me?

What happened was the power of the Holy Spirit using regular believers like me and you to be witnesses, testifying to the truth. As a result, God is drawing people to Himself.

We have His presence. We have His power.

We Have His Promise

Third and finally, we have His promise. This is about the second coming. This is fuel for our mission.

What keeps us going? The urgency that Jesus is coming back.

Do you see that picture there in Acts 1:9-11? Jesus says these things:

And when he had said these things, as they were looking on, he was lifted up, and a cloud took him out of their sight.

And while they were gazing into heaven as he went, behold, two men stood by them in white robes, and said, "Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking into heaven?"

"This Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will come in the same way as you saw him go into heaven."

— Acts 1:9-11

Meaning, He's going to return physically, and He's going to return visibly.

"What are you staring up into the sky for? Get to work."

The clock started ticking on Jesus' return as soon as He was lifted up. He is closer to His return today than He was 2,000 years ago when He ascended back to His Father.

This is a promise. He is coming again.

Second Peter says He is not slow concerning His promise, but He is patient, not willing that any should perish. If you're here today thinking, "Why hasn't He come back?" it's so that more lost people can come to know Him. More lost people come to know Him when more saved people go out on mission for Him.

This is what we're called to do.

The ratio, if you're interested, is eight to one: first-coming prophecies to second-coming prophecies. There were 300 prophecies that Jesus would come the first time. He came, okay? There are 300 prophecies in the New Testament that He's coming a second time and 1,500 in the Old Testament.

It's going to happen, and there is a sense of urgency. As long as there is one person in Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, or the uttermost parts of the earth who doesn't know Him, we have work to do, and it's on us.

I was doing some research for this message this week. Being up in Boston and New England, I saw that what were called rescue societies were formed in New England.

Rescue societies were made up of people who owned boats. They would get together, and when a distress call came because there was trouble out on the Atlantic and somebody was perishing or there was a fear of it, these rescue societies would jump into their boats and go rescue the boat that was in danger.

They would come back, whether they succeeded or failed, have a meal together, and talk about it. They became rescue societies. The more people they rescued, the more people decided they wanted to be a part of that, so they brought their boats.

But here's the tragedy. Here's what happened over time: Those rescue societies stopped sending their boats out.

The job was too dangerous. The cost was too much. They enjoyed the fellowship and community they had among one another and the meals they shared. Do you want to know what these rescue societies became? True story. Yacht clubs.

They just stayed there. There was a marina close by where they could park their boats. These yacht clubs would have restaurants where their members could come in, have nice meals, and fellowship together. Some of them marked out beaches where their members could come, lie out, enjoy the sun, and swim every now and then.

You know where I'm going with this story, don't you?

Champion Forest, we can't ever become a yacht club. That's not who we are.

God has given us so much. We have beautiful facilities. We're here in the suburbs, living large in northwest Houston. But we cannot let comfort and luxury rob us of the mission God has called us to, and that is to go into the world and rescue souls who are perishing, to care for those who are dying.

This is what we've been called to, and we can't say no to it. We can't get comfortable. We can't get comfortable.

As a member of this church, you had better ask yourself a question: "Why am I a member of this church?"

This is not about us. This is not about us. We are here for the sole purpose of doing what Jesus commissioned us to do: to go on mission to our neighbors and to the nations and to rescue those who are perishing.

We will not get comfortable. We will not live in luxury. We will stay on mission.

The great theologian Carl F. H. Henry said that the gospel is only good news if it gets there on time. I'm telling you, we have good news to share. But Jesus could return at any moment. We have work to do.

I'm calling you to two things as we close this message out. In my journal, I have a card. On one side is my life-

purpose statement. I look at it nearly every morning when I'm praying and journaling. On the backside are just some motivational things that I look at and pray about. It's just a note card.

On there, I have a prayer: I want God to write two things on my heart. The application of this message is for you to begin praying, "God, would You write this on my heart?"

Number one, the name of Jesus. Write His name on my heart. All authority has been given to Him. He championed death and got out of the grave. He owns our hearts.

"Lord, may the name of Jesus always be on my heart."

Secondly, write on my heart the name of the lost. Somebody in my circle of influence - a waiter, the person cutting my hair, or a family member. Write the name of the lost on my heart.

Why does the resurrection matter? Because the name of Jesus matters. The lost matter.

So, Champion Forest, let's stay on mission until He comes. Amen.