

Jesus Sends on Mission

Matt. 28:16-20, Acts 1:8

SERIES “So What”

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We are concluding this message series, *So What? Why the Resurrection Matters* today, and I am VERY excited about this particular message because it is the culmination of everything we have talked about up to this point.

ALL of the messages actually flow INTO this one we’re looking at today.

So far in our series, we have talked about how the resurrection of Jesus – and BTW - it is the greatest and most significant event in human history...we understand this, right?! NOTHING else even comes close.

It’s what distinguishes Jesus...it’s what sets him apart from every other religious figure to ever live. ONLY Jesus claimed to be God AND to demonstrate (i.e., prove his Deity) by raising from the dead.

- Muhammad - He never claimed to be God, and you can visit his remains within what is called “The Prophet’s Mosque in Medina, Saudi Arabia...
- Buddha – He never claimed to be God, and you can visit his cremated remains in what is called “stupas” – think monuments or shrines all across India...
- Confucius – He didn’t claim to be God, and his remains are buried in the Shandong Province in China where he grew up...

We could go on and on...any religious figure you choose – at the most they considered themselves prophets. People like Joseph Smith, the founder of Mormonism or Charles Russell, the founder of Jehovah’s Witnesses – NONE of them claimed to be God and ALL of them – we could go dig their bones up and show that they were mere mortal.

Illus. Trips to Israel – On our trips to Israel we go to the holy sites...the traditional place where Jesus was buried. And guess what?! There is NO BODY – NOT NOBODY, but NO – next word – BODY there!

ONLY Jesus – claimed to be God and according to eyewitnesses – (MORE than 500 people) saw him after he was raised from the dead.

According to scripture, we have 10-12 depending on how you count appearances of Jesus AFTER his resurrection and each of them teach us something about Jesus and teach us something about ourselves.

So far, we’ve talked in this series and said that:

- Jesus is Hope...

- Jesus brings Understanding...
- Jesus gives Peace...
- Jesus offers Restoration/Forgiveness...

This week, we're going to see...and this is the title of the message today: **Jesus Sends on Mission**

Now, every week up to this point we have seen the risen Christ meet people meet people exactly where they were. He met:

- Mary Magdalene, in her grief...
- The disciples on the road to Emmaus in their confusion...
- Thomas, in his doubt...
- Peter in his failure...

In today's passages of scripture and in covering this post-resurrection appearance of Jesus, he doesn't just meet a specific need in his follower's lives, he gives them a new purpose...a new assignment...he gives them...and sends them on mission.

This, Champion Forest IS the purpose of our lives. THIS is what makes the resurrection so much more than simply an event in history – the resurrection of Jesus changes our “here and now”.

The resurrection of Jesus is NOT something we simply believe in, it's something we live for.

And here is what we are going to see today. Jesus sends us on mission – and because of his resurrection, we don't go it alone. We can go on mission and live on mission with confidence BECAUSE in the resurrection:

- We have his presence...
- We have his power...
- We have his promise...

Let's look at a couple of post-resurrection appearances of Jesus today. We'll start in Matthew's gospel.

Matt. 28:16-20 – “**Now the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain to which Jesus had directed them.** (mountains play an important part in scripture – God often demonstrated powerful works and revealed himself in unique ways on mountaintops: think Moriah, Sanai, Carmel, Sermon on the Mount, Mount of Transfiguration, Calvary – here for the Great Commission, it's an unmade mountain in Galilee) ¹⁷ **And when they saw him they worshiped him, but some doubted.** (that verse has always amazed me!) ¹⁸ **And Jesus came and said to them, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me.¹⁹ 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,²⁰ teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.”**”

Let's very quickly look at another post-resurrection appearance of Jesus. This one doesn't take place on a mountain in Galilee just after the resurrection, but on a mountain back in Jerusalem – the Mount of Olives, forty days after the resurrection.

Acts 1:6-11 – “So when they had come together, they asked him, “Lord, will you at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?” (The disciples are still thinking earthly kingdom rule) ⁷ He said to them, “It is not for you to know times or seasons that the Father has fixed by his own authority. ⁸ 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.” ⁹ 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. ¹⁰ And while they were gazing into heaven as he went, behold, two men stood by them in white robes, ¹¹ 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.”

Two different appearances at two different times, but both reveal pretty much the same thing. Jesus is sending his disciples on mission.

Before we unpack these texts in detail, I want to remind you of what Jesus said in another post-resurrection that we looked at several weeks ago before he appeared to Thomas. It's found in:

John 20:21 – “As the Father has sent me, even so I am sending you.”

Very important: Jesus doesn't just invite us to follow him or to simply believe in him. He SENDS us in the very same way the Father sent him.

The mission for our lives flows directly from the resurrection. THIS is why the resurrection matters!

- The Father SENT the Son.
- The Son SENDS us.

Now, I want you to notice in all this the scope of the mission Jesus sends us on: It's every believer...each disciple...TO the whole world.

- In Matthew's gospel – (Matt. 28:19) – “Go make disciples of all nations – the word “nations” there is literally the word “ethne” where we get the word “ethnic” from – it means “all peoples...or all people groups” ...

Illus. Joshua Project – this is an organization that tracks “people groups”. They estimate there are some 17,000-17, 500 people groups in the world today. They share a distinct language, culture and customs...and check this: according to their numbers – 7,000 remain “unreached” – they have little to no evangelical witness.

This represents over 3 billion people that have never heard the name of Christ. This is part of our “target audience” here that Jesus has told us to “go” to.

In (Acts 1:8b) – “You will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.”

Notice the concentric circles: Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, and to the world...it’s a map for us! These are four geographic zones...look here on this map

It’s more than just geographic zones though! Samaria was enemy territory to a first century Jewish person. And yet Jesus says, “be my witness there!”

Jesus calls us to be his witnesses wherever we live and wherever we go, and this call in (Acts 1:8) is a call to intentionally go to people who are different than us...those that we are opposed to and don’t like or that are opposed to us and don’t like us!

Our mission is across the city to those who look different than us...it’s across racial lines and across political lines to those that think differently than us.

It’s NOT just geographic in nature, it’s social and cultural as well. We are sent on mission across ocean to the nations, and across the street our neighbors both and at the same time.

If you read all of Acts, you see that (1:8) is a table of contents to the entire book because this is exactly what the disciples and the apostle Paul end up doing. The gospel moves from Jerusalem and because of persecution flows throughout Judea and Samaria and eventually through Paul’s ministry reaches the rest of the known world.

What a mission – the scope is HUGE! And I have to be honest with you it can feel a bit overwhelming!

God’s calling me (a stay-at-home mom, a student, a dad here working two jobs to make ends meet, a young professional just getting started in their career) – God is calling ME to “go” and make disciples of all nations?

How does that work? What does that even look like?

Here is what I want you to think about as it relates to going on mission and being a witness. A witness simply testifies to what he has seen and what he has heard. These disciples had seen Jesus die and they saw him after he had been raised back to life.

Upon his resurrection, he appears on numerous occasions, and we’re told in (Acts 1:3) that for the forty days he appeared, and spoke about the kingdom of God.

THIS is what they were a witness to. They told people what they had seen (the resurrected Jesus), and they told people what they had heard him say (his teachings about the kingdom).

This is what being a witness is...it's just that simple. It's not meant to be complex...it's not meant to be complicated.

The mission is to be a witness to the world – we share what we have seen and what we have heard everywhere we go. From Jerusalem to our Judea to our Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.

Of course, God is going to raise up certain individuals to leave the comforts of home and uproot their lives and families to take the gospel to far places that have never heard the good news – and we celebrate that!

It could be God is whispering a call to the nations in your heart today – no greater calling you could answer today!

For most of us though...the call to be a witness is going to be right here in Jerusalem. And here we are live as witnesses...testifying to all who will listen what we have seen and heard. We ask God to give us in Jerusalem for the heart of a missionary...a “sent one”.

Charles Spurgeon – “Every Christian is either a missionary or an imposter.”

What he is saying is just what is being communicated today. The resurrection of Jesus matters because it puts us on mission.

Illus. PB&J - I often and I've used this as an illustration here before likened the Great Commission to a good PB&J sandwich. There is NOTHING like a PB&J...can I get a witness?!

Well, in (v. 18) you have the peanut-butter – “all authority in heaven and earth has been given to me.” The resurrection PROVES Jesus in control and he is in charge! (Amen!) That's the peanut butter side of things.

Then in (v. 20b) you have the jelly! Jesus says, “I am with you always, to the end of age”. He's NOT sending you out alone...he's NOT sending you out and watching from a distance. He is WITH you!

You combine HIS authority with HIS presence in our lives and we get PB&J magic! We have everything we need to answer the call and go wherever he sends!

Let's look at three facts from scripture that should encourage, motivate and steady us in this calling.

1. We have his presence

Jesus doesn't just send us on mission. He doesn't just go with us on mission. He lives in us FOR mission. Jesus is with you and me as we attempt to be his witnesses.

“I am with you”. Think about that statement. If you knew God was with you, there would be nothing you fear:

- Speaking to someone about Jesus if he was right there with you?! You wouldn't fear that!
- The cost associated with sharing Jesus? If he was right there with you, would you fear what someone would think? Would you fear the consequences that came your way for sharing Jesus?
- If Jesus was with you, would you fear or be concerned with where he was telling you to go or what he was telling you to do?

NO WAY...NOT if Jesus was right there with you!

And here's the thing – he is right here with us! His presence isn't a metaphor! It's not a feeling we have to work up. His presence is a reality in our lives because of the resurrection!

The same Jesus that appeared to Mary in the garden, who walked the Emmaus Road with a couple of the disciples, who showed up in a locked room to a doubting Thomas and extended forgiveness to Peter who had failed – that God is present with you!

We have this assurance...this confidence that God – just like he was with Moses and Joshua and Gideon and the Psalmist, he is with us as well.

Illus. D.L. Moody - In 1858, there was a Sunday school teacher named Edward Kimball decided to visit a shoe store where one of his students worked, to talk to him about Christ. Listen to his testimony:

Edward Kimbell – “I have seen few persons whose minds were spiritually darker than was his when he came into my Sunday School class...(he went to his shoe store to visit him) I went up to him and put my hand on his shoulder... 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 in the back of that shoe store in Boston, the future great evangelist gave himself and his life to Christ.”

He did give his life to Christ and because of the empowered witness of a Sunday School teacher, D.L Moody came to know Christ.

He would go on to become one of if not the most famous evangelists of the 19th century. He was amazing...preached to thousands in America and in England. Founded the Moody Bible Institute...his church in Chicago sent scores of people on mission all over the world.

All because one Sunday School teacher decided to say yes to God's "GO" and went full of the Holy Spirit to be a witness for Jesus, and just look at what happened! I went by the place in Boston where Moody was converted...there is a plaque on the wall that reads (**SHOW PIC**)

D.L. Moody – “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.”

Come on!!! Jesus sends us on mission. Just go in his name and be a faithful witness. He is with us...we can go and be his witnesses!

That's not all we have though!

2. We have his power

If there was a "secret" to the mission...a "secret" to being sent on mission, this is it! We're not going to the world...we're not being witnesses in our own power!

We have the power of the living God IN us! We can be confident he is WITH us because as believers in Christ he lives IN us!

After the Great Commission, but before his ascension, Jesus gives a command BEFORE stating the commission again.

Acts 1:4a-5b – “And while staying with them he ordered them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the promise of the Father... you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now.”

Before there was a "GO" there was a "WAIT"! And what we're they to wait on?! The promise of the Spirit. They were waiting for power from on high!

This is interesting. We read the word "authority" in Matthew's gospel...He has ALL authority. In other words, our "GOING" is in his name...it's under his umbrella. He gives the RIGHT to go because this is his world and we're just living in it!

However, we don't just have the RIGHT to go (i.e. we're under his authority), his Holy Spirit power gives us the ABILITY to go! He infuses us with a supernatural ability and gifting we don't have apart from him!

The resurrection grants us BOTH these things! We "GO" on his authority and in/with his power!

You've probably heard the word "power" here in (Acts 1:8) is the word "dunamis" – it's where we get the word "dynamite". It's a word that means "force" or "energy" – POWER.

The power in our witness is the Holy Spirit! This is why it doesn't matter if you have a gospel presentation memorized or not...is it helpful? Sure! It's why we have our Three Circles plastered on a wall in the Great Hall – we think having a track to run on is good for sharing the gospel, but

at the end of the day what makes us effective witnesses is not the outline we have memorized, it's the Holy Spirit is IN us.

Wherever we go in the world, Christian, we are taking God with us! Jesus called him our "Helper" (John 14:16-17). I love the book in our New Testament called, *The Acts of the Apostles* but I would prefer to call it *The Acts of the Holy Spirit Through the Apostles* because that's what it really is!

Illus. Boston – Hope Fellowship c/o Curtis Cook, Uber Driver (that's the power of the Holy Spirit)

We have his power in us...we can go be his witnesses! Listen: Edward Kimball didn't have a seminary degree. He didn't have a polished outline. He had a testimony and was willing to share it in the power of the Holy Spirit.

That's what you have! If you are believer in the Lord Jesus, you have a testimony! This is:

- Who you were BEFORE you came to know Christ...
- How you met Jesus and when he changed your life...
- Who you are now (present tense) AFTER you have met Christ...

This is your testimony, and no one can argue it or dispute it! They might not believe it! How you live may limit its credibility! People may not receive it. But this is what you take to your neighbors and the nations – your story...your testimony in the power of the Holy Spirit and THIS is what God uses to change people's lives.

We have his presence. We have his power. Third and finally:

3. We have his promise

Now...this is motivation right here! He has already promised he will be with us until the end of age...but I want you to notice the promise of:

Acts 1:9-11 – “**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.** ¹⁰ **And while they were gazing into heaven as he went, behold, two men stood by them in white robes,** ¹¹ **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.”**”

Jesus is coming again...and his second coming is the fuel that our witness runs on!

See, there is a sense of urgency in this mission because once Jesus comes again, there is no more mission to complete...it'll be over!

The clock is ticking! And some of us are standing around like the two people the angels asked, “what are you staring out?” It's time to go and get to work! We have a responsibility...we have been sent on mission by the resurrected Jesus.

Why is he sending us on mission? Because there are people in Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria and the ends of the earth that need to be saved!

Jesus is coming back and THIS is why we have to take the gospel to our neighbors and to the nations. If he returns before they hear the gospel and put their trust in him, the Bible teaches that they will enter a Christless eternity and will forever be separated from him.

Illus. Rescue Society – I read this week in some research...and it was interesting being in Boston because this is where what was called “rescue societies” started. It was a group of people that came together with boats they owned and rescued people who were in trouble in the Atlantic Ocean.

When a distress call came in, they would race out, risking their own lives, to save the lives of people whose lives were in jeopardy. Almost all of the people who joined these rescue societies were boaters. Many were people who had been rescued and after being rescued themselves decided that they wanted to join the rescue society so they could help someone in the same way they’d been helped.

So, they’d go out, rescue people, or, sometimes, fail TRYING to rescue people. After a rescue attempt, they’d come back to their building, worn out, and share a meal together.

But, over time, some of the people in the rescue societies got tired of rescuing people. It wasn’t easy. But...they didn’t want to leave the rescue society, because they loved the other people there. They enjoyed the bond they had over being rescued and the sense of community they shared.

And so, guess what happened. Over time the “rescue societies” – you know what they became? Yacht clubs.

You know what a yacht club is?

- There’s a marina where you keep your boat...
- There’s a luxurious clubhouse w a restaurant and café and a bar...
- They usually have their own beach for their members to lay out on and swim and a swimming pool...

Amazing isn’t it. That in some places where “rescue societies” started out dedicated to rescuing people who were perishing abandoned their mission and became devoted to their own comfort...to having their own needs met...to living in luxury. That transition...that shift they made is a danger we face today.

God has called us believers...has called churches to be “rescue societies” and we can’t for a minute get complacent and comfortable and forget why we are here!

We exist to live for the mission of telling as many people as possible about the resurrected and the returning Jesus! Listen to me:

- You are not just a teacher in a classroom or a coach on the field or administrator in the school building ...you are a missionary to your school and the team you serve!
- You are not just a nurse on a hospital floor...you are an ambassador of hope in a place where people are most afraid and desperately need hope!
- You are not just a stay-at-home parent...you are a disciple-maker raising the next generation for Christ!
- You are not just in insurance or banking or sales...you are an emissary of God carrying his love into every conversation, every lunch, every appointment you schedule!

Jesus has promised he is returning...and it's sooner today than it was 2,000 years ago when he promised. I'll tell you this, he doesn't break his word...he keeps his promises and the promise of his return is motivation to say "YES" to the mission he sends us on!

Theologian, **Carl F.H. Henry** – **"The Gospel is only good news if it gets there in time."**

What better news is there to share the resurrection of Jesus. As we have seen in this series, He is hope. He brings understanding. He gives peace. He offers forgiveness and he sends on mission. People need to know Jesus, and they need to hear about him as we go! This mission is for EVERY believer to the WHOLE world.

Here's the closing application.

Illus. Card in my journal – I have several things written on it. Here are two statements I want to give as we bring this message to a close and I want you to write this down AND commit to pray this into your life.

"God, write these two things on my heart."

- **The name of Jesus** – that all of our life would be about him and this mission he sends us on.
- **The name of the LOST** - that you would carry them on your heart wherever you go.

Who is it? Write their name down. Begin praying for them right now, and ask God to open up a door for you to share...to be a witness to them. Ask God to bring someone in their path that will be a witness to them (Uber driver's wife).

THIS is why the resurrection matters! Because his name and the lost matter.

Jesus sends on mission. It's every believer to the whole world. Let's answer the call and "go" for his glory.

Will you pray with me?

Please Note: This document is not meant to be a published, cited, annotated research paper. It is simply a transcript of a spoken message, provided as a resource. Many commentaries, articles, and other sermon helps were likely studied and contributed to the forming of this message.