

Matthew 28:16-20: Engage the World

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Connecting Faith to Life / Matthew 28:16–20

Introduction

- <https://www.wesh.com/article/they-are-crimes-not-harmless-videos-ocala-teens-arrested-after-lawn-mower-joyride-inside-target-store/71129928> - Living for a viral moment rather than considering others, respecting authority, etc...Living like they're in charge of their lives...
- For followers of Jesus, easy to give in to the temptation to live like we are in charge rather than living knowing that Jesus is in charge.
- If Jesus is King who is in authority, then what He wants matters far more than what we want. What He wants is for us to engage the world with the Good News of salvation through His death and resurrection.
- If we choose to NOT live for the reason why Jesus left us on this earth, then we tend to drift into maintenance Christianity.
- Maintenance Christianity = I want to be around people who think like me, believe like me, affirm me, and help me. I don't want to take risks for my faith or live boldly - I want to be comfortable. I want stability, not stepping out into the unknown that faith requires.
- If maintenance Christianity is the goal, then we won't engage the world with the Gospel.
- Have you settled for maintenance living, or is your life characterized by missional living?
- For four weeks, we've talked about our church's priorities that help us connect faith to life. Today, our last priority: engage the world.

- This morning, I want to look at the last words of Jesus before He ascended- our marching orders. I want to show you three contrasts between maintenance living and missional live.

Maintenance living resists authority. Missional living submits to authority.

- Jesus had risen from the dead. In Matthew's resurrection account, Jesus appears to the women and tells them to tell the eleven disciples (Judas dead) to return to Galilee ([Matthew 28:8-10](#)).
- The disciples who by and large had scattered when Jesus was crucified. John the only one at the cross. Now, will make the 90 mile journey back to Galilee (3-5 day walk). Galilee - where it all started. Where Jesus had called them to Himself.
- vs. 17 - They worshipped and doubted. Matthew doesn't give us details about their doubts. Were their eyes deceiving them? Doubt His words? Is He really in all authority? Doubt their ability? Could they carry out His words? Still doubted if Jesus was really the Messiah? Like us, they wrestled with the reality of Jesus and His mission.
- To a mountain - Mountains important in Matthew's Gospel. Mountains give an elevated view - they could see the surrounding countryside - in the distance places like Gerasenes a Gentile area - or the Decapolos - Roman cities - places where the disciples needed to take the Gospel.
- Sermon on the Mount, Mount of Transfiguration - Mountains where Jesus revealed His Authority. Sermon on Mount - Jesus ascended as the One greater than Moses and interpreted the Law for the people explaining what it looks like to live as citizens of the Kingdom.
- Now, on another mountain, Jesus would send out the first citizens of His Kingdom to the nations. The disciples would take the Good News to all people inviting them to live as citizens of God's eternal Kingdom.

- All authority - Comforting words - Rome was not in all authority, nor were the religious leaders in Jerusalem. Jesus, the One born of a virgin, who grew up in a carpenter's home, who traveled Israel as an itinerant teacher, who ultimately died on a Roman cross only to rise again is in all authority. He is God, creator of the universe. He is the King over every tribe, tongue, and nation ([Daniel 7:14](#), [Colossians 1:17-20](#)).
- Matthew shows us Jesus' authority. Jesus cast out demons, calms storms, heals diseases, teaches like one with authority, rises from the dead.
- No one will remove Jesus from His throne. (He's got the whole world in His hands... That's reality.)
- Maintenance living resists His authority. It's not that you deny His authority, it's just that you don't want to live under it. Missional living not only recognizes that Jesus is in all authority but submits - whatever Jesus wants, I want. Whatever Jesus tells me, I do.
- **How do you know if you are resisting Jesus' authority?**
- **Selective Obedience** - You do what Jesus wants when you agree with Him or think it will benefit you, but if it inconveniences you, you ignore.
- **Delayed Obedience** - You often think, "I'll get to it later," but you never get to it whether sharing the Gospel, spending time in prayer, reconciling relationships. You have good intentions, but don't live out those intentions.
- **Redefine His Commands** - "What Jesus really meant..." When it comes to evangelism, "why go to the nations when so many lost people are right here." Or, "I'll share with who it's easy to share with." Or, "Missions is for those who are called to missions." Not realizing that you're called!

Maintenance living stays put. Missional living can't help but go.

- When you resist Jesus' authority you won't go, you'll stay put instead of obeying.
- Since the fall of Adam and Eve, God's plan was that all nations would be reconciled to Him ([Gen. 3:15](#), [Gen. 12](#)). Israel was to be the nation that shined the light of God to the world.
- Israel failed, but from Israel came a Messiah, the Savior of the World. Jesus, from the line of David, did not fail. He perfectly obeyed God, died in our place, and rose again. He IS the light of the world.
- Last words to disciples = four verbs. "Make disciples" is the main verb. The other three are participles that describe how to make disciples.
- Notice - the main verb is to make disciples - not converts. Implies intentional investment - share the Gospel, but also teach how to live out the Gospel.
- **Go** to the nations and announce the Good News of a good King who has all authority. **Aren't you thankful the disciples went?** They went back to Jerusalem and waited for the Spirit. Then, compelled by the Spirit to take the Gospel from Jerusalem to Judea, Samaria, and the ends of the earth. You are in this room as a follower of Jesus because the early church took the Great Commission seriously.
- Go where? Everywhere! As you are living life, live to share the Gospel and help believers walk with Jesus. At home, at your work, etc.
- Go to the nations. 3.2 billion people have little to access to the Gospel and will experience eternity apart from Christ if they do not believe. Lostness is the greatest problem the world is facing.
- **We talk about the second coming of Christ when many in our world have never heard of the first coming of Christ.**

- Makes sense that we would give an abundance of resources to taking Gospel to the nations if we are convinced that the greatest problem is lostness and the church is God's plan to reach the nations with the Good News.
- Baptizing - identifying with Christ. Name of Father, Son, Holy Spirit - fellowship with God.
- Teaching them to obey - teaching how to walk with God - not simply pray a prayer to get into heaven, but how to live a life that honors God.
- **Stop making excuses.** This is what maintenance Christians do.
 - I'm not called. (Yes you are.)
 - I don't know what to say. (You have a story to share, and in our church, you've heard the Gospel a million times. Can't give that excuse.)
 - I don't want to have an awkward conversation or be judgmental. (You'd rather someone go to hell than have an awkward conversation?)
 - What if I mess up? (Don't you trust the Spirit's work?)
 - I don't have the resources to go. (You don't believe that God is able to provide?)
- **Don't wait for a mission trip. See your life as a mission trip.**
 - I want you to go on a mission trip. God uses short-term missions as a way to support and encourage our missionaries, to join them in evangelistic work, etc. (e.g., when I started going to Russia, Adam was only IMB missionary in a city of over 1 million.) God uses short-term missions to open your eyes to lostness and call out people to vocational missions.
 - As you are going... But, you'll unlikely engage the world outside of your context if you're not engaging the world in your context. Your

immediate context is full of opportunities - ESL, church replanting, your job/school as a platform for Gospel work, etc.

- Identify and initiate. Where is the lostness that God wants you to engage? In your family? On your job? In our community? Where will you initiate a conversation?
- Personal experience: Starting the conversation is the hardest part. From time to time, you might get shut down, but people are willing to talk. Simple question I use: “Where do you go to church?”

Maintenance living treats Jesus’ presence as optional. Missional living depends on Jesus’ presence.

- When you start actually living out the mission of God, you’ll realize very quickly that you can’t do it without Jesus.
- vs. 20 - “And remember, ‘I am with you always, to the end of the age.’”
- This age will come to an end. A day will come when the mission is no longer necessary because the work will be complete. Christ will return and we will be with Him - physically in His presence.
- In the meantime, His Spirit is with us. [Matthew 1:23](#) - Matthew starts His Gospel reminding us that Jesus is Immanuel - “God with us.” Matthew ends his Gospel recording Jesus telling His disciples, “I am with you.”
- When you’re stuck in maintenance living you see time with Jesus as expendable rather than essential.
- You struggle to connect faith to life. You struggle to spend time with Jesus unless you feel like you need something from Him.

- You struggle to think about Jesus unless it's Sunday morning. You come to church because you know you're supposed to. You engage. You listen, but you don't put into practice what you learn. You're not submitted to discipleship. So, the rest of the week your life is lived as if Jesus is not present. You depend on you, your strength, and your abilities.
- But... when you finally realize that your purpose in life is to steward everything God has given you: your life, your resources, your time, your family, for His mission, you'll quickly realize how much you need Jesus, and this verse will become a great comfort to you.
- Fulfilling the Great Commission is difficult. It requires daily surrender, boldness, and perseverance knowing you might be ridiculed, persecuted, or rejected.
- We NEED His presence to live out His mission. "I am with you always" isn't a nice, Christian slogan. It's our lifeline.
- Missional people are always turning to Jesus for help. This week, I want to challenge you to daily exercise dependence on Jesus' presence by daily praying the three opens.
- Our missionary friend, Jared, challenged me with the three opens years ago. How might you see God move in your life if you daily prayed:
- **Open the door.** Ask God to help you clearly see the opportunities, and ask God to help you walk through every door He opens. Right now, an open door to Boston and Japan. Will you walk through the door? Where's the open door at school? At your job? At home?
- **Open hearts.** We're called to be faithful to share the Good News, but it's the Spirit's job to draw people to salvation in Christ. Ask God to open the hearts of people that you are praying for that they will be receptive to the Gospel.

- **Open my mouth.** Ask God to give you the boldness to actually open your mouth and share the Gospel.
- Followers of Jesus, the question you must ask yourself today: Maintenance or mission? What will it be? Will you live in maintenance mode? If you're living in maintenance mode, will you repent? Will you ask God to give you a renewed passion for the Great Commission?
- Maybe this morning, the heart that God is opening is your heart. Maybe your life has felt purposeless instead of purposeful, empty instead of full. This morning, respond to Jesus. Good News: Jesus came, lived, died, and rose again for you - to forgive your sins and bring you into a relationship with Himself. Today, repent of your sins, give your life to Him, and join Jesus in the only mission worth living for.