

Matthew 28

The Messiah's Victory

Good morning Church...

What a wonderful day we have before us.

Communion is such a great reminder of the importance of the death of Christ.

The Gospel centers on Jesus' sacrifice that atones or propitiates for our sins.

Now the gospel message does not rest on the death of Jesus Christ alone, the resurrection of Jesus Christ substantiates all that His death has accomplished.

Had not Jesus rose from the dead, He would have just been another dead religious man.

But when His life was given as a ransom for many, God accepted that sacrifice as sufficient for the appeasement of His wrath toward the sins of the world.

When the act was completed it pleased God to bring Jesus Christ back from the dead.

In so doing this, He released Jesus of the charge of personal failure for which He was afflicted.

In raising Jesus from the dead, the Father was approving of His Son's perfect work in the redemption of man.

Now today, our morning began with communion, and after 2nd service we will enjoy watching the baptisms of many, identifying themselves in the death, burial, and resurrection into new life.

What a wonderful day the Lord has arranged today for His glory as we finish out the gospel of Matthew.

This morning we will learn of the empty tomb of Jesus, that for the ages has been a silent witness to the fact of His resurrection.

Now each gospel writer, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit gave their own unique details of this miraculous event.

The full picture can be found when each gospel record is taken into account.

But each account records the aspects which contributes to the furtherance of the purpose which each gospel was written for.

Matthew focuses on the Victory of the King.

If anything was going to prove that Jesus was indeed the Jewish Messiah it will be His resurrection from the dead.

Now we move into Matthew 28 after 3 days and 3 nights of a dark, dark time for Jesus' followers.

Had they believed the words of Jesus when He spoke numerous times about His resurrection?

They might have had a hopeful expectation here.

Jesus informed them that He would die, and they would scatter, but He gave further instructions they completely forgot about...

Matt 26:32 But after I have been raised, I will go before you to Galilee."

Yet we see here on that first Easter Sunday they were not prepared for what was about to happen.

He Is Risen

(Mark 16:1-8; Luke 24:1-12; John 20:1-10)

28:1 Now after the Sabbath, as the first day of the week began to dawn, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary came to see the tomb. 2 And behold, there was a great earthquake; for an angel of the Lord descended from heaven, and came and rolled back the stone from the door, and sat on it. 3 His countenance was like lightning, and his clothing as white as snow. 4 And the guards shook for fear of him, and became like dead men.

5 But the angel answered and said to the women, "Do not be afraid, for I know that you seek Jesus who was crucified. 6 He is not here; for He is risen, as He said. Come, see the place where the Lord lay. 7 And go quickly and tell His disciples that He is risen from the dead, and indeed He is going before you into Galilee; there you will see Him. Behold, I have told you."

8 So they went out quickly from the tomb with fear and great joy, and ran to bring His disciples word.

So we see here on the day after the Sabbath, the first day of the week, being Sunday.

We see here an era ending, the Jewish Sabbath had ended, and a new day has begun.

No longer would the Jewish Sabbath be God's Holy Day.

This Resurrection Sunday would change that day of the week for the years to come, Sunday is the Lord's Day now.

When the people of God gather on the Lord's Day, we are attesting to the fact that Jesus is alive.

It is our high day for worship and praise, to our risen King.

And on this first Lord's Day, the women were actually heading to the tomb to make the preparations for embalming Jesus' body.

In Mark, we see on the way to the tomb, they were in discussion about how to roll away the stone, to minister to Jesus' dead body.

After Jesus' body was hastily taken off the cross and placed in the tomb, they were waiting in anticipation for the Sabbath to be over, and early in the morning wanted to properly handle Jesus dead body.

Yet they were in for a surprise, as an earthquake was caused by the arrival of one of God's ministers, an angel.

Who rolled away the stone.

Now this was not done to let Jesus out of the Tomb, Jesus was already gone.

But had the angel never been sent to roll this stone away, there would have been claims that Jesus still lay in His tomb.

So the stone was rolled away, so those faithful women could look upon the empty tomb.

Matthew says the angel's countenance was like lightning and had clothing white as snow.

I find it interesting that in scripture these supernatural beings, who at various times allow themselves to be

seen, they are never shocked or frightened with their human interactions.

They are very familiar with humanity, yet on the other hand, we see time and time again any human who witnesses these supernatural servants of the Most High God, the human is terrified.

We see these seasoned guards here gripped by their fear, and become as dead men.

These hardened soldiers who have perhaps seen the worse of humanity, who courageously charge into the face of danger in the heat of battle, yet they are so overwhelmed by the celestial being they fainted, and as we will see later, some even fled.

Yet to those faithful women, he comforts them with the words “Do not be afraid.”

He was not there to harm anyone, but to give the good news of the One whom they are there seeking.

He gives these women the foundation of our faiths hope.

“Jesus is not here, He is risen.”

In their shock and disbelief, I imagine their faces are speaking to the confusion of this whole scene.

So the angel explains to them, “Look for yourselves, He is not where He was laid.”

We know from John’s account that the grave clothes were left in the tomb, and interestingly enough the headpiece was folded up nicely by itself.

Now, had the body been stolen away, surely the grave clothes would have been gone as well.

Yet, Jesus was risen, at God’s appointed hour Jesus left that tomb forever, alive, no longer needing those garments of death.

Now these faithful women, who were with Jesus every step of the way to the cross, are now given the very first privileged to spread the Good News of the resurrected Savior.

It was most definitely owed to them, and not the disciples who are wallowing in their despair.

These women were the first evangelists in this New Era of Grace, on this very first Lord’s Day.

They were commissioned to take the good news of a risen Savior to the sorrow filled, unbelieving disciples. They are sent with the reminder of Jesus appointment with the disciples in Galilee.

Now verse 8 records that “love and joy gave flight to their feet.” Ironside

These women had unwavering faith in all that the angel had said.

There was no doubt in their minds whatsoever.

You know, there is no doubt that Christianity has lifted women higher than any other belief or philosophy has over the centuries.

Here we see these women bestowed with such honor, and if this celestial encounter was not enough, their unwavering faith will be rewarded with Jesus Himself.

The Women Worship the Risen Lord

9 And as they went to tell His disciples, behold, Jesus met them, saying, "Rejoice!" So they came and held Him by the feet and worshiped Him. 10 Then Jesus said

to them, "Do not be afraid. Go and tell My brethren to go to Galilee, and there they will see Me."

Now, how wonderful this was, that not only do they have the word of an angel, the sight of the empty tomb, but now the physical presence of Jesus Himself. His resurrected Body was not only seen but also held. The greeting here is simple, Rejoice, or in the original translation "All Hail," really this greeting can mean Grace as well.

Just simple "Hello." I imagine this was done with some kind of joyful smile.

But in this simple greeting, was a great reward for their faith, their faith was turned into sight.

You understand it is when the believer is obeying God's Word that is when Jesus comes to us.

His Divine presence is felt, and He is known personally through our obedient faith.

When we believe God's Word, and obey, Jesus is with us.

Now, Jesus instructs them to remind the disciples of the rendezvous point in Galilee.

Jesus would appear to the 10 disciples at various times while they are in Jerusalem and even Peter on a special occasion.

Jesus would appear to two men on the Emmaus road as well.

However, this appointment in Galilee seems to have some great meaning.

Most of Jesus' followers were from Galilee where much of His ministry took place.

This seems to be the place where a bulk of the many witnesses would perhaps see Jesus as well.

Spoken of by Paul in **1 Cor. 15:5-6**

... that He was seen by Cephas, then by the twelve. 6 After that He was seen by over five hundred brethren at once, of whom the greater part remain to the present, but some have fallen asleep.

So, many believe it is at that appointment in Galilee that Jesus reveals Himself to the many disciples and gives His instruction to them.

Now notice how wonderfully Jesus refers to His disciples.

He tells these women to go to His brethren.

He doesn't say, "go tell those treacherous cowards, or those disappointing, dissenting disciples."

"Go tell those unbelieving, unfaithful supposed friends of mine to meet Me where they were told to meet Me."

No, Jesus, here the merciful, and gracious God that He is, calls these men His brethren.

What a wonderful thing that from the very beginning of Christ's church, those He called were called immediately under His grace.

So off go these ladies in hurry, however we will see next, as quickly as the truth is going out, Satan will immediately counter it with his lie.

Mark Twain once wrote, "A lie can go around the whole world while truth is still lacing up its boots."

There just is something within man that we immediately find it easier to accept the lie over the truth.

The Soldiers Are Bribe

11 Now while they were going, behold, some of the guard came into the city and reported to the chief priests all the things that had happened. 12 When they had assembled with the elders and consulted together, they gave a large sum of money to the soldiers, 13 saying, "Tell them, 'His disciples came at night and stole Him away while we slept.' 14 And if this comes to the governor's ears, we will appease him and make you secure." 15 So they took the money and did as they were instructed; and this saying is commonly reported among the Jews until this day.

Now these religious leaders have no depths of the amount of deceit and treachery that they are capable of.

They are the ones who made sure that this Tomb was sealed and secured by a guard.

They made sure that there would be no possible way for Jesus' body to come up missing.

And this supernatural account from the guards, who fled the scene, was brought before them.

This undeniable proof that Jesus was their Messiah, and death could not hold Him, they should have repented and surrendered in their battle against truth.

Yet, only thinking of their position in this life, they disregard any eternal consequences they will be held too and they satanically stage a lie.

They paid off Judas, and now they are using those methods to pay off these soldiers.

Now this would have to be a hefty payoff, for these soldier's lives were on the line here.

If their superiors hear of this, they could have been executed.

The religious leaders, who believe that they have Pontius Pilate under their spell, since they have controlled the man up to this point.

They assure the soldiers they will be able to continue in their manipulation of the Roman Governor.

Now Pilate, I imagine did not care, this was not a live prisoner who escaped from these soldiers.

This was a dead man's body that had gone missing, and perhaps Pilate was amused at the religious leader's desperation.

Now the paid off soldiers do as they were commissioned to do and spread the news that while they were sleeping the disciples came and stole away the body.

Now, for most people, this story was enough to explain the other story being talked about of a resurrected Jesus.

We see no great multitudes coming to faith in Jesus, not until Pentecost, when the same Holy Spirit that rose Jesus from the dead, testifies through the

disciples of this resurrected Jesus, and then we see thousands swept into the Kingdom of God.

Yet up until then, the lie being that was being spread, sufficed for any human responsibility to believe in the Savior.

Don't you notice that people will believe any lie no matter how ridiculous and sometime insane it can be, they will believe just so they have no accountability to God?

"I believe science" they claim, "and science says the world is 4.54 billion years old."

"Makes sense to me, that at one point, life formed on the backs of crystals on a rock one day, and through the friction of those crystals moving around this gob of living goo developed."

"This gob of goo, had no eyes, and it was determined to see, so over the course of millions of years, the goos that came from that original goo begin to rub little calluses on themselves, they did this so much, that one day an eyeball appeared, that poor little gob of goo

could now see, it saw the ocean, and thought it could develop better in the water, and it did, lungs developed and gills and a stomach that grumbled one day for food, and the goo over the course of a million years developed another callus that one day spontaneously became a mouth.”

“Now with a full stomach, and more energy its ambitions grew, as it saw the land, it so badly wanted to walk on the land, but only fins fit for swimming were on its body.”

“But determination and another million or so years the goo developed two more calluses and one day they developed into legs.”

“And then over millions of years monkeys came from the goo, and thousands of other species, and bam, that is where we came from.”

And man, says yep that sounds right, I’ll believe that. There must not be a God. And they choose to believe the lie over the truth, because they are then not accountable with their lives to a Holy God.

When really it just take a few questions, to blow holes through all of the prevailing thought of the day.

Today people will believe any nonsense, if it comes from their professor or teacher in school, or if a movie star, or their favorite musician say something, they believe it with no questions asked.

You know it would only take one person to ask these soldiers, “So, while you were sleeping, you saw, very specific men come and take Jesus.”

While they were sleeping they gained these facts, and no one thought to ask them “How?”

They were just content with the lie.

These soldiers who could be killed for allowing this kind of failure in their duty.

Just fell asleep, and somehow, while they were sleeping, they know without a doubt, it was Jesus’ disciples.

That makes sense.

And unfortunately this has been the fate of humanity since the garden of Eden, to believe the lie, instead of the overwhelming evidences of God's Word.

If any sincere person studies the evidence of the account of the resurrection of Jesus Christ, with an open heart they will conclude that the resurrection of Jesus Christ is a truth that cannot be refuted.

The enemies of Christ never produced a Body of the dead Savior, yet over 500 witnesses saw the risen Lord.

In court today, you only need 1 or 2 witnesses to substantiate a truth.

The men who testified of Jesus resurrection went to their own demise and many died a torturous death for the truth they had witnessed.

The resurrected Christ meant they too would defeat death in the end.

They had a hope, that hope carried them to the ends of the earth, facing perilous challenges, just to preach this message.

And many faced a brutal death, their faith was rewarded however in eternity.

The resurrection is the central factor to our Christian faith.

The resurrection substantiates all of our tenants of faith.

It proves that Jesus is God's Son.

As Jesus revealed this in **John 10:17-18**

17 "Therefore My Father loves Me, because I lay down My life that I may take it again. 18 No one takes it from Me, but I lay it down of Myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This command I have received from My Father."

The resurrection validates the truth of scripture. For which in the Old Testament the scriptures declare of the Messiah...

**Ps 16:10 For You will not leave my soul in Sheol,
Nor will You allow Your Holy One to see corruption.**

If Jesus did not come out of His tomb, the scriptures would not be valid.

Now, the resurrection also assures to us our own future resurrection.

1 Thess. 4:13-14 But I do not want you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning those who have fallen asleep, lest you sorrow as others who have no hope. 14 For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so God will bring with Him those who sleep in Jesus.

This is why a Christian memorial or funeral is bittersweet, for the believer is gone from us, but we also have the assurance of their own resurrection into new life.

Warren Wiersbe says, “The entire structure of the Christian faith rests on the foundation of the resurrection. If we do away with the resurrection, we have no *eternal* hope.”

The resurrection is even the proof of a future judgment spoken of in...

Acts 17:31 because He has appointed a day on which He will judge the world in righteousness by the Man whom He has ordained. He has given assurance of this to all by raising Him from the dead."

Speaking of the old priesthood, that was limited by the death of the sinful priest, Hebrews declares in Jesus, death cannot hinder His ministry.

Heb. 7:23-25 Also there were many priests, because they were prevented by death from continuing. 24 But He, because He continues forever, has an unchangeable priesthood. 25 Therefore He is also able to save to the uttermost those who come to God through Him, since He always lives to make intercession for them.

Because of the resurrection, Jesus our High Priest is able to save unto the uttermost.

Because of the resurrection, we as believers have power to live for Christ.

Rom 6:4 Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.

If Jesus Christ is dead still, then I am a drug addict still, if Jesus did not raise from then dead then I am still a monster of iniquity.

Yet in Him I have found New Life, and power to live out all He has called me to do.

He is risen, He is alive and He is here now.

1 Peter 1:3-5 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His abundant mercy has begotten us again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, 4 to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled and that does not fade away, reserved in heaven for you, 5 who are kept by the power of God through faith for salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.

Because of the resurrection we are given power to live for Him now.

And yet it also means we are promised an eternity in heaven, away from the corruption that we know in this life.

What a hope the resurrection gives us as believers!

And for 2000 years the truth of the resurrection has and is still changes lives.

Now, the resurrection means salvation for humanity, and once we find this resurrected Savior, and believe on Him, our lives do not just rest there.

The resurrected Jesus will have some final words for His disciples, the King will give His last command, and these words were intended for every disciple, not just those who met Jesus in Galilee.

The Great Commission

(Mark 16:14-18; Luke 24:36-49; John 20:19-23; Acts 1:6-8)

16 Then the eleven disciples went away into Galilee, to the mountain which Jesus had appointed for them. 17 When they saw Him, they worshiped Him; but some doubted.

Now during Jesus' last days with His disciples before the cross, as they were coming to Jerusalem, He told them many times of His coming death and resurrection.

He specifically told them that He would meet them in Galilee, and this is the setting where the many disciples, the 500 hundred mentioned in Paul's writings are believed to have witnessed the risen Christ.

Jesus already appeared to the 11 disciples in Jerusalem, and even worked with Doubting Thomas on his lack of faith.

Yet verse 17 concludes with the words but some doubted, and this some, is supposed by many to be from the greater multitude of witnesses.

However, we see also many when they beheld Jesus on that mountain in their hometown, they worshipped.

The doubters are proof at what evils the human heart are capable of.

Not all of those present will have faith enough to experience all that they would be commissioned to do by Jesus.

In Marks account of the great commission Jesus explains **Mark 16:17 And these signs will follow those who believe.**

It was promised to only those present who were found to be believing disciples, that they were given signs and wonders to authenticate the message that they preached.

Unbelief, and doubt are one of the greatest hindrances of the work of God.

May all of us hear the Great Commission next, and take it to heart and believe that the risen Jesus is still at work, and wants to work through us.

Next up on that mountain top we read...

18 And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. 19 Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and

of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, 20 teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age."

Amen.

Jesus, the Obedient Servant, humbled Himself to a death on a cross.

Phil 2:9-11 Therefore God also has highly exalted Him and given Him the name which is above every name, 10 that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in heaven, and of those on earth, and of those under the earth, 11 and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

Jesus, is to whom all God's servants are subject to.

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

And from that place of authority Jesus could have commanded a revolution, He could have demanded as the Sole Dictator of these men, and the millions of disciples to come after them, that we overthrow the

devil and his followers, through a great conflict of worldly weapons.

He could have charged these men into battle, with all power, they could have overthrown Rome, and the world.

Yet, Jesus from this place of all authority, gives the command to “Go, therefore and make disciples of the nations, baptizing them and teaching them.”

Well, all the momentum of this moment, as Jesus has gathered His disciples on the mountaintop, in Galilee, all of His disciples wondering what this great meeting was called for.

And Jesus gave them the Great Commission.

Now, at this moment, I think the adrenaline of these men at the sight of Jesus, knowing He has all authority even over death itself; perhaps once again they were counting on over throwing Rome.

“Who can stop us when we have a leader such as this, the whole world will be in subjection to God’s Son.”

Now there is no evidence that these final words even had any impact on the multitude of disciples.

It seems they remained discouraged, all the way to Pentecost, when the Holy Spirit came upon them, and then the impact of these words entered their hearts.

“Go” The disciples did, and they were accused of turning the world upside down.

Notice they were to go and make disciples, not converts.

Much of Christianity today is focused on making converts.

Do more altar calls, make people respond, all this pressure to get people to raise their hands or come forward in a meeting.

But the command here is to make disciples, now the work of converting in many ways is easier.

Just get people to say a prayer or raise their hand.

But, making disciples entails longsuffering.

A disciple is a learner, really someone whose mind as well as the heart are won over to God.

It is not enough to just proclaim to man their lost condition, and God's plan of redemption, and trying to get a response to that message, that is most definitely part of it.

But a True disciple is so much more than a convert.

John 8:31 Then Jesus said "If you abide in My word, you are My disciples indeed.

A disciple will take the truth learned and practice it.

It is when we appropriate by our heart, mind, and will, that we then abide in truth, continually, and only then is one truly a disciple of Christ.

Not everyone who raises his or her hand at an altar call or says the sinner's prayer truly becomes a disciple.

This will come as they obey all that God's Word has laid out for them.

A disciple joins in the work of Christ, moves from the spectator position, and engages into the work.

Now I have seen many come to Christ in my many years being a part of the church.

And the next thing Jesus commands, seems to be the first step of obedience in a believers life, that sets them on this road to discipleship.

They were commanded to make disciples of the nations, baptizing in the Name of the Father, Son, and the Holy Spirit.

As they preached the resurrected Christ, those who responded to the message, then were to be baptized.

The baptism was an outward expression of their faith.

The baptism, notice Jesus says is in the Name, singular, of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

Speaking clearly to the Triune God.

He does not say the Names of...

Each Person of the Godhead had and still very much has a part in the work of salvation.

God the Father adopts the believer as his son and heir, the Son of God washes the sins away by His precious

blood, the Holy Spirit dwells in and sanctifies the believer.

This is all that that Name speaks of.

Baptism, therefore is very important.

It is an important part of the Christian journey.

And the one who sincerely comes to the baptismal is proclaiming that he has broken with the world and has been brought into union with the Triune God.

The believer is stating that his life now is not his own, but belongs completely to the will of God.

This is a huge step of obedience for a disciple of Jesus.

Like I said, I have seen many times, that it was from the point of baptism, that many disciple's walks were confirmed, solidified and strengthened.

It seems to be that first step of a life sold out for Jesus Christ.

Next Jesus commissions them after the disciple making, and baptizing, to continue in ministry with them, in teaching all that Jesus had commanded.

During the 40 days between His resurrection and ascension, Jesus explained to His disciples the ministry He would have them carry out, He gave them commandments that they were to teach to the nations.

In the beginning of Acts, Dr. Luke explains **Acts 1:1-3**

The former account I made, O Theophilus, of all that Jesus began both to do and teach, 2 until the day in which He was taken up, after He through the Holy Spirit had given commandments to the apostles whom He had chosen, 3 to whom He also presented Himself alive after His suffering by many infallible proofs, being seen by them during forty days and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God.

Now I imagine this teaching part of the commission here included all of Jesus' amazing discourses, all of His parables, and the memorable sayings of Jesus.

“Deny yourself, love your enemies,” and so on.

This would also include His prophecies and predictions.

All of His wonderful promises.

I imagine in those 40 days Jesus explained the doctrine of the cross and what it meant for humanity.

So this teaching them consisted of really the whole council of God, that Jesus left to them.

This is the commission of the church, to Go, make disciples of the nations, baptizing them, and teaching God's Word.

This is the instruction that turned the world upside down.

And unto even today, continues to effect the world.

Jesus ends with those wonderful words "and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age."

Notice Jesus promises His presence, within the church.

Now if Jesus remained on earth physically, He could not have fulfilled this promise.

It was when the Spirit came that Jesus could be with His people no matter where they were in this world.

Jesus promised to the end of the age, showing He has a plan.

He is the God of History.

As we as a church follow His leading and obey His word, we will fulfill His purposes in the world.

And we can count on the fact that everything will come to a climax one day, the end of this age will come, and in the meantime we live out these instructions until He comes again.

Now if you are here this morning, wondering what the purpose of your life is as Christian, Jesus very plainly laid it out for us this morning.

Your sole purpose is to make disciples of the nations.

This perhaps might be in your home with your children, or maybe in your workplace.

Your number one mission is to bring people to Jesus Christ, and teach them His ways.

This calling perhaps might send some of you to distant lands as missionaries; some of you are called to do this with your grandchildren.

But in these last days, it sure seems the church has forgotten how clearly Jesus commissioned us.

The church model today is set up as to where we like to sit and listen to a preacher week after week, and we trust that man to do the work of this commission.

Our we believe it is the Elders job to do the work of the ministry, or those serving the in the various ministries.

It seems the program of the church today is to simply get more people sitting in the pews, but the mission very clearly for each and every one of us, is to make disciples of the Nation.

This should be our number one passion, if you are a disciple of Jesus Christ sitting in the pew each week, that sitting should leave you feeling unfulfilled.

Your life will find meaning and purpose when you set your heart out to obey this commission.

Now sitting and hearing the Word is very important, but doing what we hear is Christianity.

Imagine a church, where everyone purposed in their heart to Go, where God called them.

Listen, our church is smack dab right in the middle of a mission field.

Each week, we are ministering to the lost.

God has a great purpose for this church.

He is bringing it to life.

This neighborhood is dark, churches all around us are closing their doors.

The Muslims just bought a church one street over, they paid for it, and now they are worshipping Allah in a place where Jesus Christ used to be worshipped.

We have two such Islamic Temples right here, a stone throw away.

Now this church at one point, too was falling under that darkness.

I had a demoniac, shortly after I got here in 2016 tell me as he pointed to the church, that they call this the devil's den.

I told him, "Not any more buddy, Jesus is taking this spot back."

You know I don't think it is an accident that God has called each of you here.

This is a battleground.

Every Sunday, as the neighborhood sees the parking filled, and kids running joyfully around, as they see love being extended here.

Light is shining in this neighborhood, and God has raised us up for a purpose.

He did not let this church close down like the many others.

Instead, He heard the prayers of a faithful, sometimes discouraged remnant.

And He began to work, to bring life once again.

Now if you are here, God's Spirit has led you here for a great work.

He desires us to make disciples here, and I believe that from this church one day we will see many disciples going into the uttermost parts of the world with the message of a resurrected Jesus Christ.

God has great things planned for His church, and lo He is here with us, now, He is responsible for all that is taking place, He has not forsaken this neighborhood or church.

This is His house, His ministry, and He is building and He is adding to His church weekly those who would believe.

And what an amazing day we have today, as we get to watch many new disciples take that step of obedience in baptism.

What a wonderful thing as we witness this work of the Spirit in our midst, as lives are being transformed.

Understand that Jesus is here with us this morning; He loves you, and has a plan and a purpose for your life.

If you have not responded to that love come to Him this morning. The Elders and Pastors will be available.

Now, we have finished the Gospel of Matthew, Next time, we will begin the Revelation of Jesus Christ.

It is an exciting Book, a difficult book, but it speaks directly to the church of the last days, for which I believe we are in.

So invite your friends and neighbors and co-workers, many are open to come to church when prophecy is being taught.

Even unbelievers have an uneasiness about what is happening in the world, we have the answers.

So be praying about whom you can invite.

Prayer

Baptism will be right out in the courtyard, if you are getting baptized I want to talk with you for a moment, if you can gather over here after service.