



## Matthew 27:62-28:15

These notes cover the two last sermons on Matthew, looking at the resurrection and the great commission. The first passage has the empty tomb and Jesus appearing to the women, surrounded by the Jewish leaders trying but failing to stop the Jesus movement.

### Questions

1. Share what impacted you most from the sermon, and the Easter season generally.

*Icebreaker*

2. What bits of evidence does Matthew give why the resurrection is really true? Do you feel confident that the resurrection is a historical fact?

*Lots of details mainly to show this is really true:*

- *The disciples weren't there, they really didn't expect it - yet they were transformed - something caused it*
- *The guards - making it very unlikely that the disciples stole the body.*
- *Both sides agree the tomb was empty - otherwise the Jewish leaders wouldn't make up the story that the body was stolen.*
- *The first witnesses were women (the two Marys) - women's testimony was not accepted in the 1st century*
- *Physical details - the disciples would meet Jesus in a specific place, people could touch his feet etc*

*There's more but it's clear Matthew wants us to know this is really true. Do we believe it?*



3. What implications does the resurrection have that you can think of? Any of them you struggle to believe? How does this passage assure your heart?

*People can probably think of loads - we'll consider in the next question what Matthew will focus on. But here are a few:*

- *God exists - we have good historical evidence for a miracle*
- *Our sin is paid for, the cross worked*
- *Jesus never sinned - otherwise he would have stayed dead*
- *Death is defeated, God is stronger, there will be a new creation*
- *There is life after death, death is not the end*
- *We will certainly be raised ourselves, hence we can live for God (1 Cor 15)*
- *Jesus' words are reliable - who else can predict his own resurrection*
- *Jesus is the king, as the Messiah would rise from the dead (Psalm 16:10)*
- *There will be a day of judgement and Jesus is the judge (Acts 17:31)*
- *...*

*See what you can come up with*

4. In 4 groups, look at 16:27-28, 21:42-44, 22:43-45, 26:63-64 in context. How are they related to the resurrection, and therefore what is the resurrection's significance?

*The resurrection lies behind all these passages. Jesus will suffer but will also come and reign in glory. How can they both be true?*

- **16:24-28**, *Jesus will go to the cross, but will come back in glory - he will rise*
- **21:42-44**, *after the tenants have rejected the son, he will become the glorious cornerstone, the new head of the people, again implying the resurrection*
- **22:43-45**, *Jesus is the Lord, risen to ascend to God's right hand*
- **26:63-64** - *Jesus makes clear he will become king after being rejected - the Son of Man in Daniel 7, or again Psalm 110 - implying resurrection*



*Jesus can only reign after his death if he is raised. So the resurrection shows Jesus really is the king who will reign, he really is who he says he is. No wonder the women worship Jesus when they see him.*

5. How does the resurrection make you feel about Jesus? What else strikes you about him from this passage?

*Jesus really is the king, the Christ, the Son of God. If we had any doubts about Jesus' identity and his right to rule our life it should vanish now in light of his resurrection, and we should worship him and take him utterly seriously.*

*At the same time, in the passage he is at the same time full of grace. He greets the two Marys, lets them hold his feet, and does not give up on the disciples who deserted him. He is not just exalted but also Immanuel, God with us - more on this next week.*

6. What would it look like for us to live our life now in light of the resurrection?

*Partly, we take Jesus and his words seriously, as the resurrection shows him to be the king. We will be loyal to him in the face of other claims and other authorities in our lives. But also we live in confident hope of eternal life, knowing that this life is not all there is. So instead of living for our pleasures now we can live for Jesus, because we will have a much better never-ending life coming. We are pilgrims, not at home here in this world. And we should want to proclaim this wonderful news, because we can see the gospel is true.*

### **Ideas for prayer**

- Praise God for raising Jesus from the dead and assuring us of his grace and power. Pray our hearts would be fully trusting in the historical facts.
- Pray the good news of Jesus and the resurrection would transform us just like it did for the first disciples in Acts.
- Pray we would see Jesus as the divine king that the resurrection shows him to be, and be loyal to him in this hostile world.
- Pray we would live in hope and be willing to give up this life, because we are sure we have a better and abiding life coming.



## Matthew 28:16-20

This is for the final sermon on Matthew, the epilogue. After Jesus' resurrection, he instructs his disciples, setting the stage for part 2, as the church grows. As that is the story we are now in, between Jesus' resurrection and return, this is our task too.

### Questions

1. How does Jesus' commission flow out from the resurrection last week? How do you feel about the task in light of who Jesus is?

*The Great Commission has a 'therefore', and the reason is that Jesus has been given all authority in heaven and on earth. Why is that now? Through the resurrection. It's the end of the old order and the start of the new, with Jesus as king (the cornerstone). He has fulfilled his mission and has been rewarded with the kingdom. Hence the world should acknowledge and reflect his kingship.*

*It should make us feel the weight of what Jesus asks us. It is not just good news we can spread, it is the rightful king of the world who demands his rule of love is implemented in the world. The more we feel the authority of Jesus, the more we should want to get behind it.*

*(There is some overlap with last week's CG study. If last week you spent good time on the resurrection and what it shows about Jesus feel free to move on quicker)*

2. Jesus' authority is the 'why' of the Great Commission. (Maybe in groups) put the what, how, where and who of the Great Commission in your own words.

**What:** *make disciples - getting people to submit to Jesus' authority so that they will follow him both formally and more and more in practice*

**How:** *through the gospel / God's Word. A disciple is a learner - and people learn as you teach them. The gospel is how people both become Christians and grow as Christians*

**Where:** *local & global. All nations. This includes HK but also the ends of the earth*

**Who:** *wonder what people say! It wasn't covered in the sermon. It would be all Christians who are to do this. Jesus says "I'll be with you to the end of the age" which*



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*suggests the commission extends to the end of the age, not just the apostles' lifetime. Also the 11 are called "disciples" in v16 - not apostles - suggesting that making disciples is part of being a disciple, and if someone becomes a disciple that means they in turn are to be making disciples - and so on, world without end, Amen.*

3. How does something like helping the poor fit with the Great Commission? Is it part of it, or if not, what is the relationship between the two?

*Helping the poor is a wonderful thing to do, but it is being a disciple, not making disciples. I.e. it is not part of the Great Commission, but rather the fruit or result of the Great Commission, as making disciples results in people who want to obey Jesus' teaching. The same goes for being a peacemaker, being a good employee, taking care of the environment etc. It is not part of our mission but the result of our mission.*

*For some this seems counterintuitive, but historically a focus on the Great Commission has resulted in more social action. The fruit of evangelism is more people following Jesus and helping the poor. As they grow in their faith, they will want to help the poor more. So revivals have usually led to great social change, e.g. in 18th century Britain.*

4. Think about your usual week. When do you already interact with people? How can you make these into opportunities to make disciples? Share your ideas

*Making it practical. If it is just bringing the gospel to people, whether Christians or non-Christians, there are lots of ways we can do that. E.g. over lunch, conversations at work, with family at home... God has already put us in contact with people, but are we going to use those as opportunities to make disciples or not?*

5. At the same time, Jesus wants the good news to go to every corner of the earth. What are ways we can be involved with or support mission to the unreached?

*We don't want to lose the global perspective here. We can pray for parts of the world where the gospel needs to go. We can support missionaries or organisations working in other places. We can maybe get more informed, e.g. through Operation World. Maybe we can 'adopt' a people group and pray for them more regularly. And of course consider whether God calls us to go elsewhere... Lots of ways*



6. What fears or issues are in your heart as we consider going & making disciples? How does' Jesus' encouragement of his presence at the end address these?

*The third point - "Surely I am with you always". As Jesus sends us out he promises he will be with us, by the Spirit. As we consider the Great Commission, we may feel burdened, anxious, fearful of what might happen. But Jesus' presence means power, wisdom, comfort, support, help... exactly what we need.*

7. (More general, if time) Think back over Matthew's gospel and the sermons we've heard. What has most stayed with you? How is God calling you most to respond?

*Depending on time you could have some general sharing, as we finish Matthew's Gospel after 4.5 years.*

### **Ideas for prayer**

- Give thanks for Jesus our Risen King, who has all authority and established a new kingdom of love and grace.
- Pray we would desire to see his kingdom grow in this world, for the glory of Jesus and the good of the world, as people come to experience and share his love.
- Pray we would be active in making disciples, making the most of the opportunities we have, particularly with those who are not yet believers.
- Pray we would not be afraid with this big task but rely on Jesus' presence with us, to give us everything we need to fulfil his command.