

The End (...and Also, the Beginning) (28:16-20)

Turn with me, if you have a bible, to **Matthew 28**. What do y'all say we **finish the book of Matthew** today? I thought you guys might be game for that. If you're here for the first time this morning, we have been working our way, verse-by-verse, through the book of Matthew for nearly four years, on and off. We've learned so much about who Jesus is and what his time on earth was like. We've learned what he *taught* and what he *did* and what he wanted us to *know* about life in what he called "the kingdom of heaven." And *this week*, we bring the whole thing to a close. *Next week, we'll begin a seven year study through the book of Mark*. Running it all the way back. No, I'm joking. But today, we are going to finish things out.

What we're about to read is **just four verses** (probably one of the shortest passages we've covered in the entire book). But as Jesus' final words to his disciples, these four verses are absolutely jam-packed with meaning, and instruction, and significance—as I think you'll see as we go along. So let's just hop in. Pick it up with me with me in chapter 28, v. 16:

[16] Then the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain where Jesus had told them to go.

So if you'll remember, **in the passage we covered** two weeks ago on Easter, Jesus told the women at the empty tomb to tell the *other* disciples to head into Galilee, which is where he would meet them post-resurrection. Those instructions apparently have made their way to the disciples, because here in v. 16 it says that's exactly where they go. And once they're there, they do in fact see Jesus. Verse 17:

[17] When they saw him, they worshiped him (as I'd imagine some of us would if the guy who told us he was God, and told us he'd come back from the dead after three days, did in fact come back from the dead—they *worshiped* him. But—don't miss this part...); **but some doubted.**

Now, I absolutely **love the honesty** of the Bible here. Because this means that *after* Jesus has been crucified (just as he predicted would happen), *after* he's been resurrected on the third day (just as he predicted he would be), and as he's standing in front of them, in the flesh, nail scars in his hands and all, *resurrected and all...* after all of *that*, the bible says that at least *some* of the twelve disciples went, **"I don't know about all of this. I'm going to see more proof. I think I'm going to need to see some receipts..."**

And **as crazy as that might sound** to us, I also think we should find it a bit instructive. Because sometimes I hear people say things like, “well I just wish I could’ve been there when Jesus was in the flesh and followed him around and heard his teaching and seen his miracles—then I wouldn’t struggle to believe like I do.” And as much as I understand that sentiment, this passage would seem to prove it dead wrong. Because here were eleven guys who had followed Jesus around from the beginning...who saw everything he did and everything he taught...who saw him *crucified* and then *back from the dead*...and *still*, it says, some of them “doubted.” So maybe the source of our doubt isn’t what we think it is.

You see, **over and over again, the Scriptures are going to insist that doubt is not actually a problem with our eyes or our ears; it’s actually a problem with our hearts.** It’s not primarily a problem with what we see or *don’t* see, with what we can logically *prove* or *not* prove; it’s a problem with the things our hearts *want*. The things our hearts *want* and *don’t* want us to *believe*. Which is why some of the people who see it *all* in this passage can see it all and still have doubts. That’s worth sitting with I think. / Now, that part of the teaching is for free. Not even the point of this passage—just a casual observation from it. The *point* of the passage, I think, is what comes next. Because in v. 18, Jesus says to *all* the disciples—the ones *believing* and *worshiping*, **AND** the ones *unsure* and *doubting*—the following words. Verse 18:

[18] Then Jesus came to them and said, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. If you’re wondering, that’s how you say “Jesus is Lord” in the *first* person: “All *authority* in heaven and on earth has been given to *me*.” Verse 19: **[19] Therefore** (in *light* of that...) **go and make disciples of all nations** (we’re going to circle back and unpack all this language here in a moment. “Go and *make disciples of all nations*...”), **baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, [20] and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.”**

// **So these are the final instructions** given from Jesus to his disciples in Matthew’s gospel. This is what he wants *them* to do, from this point forward. So **this is the end of Matthew’s gospel. But it’s really, in many ways, the very beginning of the Jesus movement.** Jesus is commissioning and sending his disciples *out* to go and do what he’s been *training* them to do all along. What he’s been doing with *them* all along...is now what he wants *them* to do for others.

And **make no mistake** about it: **this commandment from Jesus also makes its way, down throughout history, straight to you and I.** Followers of Jesus *today* are called to

do the very same thing *Jesus' first* disciples were asked to do *here*. Theologians have typically called these verses the “Great Commission”—as in, the commission given to all followers of Jesus everywhere at all times. **If there's one place in the bible that summarizes what we are called to do with our time, effort, energy, and resources as followers of Jesus...this is it right here.** / So to me, it makes a lot of sense to spend a substantial amount of time together this morning, as we close out our series, understanding exactly what it is that Jesus is calling us to do. Just breaking down the particulars of this commission. So that's what we're going to do for the rest of our time.

So let's take **each part** of Jesus' instructions **in turn**. *First*, Jesus says...

Go...

That word **means exactly what it sounds like** it means in English. **It implies something moving from one place to another. Point A to point B.** In this case, Jesus is talking about his *disciples* “going.” But what's interesting is that the way Jesus says it, it's actually in what's called the *gorist* passive voice. So in English, it would *sound* a little more clunky, but a more literal translation would be something like “therefore, having *gone*, make disciples...” **In other words, Jesus isn't just commanding them to go; he's assuming that they already have gone. He's assuming they know that their job isn't just to stay in one place and keep this whole kingdom of heaven thing to themselves.**

Now, that **matters for them** because, best we can tell, they've been sort of *hiding* in the upper room since everything happened back on Good Friday, unsure of whether they should “go” *anywhere*. Many of them are *terrified* by what happened to Jesus on the cross, and at least somewhat terrified that something similar could happen to *them* if they show their face in public. So they've mostly been out of the public's eye, part mourning and part hiding, since Jesus died. Jesus *here* is nudging them *out* of that place: “Go,” he says. Don't *stay*. Don't *hide*. I want you to *go*.

And I think this part of the passage **matters tremendously for us** today, as well. Because at *times*, I've found we have a similar tendency to the *disciples*. Sometimes *our* tendency too is to spend more time *staying* in one place than we do *going*. Now maybe for *us*, the *motive* is different. **Maybe we don't stay because we're scared or because we're mourning; maybe we stay because we're comfortable. We keep to ourselves because that's easier than striking up relationships with our coworkers, our neighbors, our classmates, our family members that don't know Jesus. We sometimes confine our faith to this setting (and maybe our LifeGroup setting once a week), because that's far simpler than trying to work it out in our everyday contexts where there are other people**

who may not agree with it or like it very much. All of that is just another form of “staying.” Which is what Jesus calls his disciples *out* of here; I think Jesus says to us *today*, the same thing he said to his disciples *then*. And that’s that we are to “go.” Are you following so far?

Second thing Jesus says is...

...make disciples...

So *this* is **what we are called to go *do***: *make* disciples. *That* word is actually a *verb*: literally, “...go and *disciple* all nations...” **Jesus’ desire is that his disciples would now turn around and *disciple* other people, just like *he* has *discipled* them.** / **So what does that *mean* exactly—to “disciple” someone?** Well, the *noun* form of the word just means “learner” or “student”—but some have made the case that the *best* English translation would be a word like “*apprentice*.” Because **the word *disciple* in the first century didn’t just mean *student* in the way that we use that word today, where you go to some classes, take some notes, take some exams, and get a degree. It actually meant to walk through life with the person you were learning *from*, to *watch* how *they* do things, and then imitate that way of doing those things yourself.** It was essentially, to be an *apprentice*.

So it was **much less like a student at the University** of Tennessee and much more like an electrician or a contractor learning a trade. When you’re doing that, there *are classes* you need to take and information you need to learn, to be sure—but that’s only *part* of it. The *other* part is that you need on-the-job training. You need to watch somebody else doing what you want to *learn* to do. I don’t know about you, but when I ask an electrician to come wire something in my kids’ rooms, I don’t just want to know how many *podcasts* he’s listened to on electricity. I don’t just want to know how much he *knows* about electricity. I want to know that he has on-the-job *experience* in wiring a house. And specifically, doing it *safely* and *correctly*.

Okay, that’s **what it means to be a *disciple***—not just that you *know* things about a relationship with God, but that you *live* a relationship with God. Which explains why, back when Jesus initially *called* his disciples, he didn’t say “come and take my course on leadership,” or “come and read my book on systematic theology,” or “come and listen to my cultural analysis podcast.” He said, “come and *follow* me.” And **he meant that *literally***. As in, “grab your stuff and walk alongside and behind me as I do life. Let me show you how to navigate the complexities and intricacies of your day-to-day the way *I* do.” That’s what *discipleship* is. It’s definitely a type of *learning*, but it’s *on-the-job* learning. It’s life-on-life learning.

So when it says for us to go and *disciple* others, it doesn't just mean "impart some facts about God to them." That's *important*, but that's not discipleship. It means you actually have to open up your life in such a way that people can watch you follow Jesus, and then learn how to follow Jesus themselves. We'll circle back to that in more detail here in a moment, but for now, I just want you to hear that difference.

For now, let's look at the **next thing** Jesus says, which is...

...of all nations

He says "go and make disciples of *all nations*." So this part **also requires some context**. Keep in mind that the eleven disciples Jesus is saying this to are all *Jewish men*. Men who are still probably still *largely* under the impression that the Jesus movement is a movement *just* for the *Jewish* people. **Now, Jesus has done his best to push back on that assumption of theirs. He's been marveling at the faith of Gentile Roman soldiers,¹ and Canaanite women²—just to name a couple.** He's trying to regularly *show* them that his kingdom is bigger than just the Jewish people.

And here, just **to remove any lingering doubt** about it, Jesus just said here, "go" and "make disciples" of "*all nations*." Of *how* many nations? *All* of them. Every single one of them. **To which the disciples might say, "What about the Romans who are oppressing us and occupying our land, Jesus?" "Yep, make disciples of *them*." "What about the Samaritans and the Canaanites—where there's this long, ugly, violent quasi-racist history between them and our people?" "Yep, make disciples of *them* too. In fact," Jesus might say, "I've already started a couple friendships with a Samaritan woman³ and a Canaanite woman a while back—maybe just pick up where I left off." **Jesus means his instructions here. Go and make disciples of *all* nations. *All* ethnicities. *All* people groups. *All* corners of society. *All* socioeconomic statuses. Go and make disciples of *all* of them.****

This part matters to us for a *couple* reasons. One, because **we live in a city where in a lot of ways, the "nations" actually come to us.** As of late last year, there were 1,329 international students enrolled at the University of Tennessee. Not to mention 734 international faculty and staff, and 312 exchange students.⁴ That's a *lot* of people not from here. The top three countries of origin there were **India, China, and Bangladesh.** Just for us to know, *India* as a country is **90% unreached** with the gospel. *China*, **81%**

¹ Luke 7:1-10

² Matthew 15:21-28

³ John 4:1-26

⁴ [Source](#)

unreached. And Bangladesh, 93%.⁵ Did you realize that for many of those countries, the only thing standing between them and another gospel presence in their country is one of *us* striking up a friendship with a student or faculty member here, and eventually introducing them to Jesus? That's *incredible*. In fact, our plan as a church at the end of this year is to give *everyone* in our church some really *specific* opportunities to do just that. But suffice it to say, that's an *unreal* kind of opportunity we have, just by living in Knoxville, TN.

The *second* reason it matters for us is because **we have more *ability* to reach all nations with the gospel *today*, than any society to ever exist before us.** Have you ever thought about it like that? Right now, you can go online and connect with *amazing* missions organizations that will train you and send you just about anywhere in the world, short-term or long-term. You can go online and read about where the biggest needs are for missionaries, and then be trained to *become* one of those missionaries. You can go online and give your *money* to missionaries that are already on the ground, in those places, doing amazing work. All of that is available, literally, at our *fingertips*. That's an *incredible* opportunity. **Many of us should seriously consider how to be a part of either *going*, or *giving* so others can go.**

But listen: *all of us*, bare minimum, should take *seriously* Jesus' instructions to go to "all nations" and make disciples. To see it as our responsibility to introduce our friends, neighbors, coworkers, family members—you name it—to Jesus and his way of life. Regardless of their background. Regardless of their faith tradition. Regardless of their ethnicity or their socioeconomic status. Regardless of how much we personally do or don't like hanging out with them. Regardless of how they vote or what they believe. Jesus' instructions apply to us: "go and make disciples of *all* nations."

Third thing he says is that we do this by, first...

...baptizing them...

If you were with us two weeks ago, on Easter Sunday, you've got a pretty good idea what *baptism* is. Baptism is a public demonstration of a person coming to know, love, and follow Jesus. It's a way of visualizing Jesus' death and resurrection by going under the water, and then coming back up *out* of the water. And also, visually representing that person's *own* death and resurrection, spiritually speaking.

⁵ [Source](#)

So when Jesus says here, in this passage, that making disciples involves “baptizing” them...he’s saying that it involves leading people to make a *decision* to know, love, and follow Jesus for the first time. **Now, it’s not *just* a one-time decision, as we’re going to discuss here in a moment. But it’s also not *less* than a one-time decision. In other words, you can’t teach someone to obey everything Jesus has commanded, unless they’ve first acknowledged and *agreed* that Jesus is their authority in the first place.** Am I making sense? It has to *start* there. You can’t *skip* this step. There has to come a moment where that person says “I believe in Jesus, I believe that he is who he says he is, and I’m giving him functional authority over my life.” That’s what *baptism* represents.

Now, this part of Jesus’ instructions, if I’m honest, is something I think we could grow in as a church. And we’re going to talk about that in more detail here in about a month as part of our next series. But here’s the short version: I think our church does a really good job of loving and genuinely caring about non-believers in our lives. I think we also do a good job of welcoming people in and speaking into their lives once they’re here with us as a part of our church, and once they *claim* to follow Jesus. And I’m really thankful for that; I don’t want any of that to change.

But sometimes, I feel like we aren’t quite as strong at getting people to a place of *deciding* that Jesus is Lord. Of helping them come to understand what it looks like to operate with him as their ultimate authority. And according to Jesus in Matthew 28, that’s really where discipleship *starts*. It’s *one* decision to submit your life to Jesus, that then leads to a lifetime of other decisions to follow him. Make sense? That’s why Jesus says that “baptizing” them is an essential part of discipleship.

And then we have the final instruction...

...teaching them to obey...

So here, we get to the *other* side of the coin. While the decision to follow Jesus is just that (a decision), it doesn’t *stop* at that one decision. That *decision* is the on-ramp to learning a life of *obedience* to Jesus. Now, I realize there are likely few words that modern Americans have more of an *aversion* to than the word *obedience*, or *obey*. Those words feel somewhat stifling to a lot of us.

But think about it this way: in reality, all of us live in “obedience” to something. Some of us obey our *desires*. Some of us obey our sex drive. Some of us obey our *feelings*. Some of us obey our *intellect*. Some of us obey *external* authorities; like political parties or cultural trends or world philosophies. And most of us probably obey a *combination* of

many of those things I just listed, and more. But all of us live in obedience to something. All of us allow some part of us, or some part of the world around us, to *dictate much* of how we live and think and act and relate to others, at some level.

So **the question isn't whether or not you obey something; it's what you obey.** And maybe most importantly: *what will you obey most?* What is it that you will give *ultimate* allegiance to? When push comes to shove, what gets to override everything else? *Is it advancing in your job or career? Is it your desire for a spouse? Is it your desire for total autonomy and freedom? Is it your desire to please other people? Is it your desire for a comfortable, luxury-filled life? Is it your desire to be seen as a morally upright person? Is it your desire to be "right"?* **What is the *thing* in your life, that overrides all the other things?** *That*, to use the language of our passage, is what you "obey."

To put it in the *broader* language of this passage as a *whole*: **all of us are disciples of something.** All of us allow ourselves to sit under the authority, teaching, or even *fear* of something. There is something—often one *big* thing—standing in functional authority over our lives. And **Jesus here is saying that following him means switching whatever those things are, out for him.** It's learning to "obey everything he's commanded us." And then to encourage *others*, in turn, to do the same. To *teach* them to obey everything Jesus has commanded *them*. *Discipleship* is bringing yourself, and anyone you're discipling, under the gracious rule and reign of Jesus.

And it's **to bring all of our lives** under the rule and reign of Jesus. Not just the parts of our lives that are *easy* to submit to him; but the parts of our lives that often, we really don't *want* to submit to him. *Our bitterness and resentment. Our sexuality and sexual desire and sexual orientation. Our passions and desires. Our wallet and our budget. Our calendars and our spare time. Our predetermined priorities in life that we tend to not like changing.* Jesus says to *his* disciples, 'teach them to obey *'everything'* I have commanded.' *That word "everything" in the original language is really interesting; it means...everything.* Like *all* of it. Everything in your life and every part of it comes under the rule and reign of King Jesus—and listen: that's the best case scenario for all of us.

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So **that, in a nutshell,** is what Jesus' final instructions to his disciples were all about. "Go, and make disciples, of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I've commanded you." / Now, there's one final piece of what Jesus says here that we're going to circle back to before we're done. // But first, I just want to make sure that we are evaluating our *own lives* in light of what Jesus says here. So I've got **three questions** I want you to consider with me. And I want you to, as best as you can, answer them honestly. We'll even spend some time in

our LifeGroup settings this week wrestling with them together. But I've pulled these right out of the content of this passage.

First question to consider is this:

Do you know Jesus?

As we just said, **all of this starts** with understanding that through Jesus' life, death, and resurrection, you have access to a relationship with Jesus. That relationship can only *happen* if you've trusted him and decided to begin that relationship with him. But when I ask "do you know Jesus?" I don't just mean did you make a decision one time, years ago, where you said a prayer and did a thing and somebody told you that you were good. That stuff can be *great* as a starting point. What *I'm* asking, though, is did all of *that* begin a *process* of you *knowing* Jesus? **You knowing him like you get to know a good friend. You interacting with him as a regular practice in your life, like you would interact with a close family member.** Ultimately, the other two questions don't actually matter at all until you've answered this one: do you *actually know* Jesus?

Second question...

Do you follow Jesus?

By this question, I mean have you **given him functional authority** over your life? **I'm not asking if you do that perfectly, without error. That would be a very silly question to ask; because the answer to that for all of us is "no."** That's not what I'm asking. But I *am* asking if, when Jesus *convicts* you of something, *shows* you something, tries to lead you *into* something or *away* from something—when those moments come, do you have a *desire* to listen to him? Do you, as a pattern in your life, allow what *he* says to *override* what *you* want? Do you allow what *he* commands to *overrule* what *you* would prefer? Again, not 100% of the time, but as a pattern of your life. More often than not.

I ask that because **that is what it means** to follow Jesus. There's no such thing as following Jesus and regularly, unrepentantly *refusing* to *do* the things he said to do. Or, as Jesus himself once put it, "Why do you call me 'Lord,' 'Lord,' and not do what I say?"⁶ So that's my *second* question: do you *follow* Jesus?

My **third and final** question is this:

⁶ Luke 6:46

Are you helping others follow Jesus?

This **final instruction** from Jesus, once again, is about going and *making* disciples. Going to all nations, and helping anyone and everyone you know come to *know* Jesus, and then learn how to follow him themselves. So **my question for those of us who follow Jesus here this morning is *are we doing that?* Is there a regular pattern in our life, where we are helping people around us follow Jesus?**

Now, as we've already said, there are really **two main components** to that. The *first* is helping people come to *know* Jesus in the first place, and the second is helping them learn to *follow* Jesus and become more *like* Jesus, *once* they know him. And like I said, we'll get into some specifics on *both* of those things in our next series. So more detail is coming your way. But for now, I just want to ask: *do we have a desire to be involved in that?* As a pattern in our life, are we helping others come to know and follow Jesus? Because according to Jesus in this passage, that's sort of the *main* thing we should be doing. (And when I say "sort of," I mean it *is* the main thing. It *is* the main thing we should be doing.)

So practically: **bare minimum**, for those of you who consider yourself a part of *our* church, that would at least mean "are you a part of something like a LifeGroup?" If you're a *member* of our church, that's actually a *requirement*. *Are you a part of a LifeGroup, and are you regularly involved in that LifeGroup? Are you both physically and mentally present there? Do you show up, more often than not? And when you're there, are you at least asking the question, how can I practically benefit the people here in their relationship with Jesus? How can I help them become more like Jesus, as a result of me being here?*

Without at least having regular *interactions* like that with other believers, it's going to be pretty tough to fulfill the instructions Jesus gives us in this passage.

Obviously, there are times and seasons where life is overwhelming and involvement in our LifeGroup is negatively impacted—that's part of life. But at the same time, if all of the past three years have been one of those seasons for you, I would ask you to consider if maybe it's not a season-of-life issue, but rather a *priority* issue. Make sense? **For you to help others follow Jesus, you have to regularly be around them.**

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So I'd love for us all to just spend some time this week **reflecting on those three questions:** *do I know Jesus, am I following Jesus,* and *am I helping others follow Jesus?* Reflect on those questions on your own, and then spend some time in your LifeGroup setting reflecting on them as well.

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But as we wrap up, I do want to make sure you hear one final thing loud and clear from this passage. There is one final thing that Jesus includes in these final four verses of Matthew. And it is—not trying to overstate things here—but quite possibly one of the most *important* things said in the entire bible; especially if we’re going by just the sheer number of *times* it is said. Here’s how Jesus puts it in the second half of v. 20:

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

So the **final thing** Jesus gives his disciples is not a **command**, and it’s not **instruction**; it’s actually a **promise**. It’s the promise to be “with” his people, until the very end. Here’s why I think that matters in the context of this passage: **more than discipleship being something you do for Jesus, discipleship is something you do with Jesus**. Specifically, you do it with the *power* and *presence* he’s made available to you. **When Jesus asks us as his people to go and “make disciples,” he’s not asking us to do something on our own; he’s asking us to join him in what he’s already doing.**

Jesus actually **elaborates on this elsewhere** in the other gospels. He tells his disciples that it is actually “to their advantage” that he goes away (at least in the flesh), so that he can send another “helper” (who we know as the Holy Spirit) to be with them.⁷ He tells them *that* is actually *better* for them than having him present with them in the flesh. Stop and think about that for just a moment. **Have you ever had the thought, I wish I could’ve known Jesus in person? I wish I could have been with him in the flesh? Have you ever thought to yourself that that would probably help you tremendously in terms of trusting in him and understanding the things he said and having faith in who he is? I don’t know about you, but I’ve had that thought often. Like approximately once a day. Maybe several times a day, depending on how rough the day is.**

Okay. Well just for clarity, **Jesus just said that what we have available to us via the Holy Spirit is actually better than all of that.** It’s the functional equivalent of Jesus in the flesh, and *then some*. Because think about it: *if we had Jesus in the flesh, he would still be limited by space and time. Right? So if Jesus was hanging out with somebody else in another place, that means I can’t hang out with him here. If he runs out of time in a day, he’s out of time to help me. If Jesus is asleep, he can’t tell me what I should do or what decision I should make. If Jesus was present to us in the flesh, there would be limits to how present and available and helpful he could be to us at any given time.* Because humans are limited like that.

⁷ See John 16:7

But with the Holy Spirit, there are precisely *none* of those same limitations. With the Holy Spirit, he is always available to teach and instruct and comfort and counsel and encourage and convict and guide. He is ever present with us. *Always* present, to those that know and follow Jesus. And *that* is the promise Jesus leaves his disciples with: “...and surely *I am with you always*, to the very end of the age.” **We don’t work for God; we work with God, by his power.**

And here’s why that matters. I think at least a large part of our neglect to do the things Jesus lays out in this passage is that we think we’re not *capable* of doing it, or of doing it well. I think anytime we think about “making disciples,” there’s a part of us that goes “yeah...I don’t think I’d be very good at that.” “I don’t know how to do that.” “I don’t know where to start, with that.” And then some of us functionally conclude, “...so I might as well not even try.” I think that is the insecurity that rises up in at least a lot of us when we think about making disciples.

But listen: Jesus didn’t say ‘go and make disciples...because we all know you’re awesome and will knock it out of the park.’ It’s almost the *opposite* of that. The command he gives, in many ways, is meant to draw out an *acknowledgement* of our own weakness. An *acknowledgement* of our own insecurities. **Whenever we encounter that insecurity, all that means is that we’ve come face-to-face with a challenge that we do not have the resources within ourselves to overcome.** Our insecurities *remind* us that we are *human*. And if we’re human, we need a power *outside* of ourselves to do everything God has called us to do.

And the good news for followers of Jesus is that that is *precisely* the power God has made available to us in sending the Holy Spirit. So here are Jesus’ final words to his disciples, and to *us*, in the gospel of Matthew. “Go and do the things I’ve called you to do...by the *power* I’ve given you to do them.” “Go and make disciples, because you’re making disciples *with* me.” “Go and do the things *I* did,” and know that you can do it *because* I am *with* you. *Know*, without a doubt, that I am with *you*, always—even to the very end of the age. So if you feel like you are inadequate to do all of this on your own, *great*: that means you’re almost ready. *That’s* when we place our hope, our trust, our confidence, in *Jesus*. In the fact that Jesus, by his Spirit, is *with* us. That is what Jesus wants us to *do*, and what he wants us to *know*.

Let’s pray.