

1st Sunday of Pentecost

Year A

Matthew 28:16-20

The eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain to which Jesus had directed them. When they saw him, they worshiped him; but some doubted. And Jesus came and said to them, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. 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, and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age."

Prayer:

Lord, Let us seek your truth. Let us be disciples, who seek always to learn from you.

And let us never conclude, that we've figured it all out.

-- AMEN

Sermon:

Our services often end with a Dismissal, something like this:

“Go in peace to Love and Serve The Lord.”

It's a simple phrase that rolls right off our tongue.

We usually don't think about it much.

The Dismissal is supposed to empower us to share the Good News,

When leave church and head back into the real world.

“Go in peace to Love and Serve The Lord.”

Reminds me of the Great Commission:

“... **go** and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them ... everything I have commanded you.¹”

*The operative word in this Gospel is **GO**.*

St. Matthew wrote today's Gospel. He was always on the Go.

Some old-style Church art even shows him with wings!

St. Matthew was a *very* busy guy.

But he had his problems, like everyone else.

I bet, like you and me, sometimes he just wanted to fly away.

Matthew was a Jewish guy.

But before he met Jesus, he was also a tax collector,

for the Romans.

He probably didn't get invited to a lot of parties.

In his worst days he may have cheated the people,

like all the other tax collectors did.

The Jewish Temple leaders,² called him a sinner.³

But Jesus saw something in Matthew that no one else did.

Jesus saw Matthew's strengths. *Just like Jesus sees ours.*

Jesus sees our strengths. He sees the chinks in our armor.

Jesus sees us and loves us and works with us, *as we are.*

Jesus knows where we live. And that's a good thing.

He's always there, when we need him!

In today's Gospel Jesus says, "GO".

So, Matthew went.⁴

The Gospel says, "Go", and we need to "Go", too!

Jesus doesn't want us to go home and watch TV.

Jesus wants us to go out into the world.

"Whoever welcomes you", Jesus said, "Welcomes me".

We welcome Jesus when we welcome others.

In the Great Commission, Jesus says to disciples

"go and make disciples."

The key word is GO... but **Who is supposed to Go?**

Remember the old song:

"Is it I Lord"? 5

Am I a disciple? Are you? Yes, I am. So are you!

A disciple is a student.⁶

Students teaching students.

Disciples making disciples

That is how Jesus rolls!

Who goes? DISCIPLES GO!

I am a Student.

Each of you is a student.

We are all Students.

We are all, therefore, perfectly qualified to be Disciples.7

Jesus said:

“GO... make **disciples** of all nations ... **teaching** them

Everything I have commanded you.”

When we go we are students, but we must also be **Teachers**.

Teaching and Learning are the heart of our **faith**.

Some of us are born teachers.

Others to bend and cut and shape wood.

Others are best at being stay-at-home moms or dads.

Or physicians, or astronauts,

or retailers, or insurance adjusters.

God’s Universe is marvelously diverse and complex.

So are we!

Yet, we are all students and we are teachers.

Teach your children well.8

We teach our children by what we say,

and by what we do or don't do.

We teach them by wearing masks and respecting other's health.

We teach them by staying indoors as much as we can,
And modeling patience.

We teach them by not rushing through lines at HEB.
And by not treating the cashier like an ATM.

We teach them when we don't text or use our phones
when we drive.

We teach them when we don't ask
what someone else can do for us.
*but what we what we can do, for someone else.*⁹

We teach them when we don't idly
ask what we can do but instead,
when something needs doing: *We just do it!* ¹⁰

We Just Do It! And we don't hang around for applause.

When we teachers, we will make mistakes.

It's a steep learning curve! Stuff happens!

But God has our backs. *We are forgiven.*¹¹ *Just Do It!*

When we are students, we may not always get the message.

But don't fret. Carry on.

This project is in God's hands.

“Learn to do good. Learn to seek justice. Learn to bring justice....”

That is the way. That is Jesus' way. 12

--AMEN

1 “And surely I am with you ... to the very end of the age.” It’s the “Great Commission.” See, Matthew 28:16-20 NIV

2 Themselves hardly paragons of virtue.

3 See, Matt. 9:9-13

4 Actually, we don’t have much information about Matthew. As a tax collector he was probably fluent in Greek, and Aramaic; he apparently wrote his Gospel, in Aramaic, circa 41 to 50 CE, trying to reach the every day Hebrew Joe and Jane. He focused on Jesus as a spiritual messiah, not a warrior who would toss out the Romans. Some think that he was persecuted, and some legends have him in what is now Ethiopia, but then was Parthia and Persia.

5 I, The Lord of Sea and Sky, songwriters: Anna Laura Page / Daniel L. Schutte

6 The word Disciple in Greek is μαθηταῖς (mathetes).

7 You don’t need a M.Div., or D. Minn., or a collar or know how to read Koine Greek.

8 “Teach your children”. Crosby, Stills & Nash (1969)

Genre: Classic rock

9 A nod to JFK.

10 ... to borrow from the Nike commercials,

11 We are all going to blow it once in a while. St. Paul tells us not to fret. *It is the effort that counts*. He wrote: “Forget what is behind and strain toward what is ahead”.

12 See, Isaiah 1;17 et seq.