



Peters Green News Sheet Issue No: 58

Sunday 11th April 2021

Matthew 28:16-20: The Great Commission

In this past week we have once again taken the time to remember an event that has had the most profound impact on the lives of many, with the fulfilment of a promise that has changed the world. The triumphant entry of Jesus on a humble donkey into Jerusalem on Palm Sunday paved the way to a sequence of acts that changed our relationship with God and with each other. No more is the impact of this event make clear to us than the words provided to us in John 3:16; For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish, but have eternal life.

On Good Friday, we remembered the pain, suffering and sacrifice of Jesus, as he was unjustly accused, beaten, mocked and nailed to a cross, where he died an agonising death. Having been wrapped in clean cloth, buried in a tomb that was sealed with a big stone and guarded, the authorities went to great lengths to ensure the disciples could not come and steal the body in efforts to deceive the people and perpetrate the greatest fraud in history.

But there was no deception necessary, for in spite of all efforts by the authorities to guard against the removal of Jesus' body, on the Sunday, three days following his crucifixion, Jesus was raised from the dead through the power of the Lord, just as Jesus had said when he was alive. How do we respond to such a momentous event? A gift so profound that it has the means to change our lives forever, if we choose to believe.

In Matthew 28:16, 17, we discover the reaction of the eleven disciples as Jesus having risen from the dead goes ahead of them to Galilee. When the disciples saw Jesus on the mountain, they worshiped him but some doubts regarding what they were witnessing. Had this man really died on the cross? The reasons for the doubt expressed by some of the disciples may have varied. It may be that some disciples expected Jesus as the Messiah to take the throne of David and lead them in their agenda to rid the Romans from their land. Regardless of their reasons for doubting, they chose to worship Jesus on that mountain in Galilee.

Indeed, regardless of their doubts, Jesus has commissioned those who choose to following him, saying, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore, go and make disciples of all nations..." (Matt 28:18,19). He did not wait for the eleven disciples to resolve their doubts, before they chose to follow his command. It is this obedience to God's word in spite of our doubts that has enabled the flourishing of his kingdom over two thousand years after he spoke of this great commission. In that time this great commission has not changed, and Jesus has committed to the everlasting support of his

disciples as he says, "And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age." (Matt 28:20).

As believers in his death and resurrection we are called to undertake the making of disciples across the world, by baptising in the name of the Son, the Father and the Holy Spirit. We are called to participate in the building of the church body with Christ as its head. With all power and authority in heaven and on earth given to Jesus by his Father, we can be assured of his legitimacy regarding the demand for obedience.

Through his sacrifice on the cross, his victory over death and his great commission, we have been given hope and a new purpose for our lives. The making of disciples is a matter of obedience requiring the transformation of one's self through the leading of the Holy Spirit. It is the power of the Holy Spirit that gives each of us the strength to change our relationship with God. A relationship that over time seeks to empty us of our old selves and everything that we have keeping us separated from him, and fill us with a will to openly declare our belief in Jesus through baptism and continuously seek his teaching so that we can grow to be more like the Father's Son. As we grow in faith with the courage to trust in the power of our saviour, we are called to embrace God within us (Gal 1: 15,16), so that as his instrument he is able to change the world, making disciples of all nations, baptizing and teaching believers to obey everything Jesus has commanded.

This is indeed a lifelong calling that all who have surrendered their lives to Jesus, regardless of their doubts have been entrusted too. Jesus assures his believers that he will always be there to the very end of the age, to lift his people up and see them through the good times as well as what will inevitably be difficult times as we serve him. He has assured us that he will never leave us in our efforts to do God's will as he enables us to increase his kingdom. A believer's mission, should they choose to accept it, is to change the world, one baptism at a time, supporting each other through the Christ like example of love, service and sacrifice to build the kingdom of God. This mission is only possible, if each of us rely on the power of God and the working of the Holy Spirit within us.

No matter what stage we might be in our lives, we will continue to have a righteous purpose; a gift that has been given to us through Jesus' victory over death, and his commission to his believers that mean that we shall never be useless in the eyes of God. The fruit of our belief and obedience to the great commission will be there, long after we are gone. It is indeed and incredible gift of our purpose in God's plan that will have an impact over the generations to come, until Jesus comes again.

John Evans

Go Forth In His Name (We are his children)

*We are His children, the fruit of his suffering
Saved and redeemed by his blood
Called to be holy, a light to the nations
Clothed with his power
Filled with his love*

*Go forth in his name, proclaiming "Jesus reigns!"
Now is the time for the church to arise
And proclaim him "Jesus, Saviour, Redeemer and Lord"*

*Countless the souls that are stumbling in darkness
Why do we sleep in the light?
Jesus commands us to go make disciples
This is our cause
This is the fight*

