

Matthew 28 • "I am with you always"

Teacher: Pastor Paul LeBoutillier
Life Bible Ministry

Matthew 28. Let's pray. Lord, we thank You so much for the opportunity to gather together as the body of Christ today. And especially on this day when we celebrate the resurrection and so much that this changes in our understanding. We just really pray for Your Holy Spirit to lead and guide us, Lord.

And I just, pray because, Lord, because you know where everybody is at spiritually, emotionally, and Lord what they need the most today. And so I just really pray that Your Holy Spirit would move in the hearts of people according to the need that You know and You see in each life.

Use this time, Lord God, use our study of the Word to really challenge and encourage our hearts. We look to You in this Lord, as we sang this morning, we depend on You for this. And we just praise You and worship You in Jesus name, amen.

Matthew 28 begins in verse 1 by saying, *"Now after the Sabbath, (which of course is on Saturday) toward the dawn of the first day of the week, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary (how would you like to be that gal, the other Mary? Just for all eternity, you're the other Mary. So anyway, I was like, okay, hi, I am the other Mary) went to see the tomb."* (ESV)

And by the way, it's Mark who actually tells us why the women went to the tomb. Let me put this on the screen so we can see it together. From Mark 16 it says,

Mark 16:1-2 (ESV)

When the Sabbath was past, Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James, and Salome bought spices, so that they might go and anoint him. And very early on the first day of the week, when the sun had risen, they went to the tomb.

When the Sabbath was past, Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James, and Salome bought spices, so that they might go and anoint him. And very early on the first day of the week, when the sun had risen, they went to the tomb.

And what does that tell you about what they were expecting to find? They were expecting to find a dead body in that tomb. And that's probably an important

consideration. They knew, of course, where the tomb was. We talked about this last time because they had followed Joseph of Arimathea, who had you'll remember, received permission to take Jesus down from the cross, and bury Him in Joseph's own tomb that he had made for himself.

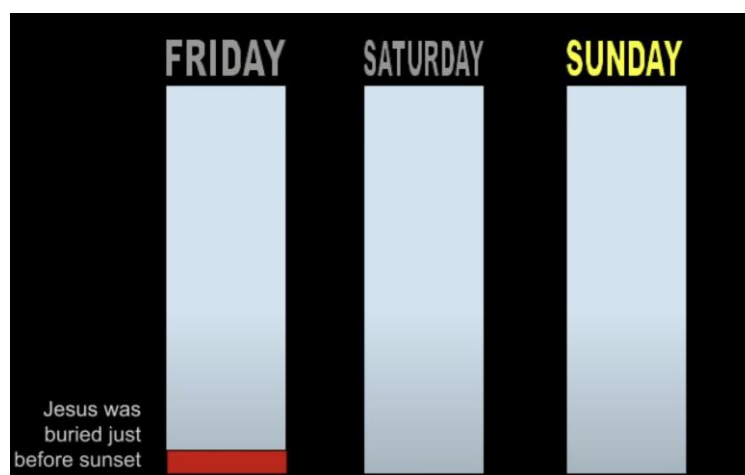
And the women had followed along so that they knew the location of the tomb. But they had hurriedly prepared Jesus for burial on the evening when He died. And the reason is because the Sabbath was coming upon them.

The Sabbath began at sundown right, on Friday evening. So that was the beginning of the Sabbath. So they only had so much time to prepare the body and they did it very hurriedly. And now they're going back after the Sabbath to finish all of the burial preparations. And they used to just add an incredible amount of things they would do to a body after someone died.

I've read where it was up to like 75 pounds, excuse me of ointment and wrappings and things like that. And it was just, this huge thing and they had barely been able to do it before the Sabbath began. So now they're going back to do it as well. So we're coming up here on, I mean, obviously they're going to find, that Jesus has been raised.

But there's one more question that I want to deal with before we move on from here. It's a question that I get very much, very often this time of year. And it has to do with Jesus's statement that He would be raised after three days.

And once people start looking into this, they start thinking it through and they're going, wait a minute, that's really not three days. Because they didn't put Him into the tomb until the very tail end of Friday. Maybe there was only an hour left of the day, before the sunset, and then He was there. Well, anyway, let me show you in a, I put a, I have a graph. And this is very simple, but each of the columns on this graph represent one day.



And so they started with just, I mean, He was probably in the tomb for about an hour, I'm guessing, maybe on Friday. So we'll represent that on the graph there. You can see that, Jesus was buried just before sunset. And then of course He was there all day on Saturday so we fill in all of Saturday. That's when Jesus was, in the tomb. And then Sunday actually began at sundown on Saturday, and then He was raised at essentially sunrise. So, okay, part of Sunday, probably not even half of the day.

Christians get to looking at this and they start saying, huh, He's going to be raised after three days, huh? Well, it is barely a little more than a day and a half, and they begin to wonder if the Bible is actually true. But what they're doing is they are presuming that the way they count time was the same way the Jews counted it. And that is in fact not the case.

The Jews counted any portion of a day, as a day. So even though Jesus was in the tomb for maybe an hour or less on Friday before it turned over to the Sabbath. And even though He was only partially in the tomb on Sunday morning, those still each count as a day, as well of as of course Saturday.

So there is the three days that Jesus is talking about. And again, this is simply because we reckon a day. We reckon a day today is a 24 hour period. And if you say that you were with me for the day, then you had to have really been with me for the whole day. Well, that's not the way the Jews thought. So now you know.

Let's keep reading verse 2. *“And behold, there was a great earthquake, for an angel of the Lord descended from heaven and came and rolled back the stone and sat on it.”* Wouldn't that have been fun to be that angel, to be the one that got...

I don't know how many angels there are, I have no idea. But you of all the angels, God picks you as the one to come down. And we don't know if it was the actual earthquake that rolled the stone away or the angel rolled it away. But how cool to be there as that angel, and roll that stone back, and then sit on it, and so forth.

And we're told in verse 3 that, *“His appearance was like lightning, and his clothing white as snow.”* ⁴ *And for fear of him the guards trembled and became like dead men.”* In other words, they fainted like little girls.

These are Roman soldiers. And by the way, a Roman guard is usually four soldiers. And the reason that they would have four is because they would take

breaks, resting and guarding, so that there was always somebody awake and guarding. But when this angel comes upon the scene and they see this thing, they all just drop to the ground and so forth.

But what's really interesting is you keep reading in verse 5 and it says, *“But the angel said to the women, ...”* Who didn't faint, right? The women—the soldiers just dropped out, and these women are just, they're still standing. They're probably afraid, but still.

Anyway, the angel says to them, *“Do not be afraid, for I know that you seek Jesus who was crucified. ⁶ He is not here, for he has risen, as he said. Come, see the place where he lay. ⁷ Then go quickly and tell his disciples that he has risen from the dead, ...”*

Some of you guys have a song going through your head right now by the second chapter of Acts, right? The Easter song. And some of you don't know what I'm talking about because you missed the 80s, but that's okay. You can actually go back and on YouTube and hear it, it's an incredible song.

So he says, *“...go quickly and tell his disciples that he has risen from the dead and behold, he is going before you to Galilee; there you will see him. See, I have told you.”*

And so what a powerful thing, but what an honor for these women to be the very first eyewitnesses of the empty tomb. And to be commissioned by this angel of the Lord to go and tell the disciples that He has risen from the grave.

Here's what's interesting about this. This is one of the reasons why I believe the narrative to be talking about real life events, and this isn't somebody's made up story, out of their imagination. And here's why.

If you were going to make up a story where people are eyewitnesses, you're going to obviously want to create eyewitnesses who have some validity, right? Well, what you may not know is that back in that day, the testimony of a woman was not admissible in court.

So here you've got the very first eyewitnesses of the empty tomb. People who can't give testimony in any sort of a legal sort of a setting, right? Nobody would do that. Nobody—that'd be a blunder to write a story like that.

And only God would choose those whose testimony wouldn't be admissible. But yet He honors these women because, they had stood by Jesus. And risked their

lives and were there supporting. And so they were the first ones to see the empty tomb.

Verse 8 goes on and it says, “*So they departed quickly from the tomb with fear and great joy, and ran to tell his disciples.*”⁹ And behold, Jesus met them (obviously along the way) and said, “*Greetings!*” And they came up and took hold of his feet and worshiped him. (note that)¹⁰ Then Jesus said to them, “*Do not be afraid; go and tell my brothers to go to Galilee, and there they will see me.*”

And we, we know from the other texts of the resurrection narratives that the women did as they were told, but they weren't tremendously successful. Luke tells us how this went. Look on the screen as we look at Luke 24. It says,

Luke 24:10-11 (ESV)

Now it was Mary Magdalene and Joanna and Mary the mother of James and the other women with them who told these things to the apostles, but these words seemed to them an idle tale, and they did not believe them.

Now it was Mary Magdalene and Joanna and Mary the mother of James and the other women with them who told these things to the apostles, (look at this) but these words seemed to them an idle tale, and they did not believe them.

Here's these pillars of faith, these men whom Jesus has chosen to be these special apostles. He's been telling them all along that this is going to happen. He's going to be crucified. He's going to rise on the third day. And they're like, yeah, no, no. I don't I don't think so.

However, we do know from John's account that Peter and John actually got up to go investigate. Let me show you this on the screen. It says,

John 20:3-10 (ESV)

So Peter went out with the other disciple, and they were going toward the tomb. Both of them were running together, but the other disciple outran Peter and reached the tomb first. And stooping to look in, he saw the linen cloths lying there, but he did not go in. Then Simon Peter came, following him, and went into the tomb. He saw the linen cloths lying there, and the face cloth, which had been on Jesus' head, not lying with the linen cloths but folded up in a place by itself. Then the other disciple, who had reached the tomb first, also went in, and he saw and believed; for as yet they did not understand the Scripture, that he must rise from the dead. Then the disciples went back to their homes.

So Peter went out with the other disciple, and (John's going to refer to himself in the third person here) they were going toward the tomb. Both of them were running together, but the other disciple (who is John) outran Peter (because Peter was probably overweight, I don't know) and reached the tomb first. And stooping to look in, he saw the linen cloths lying there, but he did not go in. (John was a little bit, cautious, but) Then Simon Peter came, following him, and went into the tomb. He saw the linen cloths lying there, and the face cloth, which had been on Jesus' head, not lying with the linen cloths but folded up in a place by itself. Then the other disciple, who had reached the tomb first, also went in, and he saw and believed; for as yet they did not understand the Scripture, that he must rise from the dead. Then the disciples went back to their homes.

Isn't this interesting? So these, you put these narratives together and you get a rather larger and more dynamic picture of the things that took place that day.

Now let's deal with these guards that fainted like little girls. Verse 11. *"While they were going, behold, some of the guard (and you'll remember that there were four of them, so some of them) went into the city and told the chief priests all that had taken place. ¹² And when they had assembled with the elders (that's essentially, the Sanhedrin) and taken counsel, they gave a sufficient sum of money to the soldiers ¹³ and said, 'Tell people, 'His disciples came by night and stole him away while we were asleep.' ¹⁴ And if this comes to the governor's ears, we will satisfy him and keep you out of trouble.'"*

And so this is the story that they were told to pass along. It's ridiculously stupid. And there are a lot of things, frankly, that you have to believe in order to believe this story that they're giving.

First of all, you have to believe that all of the soldiers decided to go to sleep at the same time. This was contrary to Roman rule as it relates to guarding whatever you're guarding. They would never all go to sleep, but you have to believe that they did. You also have to believe that they were willing along with that, to risk their own lives.

It was the rule of Roman guarding that if whoever, or whatever you were guarding, slipped away while you were on duty, you would pay with your life. They would kill you. You'll remember in the Book of Acts, that's actually what happened when Peter was being guarded by soldiers. And he was released

through a supernatural work of an angel. And you'll remember the guards were questioned and then executed. And this was the way Rome dealt with this.

You also have to believe that these guards slept through all of the activity and the noise that would go along with rolling the stone away from the mouth of the tomb, going into there and hauling a dead body out of the tomb. And they just slept through this whole thing and so forth. That's highly unlikely.

And finally, you have to believe that even though they were sleeping, they were able to identify who came and took the body. That's the really dumb part. It's like, I mean, how in the world would that hold up in a court of law? All you have to do is get some semi good attorney who's, at least working with half of his brain. And he would say, so you were sleeping? Yes, we were asleep. Then how do you know who took the body? And that would, that'd be it. That'd be it for their testimony right there. They would get thrown outta court.

But verse 15 is probably the most incredible thing. Look at, we read there, verse 15. *"So they took the money and did as they were directed. And this story has been spread among the Jews to this day."*

So it doesn't really matter, whether something is reasonable or rational, people are going to believe what they're going to believe. And this is something that I've been saying for a long time. People, guys, people don't believe things because it's reasonable. People don't believe things because what they believe is rational. They believe what they believe because they want to believe it. It doesn't matter whether it's the most ridiculous thing to believe in the world, they'll believe it because they want to.

Good grief. Have we been able to see that in our culture? I mean, come on. People will believe anything, it doesn't matter. It doesn't matter whether it's scientific or biblical, or whatever, people will just believe what they want to believe. And that's what we see here.

Even though this story that these soldiers propagated was farfetched and ridiculous, people believe it. Oh yeah. That's what happened. Yeah. Okay. Well now we know, it doesn't matter whether it's reasonable.

We come to the final verses of chapter 18. We noticed right away that Matthew is going to move on here. If we look in, you look in verse 16 and he talks about the disciples going to Galilee to meet the Lord. What that brushes over, or I should say skips over is the fact that Jesus did appear to His disciples that very evening of the resurrection.

And even though Matthew leaves it out, John includes it. And it's a very important insight that we gain from this. Let me put it up on the screen from John chapter 20. It says,

John 20:19-22 (ESV)

On the evening of that day, the first day of the week, the doors being locked where the disciples were for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood among them and said to them, "Peace be with you." When he had said this, he showed them his hands and his side. Then the disciples were glad when they saw the Lord. Jesus said to them again, "Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, even so I am sending you." And when he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, "Receive the Holy Spirit."

On the evening of that day, the first day of the week, (that would be Sunday) the doors being locked where the disciples were for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood among them and said to them, "Peace be with you." When he had said this, he showed them his hands and his side. (obviously still bearing the marks of his crucifixion) Then the disciples were glad when they saw the Lord. Jesus said to them again, "Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, even so I am sending you." And when he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, "Receive the Holy Spirit."

And the reason this is so important for us to take note of in the whole resurrection narrative is because this is the very first time that the Holy Spirit is bestowed upon believers for the purpose of regeneration and indwelling. But more than that, this is a powerful, real illustration of life and the need for life to be given to those who believe in the work that Jesus did on the cross.

You'll remember that when man was given life at the very beginning, in the Book of Genesis, the Bible tells us that God breathed into his nostrils and the man became a living being. (Genesis 2:7) But that's not enough to be saved.

Jesus told Nicodemus, yeah, listen you, we've all been born, that's wonderful, but you must be born again. And of course you'll remember Nicodemus didn't remember or figure out what that was all about. In fact, he was highly confused about it, saying, how can a man be born when he's old? Can he enter a second time into his mother's womb? He didn't understand.

And Jesus was like no, no, no. Flesh gives birth to flesh. That's what happens when everyone's born the first time. But you must be born of the Spirit, and that is what is happening in this section that we just read from John chapter 20 when

Jesus “*breathed upon them and said... “Receive the Holy Spirit.”* This is when people were born again for the very first time.

Remember, this is the very first time that the Spirit ever came to indwell someone. In the Old Testament, the Holy Spirit never indwelt anyone. In other words, the Spirit never came in to abide in a person like He does today for all believers. The Spirit merely came upon people in the Old Testament, and He also comes upon believers in the New Testament as well. But this is the very first time. This marks a very important epoch in our understanding of the work of the Holy Spirit in the life of the believer.

You say, well, pastor Paul, why did the Holy Spirit never ever come to live inside someone before this time? And the answer is, the vessel had not been cleansed in the way that Jesus took our sin upon the cross, and gave us forgiveness of sins, and cleansing in such a way that now the Spirit was free to come and indwell. And what a wonderful thing that is.

And as believers in Jesus Christ, those who have accepted what Jesus did for us on the cross, who believed that He bore our penalty, we have all received the Holy Spirit living within us. And that's why we start seeing changes in our lives.

Sometimes those changes don't happen as fast as we think they should. I get notes from people quite often; particularly new believers who are very distressed about the fact that they've come to know Christ as their Savior, and they're still capable of sinning. And sometimes they, sin, some big sin. And they'll write and they'll say, pastor Paul, I don't understand this. I've given my heart to Jesus. I know that the Bible says that His Holy Spirit comes to live within us. Well then how could I do this? How could I sin in this way? It was so horrible. I'm beginning to doubt. I'm even saved.

And I come back to them and I say, well, okay, first of all, you need to understand that yes, the Holy Spirit does come to live inside a believer when we put our faith in Jesus, but He doesn't expunge the sinful nature from that believer.

And so basically what happens now, is you as a believer have two natures living within you. The nature of sin; that human fallen nature, that tends toward rebellion and stupidity. And you also have God's Spirit and nature living within you. And those two natures are opposed to one another. And that's why you sometimes do things that you don't want to do, or you would rather not do, but you instead choose to do. And then you're grieved about it.

And that's the other thing. People will say to me, I am so grieved by what I have done and then they start to talk about whether or not they're even saved. And I say to them, okay, let me ask you a question. Where do you think that sense of grieving comes from? When you sin and when you make a mistake, you say something, do something that you know is just ungodly, and then you're grieved in your heart about your actions. Where do you think that comes from? Do you think that comes from your sinful nature? No.

That comes from the nature of God that is now living within you because you have grieved the Holy Spirit. And the Holy Spirit lives within you, and you now sense that grief. And so you see the very thing that you're wondering about, this feeling of grief when you sin, it's proof that you're saved. Because that kind of grief doesn't come from the sinful nature. It comes from the Spirit of God living within you.

So this work of the Spirit to come and indwell believers that we read about, or that we read here from John chapter 20, it's an important element of understanding that we add to the resurrection narrative to know that God has done this work of depositing His Spirit within us.

You might say, well now wait a minute, pastor Paul, you say that believers received the Spirit on the night of the resurrection. Well, then what happened that we read about in Acts chapter 2, that was some 50 days later, when the Holy Spirit fell upon the assembled believers. What's that all about?

Well, that had nothing to do with salvation. That was the coming of the Spirit to empower. If you read Acts chapter 1 carefully, where Jesus is speaking to the disciples, He says to them, don't leave Jerusalem, but stay here until you receive the gift from my Father. For in a few days, you will be baptized by the Holy Spirit and you will receive power. He didn't say you'll receive salvation. That had already happened.

He said, *“you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you.”* (Acts 1:8) That's the preposition that's used. Okay. So the indwelling Spirit, whenever the indwelling Spirit is referred to in the Scripture, the preposition is, in. When the Spirit comes on to empower for service, the preposition is always, on, or upon. Okay? Take note of that as you read through the Word of God.

Let's keep reading. Verse 16. *“Now the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain to which Jesus had directed them.”*¹⁷ *And when they saw him they worshiped...*” And by the way, that's the second reference in this chapter to

Jesus receiving worship. Okay? Which is yet another proof of His deity because no one is to be worshiped except God alone.

But I want you to notice how Matthew ends this verse. It says, ¹⁷*And when they saw him they worshiped him, but some doubted.*” Again, this is another interesting proof that this is not a made up story because why in the world if you're making up a story, would you say that some people doubted. You wouldn't. You would say, and they were blown away and they all believed, and they all lived happily ever after.

But Matthew is telling us what really happened. Some of the men doubted. It's an honest remark of human frailty because you see all of these men had received the same evidence. There wasn't more evidence given to a few than to others. They all received the same information.

And here's Jesus right there in their midst. And they knew that He had been crucified. They knew that He had been buried, and now they see Him right in there. And this is not the first time, but here He is. Here's Jesus. And yet some of them chose to disbelieve. And yes, I use those words purposefully. They chose to disbelieve because once again, they had the same evidence that those who believed. And yet to them, they simply chose not to believe.

And it's a reminder to you and me that some people can be presented with all the evidence that is necessary to make a reasonable, rational decision about something and they can still choose to say, no, I'm not going to believe. And why? Because I don't want to. That's it. I don't want to.

Why don't you believe in Jesus? Because I don't want to. Is it because of the evidence? No. I looked at the evidence. It's the same evidence that you know the next person had. And he says, yeah, that's I'm convinced. But somebody else says, no, I...

You see, sometimes we pray for our loved ones, family members or whatever, and we say, Lord, just show them, appear to them. Show them, speak to them. Give them all the evidence that they need. Assuming that's going to do the trick. Maybe, maybe not. Maybe not. Some people can receive all the evidence necessary and simply choose not to believe it, because rather than making a reasonable conclusion, they base their the decision on something else. I just don't want to.

Verse 18. *“And Jesus came and said to them, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. ¹⁹Go therefore and make disciples of all nations,*

*baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,
20 teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am
with you always, to the end of the age.””*

Now, the first statement that Jesus makes in these final verses might take some of you aback, and it's the statement, *“All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me.”*

And the reason that some of you might be wondering about that is because we talk a lot about Jesus and His deity, even during His earthly ministry. And we think, no, wait a minute, if He's God and if He never ceased to be God, even when He was born of a virgin, and raised, and worked during His earthly ministry. If He never ceased to be any less God than He ever was, then why did He need to have authority given to Him? Wouldn't He have always retained that authority?

Well, again, you have to remember that the apostle Paul made an important statement for us about the incarnation in his letter to the Philippians, and what he said was that in order for God to become a man. He had to empty Himself. That's a phrase that Paul uses in Philippians chapter 2. (Philippians 2:7) Jesus emptied Himself in order to become a man.

Well, what does that mean? I don't know. I don't have a clue. It's one of these mysteries related to the incarnation. How He could continue to be God, and yet He had to empty Himself. We don't really know what that means. We know that He obviously set aside certain prerogatives of deity and so forth, but exactly how that all plays out, we don't know.

What we do know, is that when Jesus was raised from the dead, He was re-exalted to the place that He had been before, and given this authority. Let's read the passage from Philippians that I was referring to. This is it. This is a wonderful passage. Paul writes,

Philippians 2:6-9 (ESV)

...though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name.

...though he was in the form of God, (right? And that's talking about prior to His incarnation, though he was in the form of God) did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, (okay or held on to) but (here it is, here's the phrase) emptied himself, (that's the mystery, we don't really know what that means) by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. And being found in human form, (right? Now we're after the incarnation) he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. Therefore (and the word, therefore always means because of what we just said, now I'm going to make a statement. Therefore) God (referring to God the Father) has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name.

And that is why Jesus said to His disciples, *“All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me.”* I have been exalted to the place that I was before. How much He set aside? What He had to lay aside to become a man, I don't know.

All I know is that He was fully God and fully man, and He remains. This is the cool part. He remains to this day fully God and fully man. He remains a man to this day, and yet is God in human flesh.

You say Pastor Paul, how is that possible? What a dumb question. I mean, usually I don't tell people they ask dumb questions, but there's just, there's, I don't know. I have no idea how He can be fully God and fully man, no idea. All I know is that's what the Bible reveals, and so because He has this authority, He is now able to give this commission to the disciples, right?

And so He says in verse 19, *“Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, (we're not going to leave anybody out) baptizing them in the name of...”* And by the way, in the name of means, in the authority of. It's not a formula, it is a dynamic authority that is granted to believers, to baptize, okay?

You've been given authority. Did you know that? Did you know you've been given authority to go and make disciples, and baptize them in water to signify their salvation?

We don't baptize people, so they'll be saved. We baptize people because they got saved. All right? But you have authority. It's been given to you. And so He said, go and baptize them in the authority.

Now, those of you who have been baptized here at Calvary Chapel, you might have noticed that we probably did use the words, we baptized you in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. But that's not a formula you guys.

We're simply saying, we baptized you in the authority that Jesus gave us to baptize you in. That's what we're saying.

But there are Christians, I don't know if there's any in this room or not. Yeah, but there are Christians who get really hung up on formulas. And they will tell you, it's got to be done just this way. There's even an entire denomination that is established on a formula of water baptism that says you must be baptized in the name of Jesus. They don't do the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit thing, they do the name of Jesus. And they'll even tell you if you weren't baptized with the words, in the name of Jesus, you're probably not saved.

Yeah. This is a common belief in the body of Christ. Common. I run into it a lot. And these are people who have stumbled over words that they believe are a formula when Jesus is simply telling us that He has granted authority. And that's why He begins. He says, *"All authority in heaven and earth have been given to me."* So I'm giving it to you to baptize people.

What is that authority? It's the authority of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit; the triune God. I grant you that authority. So who can baptize people? Do you know the Bible doesn't say. The Bible doesn't say that you have to be baptized by a pastor, or an elder, or anything like that.

I've had people write to me and say, is it okay if I baptize my nephew or something like that? Yeah, go for it. You doesn't matter. This whole thing about clergy, just wipe that out of your head. There's nothing in the Bible.

In fact, here Jesus is talking to His disciples but we read in the Book of Acts later on that Philip, who was a deacon, which just means servant. And later on he was known as an evangelist. He baptized an Ethiopian eunuch on the road.

And so who can baptize people? Anybody can baptize people. You want to baptize somebody? Baptize them, knock yourself out. It's fun as long as the water isn't too cold, because I've done a few of those baptisms. And rivers and things like that, and by the— and they all think it's cold, but they only have to go in dunk, get dunked, and they can leave. I stay in there for the whole time and I'm numb from the waist down by the time I'm done, it's not fun.

Anyway. And then Jesus says, we don't just, we don't just make disciples and baptize them. Look at verse 20. This is the next thing we do. He says, *"teaching them to observe all that I have commanded..."* And that's the next thing, we are to teach.

And that's one of the reasons why here at Calvary Chapel we're committed to teaching through the Bible: Genesis to Revelation. We teach the entire Bible and we don't leave anything out. And that's, because that's what Jesus told us to do. He told us to teach and so we teach.

And then the commission ends with the most wonderful promise that some of you might be wearing on the back of your sweatshirt or hoodie this morning. *"And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age."* Jesus says, I'll be with you. I will not leave you. I will not forsake you till. I'll be with you till the end of the age.

That doesn't mean that at the end of the age, He's going to go on vacation and be done being with you. There's a very specific reason He is saying, I'm with you till the end of the age.

Because you see, the age that we're in right now is called the, church age. That's just what we refer to it as and we've been in the church age for about 2,000 years, but it's rapidly coming to a close. At least all signs are pointing to that.

The next event that is going to close out this church age is Jesus coming for His bride. We call it, the catching away of the church, or if you will, the rapture. That's the next event. And when that event happens, we're going to enter into a different age. We're going to go into the great tribulation and that'll be followed by the millennial age.

So we are in an age right now and Jesus is saying to you and me, *"...behold, I am with you always, to the end of... (this) age."* Why is He focusing on this age?

Because people, this is the age of suffering. This is the age of persecution. This is the age of pain, and hardship, and difficulty. This is the age when we suffer for our faith, and that's why He's specifying, I'm with you to the very end of this thing. I'm not going to abandon you. I will be with you. I will walk through this age with you side by side, and I will not leave you alone. And you need to know that. We all need to know that.

This is a wonderful, glorious promise from God's Word. And we all know that God cannot go back on His promises. He's incapable of letting any of His good promises drop to the ground.

So there you go, this is, isn't it wonderful I just gave you such great news? We're in the age of hardship. Praise the Lord. Well, we just remember what

Jesus told us. If the world hates you, just know this, they hated Me first. (John 15:18) There you go.

And He will never leave us nor forsake us. Doesn't mean that you might not feel forsaken sometimes, but that's, our feelings lie to us all the time. So we don't listen to our feelings, amen? We listen to the Word of God. Let's stand together. We'll close in prayer.

Father, we thank You so much for the wisdom that we get from the Word. What a delight it is to gather with the body of Christ, to worship, to praise, to rejoice together in the promises of God.

And even though we are in this age of difficulty, this age of trials, this age of persecutions and hardships, we know that You are the Lord who will never leave us nor forsake us. That You will walk through this age with us every single step of the way.

Lord, teach us to abide in You. Even as we sang this morning, teach us to abide. Not just to run to You when things get hard, but to abide in You every single day.

We look to You, Lord to fill us, to teach us, and to guide us each step of the way. And we ask all of these things in the authority that is granted us through Jesus Christ, our Lord. And all God's people said together, amen.

Have a good rest of your Sunday.

God bless.