CRAWFORD BIBLE COMMENTARY

BIBLE STUDY

Matthew Chapter 28 — The Resurrection and the Great Commission

A Verse-by-Verse Bible Study from the Crawford Standard Bible

Introduction

Matthew Chapter 27 ended at a tomb.

Jesus had been crucified.

His body had been wrapped in linen and laid in Joseph's new tomb.

A large stone covered the entrance.

The stone was sealed.

Soldiers stood guard.

The leaders were sure it was over.

The disciples were hiding in fear.

The women were grieving.

It seemed that death had won.

But Matthew Chapter 28 begins with a new day.

The first day of the week.

And everything changes.

There is an earthquake.

An angel rolls back the stone.

The guards fall down like dead men.

And the angel speaks the greatest news ever announced:

“He is not here; He has risen, just as He said!”

The women run with fear and joy.

Jesus Himself meets them.

The guards are paid to spread a lie.

And on a mountain in Galilee, the risen Jesus gives His followers their mission:

“Go and make disciples of all nations.”

And He gives them His promise:

“I am with you always, to the very end of the age.”

Matthew 28 is a short chapter.

But it is the chapter that gives meaning to all the others.

Without the resurrection, the cross would be only a tragedy.

With the resurrection, the cross is the greatest victory in history.

Paul wrote that if Christ has not been raised, our faith is useless.

But Christ **has** been raised.

Matthew 28 therefore shows two great truths:

Jesus truly rose from the dead, just as He said.

And:

The risen Jesus, who has all authority, sends His followers into all the world and promises to be with them always.

The central truth of Matthew 28 is:

Jesus Christ rose from the dead in victory over sin and death, and with all authority in heaven and on earth, He sends His followers to make disciples of all nations, promising to be with them always.

I. AT DAWN ON THE FIRST DAY

Matthew 28:1 — The Women Went to the Tomb

“At dawn on the first day of the week, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary went to see the tomb.”

At dawn on the first day of the week.

The Sabbath was over.

It was early Sunday morning.

The sun was just beginning to rise.

This is why Christians have gathered for worship on Sunday, **the Lord's Day**, since the earliest days of the church.

Every Sunday is a celebration of the resurrection.

Mary Magdalene and the other Mary.

These were the same women who watched Jesus die.

The same women who sat opposite the tomb when He was buried.

They were the last at the cross and the first at the tomb.

Went to see the tomb.

Mark and Luke tell us they brought spices to anoint His body.

They were not expecting a resurrection.

They came to mourn.

They came to serve a dead body.

But they would meet a living Lord.

Cross References

Mark 16:1

> When the Sabbath was over, Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James, and Salome bought spices so that they could go and anoint Jesus' body.

Luke 24:1

> Very early in the morning on the first day of the week, the women took the spices they had prepared and went to the tomb.

John 20:1

> Early on the first day of the week, while it was still dark, Mary Magdalene went to the tomb. She saw that the stone had been moved away from the entrance.

Spiritual Principle

Those who stay faithful to Jesus in sorrow are the first to see His glory.

II. AN ANGEL ROLLED BACK THE STONE

Matthew 28:2 — A Violent Earthquake

“Suddenly there was a violent earthquake, for an angel of the Lord came down from heaven, rolled back the stone, and sat on it.”

Suddenly there was a violent earthquake.

When Jesus died, the earth shook.

Now, at His resurrection, the earth shook again.

Creation trembled at both His death and His victory.

For an angel of the Lord came down from heaven.

God sent a messenger from heaven.

Rolled back the stone.

The stone was not rolled away to let Jesus out.

Jesus had already risen.

The stone was rolled away to let the witnesses in.

And sat on it.

This is a wonderful picture.

The stone that was meant to keep Jesus in the grave became a seat for an angel.

The seal of Rome was broken.

The power of death was broken.

The angel sat on the stone as a sign of victory.

Cross References

Matthew 27:51

> At that moment the curtain of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom. The earth shook and the rocks split.

Mark 16:4

> But when they looked up, they saw that the stone, which was very large, had already been rolled away.

Luke 24:4

> While they were wondering about this, suddenly two men in clothes that gleamed like lightning stood beside them.

Spiritual Principle

The stone was rolled away not to let Jesus out, but to let us see that He was gone.

Key Truth

The stone that sealed the grave became a seat of victory.

III. LIKE LIGHTNING

Matthew 28:3 — White as Snow

“His appearance was like lightning, and his clothes were as white as snow.”

His appearance was like lightning.

The angel shone with the brightness of heaven.

Daniel saw a heavenly messenger whose face was like lightning.

And his clothes were as white as snow.

White is the color of purity and glory.

On the Mount of Transfiguration, Jesus' clothes became dazzling white.

John saw the risen Jesus with hair as white as snow.

Heaven had come to the tomb.

Cross References

Daniel 10:6

> His body was like a precious stone, his face like lightning, his eyes like flaming torches, his arms and legs like shining bronze, and his voice like the sound of a crowd.

Mark 9:3

> His clothes became dazzling white, whiter than anyone in the world could bleach them.

Revelation 1:14

> The hair on His head was white like wool, as white as snow, and His eyes were like a blazing fire.

Spiritual Principle

The resurrection is the shining glory of heaven breaking into our world.

IV. LIKE DEAD MEN

Matthew 28:4 — The Guards Trembled

“The guards were so afraid that they trembled and became like dead men.”

The guards were so afraid.

These were trained soldiers.

They were not easily frightened.

But no soldier can stand before the power of heaven.

That they trembled.

And became like dead men.

What irony!

The guards were sent to watch a dead man.

But the dead man was alive.

And the guards became like dead men.

When Daniel saw his vision, his strength left him.

When John saw the risen Jesus, he fell at His feet as though dead.

The power of God turns everything upside down.

Cross References

Daniel 10:7

> I, Daniel, was the only one who saw the vision. The men with me did not see it, but they were so terrified that they ran away and hid.

Revelation 1:17

> When I saw Him, I fell at His feet as though I were dead. Then He placed His right hand on me and said: “Do not be afraid. I am the First and the Last.”

Matthew 17:6

> When the followers heard this, they fell facedown to the ground, terrified.

Spiritual Principle

No human power can stand against the power of God.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

The guards came to watch a dead man, but the living Lord made them look like dead men.

V. DO NOT BE AFRAID

Matthew 28:5 — Looking for Jesus

“The angel said to the women, ‘Do not be afraid. I know you are looking for Jesus who was crucified.’”

The angel said to the women.

The guards trembled.

But the angel spoke gently to the women.

Do not be afraid.

These words are spoken again and again in the Bible when God or His messengers appear.

The angel told Gideon, **“Do not be afraid.”**

The angel told Zechariah, **“Do not be afraid.”**

The angel told the shepherds at Jesus' birth, **“Do not be afraid.”**

The same message that began the Gospel story now announces its victory.

The resurrection is terrifying to God's enemies.

But it is good news to those who love Jesus.

I know you are looking for Jesus who was crucified.

The angel knew their hearts.

They had come for Jesus.

And God honored them for it.

Cross References

Judges 6:23

> But the LORD said to him, “Peace! Do not be afraid. You are not going to die.”

Luke 1:13

> But the angel said to him: “Do not be afraid, Zechariah. Your prayer has been heard. Your wife Elizabeth will have a son, and you are to name him John.”

Luke 2:10

> But the angel said to them, “Do not be afraid. I bring you good news that will bring great joy to all people.”

Spiritual Principle

The resurrection that terrifies God's enemies brings peace to God's people.

VI. HE HAS RISEN!

Matthew 28:6 — Just as He Said

“He is not here; He has risen, just as He said! Come, see the place where He lay.”

He is not here.

These may be the most wonderful words ever spoken at a grave.

At every other grave, people say, **“Here lies...”**

At Jesus' grave, the angel said, **“He is not here.”**

He has risen.

Jesus is alive.

Not as a ghost.

Not as a memory.

Not as an idea.

His body was raised to new, glorious, never-ending life.

Just as He said!

Jesus had told His disciples again and again that He would rise on the third day.

Every promise He made came true.

If He kept this promise, He will keep every other promise too.

Come, see the place where He lay.

The angel invited them to look.

The resurrection is not a fairy tale.

It is a fact that can be examined.

The tomb was empty.

The body was gone.

The grave clothes, John tells us, were still lying there.

Cross References

Mark 16:6

> “Don't be alarmed,” he said. “You are looking for Jesus the Nazarene, who was crucified. He has risen! He is not here. See the place where they laid Him.”

Isaiah 26:19

> But Your dead will live, LORD. Their bodies will rise. Let those who live in the dust wake up and shout for joy!

Psalm 16:10

> Because You will not leave me in the grave. You will not let Your faithful one rot in the grave.

Spiritual Principle

Jesus rose just as He said, so we can trust everything He says.

Key Truth

Every other grave says, “Here lies.” Jesus' grave says, “He is not here.”

VII. GO QUICKLY AND TELL

Matthew 28:7 — Going Ahead of You into Galilee

“Then go quickly and tell His disciples: ‘He has risen from the dead and is going ahead of you into Galilee. There you will see Him.’ Now I have told you.”

Then go quickly.

The good news cannot wait.

And tell His disciples.

The women became the first messengers of the resurrection.

In that culture, the testimony of women was often not taken seriously.

Yet God chose women to be the first witnesses.

This is one reason many people believe the account is true.

If someone were making up the story, they would not have chosen women as the first witnesses.

He has risen from the dead.

And is going ahead of you into Galilee.

On the night before He died, Jesus had promised, **“After I have risen, I will go ahead of you into Galilee.”**

Even though the disciples had abandoned Him, He was still going to meet them.

There you will see Him.

Now I have told you.

The angel's message was complete.

Cross References

Mark 16:7

> But go, tell His followers and Peter, “He is going ahead of you into Galilee. There you will see Him, just as He told you.”

Matthew 26:32

> But after I have risen, I will go ahead of you into Galilee.

John 21:1

> Afterward Jesus appeared again to His followers, by the Sea of Galilee.

Spiritual Principle

Those who meet the risen Christ are sent to tell others.

VIII. FEAR AND GREAT JOY

Matthew 28:8 — They Ran to Tell

“They hurried away from the tomb, filled with both fear and great joy, and ran to tell His disciples.”

They hurried away from the tomb.

They obeyed at once.

Filled with both fear and great joy.

Both feelings at once.

Fear — they had seen an angel and an empty tomb.

Great joy — Jesus was alive!

The resurrection is so wonderful that it fills the heart with awe and gladness at the same time.

And ran to tell His disciples.

They did not walk.

They ran.

Good news makes people run.

Cross References

Luke 24:9

> When they came back from the tomb, they told all these things to the Eleven and to all the others.

Mark 16:8

> Trembling and confused, the women went out and ran from the tomb. They said nothing to anyone, because they were afraid.

John 20:18

> Mary Magdalene went to the followers with the news: “I have seen the Lord!” And she told them that He had said these things to her.

Spiritual Principle

The good news of the resurrection is too wonderful to keep to ourselves.

IX. JESUS MET THEM

Matthew 28:9 — They Worshiped Him

“Suddenly Jesus met them. ‘Greetings,’ He said. They came to Him, clasped His feet, and worshiped Him.”

Suddenly Jesus met them.

While they were running to obey, Jesus Himself appeared.

Jesus meets those who are obeying Him.

Greetings.

A simple, ordinary greeting.

The risen Lord of the universe said, in effect, **“Good morning.”**

They came to Him, clasped His feet.

They held on to His feet.

This shows that Jesus was not a ghost.

He had a real body.

They could touch Him.

And worshiped Him.

They bowed down before Him.

Jesus did not stop them.

He accepted their worship, because He is God.

This was the right response to the risen Christ.

Cross References

John 20:14

> At this, she turned around and saw Jesus standing there, but she did not know that it was Jesus.

Luke 24:39

> Look at My hands and My feet. It is I Myself! Touch Me and see. A ghost does not have flesh and bones, as you see I have.

1 Corinthians 15:6

> After that, He appeared to more than five hundred of the brothers and sisters at the same time. Most of them are still living, though some have died.

Spiritual Principle

The right response to the risen Jesus is worship.

X. TELL MY BROTHERS

Matthew 28:10 — They Will See Me

“Then Jesus said, ‘Do not be afraid. Go tell My brothers to go to Galilee, and there they will see Me.’”

Do not be afraid.

Jesus repeated the angel's words.

Go tell My brothers.

This is amazing.

Jesus called the disciples **My brothers.**

These were the men who had run away.

Peter had denied Him three times.

All of them had abandoned Him.

And yet Jesus did not call them **cowards** or **traitors.**

He called them **brothers.**

This is grace.

Psalm 22, the psalm of the cross, says, **“I will declare Your name to My brothers.”**

Hebrews says Jesus **is not ashamed to call them brothers.**

To go to Galilee, and there they will see Me.

Jesus wanted to meet them again.

The relationship was not broken.

It was being restored.

Cross References

John 20:17

> Jesus said, “Do not hold on to Me, for I have not yet gone up to the Father. Go instead to My brothers and tell them, ‘I am going up to My Father and your Father, to My God and your God.’”

Psalm 22:22

> I will tell my brothers and sisters about Your name. I will praise You when Your people gather together.

Hebrews 2:11

> Both the One who makes people holy and those who are made holy belong to the same family. So Jesus is not ashamed to call them brothers and sisters.

Spiritual Principle

Jesus calls failed followers His brothers and invites them back.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

After the resurrection, Jesus' first word for those who failed Him was not “traitors” but “brothers.”

XI. THE GUARDS REPORTED

Matthew 28:11 — Everything That Happened

“While the women were on their way, some of the guards went into the city and reported everything that had happened to the chief priests.”

While the women were on their way.

Two groups were running from the tomb at the same time.

The women ran to tell the truth.

The guards ran to report to the leaders.

Some of the guards went into the city.

They went to the chief priests, not to Pilate.

This suggests they may have been the temple guard, or Roman soldiers assigned to help the priests.

And reported everything that had happened.

The guards told the truth.

The earthquake.

The angel.

The stone rolled away.

The empty tomb.

The leaders heard the evidence from their own guards.

Cross References

Matthew 27:65

> “You have a guard,” Pilate answered. “Go, make the tomb as secure as you can.”

Matthew 27:66

> So they went and secured the tomb by sealing the stone and posting a guard.

John 11:47

> Then the leading priests and the Pharisees called a meeting of the Sanhedrin. “What are we accomplishing?” they asked. “Here is this man doing many signs.”

Spiritual Principle

Even the enemies of Jesus became witnesses to His resurrection.

XII. A LARGE SUM OF MONEY

Matthew 28:12 — The Leaders' Plan

“After the priests met with the elders and discussed it, they gave the soldiers a large sum of money,”

After the priests met with the elders and discussed it.

They heard the truth.

But instead of believing, they made a plan.

They gave the soldiers a large sum of money.

Money was used to start the plot against Jesus.

Now money was used to hide the truth about Him.

Thirty pieces of silver bought His betrayal.

A large sum of money tried to buy silence about His resurrection.

Cross References

Matthew 26:15

> And asked, “What will you give me if I deliver Him to you?” So they counted out thirty pieces of silver.

Matthew 27:6

> The chief priests picked up the coins and said, “It's not lawful to put this money into the temple treasury; it's blood money.”

Proverbs 17:23

> A wicked person secretly accepts a bribe to twist the way of justice.

Spiritual Principle

Money can buy a lie, but it cannot change the truth.

XIII. THE STOLEN BODY STORY

Matthew 28:13 — While We Were Asleep

“telling them, ‘You are to say, “His disciples came during the night and stole Him away while we were asleep.”’”

You are to say.

The leaders told the guards what to say.

His disciples came during the night and stole Him away.

This is exactly what the leaders had feared would be claimed.

Now they used it as their own explanation.

While we were asleep.

This story has serious problems.

First, if the guards were asleep, how could they know who took the body?

Second, Roman guards could be severely punished for sleeping on duty.

Third, the disciples were frightened and hiding.

They did not have the courage to fight past armed guards.

Fourth, the disciples later suffered and many died for saying Jesus was alive.

People do not give their lives for something they know is a lie.

Fifth, the guards had already reported the truth to the priests.

The stolen body story was a cover-up.

Cross References

Matthew 27:64

> So give orders to make the tomb secure until the third day. Otherwise His disciples may come and steal the body and tell the people He has been raised from the dead. This last deception will be worse than the first.

John 20:2

> So she came running to Simon Peter and the other follower, the one Jesus loved, and said, “They have taken the Lord out of the tomb, and we don't know where they have put Him!”

Psalm 35:11

> Cruel witnesses come forward. They question me about things I know nothing about.

Spiritual Principle

The lies told against the resurrection only show how strong the truth is.

XIV. "WE WILL KEEP YOU OUT OF TROUBLE"

Matthew 28:14 — If the Governor Hears

“If the governor hears about this, we will satisfy him and keep you out of trouble.”

If the governor hears about this.

The guards were afraid.

Failing at their duty could mean punishment, or even death.

We will satisfy him.

The leaders promised to handle Pilate — perhaps with more money or persuasion.

And keep you out of trouble.

The leaders who had pressured Pilate to crucify Jesus would now pressure him to ignore the empty tomb.

Lies often require more lies.

One cover-up leads to another.

Cross References

Matthew 27:24

> Seeing that it was going nowhere and that a riot was starting, Pilate took water and washed his hands before the crowd. “I am innocent of this man's blood,” he said. “See to it yourselves.”

John 19:12

> From then on, Pilate tried to set Jesus free. But the Jewish leaders kept shouting, “If you let this man go, you are no friend of Caesar. Anyone who claims to be a king is against Caesar.”

Acts 4:27

> It is true that Herod and Pontius Pilate met together with the Gentiles and the people of Israel in this city. They plotted against Your holy servant Jesus, whom You anointed.

Spiritual Principle

One lie usually needs another to protect it.

XV. TO THIS VERY DAY

Matthew 28:15 — The Story Spread

“So the soldiers took the money and did as they were told. This story has been spread among the Jews to this very day.”

So the soldiers took the money.

Money was more important to them than the truth.

And did as they were told.

They spread the lie.

This story has been spread among the Jews to this very day.

When Matthew wrote his Gospel, this story was still being told.

Matthew wanted his readers to know where it came from.

It is important to read these words fairly.

Matthew himself was Jewish.

So were Jesus, His disciples, and the first thousands of believers in Jerusalem.

Matthew is not speaking against the Jewish people.

He is explaining the source of one particular false story that was being told in his day.

And the same truth applies to every person in every nation:

Each of us must decide whether to believe the truth of the resurrection or a story that explains it away.

Cross References

Matthew 27:8

> That's why it has been called “Field of Blood” to this day.

Titus 1:14

> And will pay no attention to Jewish myths or to the commands of those who reject the truth.

Acts 28:24

> Some were convinced by what he said, but others would not believe.

Spiritual Principle

Every person must choose between the truth of the resurrection and the stories that deny it.

XVI. TO THE MOUNTAIN IN GALILEE

Matthew 28:16 — The Eleven Disciples

“Then the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain where Jesus had told them to go.”

Then the eleven disciples.

There had been twelve.

Now there were eleven.

Judas was gone.

The number reminds us of the betrayal.

But the eleven who remained were about to become the foundation of the church.

Went to Galilee.

They obeyed Jesus' instructions.

Galilee was where it all began.

Jesus had called them by the Sea of Galilee.

Now He would send them out from Galilee.

To the mountain where Jesus had told them to go.

Mountains are important in Matthew's Gospel.

Jesus was tempted on a mountain.

He taught the Sermon on the Mount.

He was transfigured on a mountain.

He gave the Olivet Discourse on the Mount of Olives.

And now He would give the Great Commission on a mountain.

Like Moses receiving God's law on Mount Sinai, the disciples would receive their mission on a mountain.

Cross References

Exodus 24:12

> The LORD said to Moses, “Come up to Me on the mountain and stay here. I will give you the tablets of stone with the law and commands I have written for teaching the people.”

Matthew 5:1

> When Jesus saw the crowds, He went up on a hill and sat down. His followers came to Him.

Matthew 17:1

> After six days Jesus took Peter, James, and John the brother of James with Him. He led them up a high mountain by themselves.

Spiritual Principle

When we go where Jesus tells us, we will meet Him there.

XVII. WORSHIP AND DOUBT

Matthew 28:17 — Some Still Doubted

“When they saw Him, they worshiped Him; but some still doubted.”

When they saw Him.

The risen Jesus appeared to them.

They worshiped Him.

They bowed down before Him, as the women had.

But some still doubted.

This is an honest detail.

Matthew does not hide it.

Even standing before the risen Jesus, some were unsure.

The Greek word means **to hesitate** or **to be of two minds.**

It may mean they were not sure what to do, or they struggled to believe what they were seeing.

Thomas had doubted until he saw Jesus' wounds.

Luke tells us some disciples could not believe **because of joy and amazement.**

Here is the encouraging part:

Jesus did not send the doubters away.

He came closer.

He spoke to all of them.

And He gave the Great Commission to the worshipers and the doubters alike.

Cross References

John 20:24

> Now Thomas, one of the Twelve, also called Didymus, was not with the followers when Jesus came.

Luke 24:41

> And while they still did not believe it because of joy and amazement, He asked them, “Do you have anything here to eat?”

Mark 16:14

> Later Jesus appeared to the Eleven as they were eating. He scolded them for their lack of faith and their stubborn refusal to believe those who had seen Him after He had risen.

A Note on Mark 16:14 and 16:15

Mark 16:9–20 is not found in the two oldest complete Greek manuscripts of Mark. It is found in many others, and most Bibles include it with a note. The truths in these verses are taught clearly elsewhere in Scripture, including here in Matthew 28.

Spiritual Principle

Jesus welcomes worshipers who still struggle with doubt.

Key Truth

Doubt does not disqualify you from following Jesus; it invites you to come closer to Him.

XVIII. ALL AUTHORITY

Matthew 28:18 — In Heaven and on Earth

“Jesus came to them and said, ‘All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to Me.’”

Jesus came to them.

Jesus moved toward them.

Toward the worshipers.

Toward the doubters.

All authority.

Not some.

Not most.

All.

In heaven and on earth.

Over angels and demons.

Over nations and rulers.

Over sickness and death.

Over every person and every place.

Has been given to Me.

The Father gave it to the Son.

Daniel had seen one like a son of man who was given **authority, glory, and a kingdom** that would never end.

Now Jesus says that this has happened.

In the wilderness, Satan offered Jesus all the kingdoms of the world if He would bow down to him.

Jesus refused.

He took the way of the cross instead.

And now, through the cross and resurrection, He has received far more than Satan offered.

Cross References

Daniel 7:14

> He was given authority, glory, and a kingdom. All peoples, nations, and people of every language worshiped Him. His rule will last forever and will never pass away. His kingdom will never be destroyed.

John 3:35

> The Father loves the Son and has put everything in His hands.

Ephesians 1:22

> And God placed all things under His feet and made Him the head over everything for the church.

Spiritual Principle

The risen Jesus has all authority, so His people can go with confidence.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

Jesus refused the devil's shortcut to the kingdoms of the world and received all authority through the cross.

XIX. GO AND MAKE DISCIPLES

Matthew 28:19 — Of All Nations

“Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit,”

Therefore.

Because Jesus has all authority.

His command rests on His authority.

Go.

The disciples were not to wait for people to come to them.

They were to go to the people.

The Greek suggests **“as you go”** or **“having gone.”**

Wherever life takes us, we are to make disciples.

And make disciples.

This is the main command.

Not just converts.

Disciples — learners and followers of Jesus who grow to be like Him.

Of all nations.

Earlier, Jesus had sent the disciples only to the lost sheep of Israel.

Now the mission goes to every people group in the world.

God's promise to Abraham — that all nations would be blessed through him — was being fulfilled.

Baptizing them.

Baptism is the public sign of becoming a follower of Jesus.

It pictures dying to the old life and rising to new life with Christ.

Christians practice baptism in different ways and understand some details of it differently.

But all agree that Jesus commanded it.

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

Notice the word **name** — singular.

Not **names**, but **name.**

One God.

Three Persons.

Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

This is one of the clearest statements of the Trinity in the Bible.

Cross References

Mark 16:15

> He said to them, “Go into all the world and preach the good news to everyone.”

Luke 24:47

> And that turning away from sin for the forgiveness of sins will be preached in His name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.

2 Corinthians 13:14

> May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

Spiritual Principle

Every follower of Jesus is called to help make more followers of Jesus.

XX. I AM WITH YOU ALWAYS

Matthew 28:20 — To the Very End of the Age

“and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.”

And teaching them.

Making disciples does not end with baptism.

It continues with teaching.

To obey everything I have commanded you.

Not just to know Jesus' commands.

But to **obey** them.

And not just some commands.

Everything.

All the teaching we have studied in Matthew — the Sermon on the Mount, the parables, the warnings, the call to love God and neighbor.

And surely I am with you always.

This is the greatest promise in the Gospel.

At the beginning of Matthew, Jesus was called **Immanuel**, which means **“God with us.”**

Now, at the end, Jesus says, **“I am with you always.”**

The Gospel of Matthew begins and ends with God with us.

To the very end of the age.

Not just for a while.

Not only in good times.

Always.

Until the end of this age, when He returns in glory.

We do not go alone.

The One with all authority goes with us.

Cross References

Deuteronomy 31:6

> Be strong and brave. Do not be afraid or terrified because of them, for the LORD your God goes with you. He will never leave you or abandon you.

Acts 1:8

> But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you. And you will be My witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.

Matthew 18:20

> For where two or three gather in My name, I am there with them.

Spiritual Principle

The One who sends us goes with us.

Key Truth

Matthew begins with “God with us” and ends with “I am with you always.”

Crawford Bible Study Principle

You will never go anywhere for Jesus where Jesus is not already with you.

XXI. FIVE GREAT LESSONS FROM MATTHEW 28

1. The Resurrection Is Real

The empty tomb and eyewitnesses confirm that Jesus rose from the dead.

The women saw Him.

The guards reported it.

The disciples worshiped Him.

Principle:

Jesus is alive, just as He said.

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2. Fear Turned to Joy

Those who trusted Jesus saw sorrow replaced with hope.

The women came weeping and left running with joy.

Principle:

The resurrection turns mourning into joy.

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3. The Gospel Cannot Be Stopped

Though lies were spread, the truth of the resurrection spread across the world.

A stone, a seal, guards, and a bribe could not stop it.

Principle:

No lie can bury the truth of the risen Christ.

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4. The Great Commission

Every believer is called to go, make disciples, baptize, and teach obedience to Christ's commands.

This is not only for pastors or missionaries.

It is for all of Jesus' followers.

Principle:

Every disciple is called to make disciples.

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5. Jesus Is with Us Always

His presence and authority empower His people until the end of the age.

We never serve Him alone.

Principle:

The risen Christ goes with us wherever He sends us.

XXII. EVIDENCE FOR THE RESURRECTION IN MATTHEW 28

Matthew gives his readers many reasons to believe that Jesus truly rose from the dead.

The Empty Tomb (Verse 6)

The angel invited the women to see the place where He lay. The body was gone.

The Guards (Verses 4, 11)

Trained soldiers saw the angel, trembled, and reported what happened.

The Women Witnesses (Verses 1, 8–10)

The first witnesses were women — not the witnesses someone inventing a story in that culture would have chosen.

A Physical Body (Verse 9)

The women clasped His feet. He was not a ghost.

The Cover-Up (Verses 12–15)

The leaders did not deny the tomb was empty. They paid for a story to explain it.

The Changed Disciples (Verses 16–20)

Frightened men who ran away became bold witnesses who carried the message to the world.

Jesus' Own Words (Verse 6)

“Just as He said.” He predicted it, and it happened.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

The enemies of Jesus could explain away the empty tomb, but they could never produce His body.

XXIII. THE GREAT COMMISSION

Jesus' final words in Matthew give His church its mission.

The Authority — “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to Me.”

We go because Jesus rules over everything.

The Command — “Make disciples.”

Not just converts, but lifelong followers of Jesus.

The Method — “Go,” “baptizing,” “teaching.”

We go to people, welcome them into God's family, and teach them to obey Jesus.

The Scope — “All nations.”

Every people group, every language, every place on earth.

The Goal — “To obey everything I have commanded you.”

Changed lives that follow Jesus.

The Promise — “I am with you always.”

We never go alone.

Key Truth

The Great Commission begins with Christ's authority and ends with Christ's presence.

XXIV. WHAT MATTHEW 28 TEACHES ABOUT JESUS

Matthew 28 reveals many truths about Jesus.

The Risen Lord

He is alive, raised from the dead in a real body.

The Promise Keeper

He rose **“just as He said.”**

The Conqueror of Death

No stone, seal, or guard could hold Him.

The One Who Is Worshiped

The women and the disciples worshiped Him, and He accepted their worship.

The Gracious Brother

He called His failed disciples **“My brothers.”**

The Faithful Shepherd

He went ahead of His scattered sheep into Galilee to gather them again.

The Patient Lord

He came near to those who doubted.

The King with All Authority

All authority in heaven and on earth belongs to Him.

The Sender

He sends His people to all nations.

The Son in the Trinity

He shares the one name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

Immanuel, God with Us

He is with His people always, to the end of the age.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

The baby called Immanuel in Matthew 1 is the risen King who says “I am with you always” in Matthew 28.

XXV. QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS FOR PERSONAL STUDY

Question 1

When did the women go to the tomb?

At dawn on the first day of the week — Sunday morning.

Question 2

Why was the stone rolled away?

Not to let Jesus out, but to let the witnesses see that the tomb was empty.

Question 3

What happened to the guards?

They were so afraid that they trembled and became like dead men.

Question 4

What did the angel tell the women?

Do not be afraid. Jesus is not here; He has risen, just as He said. Come and see the place where He lay, then go and tell His disciples.

Question 5

Why is it important that women were the first witnesses?

In that culture, women's testimony was often not taken seriously. If someone were inventing the story, they would not have chosen women. This points to the truthfulness of the account.

Question 6

What two feelings did the women have as they left the tomb?

Fear and great joy.

Question 7

How did the women respond when they met Jesus?

They clasped His feet and worshiped Him.

Question 8

What did Jesus call His disciples?

“My brothers” — even though they had abandoned Him.

Question 9

What story did the leaders pay the guards to tell?

That the disciples came at night and stole the body while the guards were asleep.

Question 10

What are some problems with the stolen body story?

Sleeping guards could not know who took the body; the disciples were afraid and hiding; and the disciples later suffered and died for saying Jesus was alive.

Question 11

What did some of the disciples do when they saw Jesus on the mountain?

They worshiped Him, but some still doubted.

Question 12

How much authority has been given to Jesus?

All authority in heaven and on earth.

Question 13

What is the main command of the Great Commission?

Make disciples of all nations.

Question 14

What does “in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit” teach?

It shows that there is one God (one name) in three Persons — the Trinity.

Question 15

What is the final promise of Matthew's Gospel?

“I am with you always, to the very end of the age.”

Question 16

What should Matthew 28 change about the way Christians live today?

Matthew 28 should cause believers to live:

- Confident that Jesus is alive.
- Trusting every promise He has made.
- Filled with joy, even in sorrow.
- Worshiping the risen Lord.
- Quick to share the good news.
- Grateful that Jesus welcomes back those who fail.
- Honest about their doubts, and bringing them to Jesus.
- Under the authority of Christ in every area of life.
- Making disciples wherever they go.
- Teaching others to obey Jesus.
- Never feeling alone, because Jesus is always with them.

XXVI. PERSONAL APPLICATION

Matthew 28 asks several important questions.

Do I Truly Believe That Jesus Rose from the Dead?

Am I Looking for Jesus Among the Dead, or Do I Know Him as Living?

Has the Resurrection Turned My Fear into Joy?

Am I Quick to Tell Others That Jesus Is Alive?

Do I Worship the Risen Jesus?

Do I Believe Jesus Can Welcome Me Back When I Fail?

Have I Believed a Story That Explains Jesus Away?

Do I Bring My Doubts to Jesus?

Do I Live Under Jesus' Authority in Every Area of My Life?

Who Am I Helping to Become a Disciple of Jesus?

Am I Obeying Everything Jesus Commanded?

Do I Live as If Jesus Is Really with Me Always?

XXVII. A CRAWFORD BIBLE STUDY PRINCIPLE

“Just as He Said”

The angel at the tomb said three powerful words:

“Just as He said.”

Jesus said He would be handed over.

He was.

Jesus said He would be crucified.

He was.

Jesus said He would rise on the third day.

He did.

Every word came true.

This means we can trust every other word Jesus has spoken.

He said, **“I will never leave you.”**

He said, **“I am with you always.”**

He said, **“I will come again.”**

He said, **“Since I live, you will live too.”**

If Jesus kept His promise to rise from the dead, He will keep every promise He has made to you.

The empty tomb is God's guarantee that the words of Jesus can be trusted.

Principle:

Because Jesus rose “just as He said,” every promise He has made will come true.

XXVIII. FINAL APPLICATION

Matthew Chapter 28 is the final chapter of the Gospel of Matthew.

It begins at dawn on the first day of the week.

Two grieving women walk to a tomb.

But heaven has already moved.

The earth shakes.

An angel rolls back the stone and sits on it.

The guards fall like dead men.

And the angel says:

“He is not here; He has risen, just as He said!”

The women run with fear and great joy.

Jesus meets them on the road.

They clasp His feet and worship Him.

He sends them to tell His **brothers.**

Meanwhile, the leaders pay the guards to spread a lie.

But a lie cannot bury the truth.

On a mountain in Galilee, the eleven disciples see the risen Lord.

Some worship.

Some doubt.

Jesus comes near to all of them.

He declares that all authority in heaven and on earth belongs to Him.

And He sends them to make disciples of all nations.

Then He gives the promise that closes the Gospel:

“I am with you always, to the very end of the age.”

The story that began with **Immanuel — God with us** ends with **I am with you always.**

So today:

Believe that Jesus is alive.

Let the resurrection turn your fear into joy.

Worship the risen Lord.

Bring your doubts to Him.

Go and tell others.

Make disciples.

Teach them to obey Jesus.

And never forget that He is with you.

And until He returns:

Live as a witness to the risen Christ, who is with you always.

XXIX. LOOKING BACK OVER THE GOSPEL OF MATTHEW

With Matthew 28, we have come to the end of the Gospel of Matthew.

Here is the story Matthew has told.

Jesus the Promised King (Matthew 1–4)

He is the Son of David, the Son of Abraham, born of a virgin, called Immanuel — God with us.

Jesus the Great Teacher (Matthew 5–7)

In the Sermon on the Mount, He taught the way of the kingdom of heaven.

Jesus the Powerful Healer (Matthew 8–9)

He healed the sick, calmed the storm, cast out demons, and forgave sins.

Jesus the Sender (Matthew 10)

He sent out His disciples with His message and His power.

Jesus the Rejected Messiah (Matthew 11–12)

Many refused to believe, even after seeing His mighty works.

Jesus the Teller of Kingdom Parables (Matthew 13)

He explained the kingdom through stories of seeds, weeds, treasure, and nets.

Jesus the Son of the Living God (Matthew 14–17)

He walked on water, fed thousands, was confessed by Peter, and was transfigured in glory.

Jesus the Teacher of His Community (Matthew 18–20)

He taught about humility, forgiveness, and servant leadership.

Jesus the King Who Comes to Jerusalem (Matthew 21–23)

He rode into the city, cleansed the temple, answered His opponents, and warned against hypocrisy.

Jesus the Coming Judge (Matthew 24–25)

He taught about His return and the final judgment.

Jesus the Suffering Savior (Matthew 26–27)

He was betrayed, condemned, crucified, and buried.

Jesus the Risen Lord (Matthew 28)

He rose from the dead, received all authority, sent His followers to the nations, and promised to be with them always.

The Message of Matthew in One Sentence

Jesus is the promised Messiah and King, the Son of God, who taught the way of the kingdom, died for the sins of His people, rose from the dead, and now sends His followers to make disciples of all nations, promising to be with them always.

Closing Prayer

Heavenly Father,

Thank You for the first day of the week.

Thank You for the empty tomb.

Thank You that Jesus is not here among the dead — He has risen, just as He said!

Lord Jesus, You are alive.

You have conquered sin and death.

No stone, no seal, and no guard could hold You.

Turn our fear into joy, as You did for the women at the tomb.

Help us to run and tell others that You are alive.

We bow before You and worship You, as they did.

Thank You for calling Your failed disciples “brothers.”

Thank You that You welcome us back when we fail.

When we doubt, come near to us as You came near to the disciples on the mountain.

Keep us from believing any story that explains You away.

Lord, all authority in heaven and on earth belongs to You.

We place our lives under Your authority.

Use us to make disciples wherever we go.

Help us to share the good news with our families, our neighbors, and the nations.

Teach us to obey everything You have commanded.

And thank You for Your promise:

“I am with you always, to the very end of the age.”

We will never go anywhere You are not already with us.

Thank You for walking with us through the whole Gospel of Matthew.

Now send us out to live what we have learned.

Until You come again, keep us faithful, joyful, and ready.

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, Amen.

Key Verse

“Therefore 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 to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.” — Matthew 28:19–20

Central Truth

Jesus Christ rose from the dead in victory over sin and death, and with all authority in heaven and on earth, He sends His followers to make disciples of all nations, promising to be with them always.

Matthew 28 in One Sentence

At dawn on the first day of the week, an angel announces to the women that Jesus has risen just as He said; Jesus meets them, the leaders pay the guards to spread a lie, and on a mountain in Galilee the risen Lord, with all authority in heaven and on earth, sends His disciples to make disciples of all nations and promises to be with them always.