

Alêtheia Christian Fellowship
May 30, 2021
Remember
“The Resurrection & Commissioning”

Sunday school at 9:30, Service at 10:30 with King’s Kids.

NEWS

Welcome Sheeran Family!
 The New Building is a GO!

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Visit the website ~ www.myaetheia.com

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MATTHEW 28:1-7 ~

“First day of the week” - “The Lord’s Day” - “Sunday”

As a true disciple of Christ and child of God... What is there to fear?

MATTHEW 28:1-7 ~

“Fear and great joy”

Must your faith be perfectly absolute?

God gives us experiences, information, and evidence, but it is never enough really. To be a Christian, one must personally meet the Risen Christ. They met Him, and they recognized Him as the Alpha and the Omega. They responded in reverent worship.

Fill out the other side, detach this part of the page, and place it in the offering plate or the prayer/suggestion box in the lobby or with an Elder or Deacon of the church.

God Bless You!

MATTHEW 28:11-15 ~

The phrase “If this should come to the governor’s ears,” means that if they were officially charged. The phrase, “Win him over,” indicates a payment.

MATTHEW 28:16-18a ~

“When they saw Him, they worshiped Him; but some were doubtful.”

There is only one way this thing can work and that is to meet the Risen Christ face-to-face and be completely undone by the meeting.

To truly get Jesus, is to come to an end of you.

When you meet the actual Jesus, there’s only, “Woe is me, for I am undone! Because I am a man of unclean lips, And I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips; For my eyes have seen the King, The Lord of hosts” (Isaiah 6:5).

There is only he “Fell down at Jesus’ feet, saying, ‘Go away from me Lord, for I am a sinful man!’” (Luke 5:8).

People say, simply accept Jesus’ loving acceptance of you, just as you are, and then receive His abundant blessings... Well, that’s not Christianity.

MATTHEW 28:18-20 ~

If we have truly met Jesus and are genuinely filled with the Holy Spirit, we should be compelled to fulfill the commands of Jesus... Love one another. Love the lost by preaching the Gospel, or actively supporting such preaching as you are able.

Write a brief note – detach and place in the offering, or the prayer box, or give it to a Deacon or Elder.

Name _____ Address _____

Phone _____ Email _____

Welcome Friends

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO
MATTHEW

A CLASH OF KINGDOMS

Alêtheia Christian Fellowship

Just a friendly
reminder...

Armed Forces
Day is when
you thank a
person still in
uniform.

Veteran's Day
is when you
thank a person
who served.

YOUR DAY AT THE BEACH



BROUGHT TO YOU

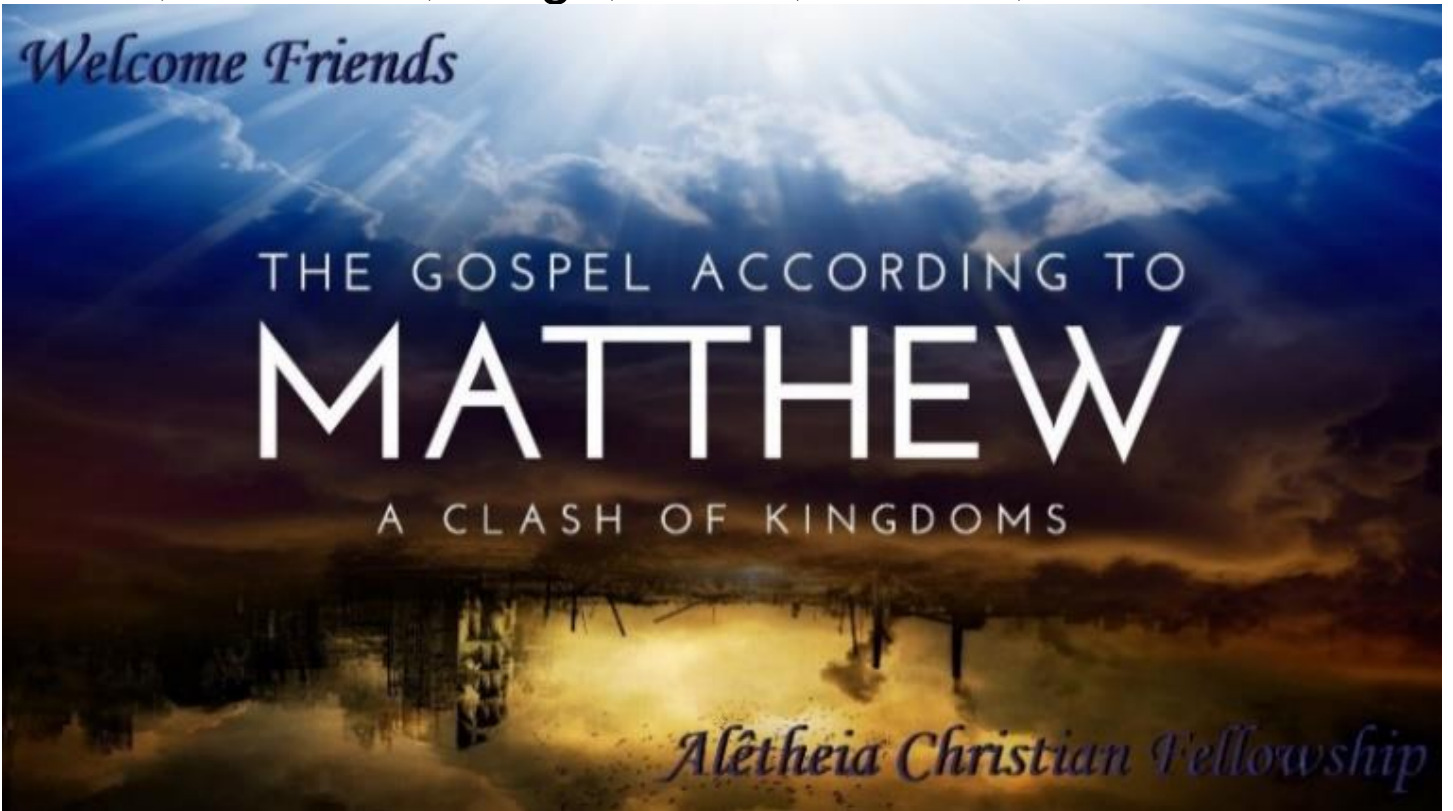


BY THEIR DAY AT THE BEACH

Memorial Day
is when we all
remember
those who
gave their last
full measure
of devotion to
defend this
nation.



Justin, Rebekah, Paige, Gavin, William, Elora & Clair.



Last week we read the first 7 verses of Matthew chapter 28. Let's reread them to help us get our bearings this morning...



Matthew 28:1-7, 1Now after the Sabbath, as it began to dawn toward the first day of the week, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary came to look at the grave. 2And behold, a severe earthquake had occurred, for an angel of the Lord descended from heaven and came and rolled away the stone and sat upon it. 3And his appearance was like lightning, and his clothing as white as snow. 4The guards shook for fear of him and became like dead men. 5The angel said to the women, "Do not be afraid; for I know that you are looking for

Jesus who has been crucified. 6“He is not here, for He has risen, just as He said. Come, see the place where He was lying. 7“Go quickly and tell His disciples that He has risen from the dead; and behold, He is going ahead of you into Galilee, there you will see Him; behold, I have told you.”

First let me quickly add to the comments last week about the “First day of the week.” As I said then, all four Gospels confirm that on Sunday morning just as it was getting light, the women arrived at the tomb to discover that Jesus was not there.

Throughout the remainder of the New Testament, there are repeated references to the fact that Sunday was considered “The Lord’s Day,” (Revelation 1:10, etc.), and that Christians gathered on that day each week to fellowship, corporately sing God’s praises, hear the Word from someone competent to teach and preach and then to “Break bread” (Acts 20:7, etc.) together in Holy Communion demonstrating loving solidarity as true followers of Christ Jesus. Sounds like church.

Beyond that, every historical reference we can gather both from the early church and from secular sources proves that Christians held these church gatherings on

Sunday in recognition of the Resurrection from the very beginning.

The idea of Christians replacing Sunday with the Sabbath is no different than requiring Christians to keep the other 613 Old Testament Laws. You are either saved by Jesus, or you are saved by your own performance... Pick.

I also said that the Resurrection is the foundation of Christianity. With that single event, Christianity becomes the one and only way to Heaven just as Jesus claimed. Remove that single event and Christianity is just another false religion. We'll come back to that.

Both groups, the female disciples of Jesus and the male soldiers guarding His tomb were terrified by what happened. The angel told the women to fear not - he gave no such comfort to the dudes. They were right to be mortified - keep it up. It's a far stronger distinction in the original language. The angel speaks forcefully and directly to the women and says emphatically "YOU, do not be afraid."

They are true disciples of Christ and children of God, they have nothing to fear from any divine being and if you think about it, as such, they have nothing to fear at all.

Back in chapter 26, in the “Upper Room” as Jesus was instituting Holy Communion during the “Last Supper,” He once again predicted His own crucifixion concluding with these words, “But after I have been raised, I will go ahead of you to Galilee” (Matthew 26:32). We talked about Galilee as the reset location back then. As a reminder, it was Galilee where Jesus started His earthly ministry, and it would be Galilee where His church would take it from there.

It is a launching pad into the world from a deeply Jewish origin point, but without it being a Jewish message. You see if Jesus simply came to help people keep the Law, it would have all started in the Temple and the Temple would still be standing today. As I have said before, Biblical Judaism has not been practiced since 70 A.D.

In verses 5&6, there is an example of the kinds of rhetorical treasures that Matthew crafts into his Gospel that we completely miss reading it in English. The

Greek flow of the angel's words is, "Jesus who has been crucified - you are looking for. He is not here -for He has risen." To a person back then, the word order alone would strongly emphasize the point that the second part "He has risen" is the direct explanation for "He is not here." The reason Jesus is not here is that He has risen from the dead - why would He be here? It is much the same as Luke's "Why are you seeking the Living One among the dead?"

The angel then invited them to more closely observe that Jesus was indeed gone. It is suggested by some that the Angel rolled the "Extremely large" stone (Mark 16:4) away, not to let Jesus out, but to let the women in. They verified, that Jesus was not there.

Let's continue...



Matthew 28:8-10, 8And they left the tomb quickly with fear and great joy and ran to report it to His disciples. 9And behold, Jesus met them and greeted them. And they came up and took hold of His feet and worshiped Him. 10Then Jesus said to them, "Do not be afraid; go and take word to My brethren to leave for Galilee, and there they will see Me."

The encounter at the tomb left the women feeling a combination of things - both "Fear and great joy." It is really fear of what has happened in the past, and the unknown concern for what will happen in the future, mixed with great joy of what's happening right now in the present. This is a critical point.

First, neither the past, nor the future objectively exist. Neither the past, nor the future can be lived. We are living only ever in the present. I'll let you think about that.

Second, we're talking about at least three women who knew Jesus extremely well. Mary Magdalene, who was severely demon possessed, set free from that Satanic oppression, and delivered into the light by Jesus. Mary His own human mother and Salome His beloved aunt. They were no doubt flooded with emotion. Emotions that ran the gamut of "Great joy," and of "Fear." They were excited and hopeful, confused and concerned... Another way to put that is they were full of faith and that faith was tempered by doubt.

Please remember they women were no different than we are today. They were super saints because God showered upon them His grace, precisely the same grace that He has showered upon you.

It isn't that your faith must be perfectly absolute without any question or uncertainty at all... We are all, like them, trapped in these earth suits - we are human. and we are plagued by our human experiences. Here's the

better question, is your hope in eternity greater than your despair? Is your trust in God greater than your doubt? Is your belief in Salvation through the Blood of Jesus greater than your disbelief? Is the love that God has poured out into your heart greater than your fear? And if not, fall to your knees and beg God to mercifully grant you, His peace.

God brought those women along. He allowed Jesus to tell them beforehand that He would be betrayed, handed over to the Romans and crucified. He allowed Jesus to share with them a bit of the rest of the story as well... He said, "On the third day I will be raised."

Then on that Sunday morning God provided a "Great earthquake" to let them know things were happening. Then they were allowed a little confab with an angel and personally shown the empty tomb that had once held the body of Jesus.

That's amazing. That's real love that God would give them so much in both experiences and information, but it is never enough really. It is never enough my friends.

I have encountered countless people who have been given that much and for some it is enough for them to

play the Christian game for years or even for a lifetime. It is a shame, because they think they are Christians, but the problem is they simply believe in the evidence, rather than in the Savior. I recently heard an apologist (that's a scholar dedicated to answering objection to Christianity) say that the only reason to be a Christian is that you are persuaded by the evidence. He's wrong.

Evidence is great, but to be a Christian one must personally meet the Risen Christ. I'm telling you this is key. Satan himself is persuaded that the evidence for Christ is there... You must have a personal encounter with Jesus.

Please notice that throughout this Gospel, that we've been studying for years now, in every case people come to Jesus. Jesus was somewhere and people came up to Him. Here for the first time Jesus comes up to someone and the someone is these women who loved Him so much throughout His earthly life. The Risen Christ approached them, and they responded by falling down before Him in prostrate worship. Please get this. They had mixed human emotions about what they had learned and what they had experienced... Jesus chose to meet with them, and these women fell to the ground, touched His feet in a sign of abject

submission, and worshipped, not their son, their nephew, their exorcist, they worshipped the one and only true God of the universe.

They met the Risen Christ and none of them would ever be the same again. They were filled at that moment with awe and reverence... The man Jesus Whom they knew and loved and even followed was not just a great man restored back to them - they recognized Him as the Alpha and the Omega - the Word of God made flesh - the Ancient of Days.

The only response to that should be the response they gave. To them Jesus said, "Do not be afraid."

Amazing right? I think a lot of people would say, I wish Jesus would come to me in that way. Yet, my dear friends, He does. Billions of people since then have had the same encounter and dismissed it out of hand.

Even people performing Christianity based upon their conviction that it's the right thing to do have been approached by Jesus only to disregard Him. What's the easiest voice in the world to ignore? That still small voice of the Holy Spirit. Keep this in mind - let it

percolate a bit, because we're going to see it again in just a moment.

After telling His sisters "Do not be afraid," He repeated the angel's instruction, telling them to inform His brothers that it was time to get on the road.



Matthew 28:11-15, 11Now while they were on their way, some of the guard came into the city and reported to the chief priests all that had happened. 12And when they had assembled with the elders and consulted together, they gave a large sum of money to the soldiers, 13and said, "You are to say, 'His disciples came by night and stole Him away while we were

asleep.’ 14“And if this should come to the governor’s ears, we will win him over and keep you out of trouble.” 15And they took the money and did as they had been instructed; and this story was widely spread among the Jews, and is to this day.

In the meantime, the terrified soldiers regained some composure and went to tell the Jewish leaders “All that had happened.” In a very real way, hearing this report is for the chief priest an encounter with the Risen Christ... It demands a response. The only thing that even crosses their mind is how can we spin this to our advantage.

Last week, I said it was a bit ambiguous whether the Roman Prefect Pontius Pilate gave the Chief Priest a few of his soldiers, or told him to use his own security people. I said it was fairly certain that it was the first situation... This is why.

Roman soldiers monumentally failing in their duty, as these dudes now realize they have, was generally a death sentence. They went to the “Chief priests” first because going directly to the governor would not have worked out for them.

As they hoped, the Jewish leaders were far more interested in suppressing the Truth than they were in seeing the soldiers punished. A deal was struck, and a conspiracy was born.

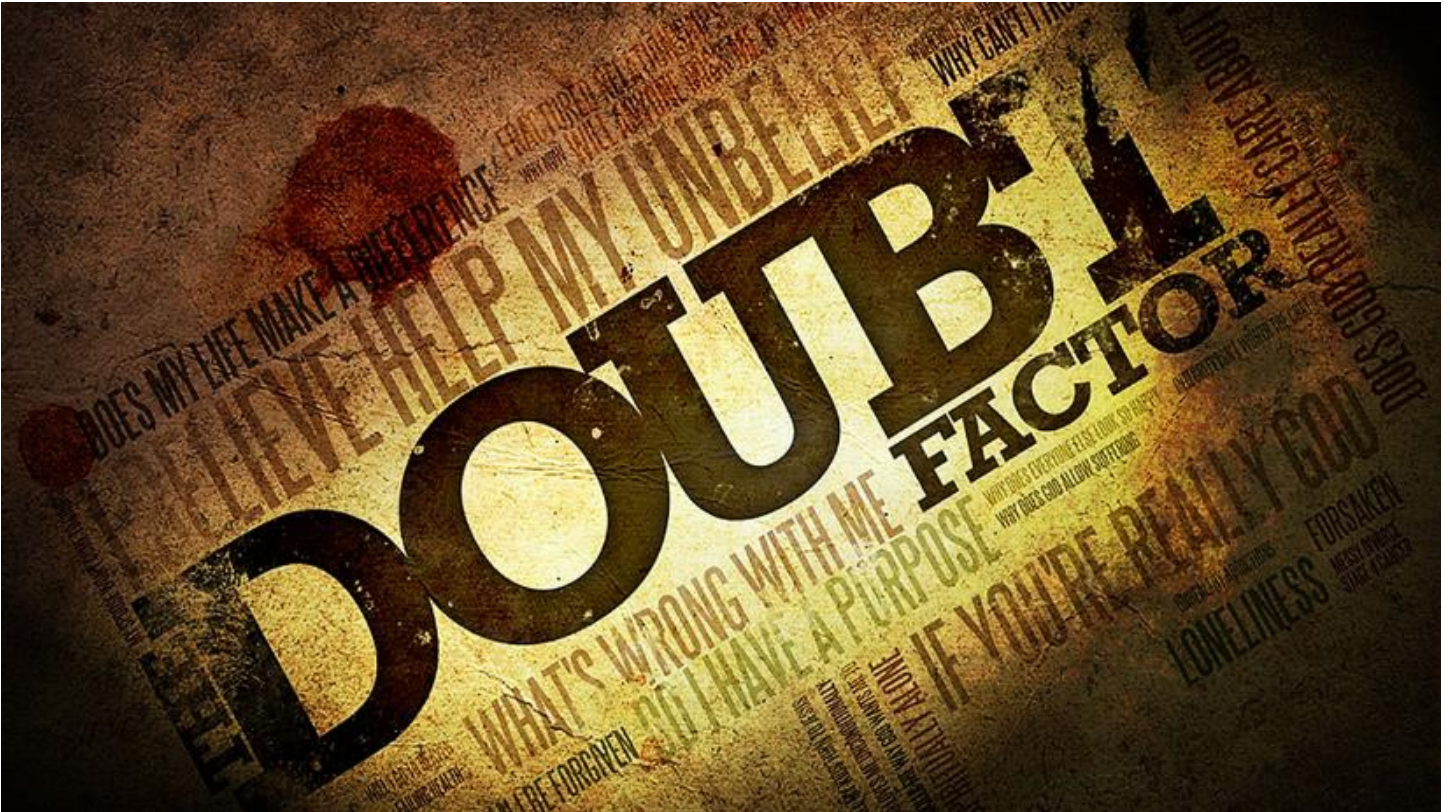
It may seem unlikely that Roman soldiers would say that they were asleep at the wheel regardless of how much money was involved. The key to understanding that comes in verse 14, “If this should come to the governor’s ears, we will win him over and keep you out of trouble.” The phrase “If this should come to the governor’s ears,” is not what it seems. It isn’t that they had any intention at all of trying to deceive the governor. It is a technical way of saying “If this should come before the governor in his official capacity as judge.” In other words, if someone formally and publicly charged the soldiers with dereliction of duty the chief priests would intervene and keep them from any punishment.

The phrase, “Win him over,” indicates a payment. The Jewish leadership would pay any kind of fine levied so the soldiers would be free from sentencing... For perpetuating a lie, they would be saved by the chief liars. Interesting ironic symmetry with what Jesus provides.

In addition to their willingness to pay to keep the soldiers safe, if necessary, the chief priests explicitly paid a large sum of money to the soldiers and also implicitly to Pilate. It goes without saying.

I mentioned some weeks back about the chief priests quelling a Jewish riot that started due to outrage that Pilate took money from the Temple to pay for a new aqueduct. Pilate didn't just walk into the Temple and grab some money. The only way he got his hands on Temple money is because the Chief Priest gave it to him.

Matthew tells us that due to that conspiracy the non-believer's explanation for the Resurrection was that the disciples stole Jesus' body. A story still circulating when Matthew wrote this Gospel about 30 years after the events.



Matthew 28:16-18a, 16But the eleven disciples proceeded to Galilee, to the mountain which Jesus had designated. 17When they saw Him, they worshiped Him; but some were doubtful. 18aAnd Jesus came up and spoke to them...

Now, it's the men's turn to meet the Risen Christ. Matthew lays it out logically, rather than chronologically, as is his habit. In the last few verses, he'll reveal Jesus' most significant final commands. He has the "Jesus came up to them and spoke" bit after the "They worshiped Him" bit for that reason... It's a logical way to tell the event... Chronologically, what happened was

that the guys, just like the women were privileged to be led along by God.

They, also, had heard Jesus repeatedly say that He was going to be executed by the state and that He would be raised on the third day. They had received the full report from the women, and we know that at least two of them, Peter, and John, but probably more, ran to the tomb and found it empty. They had travelled to Galilee with the same “Fear and great joy,” with which the women had travelled.

Then for only the second time Jesus came to them, instead of them coming to Him and the result was once again worship.

Here it says, “When they saw Him, they worshiped Him; but some were doubtful.” People wonder who doubted instead of worshipped, but that’s not what it says. They all worshipped, but they did so imperfectly. As humans, they each had doubts to some degree, but for all their faith was stronger. Why in the world would the Holy Spirit have Matthew bring this up at this point?

For the same reason that he reported the women’s “Fear” alongside their “Great joy.” We are humans and

we will ever be only humans in this life. We will never get it completely right, or have perfect faith, or be fully sinless. We will never get to the point where we don't need to throw ourselves on the ground, touch His feet and worship Him as God, as the only One Who is able to save us from our pitiful estate.

They met Jesus and they responded as well as they could and because God is merciful it was okay... He could work with that.

Please understand what I'm trying to say this morning. We have a world full of people deceived into thinking that they are going to Heaven when nothing could be further from the Truth.



There is only one way this thing can work and that is to meet the Risen Christ face-to-face and be completely undone by the meeting. In order to actually get Jesus and the Christianity He enabled is to come to an end of you.

Do you hear what I'm saying? You must reach the end of your rope and be finished with living in the power of your own ingenuity, strength, and resources. Now, you can wait for God to drive you to that point, you can go find that point through stupidly sinful choices, or through incredibly brave choices... OR... Or you can recognize the reality of who you are and Who He is and simply fall to your knees and beg for His mercy.

When you meet the actual Jesus, there's none of this Jesus loves me because I'm special. Jesus just wants to be my friend. Jesus wants me to be happy. Jesus wants me to live my best life now. Jesus wants me to be physically healed every time I have a malady. Jesus wants me to enjoy freedom from financial troubles and relational problems I create for myself. When you meet Jesus there is only, "Woe is me, for I am undone! Because I am a man of unclean lips, And I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips; For my eyes have seen the King, The Lord of hosts" (Isaiah 6:5).

That's how Isaiah, arguably the greatest prophet of all time. put it. Fast forward to the first leader of the Christian community. Luke 5:8 tells us that Peter, upon meeting Jesus 'Fell down at Jesus' feet, saying, "Go away from me Lord, for I am a sinful man!" (Luke 5:8).

The problem with what passes for Christianity is that it isn't Christian at all. I'm not talking about the rules and regulations, the doctrines and customs, the rituals and traditions... I'm talking about the very core and essence of belief.



Jesus
loves
me

We hear, even as small children, how much God loves us and how much He wants us to be His friends... Given the fact that we are completely self-absorbed creatures it resonates with us, and we actually think that we're doing God a favor by accepting Jesus and going to church!

We actually think, perhaps deep down and subconsciously, that God needs us. That we're somehow necessary to His plans. That He exists to help us, help Him.

Like God was up there talking to the Heavenly host saying good grief we're losing Scott. He's vital to my

strategy for the Flathead. If we don't get ahold of him so that he can start Alêtheia Christian Fellowship I just don't know what will happen. Double our resources - send more Holy Spirit power, more angels, more whatever it takes - we need that church - we need that man.

God never needed me. Not in any way, shape, or form - Are you kidding? I'm not performing some essential service to God. He never needed me, or this church and that means... you guessed it, He never needed you either. God is fully capable of doing whatever He wants with or without us. No other person's eternal destination depends on your actions, words, or prayers.

How incredibly arrogant to think that the Kingdom needs my talent and effort. But because we are monumentally arrogant and self-absorbed that idea fits our narrative, and it flatters our ego, and it conforms to our confirmation bias.

So many are taught to simply accept Jesus' loving acceptance of us and then embrace the reality that He wants what is best for us... Well, that's not Christianity.



Christianity is meeting the true Jesus and being undone. Meeting Him and realizing that He not only gave you your life, but He is also the One actively holding your death at bay at this very moment. That this Jesus, is the very Word of the Living Almighty God through Whom the entire physical realm was spoken into physical existence from physical nothingness.

That you can give Him nothing because everything you have is His already and is merely on loan to you. You will recognize in His perfect holy presence that you are unclean, unworthy, and unable... You will get the fact that Salvation isn't about jumping through a hoop or two and reciting some ridiculous man-made prayer, but

that it is about falling in a heap and begging Him for mercy.

I'm not trying to wreck your day; I'm trying to help you meet a Savior that can rescue your eternity. If you are not overwhelmed with humble gratitude for the undeserved salvation that has been granted you - you better pay attention.



We close with this...

Matthew 28:18-20, 18And Jesus came up and spoke to them, saying, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. 19"Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name

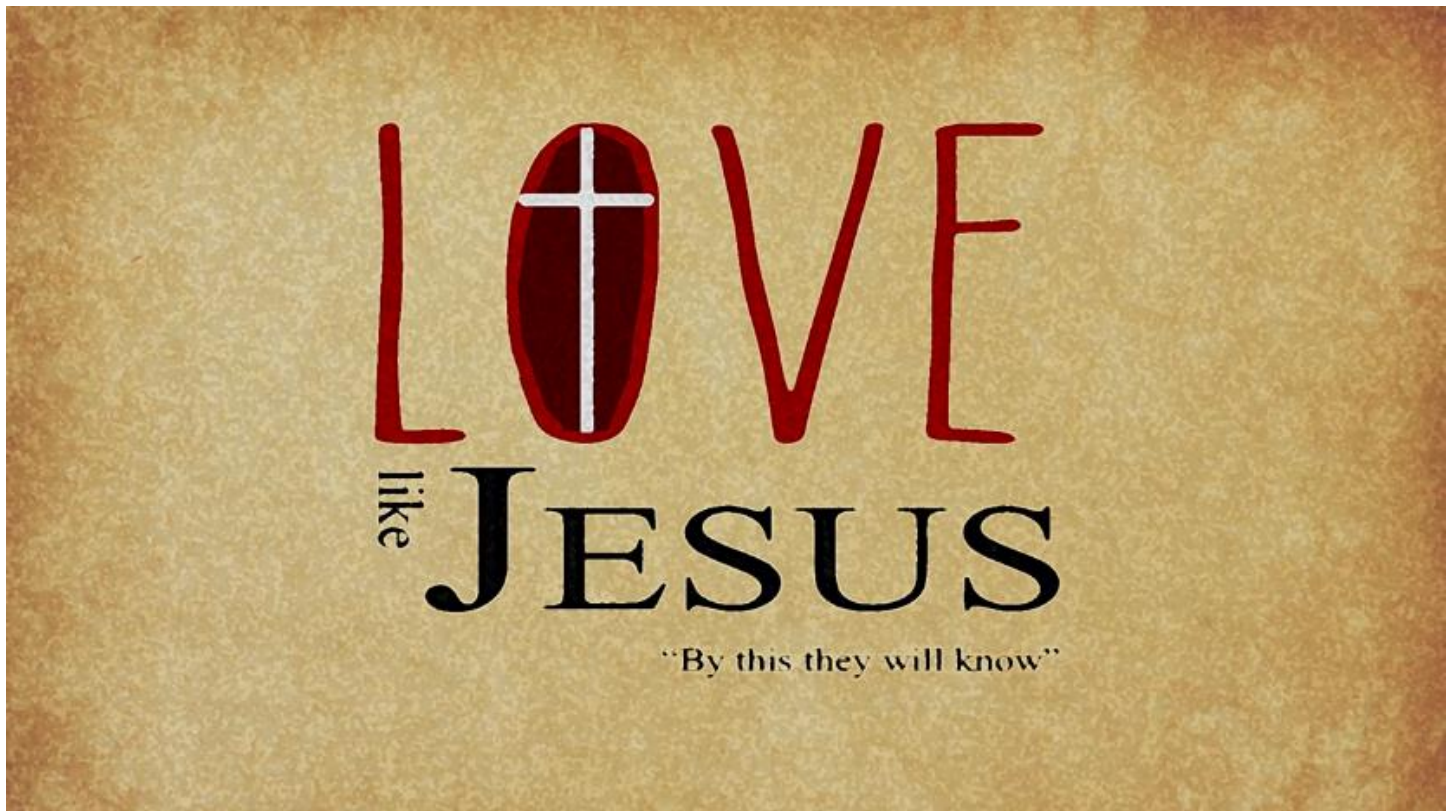
of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit,
20teaching them to observe all that I commanded you;
and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the
age.”

The important concept here is to recognize that Jesus was giving what we call the Great Commission to the 11 guys known as the original Apostles, minus Judas Iscariot. The Commission in these verses constituting the final marching orders from Jesus before He ascended back into Heaven was strictly to His hand selected chosen church leaders and to no one else.

Jesus was saying because I have now actually completed in the physical realm what was set before Me, the position and role I have always had is confirmed. I Am the One Who has all the authority there is in both the physical and metaphysical realities - in both the natural material world I created and the supernatural immaterial world to which I am returning, you 11 remaining guys “Go out!” “Disciple people regardless of their background!” “Baptize them into the church!” And if it wasn’t already obvious from all that, “Teach them to replicate what I taught you to replicate!”

That last command is the explicit reason that the Great Commission applies to every Christian generation from the first to the last. The question that will not occur to most of you is, does the Great Commission apply to the church, or does it apply to individual Christians?

In honesty, no Christian for the first 18 centuries or so would have ever thought to ask that question because it would have been obvious to them that it was a commission to the church. Ironically, Christians since then, don't think to ask the question, because they assume it is a commission for each individual.



Perhaps we'll discuss that at some future point, the thing for today is to realize that if we have truly met Jesus and are genuinely filled with the Holy Spirit we should be, as Paul put it, compelled to fulfill the commands that Jesus left us with... Love one another because this is how people will know, not really who you are, but to Whom you belong. Then love the lost and dying enough to present the true Gospel Message in whatever way you can... Whether through active preaching or actively supporting said preaching.

The Gospel Message that no one is worthy, no one is even close to good and yet if anyone wants to abandon their life of self-serving death there is a Savior, and He is God, and as God, He is the only way anyone will ever be in God's presence. Fall on your face, grab His feet, worship Him, and beg for His grace...