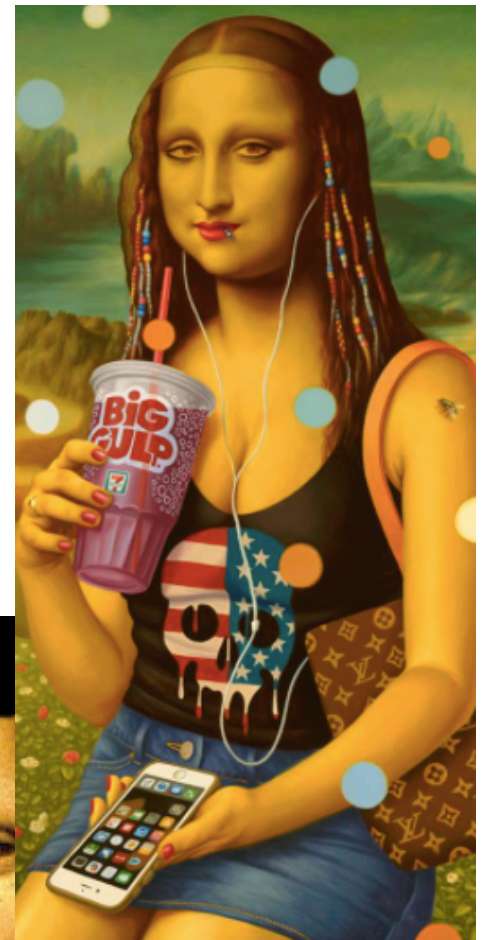
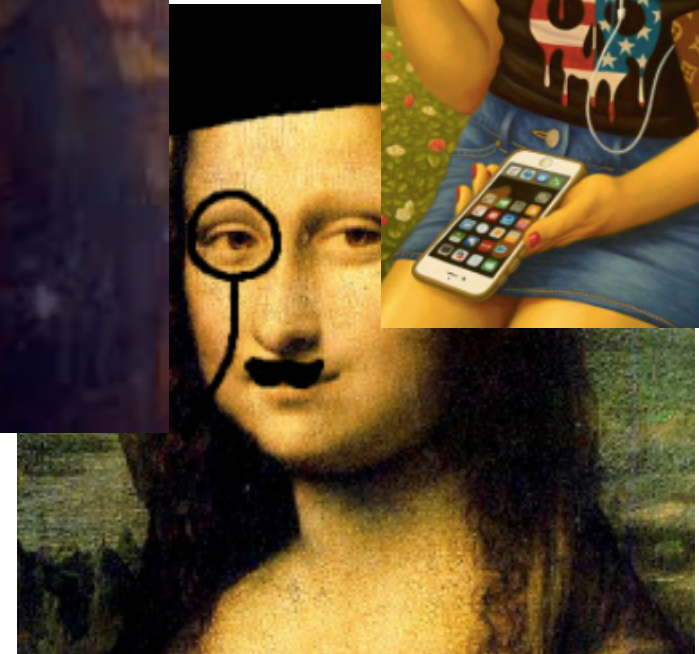
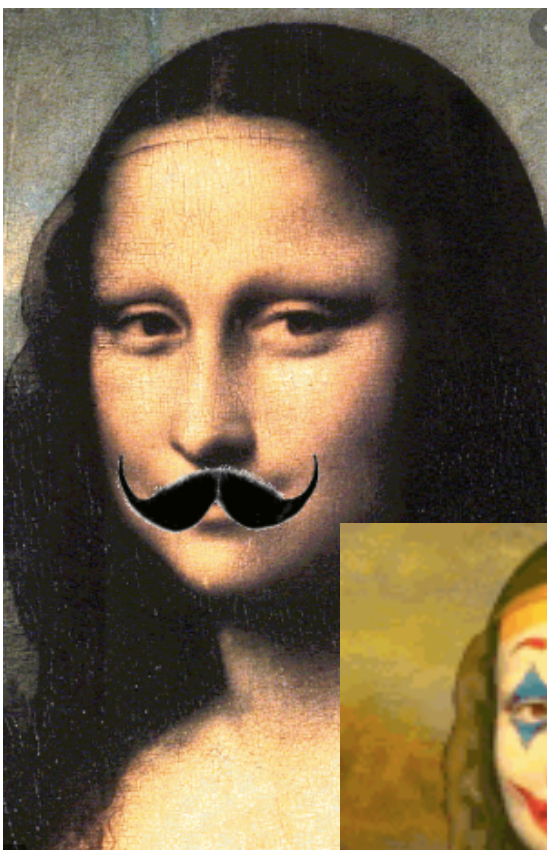


Gospel of Matthew

28:16~20

“Go and Make Disciples” (That Make Disciples)





What we have tried to do over the last two years of going through the book of Matthew is give you a true picture of the real Jesus!

So, we have journeyed together through the entire book of Matthew. I hope the book is a good deal more meaningful to you for having gone through the discipline of approaching this account of the life of Jesus, of His ministry and teachings, verse by verse, chapter by chapter. It is a Sunday morning discipline for us all! We methodically learn the scriptures because it makes us stronger. If we know the scriptures, someone cannot come and mislead us as easily, *emphasizing the unimportant things and **de-emphasizing the important** things!* These are perilous times and I'm not even talking about the COVID-19 virus. I'm talking about the explosion in false teachers and preachers. It has always been there, but much more so now - especially since the advent of the **television** and then ***exponentially more so*** with the **internet**. Now, every narcissist that imagines themselves to be special in the eyes of God, that is cynical enough to use God to promote *themselves*, wants to have his or her own podcast with their own unique take on the Bible. They spread their poisoned theology to whoever is "undefended" – whoever does not know what the scriptures actually say/teach! So, on my part I have tried to be very careful in my portrayal of the book of Matthew. You need to know the real Jesus and His real will for our lives! Knowing the real one will protect you from any of a 100 false ones, redefined ones, that you are likely to encounter in this life!



So, it is a good thing to at least stick close to “orthodoxy”. Sometimes orthodoxy can be a bit skewed because it is a creation of men, but generally it is about as well studied and carefully-worded (to avoid error) as is possible. So that is always where we should start. We start at where the orthodox view is! Most of the time when someone starts elsewhere, they are reckless or they are deliberately trying to pull people away from orthodoxy – the generally agreed upon view – over to themselves.



Sometimes there are opposing viewpoints that are actually **honest disagreements** – for instance, the sovereignty of God and the free will of man – or when the rapture of the church occurs – pre-trib, mid-trib, or post-tribulation period. Some of the more showy gifts of the Spirit would be included in this. Even the issue of eternal security. These and a few more are areas of honest disagreement that are considered orthodoxy on either side of the issue, or where the one side is not so far outside of orthodoxy that it puts one over the edge into the category of cultic beliefs. Usually there is one side that is **MORE** orthodox than the other, but if you hold to the lesser held view, it is not far enough off to effect your salvation. It is not a redefining of **Jesus**, or of redefining the **tenants of salvation**, or of redefining **the will of God** for our lives, or a reconfiguring of **heaven or hell** and who gets to go there. Or a difference over the **eternal security** of the believer – can one lose their salvation or can't they. It is just a view on scripture that one holds that is at least somewhat different than what the majority of Christians hold to.

So - this is the value of going through an entire book of the Bible chapter by chapter. Such a discipline provides good defense and it provides offensive capability – you can argue convincingly for Christ!

All four gospel accounts end differently, yet in some ways the same.

Mark ends with the resurrection. He doesn't record anything after that. Yes, there is that ending that was added later. It even reads like it was added later by someone who wanted a better ending trying to leave their mark. The earlier manuscripts do not have that ending – conclusive proof it was added later!

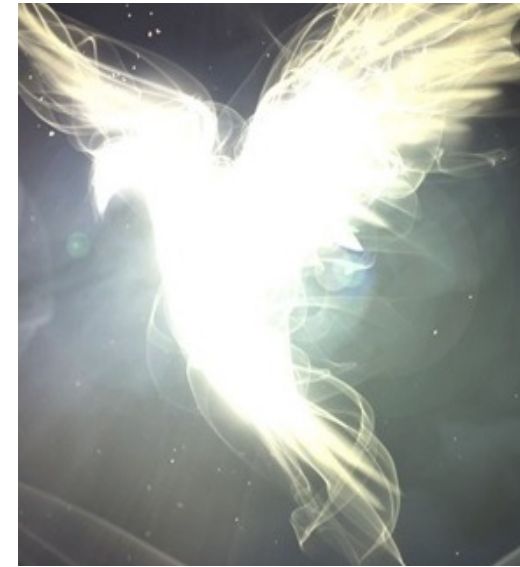
Luke ends with Jesus appearing to the two disciples on the road to Emmaus, and then suddenly disappearing afterward. Then He reappeared to all the disciples to let them touch Him to let them know He was not a ghost but had real flesh and bones! He even purposefully ate in front of them, because a ghost certainly could not do that. But he was really there in His resurrected body – complete with the scars of His crucifixion! [Luke 24:45-49]

John has Jesus appearing to the disciples at least 3 times! He tells of doubting Thomas who finally believed after Jesus suddenly appeared to them all and has Thomas examine His scars! He relates the story of a man on the shore yelling out to the luckless fishermen to cast their net on the other side of the boat, and when they did, they could not haul the great mass of fish caught in their nets into the boat! At that point they realize the man on the shore is Jesus! They go to Him and He talks to them and eats with them! Then Jesus tell Peter three times to “*feed my sheep*”, perhaps in reference to Him having denied Jesus three times on the day He had his sham of a trial! John ends with a lament that he could simply not include the bulk of Jesus' works in his gospel. They were far too many and would have filled a library!

Acts 1:8

*The
~~End~~
Beginning*

The emphasis is on the Holy Spirit here in Acts. In fact, the book of Acts is often referred to as the book of the Acts of the Holy Spirit! The Spirit of God is promised by Christ to His disciples to lend courage, power, and skill that they don't have in themselves to their efforts to tell the world of their need of Jesus! Jesus and the apostles make it clear that the disciples were to depend up the Holy Spirit to continue to carry out the purposes of God, because without the influence, guidance, and power of the Holy Spirit, it could never be accomplished. Without the Spirit, it would be a human effort which would then become a meandering and twisted path of ineffectiveness! Come to think of it, that sounds like much of church history, which powerful but ungodly men, men unchanged by Christ have controlled and influenced unduly much of the time. They make my case!



People controlled by the Spirit are different that that! Someone in tune with the Spirit becomes very much like Christ! The Spirit is the Difference-Maker! Without Him people are *posers and players* who will discredit Christ and betray Him!

The acts of the Holy Spirit of God are basically two-fold!

THE CHARACTER OF JESUS IN US - This life that we have inherited in Jesus Christ is meant to be lived only under the authoritative influence of the Holy Spirit who does not force us but who *whispers* to us. If we love Jesus, we will learn to cooperate with Him! If it is just us trying to be good people or better people, it won't work! If it is just our desire to mend our ways, we will be disappointed! We can go to all the church seminars and sermon series on **marriage and family**, or on **addictions of drugs or sex**, or on **emotional health**, and about **forgiveness**, and about **the abuse we experienced** as a child,.. and it will not do a bit of good! Well, maybe a little in some cases, but not enough! The church is not about self-help! It is about conforming to the character of Christ by following Him with our entire being and listening to the quiet but insistent voice of the Holy Spirit of God! But let me say again so this is clear, if we are trying our best to consistently do battle with our own impulses - to control our our sometimes out-of-control emotions, our lusts and passions, our inclinations to believe the wrong things, or to react in the wrong ways and do the wrong things, it simply will not work. We will not be able to fight our own nature unless we are truly a continuing work of God – literally one of his miracles, and tomorrow we will be another of His miracles, and the next day, and the next, until we are a practiced, experienced, but *still* ever-dependent follower of Jesus – who depends upon the Spirit of God for marching orders for the *next* day!

Secondly – after the character of God there are **THE PURPOSES OF GOD** - one of the most important acts of the Holy Spirit is that the Great Commission that we read today becomes the fire in our belly – the passion in our soul - the cause which is greater than ourselves and for which we will live or die if we have to! His job is to plant, establish, to expand the Kingdom of God in our minds/in our souls! His key purpose in this is to motivate and move us out into our respective worlds, to give us courage and confidence to seek to make new disciples of Christ of the people in our lives who are seeking, who are journeying, (and, because we are sharing Jesus with them), who are *finding* the author of their existence – the reason they live and breath! We are salesmen, who sell Jesus shamelessly! We are promoters who tirelessly promote Jesus to a world that so desperately needs Him. But it can be discouraging work – no doubt about it! *I remember when I was a kid, every once in a while a man would knock at our door and try to sell my mom a set of encyclopedias! Different men tried over the years. They would work so hard to convince her that our home with four children of school age needed this voluminous library of basic knowledge! But she would always answer that we already had a complete set of encyclopedias – which we did! She did not, however, share the fact that they were given to us from a lady who raised a family in the 1930s. So they were copywritten from sometime in the 1930s. They contained a lot of helpful information but they didn't even have information about WW2 in them or about penicillin! I really felt sorry for those salesman wearing out shoe leather day after day, going from house to house trying to sell something that people could not afford to buy or were not interested in.



When we care so much, and we try to sell Jesus to the people of this world, few have figured out that they need Him, (and they do),.. so they resist. They have things handled! They're doing just fine! They don't need someone else calling the shots in their life,.. except that they do! So, with many people Jesus can be a hard sell. But like I sometimes tell people who complain about Christians constantly talking to them of their need of Jesus – I tell them that maybe those Christians need to tell them more than they think they need to hear it. Indulge them, I tell them, they are under an obligation to Christ to tell of Him – that they mean no harm – that it is an obligation of love!

But if a person is reachable – usually because life has crushed them and forced them to rethink the very foundations of their existence – then Jesus is with us as we carry Him to them! “***And surely I am with you always...***”! He has promised to provide us with anything we need to carry out His marching orders! But mostly He has promised to be with us by His Spirit. If you consider yourself a follower of Jesus Christ, then you have been served with an impossible mission to bring His image – especially the image of Jesus on the cross - before the eyes of a world that would rather avert their eyes! Jesus said in **John 12:32** – “***But I, when I am lifted up from the earth (on the cross) I will draw all men unto myself***”



We are called by God to His purposes which are to win the world to Himself in convincing fashion – for the followers of Jesus to bring up the issue whenever and wherever it is feasible, force the issue, to face rejection! But we are also called to the ecstasy of leading that one person, or two, or more people to a true faith in the true Jesus – the Jesus of the Gospels!