

## ***“BORN FOR THIS: Born to Send”***

*Matthew 28:16-20*

First Presbyterian Church, Corpus Christi, TX  
Rev. Charles S. Blackshear • December 24, 2014

This evening we come to the end of our two-year journey together through the Gospel of Matthew! And for the past few weeks, during this Christmas season when we celebrate the birth of Jesus, we have been looking at *why* Jesus was born and we discovered that his suffering and death are a big part of why he came. The soldiers put a crown of thorns on Jesus and mocked him as King of the Jews. But Jesus is not only King of the Jews, he is king of the entire universe. When the Wise Men arrived they asked, “where is the one who was born King of the Jews?” When we think of kings we don’t usually think of pain and suffering as part of their role as king. But Jesus was born to suffer and die in our place. He experienced separation from God the Father so that you and I don’t have to. And then last Sunday Brian shared with us how Jesus was born to conquer death. Days after his death and burial he was alive again and seen by hundreds of people. The angel invited the women to “come and see” the empty tomb.

Come and see. Over and over again in the New Testament, people are invited to “come and see” Jesus. When Andrew meets Jesus for the first time he goes to find his brother Simon Peter. He says “come and see.” The next day Jesus calls Philip to follow him and Philip goes to find Nathaniel and says, “Come and see.” When Jesus meets the woman at the well she goes into town and tells the people, “come and see.” When Jesus meets the women after they have seen the empty tomb, he instructs them to “go and tell my brothers to go to Galilee, and there they will see me.”

Tonight’s passage begins with the eleven disciples going to the mountain where Jesus had instructed them to meet. And we’re told that when they saw him they worshiped him. When they encounter the risen Christ, their first instinct is to worship. They can’t help it. They worship because Jesus is worthy of worship. It’s no different today. When you

encounter the risen Christ you can’t help but worship. That’s one of the ways you can be assured of your salvation. You have a desire to worship Jesus. As often as possible. When you worship regularly, one of the things you discover is that it’s in worshiping and connecting with other believers that you encounter the risen Christ. It’s a cycle that draws you closer and closer to Him. The more you worship, the more you want to worship.

Notice something else about that verse, though. Verse 17 says, “And when they saw him they worshiped him, but some doubted.” I find that to be one of the most encouraging verses in the Bible. Jesus doesn’t require us to have a perfect understanding of him or of the Bible. He expects us to come and see. He meets us where we are. One of the things about faith is that it requires doubt. If you have no doubts or questions about God then you don’t need faith. And it’s immediately after we’re told that some had doubts that Jesus gives them a job to do.

It’s not enough to come and see. Jesus commissions us to then “go and tell.” Almost everywhere that Jesus says “come and see,” he also says “go and tell.” A number of years ago there was a deeply theological movie that many of you may have seen. Anybody remember *The Blues Brothers* with John Belushi and Dan Ackroyd? Do you remember their phrase they used over and over? “We’re on a mission from God.”

Friends, if you are a Christian, you are on a mission from God. Jesus says, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you.” Christians are the sent people of God. We are the presence of Jesus in the world. In Acts chapter 1, just before Jesus ascends to heaven, he tells his disciples, “you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you, and you

will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.”

That commission is for you and me as well. We are to go. We are to make disciples of Jesus. How do we do that? Jesus tells us that we make disciples by baptizing, which is the sign of entry into a life of following Jesus. It’s the sign of membership in his Church. Then we are to teach them to observe all that Jesus commanded. In other words, we are to teach them the Word of God. And then they are to go and tell others. In a nutshell, the process of discipleship is one of relationships – relationships with people in the church and with people who have no relationship with Jesus. Jesus commands us to get out of our comfort zone. We are to go and tell right here in our neighborhood, in our workplace, in the shopping centers, in all our relationships. We are to go and say, “come and see.”

But we are also commanded to go to far away places as well, outside our own cultural context. When we are involved in missions to other countries we are crossing barriers with the gospel. But missions is about even more than that. When we go we discover that *we* are changed. We encounter the risen Christ as we experience and participate in what God is doing around the world.

Finally, the Gospel of Matthew ends where it began. Jesus says, “behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.” We are reminded of Matthew chapter 1 where the angel tells Joseph that Jesus’ birth fulfills the prophecy of Isaiah 800 years earlier, “Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall call his name Immanuel” (which means, God with us.) Because Jesus has conquered sin and death he is indeed with us always as we go.

*Amen*