**6/4/23**

**Project, Cook, Build**

**Matthew 28:16-20**

Jesus let us follow the very commission you gave to your remaining disciples. Let us not be weary as we too go out and baptize and teach all the nations in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Amen.

Have you ever started a project, began cooking something, or even opened up a piece of furniture to build, and thought this is going to be pretty simple? Then, you slow down just enough to look at the directions in front of you. I mean you even look at all the pieces or ingredients or steps, and you realize that you are in store for a little bit more of a lengthy process than you initially thought. Well, that is exactly where today’s sermon had me doing some extra research. I mean initially before I read anything, before I looked at the ingredients I needed or the pieces or the directions I had, I just looked at the title of this new season of the church year that we are embracing. I really thought today I was just going to be solely focusing on the Holy Trinity as we enter this time after Pentecost. I mean that is a heavy enough topic all in its own, and a process all within itself. Admittedly, I know it is not just me, but all of us sometimes make the Trinity much more complex and confusing than it really needs to be. Wayne often reminds me of that in Bible Study, and I am thankful for that. However, let us focus on the entire picture here today, and not just one thing.

So, as I slowed down a bit, and I looked at the directions and parts and ingredients and steps I had before me, I also encourage you to do the same with me here. I even ask you to step back and realize with me where we were coming from just last week as well. I mean the disciples were called from their fear in an upper room, and provided peace from Jesus to go and make disciples. They were to go out just as the Father had sent Jesus. Now, they were even able to “communicate in one another’s languages, rather than being confined to a single, dominant language.” (1) Yes, the Great Commission, for all intents and purposes started last week, and is driven home even more so this week. So, it is now time to look at all the pieces and ingredients and processes here, and step into the proverbial builder or project manager or cook position. In these very processes we are called to our ministry of sharing the Word, and blessing one another, and those in the community with the opportunity to know the God we come to love more and more each and every day. We are called to put all the pieces together, to mix all the ingredients together, to follow the proverbial processes set right in front of us in the very Word we enter into each and every day within our Bibles. We are reminded and empowered by the last words in our Gospel Reading today as well that we are not alone in these very processes at all as Jesus told his disciples and informs us that “I am with you always, to the end of the age.” (1)

He has our back at all times! We are forever reminded that we are not on this journey alone, just as the disciples were not on their journey alone either. Yes, at times they got overly comfortable with him being at their very side for peace and advice. Just as many of us have gotten overly comfortable with our parents, friends, aunts or uncles, or our mentors being by our very side and guiding us along the way. However, just as things change over time, we come to realize that they really just change a little bit. As Jesus was no longer physically with the disciples by their side, and just as those important people in our very lives may not be by our side each and every day anymore, we are forever reminded that they are with us in spirit. This is very similar to the spirit Jesus breathed on the disciples in the upper room. You and I have that same spirit with us, we have the spirit of the Lord with us, and we have the spirit of those important people along with us on our journey through our project or building experiment or cooking process.

What is even cooler is that as the skies were opened and the spirit came upon us in our very baptisms. We even got to witness that cool event just a few short weeks ago as Madison was baptized here in this very church, at that very font. Every so often we need reminded of these things. I mean we are only human after all! “The disciples who walked with Jesus and talked with Jesus and ate with Jesus still needed reassurance.” (4) Every so often we all need that visual experience to remind us of the family and calling that we are a part of each and every day. The Great Commission is nothing to fool around with, or to be taken for granted. We explore our faith day in and day out, and we are not called to keep it to ourselves. We learn that “More than a doctrine, the Trinity expresses the heart of our faith: we have experienced the God of creation made known in Jesus Christ and with us always through the Holy Spirit. We celebrate the mystery of the Holy Trinity in word and sacrament, as we profess the creed, and as we are sent into the world to bear witness to our faith.” (1)

Alright let me slow things down a little bit here, as I know things kind of got admittedly a little heavy there. Let me share with you a pretty cool story I read while conducting my research for this week. “"There was a little church in Scotland which years ago as the ushers were returning to the altar with the offering plates, a little boy sitting next to the aisle tugged at the sleeve of one of the men and whispered, "Please put the plate down on the floor." Bewildered, the usher obeyed. Then the boy preceded to step into the plate. This was his way of saying to Jesus "I give my whole self to you, not only the money in my pocket, but my time, my strength, my whole life."” (2) So, as we reflect on this story a little bit, some questions come to the forefront here. So, we can feel free to examine things and ask ourselves, just as this sermon writer put out there. “Are you willing to step into the offering plate so to speak? To give us yourself so that the Spirit of God can rest in you and then you can proclaim that Spirit to the world? (2) Some pretty heavy thought process there for sure. However, what a direct contrast or mentality shift than that which we are used to by just putting our envelope or money in the offering plate. It is good to challenge our so-called normal or ritualistic ways of doing things. It is also good to take a look at the larger picture, just as we are called to do in the process of the project, cooking, or building. When we give our all, and we are all in, we are no longer lukewarm. Now, I am not asking all of you to go back to the table and jump in the offering plate. That is a figure of speech here for certain, but do we realize that indeed is our very call, as we give it all to him?

So, as we begin to wrap things up here today we come to realize that “Discipleship is service to the least, and the banner of Christ’s discipleship is taken up by the least likely candidates.” (1) I mean after all, when we really look at things “WHO does He give this commission to? 11 run of the mill guys. Some fishermen, a zealot, and a tax collector. There’s nothing special about them at all, even with their faith in some ways. Today’s text says that even when the resurrected Jesus was standing right in front of them, some hesitated because they were uncertain. Think about it, if there is any chronological order to this at all, this would have been AFTER He had come to them in the upper room and told them to STOP DOUBTING and believe, and they STILL doubted. But Jesus wanted THEM, THESE DOUBTERS, to be the ones who would have the future of Jesus’ kingdom in their mouths and hands. You would think He would have picked better people for such a task.” (5) As we think about this, and as we even examine ourselves at times, “Don’t we say the same things about ourselves as well? Here He gives us children and grandchildren. He gives us opportunities to speak with our neighbors and co-workers. And what do we do? We doubt. We fear. We say nothing. So why would He want US either? Is He blind? Is He foolish to think He’ll get ANYTHING done through US?!? No. God is neither blind nor foolish. God’s grace and mercy are not bound by your doubts. His power is not bound by your sin either. He still works through us, even in spite of us at times.” (5) Thank God for that!

If you really think about it, “Jesus never commissioned his followers to baptize everyone and teach them the absolute truth. Our commission, as disciples of Jesus Christ, is to teach others what Jesus has taught us. And what has Jesus taught us? God is love, everyone is included, and we are to love as we have been loved.” (3) “Christians have so much good news to share with others. We have been so blessed to experience a relationship with God, be recipients of God’s forgiveness, love and grace, and live lives of purpose and meaning. We will not find receptive hearts if we start with the idea that we are right and everyone else is wrong. We will only be able to accomplish the commission that Jesus has called us to when we share what is important to us and listen to what is important to others. Doing this, we know that God will be with us, just as God promised.” (3) “The great commission of our triune God, which was announced by Jesus to his first disciples, has not changed over all of these years. The fact is that today, every believer in Christ is a modern-day disciple of the triune God. Our encouragement is still the same as it was when Jesus met privately with the eleven.” (4) So, follow the steps and the processes, use the ingredients and follow the directions, use each piece you were given and build the kingdom here on earth. Whether you relate things to a Project, or to a recipe and Cook, or to a piece of furniture and Build realize that the spirit has been breathed on you, just as the disciples. Go out into the world with God in your heart and make things happen!

Amen.

**References**

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 Preaching

 Year A 2023

 June 4, 2023

 The Holy Trinity

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 Scripture: Matthew 28:16-20

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(4) SermonCentral.com

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 Denomination: Lutheran

(5) SermonCentral.com

 The Almighty Jesus Commissions Us To Go With Water And Word

 Contributed by Joel Pankow on Jun 4, 2020

 Scripture: Matthew 28:16-20

 Denomination: Lutheran

**Matthew 28:16-20**

 After his resurrection, Jesus summons his remaining disciples and commissions

 them to baptize and teach all nations in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy

 Spirit.

 16Now the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain to which Jesus had

 directed them. 17When they saw him, they worshiped him; but some doubted.

 18And 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, 20and

 teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you. And remember, I

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