

Service for Covid-19 – Trinity Sunay 7 JUNE 2020

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Matthew Chapter 28. vs.16-20

One of the many things we missed out on this year was the completion of the Six Nations Championship – not knowing how it ended has been particularly hard for a lot of us. The excitement of seeing how the game changes from one half to the next, the underdogs often coming out fighting after a pep talk from the coach – we're never allowed to see what's said or what happens, but we know that the players are fired up and ready for the next challenge.

In our reading from the very end of Matthew's Gospel today, we have Jesus giving his pep talk, talking to the eleven people who will go on to turn the world upside down in the power of God's Spirit. These were his last words on earth given to the disciples, and they are recorded by Matthew, so they must be very important.

16 Then the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain where Jesus had told them to go. The disciples have obeyed Jesus instructions to the letter after the last time they saw him, by going to the mountain in Galilee to meet with him. This was after his death and resurrection and he had appeared to them, and others, taught them, and eaten with them.

17 When they saw him, they worshipped him; but some doubted. Some worshipped him, like Thomas on the Sunday after the first Easter. Yet others were hesitant, this is what 'doubted' means. Perhaps they did not fully understand the significance of the events of the last six weeks. And, of course, they had still to receive the Holy Spirit who would empower them to be witnesses, and turn people's hearts to Jesus. Perhaps some of us feel fatigued and tired now, we want to get back to the way things were before when it comes to serving Jesus or being church. We may feel weak. But we know more than the disciples did at that time. And we have the power of the Holy Spirit available to us.

18 Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me.

This authority has been given to Jesus and only to Jesus by God the Father. You can imagine the disciples saying to one another after Jesus has spoken... so how much authority has been given to Jesus? All.

And where does he exercise his authority ? In heaven and earth, i.e. everywhere.

And these two statements have huge repercussions for us -

Firstly, because Jesus has this authority we must listen to him without question.

Secondly, he has the power and authority for us to carry out the tasks that he gives them. So he sends them moving again – there is no chance to stand still and ponder -

19 Therefore go and make disciples of all nations,

Go. Go and make disciples of all nations.

The good news is this is good news for everyone and anyone without exception.

From every nation, class, language, gender, occupation and so on. We cannot look at anyone and say, 'Jesus did not come for you.'

Look at Saul of Tarsus, persecuting the church but turned around by an encounter with the risen Lord Jesus. Jesus came for everyone.

And so let us be people, in spite of everything, who will continue to live their lives trusting and listening to Jesus in the power of his Spirit and to be witnesses to all that he has done for us, for as long as we can. Amen.

[594 words]