

## Hayward United Methodist Church

Pastor Samuel's Message for Seventh Sunday After Pentecost, July 11, 2021

*"We Are All Disciples"*

Text: Matthew 28:16-20

Gospel Reading: Matthew 28:16-20

Now the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain to which Jesus had directed them. when they saw him, they worshipped him, but some doubted. And Jesus came and said to them, "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, and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age."

Prayer for Illumination (UMH 6)

Lord, open our hears and minds by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, that, as the Scriptures are read and your word proclaimed, we may hear with joy what you say to us today. Amen.

Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

What is God calling me to do? The is the question we should be asking each and every time when we read the Scriptures and the Word is preached. God speaks to us through the Scriptures. God has spoken to us through Jesus Christ whose gospel is recorded in the Scriptures. Jesus gathered his disciples to participate in the ongoing mission of God. Jesus through his life and ministry brought redemption for the whole humanity. Jesus commissioned the disciples and us to proclaim and make new disciples for the work of God.

The first disciples did not have everything at their disposal. They didn't have the recorded story of Jesus. They didn't have anything in print to pass on. They had to preach from memory and rely on oral tradition concerning the gospel of Jesus Christ. We are very much privileged. We have the whole Bible in print. We can search through the Scriptures and pick up the passages we want to reflect on. We can also look at how the gospel was preached over the centuries. Jesus sent the Holy Spirit to interpret his ministry. Whenever we read a passage about Jesus, it

is the Holy Spirit that brings alive the message of the gospel. That is why we need to pray to the Holy Spirit to guide us so that we might gain insights to reach new people for Christ.

The Gospel text chosen is called "Great Commission." Because Jesus commissioned his disciples to carry on his mission after resurrection. The Great Commission is also found in other Gospels, but with different wordings. After his resurrection, Jesus appeared to his disciples in Galilee where it all started and where it would end to begin with a new start. Most of Jesus's disciples were from Galilee where ordinary folks lived. Jesus ministered in Galilee for almost three and half years. He knew the people very well. He came to Jerusalem to die. But he revealed himself again in Galilee. That's where Jesus first commissioned his disciples. That's where Jesus would commission his disciples again with his ongoing presence.

When they saw Jesus alive, they were overjoyed. Some of them worshipped him, but some doubted. It was not a doubt about his resurrection, but it was a doubt about the future. They were worried. They were worried about how they would carry on the mission without Jesus. They were with Jesus on many occasions. They could come to Jesus and ask questions to clear their doubts. Now it is all different. They had to go alone with the physical presence of Jesus. It was more like mission impossible. They were worried about the future. But Jesus determined to send them on a world-wide mission.

First, Jesus said, "Go, and make disciples." The word, "disciple," comes from the Greek word, "*mathētēs*" which means "student" or "learner." The disciples were with Jesus for almost three years and they learned from Jesus. Now it is time for them to put the skills into practice. They should go out and make new disciples, new believers for the Kingdom of God. Discipleship is a life long process. They need to continue to learn from the Scriptures and practice in life. When Jesus said, "Love your neighbor", he meant to show it in action. What are the things the disciples should do to love their neighbor?

The early believers showed compassion and helped the poor. They were together in fellowship and breaking of the bread. They had a team of disciples to serve the poor and the needy. They also had a team of disciples to preach the gospel to new people. They relied on the Holy Spirit. God blessed their mission. Everyday new

believers were added to the fellowship. When we depend upon the Holy Spirit and do the work of God, God will bring new people to church. We will experience miracles in our ministry of disciple making.

Second, Jesus said, “Baptize in the name of the Father and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.” Jesus revealed God to us as Father. The Holy Spirit continues to reveal the Son to us. Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are united in saving the world. The name of the Trinity invites us to participate in the saving work of God. Baptism is a symbol of new life. It is a symbol of new life in the Trinity. To be baptized is to immerse ourselves in the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. It is to give ourselves in service for others. We are called to be a light to the world so that others might believe in the redemptive work of God.

We are being set apart for the work of God through baptism. The apostle Paul captures the baptized life this way: “Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? Therefore we have been buried with him by baptism into death, so that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life” (Romans 6:3-4). We are called not only to baptize, but to live the life of baptism. It is to demonstrate the newness of life in our Christian life.

Third, Jesus said, “Teach them to obey everything that I commanded you.” Jesus is not here a new set of commands. He has already given the greatest commandment. That is to love God and love your neighbor. Jesus went to the Temple and to the Synagogue to demonstrate his love for God. Jesus went to eat with sinners and tax collectors to demonstrate his love for neighbor. Above all he died on the cross for the sinful humanity. This is found all over the Scriptures. We need to explain and interpret the Scriptures in today’s context.

Jesus told many parables. Jesus performed many miracles. The Old Testament prophets called people to do love and justice. So, we need to take time to reflect on the Scriptures and do what God is calling us to do. The author of 1 John takes time to teach us about love: “Little Children, let us love, not in word or speech, but in truth and action. And by this we will know that we are from the truth and will reassure our hearts before him whenever our hearts condemn us; for God is greater than our hearts, and he knows everything” (1 John 3:18-20). There are

many passages in the Scriptures that talk about love. We can use them as teaching tools to draw more people to the love of God.

Finally, Jesus said, “I am with you always, to the end of the age.” The disciples were not alone. We are not alone. Jesus’s presence will continue to strengthen us in ministry. In Matthew’s Gospel, there is no explicit ascension of Jesus. Jesus has ascended into the mission of the disciples. Peter boldly proclaimed the gospel on the Day of Pentecost. Because he had the presence of Jesus. Stephen faced martyrdom because of Jesus’s presence. Paul was called to be an apostle because of Jesus’s presence. We can do great things because of Jesus’s presence. Jesus promised that he would never leave us. He will abide with us until the end of the age.

John Wesley said that the world is my parish. God has kept the door wide open for world-wide mission. God wants us to be part of God’s work. The Great Commission invites us to make more disciples, to baptize more people, and to teach more people. What is God calling you to do? There is a story told about Francis Assisi who invited a monk to join him on a preaching trip to town. The monk followed Francis all day. But Francis never preached nor did he speak a single word. The monk asked Francis, “I thought we were going into town to preach.” Francis said, “Yes, we did preach. We were preaching while we were walking. It is of no use to walk anywhere to preach unless we preach everywhere as we walk.” God wants us to be a presence of the gospel everywhere so that others will be drawn to the Kingdom of God. God Bless.

**Pastor Samuel**

**Let’s say the Benediction together:**

**The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ,  
and the love of God,  
and the communion of the Holy Spirit  
be with us all. Amen.**