



#18 in the Story to be told Series
The End is the Beginning
 1 Forest Park Church
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Even the resurrection is met with Unbelief:

Mark 16:9–14

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9 When Jesus rose early on the first day of the week, he appeared first to Mary Magdalene, out of whom he had driven seven demons. 10 She went and told those who had been with him and who were mourning and weeping. 11 When they heard that Jesus was alive and that she had seen him, they did not believe it.

12 Afterward Jesus appeared in a different form to two of them while they were walking in the country. 13 These returned and reported it to the rest; but they did not believe them either.

FIRE IN A SYNAGOGUE

J. Mack Stiles writes of hearing James McPherson, the Pulitzer Prize-winning historian, lecture on naval battles during the Civil War. The lecture, sponsored by the local historical society, was held in a large synagogue. The auditorium was packed. There was a certain electricity in the air as we waited to hear from the well-known professor from Princeton.

As Dr. McPherson took the stage, he also took command. His resonant voice, dry wit, and astounding command of the material captivated the audience. But midway through the lecture, the fire alarm sounded. This was a serious alarm. It wasn't merely allowed "blat blat blat" coming from an electronic horn; there were also strobe lights that ticked blinding flashes at odd intervals.

Dr. McPherson froze. His wide-eyed look reminded me of an owl woken suddenly from slumber. He rotated his head from side to side, not knowing what to do. Since no one in the audience apparently attended the synagogue, no one took charge. We just looked around, smiling at our neighbors and wondering what to do. For what seemed like an eternity, the alarm continued. People in the chairs began talking in small groups while waiting for the alarm to go off.

"Maybe there really is a fire," I thought. But I quickly dismissed the idea: false alarms are the norm; i figured the alarm just needed to be reset. Besides, no

one else seemed to think there was a problem - except one man who stood up, calmly walked to the exit, and left the building. I'm not sure that many noticed him. Soon the alarm stopped and Dr. McPherson continued where he had left off.

If this parable were of true, there was only one true believer...one convert in the room;

- The rest of us were stuck in our rationalization.
- Some might have thought there was a fire, but they didn't really believe it enough to walk out.
- We aren't persuaded in a biblical sense unless we repent, place genuine faith in Jesus, and walk with Him.

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I. UNBELIEF.....

One of the objections to the New Testament account of Jesus' resurrection is that He appeared only to believers—people who already had a desire to believe the marvelous stories about Him. The facts say otherwise.

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1. The Disciples Were the First Unbelievers

The apostles thought it was all nonsense, and they would not believe. (Luke 24:11 CEV)

At first, they rejected the idea that Jesus had risen. They thought the women were only speaking nonsense. There was no expectation whatsoever on their part that Jesus would come back from the dead. Even when told about it, they did not believe it.

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2. Thomas Was an Unbeliever

"I won't believe it unless I see the nail wounds in his hands, put my fingers into them, and place my hand into the wound in his side." (John 20:25 NLT)

6

3. Other Disciples Also Doubted

We are even told that when Jesus met His disciples in Galilee there were some who still doubted. Matthew records the following:

When they saw him, they worshiped him; but some doubted. **Matthew 28:17**

7

4. Jesus' Family Were Unbelievers

We are told that the brothers of Jesus did not believe in Him during His earthly ministry. John recorded this:

For not even his own brothers believed in him. John 7:5

- However, we find Jesus' brothers gathered with Jesus' disciples, after His resurrection, awaiting the coming of the Holy Spirit:
- *They were joined by some women, including Mary (the mother of Jesus), and they were joined by his brothers. Acts 1:14*
- Something caused these half-brothers of Jesus to believe in Him after His resurrection from dead. Previously, during His public ministry, they had rejected His claims.

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5. Paul Was a Non-Believer

Saul of Tarsus, who later became the Apostle Paul, was not a believer when the resurrected Christ appeared to Him. He had to be convinced from his position of unbelief. He is described in the following way before his conversion on the Damascus road:

These people didn't become unbelievers in that moment - but they were unbelieving....

- refusing to believe the report of the women,
- the 2 witnesses,
- And even struggling when Christ appeared because "for joy and marveling, they still disbelieved."
- **The greek word for doubt is Apistia** - refuse to put one's trust or reliance in someone or something. (11x in NT)
- **Luke uses the word Apisteo** in Luke 24:41- to believe that something is not true - to not believe. (8x in NT)

Faith is like a key, which turned one way, can unlock the power of walking with the Lord, but turned the other, can lock it up.

- Turned one way, it is belief.

- Turned the other, it is unbelief.
- Both are powerful.

Psalm 14:1

*The fool says in his heart,
“There is no God.”
They are corrupt, their deeds are vile;
there is no one who does good.*

They were acting like unbelievers. At best they were foolish.

Unbelief can make us appear foolish as well when we get entangled with the affairs of this world and live as though there is no Great Commandment for us

- To love God with all our heart, mind, soul, and strength and love our neighbors as ourselves.

Why do we struggle with unbelief?

- Sometimes the hardness of our hearts allow our perspective to become immovable.
- We ask God to fill me with Your Spirit.”
- He might reply, “It is hard to fill a cup that is already full of its own wants and desires.”

This may seem a little scary, but you are getting ready to walk with God. If you are going to have a relationship with Him, you must open your heart and allow Him to cleanse you of all unrighteousness.

9

Mark 16: 14

Later Jesus appeared to the Eleven as they were eating; he rebuked them for their lack of faith and their stubborn refusal to believe those who had seen him after he had risen.

10

II. RECALIBRATE TO THE COMMISSION!

11

Mark 16:15–16

And he said to them, “Go into all the world and proclaim the gospel to the whole creation. 16 Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be condemned.

See also:

Matthew 28:19–20

Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, 20 and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.”

Have you ever considered thatTHE GOSPEL CAME TO YOU ON THE WAY TO SOMEONE ELSE!

I feel like we stand in need of recalibrating everything in our lives to the Great Commission.

12 1. Follow God's Spirit

John 15:26

“But when the Helper comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth, who proceeds from the Father, he will bear witness about me.

- We must be sensitive to what He tells us to do and quick to obey it.
- We must willingly allow Him to disrupt our daily routine and step out with boldness and faith as we follow Him.
- We must understand that whatever God guides us to do, the Holy Spirit is the one that equips us to do it.

It is easy to get caught up in fears of being inadequate, not knowing what to say, or not feeling as though we have the courage to do as God commands.

- When God tells us to do something He always provides us with what we need to accomplish it.
- We may not physically see these provisions, but we must walk in faith believing that they are there.
- We, as believers, get to be vessels for the Holy Spirit to work through us to accomplish the will of God.
- The same Holy Spirit that was with Jesus' disciples and Jesus Himself is in us today! We have access to that power, truth, and guidance which we need to use in order to fulfill the Great Commission

13 2. Build Discipling Relationships.

Many times Christians can consciously and subconsciously see the fulfilling of the Great Commission as an overseas endeavor while forgetting that there are many people all around us that are lost.

- Yes, global missions are an extremely important part of fulfilling the Great Commission as Jesus said to make disciples of ALL nations,
- But we must remember that “ALL” includes our own.

The simplest and quickest way for us to start participating in the fulfillment of this mandate is by impacting the lives of the people we are closest to, both in proximity and in relation.

- We have the opportunity to build a reputation of strong character and integrity in the eyes of those around us, and from that, build deep relationships with the people in our community.

In Matthew, it says that we are the salt and light of the World and through our reputation, we can bring Glory to God,

14 **Matthew 5:14-16**

“You are the light of the world. A town built on a hill cannot be hidden. Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven.”

Through our example of a life lived for Christ we can show the life-changing truth of the Gospel at work in our own lives.

- God has us where we are for a purpose and we must be faithful to fulfill his commands in all situations, both here and abroad.

15 **3. Give**

Giving in all forms is a great way to participate in the Great Commission.

- Through giving, we have the ability to partner with other believers to make an impact for the Kingdom.
- It enables us to empower missionaries and ministries in the advancement of the Gospel and to spread our reach further than we could on our own.
- Even though we may not be the direct messenger, the Bible tells us that we are certainly participating.

2 Corinthians 9:6-10

vs 6 The point is this: whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows bountifully[d] will also reap bountifully. 7 Each one must give as he has decided in his heart, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver.

Vs 10 He who supplies seed to the sower and bread for food will supply and multiply your seed for sowing and increase the harvest of your righteousness.

We may not always feel as though we have much to give, but God loves a giving heart no matter what the amount.

When we take action through allowing the Holy Spirit to guide us in our daily lives, pursue sharing the Good News with our community, and support missions, **we are able to make an impact for the kingdom in our everyday lives.**

God graciously allows us the chance to partner with Him, let's not let anything stop us from taking part in this incredible opportunity!

16 III. Realize Our Partnership.

Mark 16:17–20

“These are the miraculous signs that will accompany believers: They will use the power and authority of my name to force demons out of people. They will speak new languages. 18 They will pick up snakes, and if they drink any deadly poison, it will not hurt them. They will place their hands on the sick and cure them.”

We know these were apostolic signs and wonders for the early establishing of the church.

- These types of signs that accompanied the apostles began to fade from view and practice (and necessity) even before the New Testament was finished being written.
- Follow Paul’s writing to these hosts of new believers and you see a sharp decline and disappearance of these temporal signs and wonders as the Scriptures & NT Letters began to be distributed circularly.

Jesus even demonstrates the lesser signs as a means to validate the greatest sign in Mark 2.

Mark 2:4-5

17

Since they could not get him to Jesus because of the crowd, they made an opening in the roof above Jesus by digging through it and then lowered the mat the man was lying on. 5 When Jesus saw their faith, he said to the paralyzed man, "Son, your sins are forgiven." 6 Now some teachers of the law were sitting there, thinking to themselves, 7 "Why does this fellow talk like that? He's blaspheming! Who can forgive sins but God alone?"

vs 8 *Immediately Jesus knew in his spirit that this was what they were thinking in their hearts, and he said to them, "Why are you thinking these things? 9 Which is easier: to say to this paralyzed man, 'Your sins are forgiven,' or to say, 'Get up, take your mat and walk'? 10 But I want you to know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins." So he said to the man, 11 "I tell you, get up, take your mat and go home." 12 He got up, took his mat and walked out in full view of them all. This amazed everyone and they praised God, saying, "We have never seen anything like this!"*

Signs, Wonders, Healings - all start and stop..

- Every blinded eye opened will once again be closed in death
- Every lame person made to walk, would be carried to the grave
- Every deaf ear unstopped and mute tongue loosed, would be closed in silence by death
- The water that Moses turned to blood, turned back to water
- The Red Sea closed back up
- The fire Elijah called down from Heaven went out.

18 **Luke 10:17**

The seventy-two returned with joy, saying, "Lord, even the demons are subject to us in your name!" 18 And he said to them, "I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven. 19 Behold, I have given you authority to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy, and nothing shall hurt you. 20 Nevertheless, do not rejoice in this, that the spirits are subject to you, but rejoice that your names are written in heaven."

The most powerful SIGN & WONDER is when a soul is transferred from the Kingdom of darkness into the marvelous light

- where a soul that was dead in trespasses and sins has been made alive in Christ Jesus

- When a person is truly converted from Rebel to Disciple!

**We are partnered with the author of the Gospel to bring it into our world.
No bigger or greater opportunity you will ever get!**

Hebrews states clearly that God has moved differently in different times for different reasons - always consistent with His character/nature. But Jesus Christ and his word are the final word on the matter.

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Conclusion:

Notice the finality of the last 2 verses...a finish and a start...

Mark 16:19–20

After the Lord Jesus had spoken to them, he was taken up into heaven and he sat at the right hand of God. 20 Then the disciples went out and preached everywhere, and the Lord worked with them and confirmed his word by the signs that accompanied it.

REPENT of our Unbelief

RECALIBRATE to the Great Commission

- Before I would take on another major calendar interruption
- Before I would take on another major expense
- Before my life (or family's life) becomes indistinguishable from those without Christ.

REALIZE OUR PARTNERSHIP