

The Final Chapter (Matthew 28)

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Date: 27 April 2025

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[0 : 00] After the Sabbath, at dawn on the first day of the week, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary went to look at the tomb. There was a violent earthquake, for an angel of the Lord came down from heaven and, going to the tomb, rolled back the stone and sat on it.

His appearance was like lightning, and his clothes were white as snow. The guards were so afraid of him that they shook and became like dead men. The angel said to the woman, Do not be afraid, for I know that you are looking for Jesus, who was crucified.

He is not here, he has risen, just as he said. Come and see the place where he lay. Then go quickly and tell his disciples, He has risen from the dead and is going ahead of you into Galilee.

There you will see him. Now I have told you. So the woman hurried away from the tomb, afraid yet filled with joy, and ran to tell his disciples. Suddenly Jesus met them.

Greetings, he said. They came to him, clasped his feet, and worshipped him. Then Jesus said to them, Do not be afraid. Go and tell my brothers to go to Galilee. There they will see me.

[1 : 08] While the women were on their way, some of the guards went into the city and reported to the chief priests everything that had happened. When the chief priests had met with the elders and devised a plan, they gave the soldiers a large sum of money, telling them, You are to say, His disciples came during the night and stole him away while we were asleep.

If this report gets to the governor, we will satisfy him and keep you out of trouble. So the soldiers took the money and did as they were instructed. And this story has been widely circulated among the Jews to this very day.

Then the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain where Jesus had told them to go. When they saw him, they worshipped him, but some doubted. Then Jesus came to them and said, Thank you, Mariah.

We'd like to invite Peter up to share the message for today. Thank you.

Fantastic. And what a wonderful testimony, too, from our sister Mary. Yeah. Well, let's pray together. Dear Lord, we thank you for the service together this afternoon and for the testimony we've heard.

[3 : 13] We thank you for the reading of your word, so beautifully read. Thank you, too, Lord, for the time of prayer together and of singing and worship.

And we ask you to speak to us now through this very familiar passage as we come to the end of Matthew's gospel. We speak into each one of our hearts, we pray.

In Jesus' name. Amen. Amen. Amen. Well, it's a real privilege to be with you guys. And I'm going to just switch this on. Are we all ready to go?

Yeah. Yeah. And to come to the very last talk, I think Pastor William told me you've been doing it for about five years. And so that's a long time.

But Matthew's a great orphan on and off, yeah. But it's a real privilege to come to this final chapter. And, you know, who can possibly do justice to Matthew 28 in one message?

[4 : 14] In fact, it could have many messages. Their books have been written on the two big topics that are touched on here. The resurrection, of course, and then the Great Commission.

And in writing, interestingly, in writing, what happened on Easter Sunday, at Easter and the resurrection, all the four gospels, they give different highlights.

Different writers focus on different people, different parts of the story. No one of them gives the whole detailed event in the time frame.

But they give eyewitness accounts. For example, Matthew and John were disciples of Jesus. They were eyewitnesses of these events.

And then Mark is believed to have got most of his information from Peter. Peter, he may even have been a young man, was mentioned in the gospels, he ran away when Jesus was arrested that evening.

[5 : 25] It's possibly John Mark. But he got a lot of what he wrote from Peter, also eyewitness. And then we have Luke. Luke was the doctor, a brilliant, brilliant writer, wrote Luke's gospel and Acts.

Brilliant, historically accurate. You know, people have tried to criticize the Bible for certain things. But when they look into the details, people like Luke is unbelievably historically accurate.

And so he's another one who knew the apostle Paul, knew the early apostles. So these four gospels were written by people who gave different details, focused on different individuals in the story.

But they were eyewitness accounts, based on eyewitness accounts. And actually, even the apostle Paul, I'll mention in a minute, mentions this. So we're going to look at this chapter.

And I've got for us just three headings. And the first one is the dramatic news, the dramatic news, verses 1 to 10. And Matthew starts in chapter 28.

[6 : 36] He says, after the Sabbath, now Sabbath was from 6 p.m. Friday to 6 p.m. Saturday.

That's when the Sabbath was. After the Sabbath, at dawn, on the first day of the week, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary went to look at the tomb.

Now, Mary Magdalene was one of many women who followed Jesus. And they were supporters of Jesus.

And many of them had come from Galilee. And they loved him. Mary Magdalene had been delivered of seven demons. Jesus cast out seven demons from Mary Magdalene.

You can imagine sort of maybe the mess her life was in. But Jesus transformed her. And she obviously loved Jesus, as did all the others and the disciples.

And they were all shattered. They were shattered when their Lord and Master was crucified. If you look back in chapter 27, verse 55, We read here that the women, unlike the disciples, did not flee.

[7 : 50] In fact, when Jesus was arrested, they didn't run off like the disciples. And they were there when he was crucified, even though they were standing from afar. They stood at a distance.

But they were watching the whole terrible crucifixion. And then Mary Magdalene and the other Mary. Who's the other Mary? If you look at the other Gospels, it's a lady who possibly had two children that are mentioned there.

But it's not another Mary, the mother of Jesus, who John mentions, of course, in his Gospel. She was another Mary. So three Marys out of all these women who were there at the crucifixion.

But Matthew talks about Mary Magdalene and the other Mary, this other lady. And they went very early in the morning to the tomb.

Have I gone too far? So they went there early. And the other details from the other Gospels let us know that there was a whole bunch of them who had been preparing spices and anointing oil.

[8 : 59] Well, and they were on the Sabbath, of course, they couldn't go and do things. Before the Sabbath started, they had bought these things and they were preparing them on the Sabbath. Then early Sunday morning, the first chance they had, they all went to the tomb.

And some of the other Gospels tell us that there was a whole group of them went. Matthew talks about these two, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary. Other Gospels say there were others as well. And there's the one Gospel, John, just mentions Mary Magdalene.

So you see, the point is I'm saying that different Gospels focus on different details and individuals, but they're not in conflict. They're not contradictory. They're just picking out different details that they wanted to mention.

But so in fact, there was a bunch of them going. I wonder what was in their mind as they went to the tomb that morning, early morning, as they headed to the tomb.

Would they think about the stone, the massive stone that had been rolled in front of the tomb? How were they going to move that? Maybe they didn't even think about moving. It's just that they went to look at the tomb.

[10 : 09] Maybe they were just, you know, they were just so heartbroken. They just wanted to be there. It's like you go to the grave of someone you love.

You just want to be there, right? And just be quiet and reflect. They were heartbroken and they went. They wanted to be there. And they, amazingly, in the midst of their grief and sorrow, these ladies who loved Jesus and served him and his disciples so faithfully, so generously, were the first

to discover the wonderful news.

Of his resurrection. And so, as they were making their way to the tomb, we read about this earthquake. And an angel of the Lord came down from heaven and rolled the stone away. His appearance was like lightning. And his clothes were as white as snow. Now, I don't know if any of you were awake. Was it a week ago on the Friday when we had that lightning and thunderstorm? We were in bed, asleep. But I tell you, sometimes a lightning storm is a scary thing, right? Like, have any of you been near where lightning strikes?

[11 : 23] And then straight away there's the thunder. It's a scary thing. And this angel was like, you know, the angel came down from heaven and rolled back the stone. His appearance was like lightning.

A man flashing of lightning. So it was a scary kind of situation. An earthquake is scary enough. Massive stone was rolled away from the entrance.

Not to let Jesus out, but to let people in, to have a look. He's not here. He's risen. So Matthew goes on then to mention the reaction of those soldiers.

Because there's a bunch of soldiers that have been sent there on the Sabbath, on the Saturday. Interesting that the old Pharisees and all those guys didn't mind doing stuff on the Sabbath. Organizing a guard of troops and going to see Pilate and all that.

They sent this group to go to the tomb, to guard the tomb. And they were so frightened. They're just like dead men. You know, out.

[12 : 24] They were so scared at what happened. And they'd been given a solemn charge to guard the tomb. Well, you know, because Jesus, interestingly, Jesus had said many times that he was going to rise from the dead.

And the Pharisees, the enemies of Jesus, the arch enemies of Jesus, they heard Jesus say that. And they organized this group to go and guard the tomb.

So that's what the soldiers were there for. He said he's going to rise on the third day. So let's make sure nothing happens. And we seal the tomb.

They actually sealed it with a governor's seal. Well, the angel kind of ignored the soldiers. They were out like dead men anyway. But said to the women, don't be afraid.

This is the first thing. He had a message for them. He spoke to them and said, don't be afraid. You can imagine they were grief stricken after the horrible death. Imagine the terrible, terrible things that Jesus went through.

[13 : 32] Overwhelmed they were with what they had seen and experienced. And the angel says, don't be afraid. You looking for Jesus who was crucified, he's not here.

He's not here. He is risen. Wanted them to know that even though their hopes seemed to have been dashed, they could be joyful. Rather than filled with grief, they could be filled with joy.

And the angel added, he has risen just as he said. As we said, Jesus had said many times. And there at the bottom of the screen, you can see all the times in Matthew's gospel that Jesus had mentioned that he would rise, he would be healed, and he'd rise again on the third day.

There are at least six times there that he mentions in just Matthew's gospel that that's what would happen. Now then the angel invited the women.

He said, don't be afraid. They said, come and see. Come and see the place where he lay. He urged them to check out the facts. Come and see. And this is an encouragement to us too.

[14 : 44] If, like, are you on the screen for the prayers? Those who doubt. Those who are not sure. There's a picture here too.

Come and see. Even if you don't believe. Come and have a look. Come and examine the evidence. Say, how is it possible that Jesus could rise from the dead?

How can someone who's dead come alive again? Examine the evidence. Come and see. You know, so, dear friends, don't be afraid. If you're not yet a Christian, you examine the evidence.

You take a look. And I encourage you. Because Christianity has nothing to fear from people who are honest seekers. Honest doubts can turn into great faith.

And Frank Morrison was quite a well-known story behind this. Frank Morrison was a freelance writer. Some people, sort of stories, but he was a lawyer.

[15 : 47] But I was reading up about it. Maybe he wasn't a registered lawyer. But he was certainly a journalist writer. And he thought the story of Jesus was wonderful.

The teachings of Jesus. But then he thought about the resurrection. This is a fairy tale. I mean, people don't get killed on a Roman cross and then come alive again. You know, he thought it was like a myth.

And he decided he's going to write a book to show that the resurrection didn't really happen. And he started studying.

The more he studied the facts, the more he came to the conviction that, in fact, it was true. And this is the book he wrote. And it was entitled, *Who Moved Stone?*

And the first chapter was entitled, *The Book That Refused to Be Written*. It was first published in 1930. Have any of you read this book, by the way?

[16:43] It's an old book, but it's been published many, many times over the years, even recently. And it's been translated into seven or eight different languages, *Who Moved the Stone?*

Maybe you've read another similar book called *Christ, The Case for Christ*, by Lee Strobel. Now, he was another one who was a skeptic.

He didn't believe. He was an atheist. But he studied the facts. And he wrote this book, *The Case for Christ*. Very powerful. And, you know, I just read, I watched a video, a YouTube video on Friday, of a guy who had been the right-hand man of Professor Richard Dawkins.

Have you heard of Richard Dawkins? He's a kind of notorious atheist scientist who's written a lot of stuff against Christianity.

And this guy, his name was Josh, let me see, it's a sort of Finnish name, if I remember, Josh Timonen.

[17:48] He was his right-hand man. He helped him set up his website. He did videos for him and all kinds of things. To cut a long story short, Josh has become a Christian. And one of the things that clinched the deal for him was he studied the death and resurrection of Jesus.

And he couldn't get away from the evidence. And he said, it has to be true. And if it's true, then I have to believe. And so, the angel told the women not to be afraid, but to believe.

And then he said, come and see. And then what did he do? He said, go quickly and tell his disciples. So, this is a message for us today.

Jesus says to us, by his spirit, come and see. Come and see. Meet me. Come and see that I'm alive. And then when we see, he says, go and tell.

Come and see. Go and tell. And what is the response of the women? It says, the women hurried away from the tomb. Afraid, yet filled with joy.

[18:57] And they ran to tell his disciples. They were afraid still, but they were now filled with joy. What a difference from when they went. Filled with grief, no doubt.

Pain, sadness. But now with unbelievable joy. He's alive. He's alive. And they ran to tell the disciples. Now, when we look at the other Gospels, it seems that there was probably a gap between verse 8 and verse 9 in Matthew's Gospel.

Because, he says here, so they hurried from the tomb to tell the disciples. And we know from the other Gospels that they went and told the disciples.

And, of course, the disciples had a look at them and said, are you crazy? These crazy women. What are they? You can't believe anything they say. But Peter and John said, wow. Now, this is, I've got to check.

We've got to check this out. Remember? And John's Gospel writes about this, the race between Peter and John. And off they went. And John got there first because he was a younger man. And then Peter rushed in, you know, and saw the grave close.

[20:07] And then, so the Gospels tell about that. And it seems like the women went back with them. Mary Magdalene and the other Mary went back with, followed Peter and John running.

And then the women going back, maybe not just the two of them, but at least those two that Matthew talks about. Because in verse 9, we read, suddenly Jesus met them.

Greetings, he said. It's just like an ordinary greeting. Say, hi, guys. Hi, ladies. How are you doing? It's me. He came to them. And they clasped his feet, worshipped him.

And Jesus said to them, do not be afraid. Again, just what the angels said, don't be afraid. Go and tell my brothers. Isn't that interesting that Jesus didn't say, tell those rat-bagged disciples who let me down or ran off like, you know, afraid, weak bunch of good-for-nothings.

No, he said, go and tell my brothers. He's so gracious. When we let him down, he wants to welcome us back. And we're his brothers. He says, go to Galilee. Go to Galilee.

[21 : 15] I'm going to see them all up there, up in Galilee. So this resurrection that Matthew just briefly, this is all Matthew writes about the resurrection, the brief passage here.

It's critical to Christianity. The fact that Jesus is alive and we can know him. You see, it's not just a religion or a philosophy, but it's a relationship that we can have with the living Lord Jesus Christ. And he's not like other religious leaders like Buddha or Mohammed who's dead and buried. You can go to the grave there in Mecca. Mecca. Go around and around this tomb.

Or the Buddha. Find his tooth somewhere in some temple somewhere or other. And all these kind of things. Our Savior and Lord is living. He's the Lord of the universe.

His tomb is empty. And writing about the women at the tomb, Matthew says, suddenly Jesus met them.

[22 : 15] And the question for us today is, have you met Jesus? Has he come into your life? Have you responded to his revelation of himself to you?

And like those women, have you come and seen and believed? And then are you ready to go and tell others as well? Don't be afraid because he wants to send you out as well.

Well, before we come to that sending out, our second point, briefly, is the attempted cover-up.

Because this is what the elders, that whole passage there in verses 11 to 15, those soldiers got freaked out.

And they ran off. Some of them ran off into the city to tell the leaders what had happened. And interestingly, our friend read so beautifully.

But they went and then they devised this plan. Gave them a whole lot of money and told them to tell everybody that his disciples came during the night and stole him away while we were asleep.

[23 : 27] He said, if the report gets to the governor, don't worry, we'll talk him out of it. We'll keep you out of trouble. Because they would be in trouble. They were given a responsibility to guard the tomb on pain of death.

That was their job. They were to guard the tomb. And say, how come? The disciples came and stole his body. What were you doing? And don't worry, we'll tell the governor.

We'll tell the governor. We'll get you out of trouble. Here's money. Here's the money. So very often, isn't it, when people try to cover up. These chief priests were just, they were able to bribe them with the money.

So often, money and lies go together when people are trying to cover up something. People lie.

There's a bit of money involved. And that's when lots of trouble comes.

But actually, sooner or later, the truth comes out. I can imagine meeting those soldiers and saying, hey guys, you say his disciples came during the night?

[24 : 33] Those disciples were a whole bunch of scared fellows. They were behind locked doors. You think they were brave enough to come and face up with you guys with your weapons and your muscles?

And then the tomb was sealed. You mean to tell me those disciples came and stole the body at those disciples?

And then the other thing is, guys, you, not one of you woke up. They moved the stone. They took the body. You're all sleeping.

Ah, give me a break. Give me a break. Now, it just doesn't make sense when you think about it, really. And there are other reasons, too, why this scheme, this attempted cover-up, just doesn't make sense.

There are other objections. One is the grave cloth. You know, if you had the disciples come to grab the body, or grave robbers grab the body, with a Jewish way of burial, they would wrap the body in, you know, lots of linen.

[25 : 43] And pack in there things to stop the body from decaying so quickly. And it would be quite, it's a big business to prepare the body for burial.

And then, you mean, that, those grave clothes were, like Michael Green says in his book, like a chrysalis case, when the butterfly has emerged, undisturbed, but empty.

Still wrapped. There's no body. It's not like they unwrapped the thing first, you know, and then grabbed the body and off they go. It's that the grave clothes are still there.

And there's the headpiece there. Now, how are you going to explain that? That's another reason to say, this story of them saying the disciples stole the body.

They wouldn't just take the body and leave the grave clothes. That doesn't make sense. And then there's another, there's another thing that doesn't make sense either.

[26 : 49] Remember, those disciples, they were so frightened, as we've said, disillusioned, defeated. Weeks later, they are proclaiming, Jesus is alive.

And they're prepared to give their lives. They're prepared to be martyred for the faith that they proclaimed. Now, anyone going to do that and not spill the beans and say, actually, it's not really true.

He didn't, he didn't really rise. It's not going to happen. So, that would be a big thing to try and explain away as well. Now, finally, as we come to our final point, the Great Commission.

The Great Commission, as I said, books have been written about this. But, those disciples eventually did go up to Galilee. And Matthew picks up on that now.

I could say a lot more about that. And, Apostle Paul mentions in 1 Corinthians 15, 6, that there are 500 people at one time saw Jesus. And when he wrote it, he said, many of them are still alive.

[27 : 53] This was 20 years later. Many are still alive. They can testify. It's true. And some of the other Gospels talk about Jesus there in Galilee. By the sea, when they're fishing.

And then the breakfast. Beautiful, beautiful resurrection stories. Matthew doesn't talk about that. He goes straight to this one. Verse 16. And he says, then the 11 disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain, where Jesus had told them to go.

And it's interesting that it says some of them, they worshipped him, but some doubted. Again, maybe it's they didn't quite see.

Like those on the sea that are mentioned in the other Gospels. Where they didn't recognize it was Jesus on the shore. And then Peter said, it's the Lord, it's the Lord.

Or John said, one of them said, it's the Lord. And Peter said, Lord? And he's diving in to swim to shore. But maybe they didn't quite recognize him. But then, as he came closer, they recognized him.

[29 : 00] But it's okay, like we said, to have doubts. Because when we don't fully understand, when Jesus comes toward us, honest doubts can be turned into faith.

And overcome our doubts and fears. And in this final paragraph, in Matthew's Gospel, this is the very final paragraph. We find this wonderful commission that Jesus gives.

And I've got three little sub-points here. The first is, a claim made by Jesus. Notice this claim. He says, all authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me.

Now, imagine. No human being could make such a claim. If somebody said, if Pastor William got up here and said, all authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me.

Are you feeling okay, Pastor William? I think we need to get him to hospital quick. You're bonkers. You're bonkers. You're bonkers. You're bonkers to make such a claim. Or else you're actually totally deluded.

[30 : 07] Now, President Trump has made some bold claims. He has. But, as President of the United States, there's no doubt that he does have a lot of authority and influence.

But he wouldn't say that. You imagine President Trump saying, all authority in heaven and earth has been given to me. Even President Trump wouldn't say that. There's no human leader or politician or military leader who could say such a thing.

It's just outrageous. But it's the claim that Jesus made. And you know that the Apostle Paul picks up on this in Ephesians, also Colossians.

But look at this in Ephesians. He talks about God's incomparably great power for us who believe.

That power is the same as the mighty strength he exerted when he raised Christ from the dead and seated him at the right hand in the heavenly realms.

Now, notice this. Far above all rule and authority, power and dominion, and every name that is invoked, not only in the present age, but also in the one to come.

[31 : 20] This is the Jesus we worship. This is the Jesus we love. The early Christians used this phrase, kurios, meaning Lord, when referring to Jesus.

Their first loyalty was to Lord Jesus. The Lord Jesus Christ. Christ the Messiah. Jesus the man. Galilee.

The Savior. Lord. And not the Roman emperor. Not Caesar. No earthly authority. Only Jesus was Lord to those early Christians.

And interestingly, in the Greek translation of the Old Testament, they used this word, kurios, for God. So who's our authority for telling people God loves them and God calls them to repent, calls them to turn and believe the gospel?

Our authority is none other than our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Some people say, What right have you to go and tell Hindus or Muslims that they're wrong and they need to, you know, who's to say you're right?

[32 : 34] Well, our authority is none other than Jesus. Agree, yeah, it's not very easy for people to accept it. But our authority in going out is because of his authority in sending us.

We are his ambassadors. And ambassadors didn't make up their own mind about what they shared. They follow instructions from the one who sent them. All authority in heaven and earth is his and his alone.

So that is a claim made by Jesus. Secondly, a command given by Jesus. He says, Therefore, because all authority has been given to me, therefore, you guys go.

Go. What are we to do? Where are we to go? We are to go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father. The name, interesting, the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

Not the names. The name. The Trinity. Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you. Now, the Greek word, the Greek word for nations that he talks there is ethne.

[33 : 47] From which we get the words in English, ethnic and ethnicity. And, you know, there are 195 countries in the world, about nations, 195.

But if we count the ethnicities in the world, there are many, many more than those 195 nations. You think of China, some people think maybe 400 different ethnic groups, languages, cultures, different. China only recognizes 55, apart from the Han majority, 55. But actually, there could be 400.

And many countries have many more than just one ethnic. Well, think of New Zealand. How many ethnic groups in New Zealand? It's a lot. Maybe all New Zealanders, but, you know.

Philippines. Many, many different ethnic groups, languages, and so on. So, actually, they reckon, I won't go into too much detail here. This is why I get books written about this.

[34 : 54] If you go into ethnic, ethno-linguistic categories, it's either 11,500 or even up to 13,000 different ethnic groups in the world.

But that's, if you don't go according to country boundaries, it's about 10,000. Because, we think of the Kurds. The Kurds are, you find Kurds in Turkey, Syria, Iraq, Iran.

What about the Tatars? The Tatar people in China, Kazakhstan, Russia. And in some categories, these categories, we could say they're all separate, different.

They're slightly different, slightly different. But if you don't worry about country boundaries, just say, Jack, the Tars, the Kurds is one. 10,000. Okay, so 10,000 ethnic.

10,000 different ethnic groups in the world. I reckon out of those 10,000, 6,000 or so are still categorized as unreached.

[35 : 58] That means they don't have a church in that people group. This is a huge challenge to us. Jesus says, go to the nations. That's his call to us.

And only when the gospel's gone to all the nations will the Lord come back. So the task is huge. Now, when I was a 10-year-old boy, God put China on my heart.

He called me to China. Put the Chinese on my heart. Now, when I was growing up in Zimbabwe or Rhodesia as it was, I didn't see any Chinese anywhere. Now, there are quite a few these days, but none in those days.

And funnily enough, my great, great, great grandfather was called by God from London to Africa. And I've got a few of the books I wrote about him.

1800 to 1852. And he was an early missionary to South Africa. What is now South Africa? There was no South Africa then. It was just a southern part of Africa.

[37 : 02] And if you're interested in this story, the nice thing about it, it's got a picture of Elizabeth, my wife, on the back. But if you're interested in this, I've got a few copies for free.

You can help yourself afterwards. That's Africa. God called my great, great, great grandfather from Europe, England, to South Africa.

And then he called me from Zimbabwe to China. It's crazy, isn't it? It's kind of funny. But God has a job for each one of us to do. This is a wonderful thing.

And then years later, when I was serving in Hong Kong and China, our organization had a language program in Tianjin, near Beijing, for foreigners wanting to learn Chinese.

And this young, young fellow from Canada came. He was studying Chinese. He called to China. And as he was studying his Chinese, he was saying, Lord, when I finish my full-time study here, where do you want me to serve you?

[38 : 06] Which of the people groups may be in China, wherever you want me to serve you? And whenever he prayed that prayer, four words came into his mind. H-A-N-I.

Hani. H-A-N-I. I want to H-A-N-I. So anyway, he looked into it, and he discovered the H-A-N-I people are a minority group in Yunnan province, southwest China.

And the more he looked into it, this is a group he felt God calling him to. He went later to Kunming, and he studied H-A-N-I. He's working with the H-A-N-I people. And he's back in Canada now, but he had a number of years of very fruitful service there in Kunming, amongst the H-A-N-I people.

And in our church on the North Shore, many years ago, not many, many years ago, there was a couple who were mid-aged, who God called to Turkey. Chinese couple.

And they're now in Turkey, studying Turkish. God called them to the Turkish people. So, you know, the interesting thing is, God wants us to go to the nations. You might think, oh, I can't go to the nations.

[39 : 18] But God has called the nations to us too, hasn't he? So that's another aspect of this whole Great Commission. God calls people to us. So maybe he's calling some of you to reach out to the nations around us here in New Zealand, to make disciples, to baptize, to teach.

I think like what our sister shared, the testimony about her father sharing the gospel with her father. It's not an easy thing, is it?

To keep praying, to seek opportunities, to witness. It's a big challenge. But it's the command of Jesus that we must reach our loved ones. We must reach our colleagues.

We must reach the people that God places in our lives that he's calling us to. But notice, not only is a claim made by Jesus, a command given by Jesus, but finally there's a commitment made by Jesus.

Because he finishes the gospel of Matthew. This is the final verse of Matthew's gospel. What does Jesus say? He says, surely I am with you always to the very end of the age.

[40 : 30] The great I am. The one who's the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. The God who called Moses at the burning bush and said, I am is sending you to Egypt.

The one who said, I am the way, the truth and the life. The one who said, I am the good shepherd.

The one who said, I am the bread of life. The one who said, I am the resurrection and the life.

This is the Jesus who promises to always be with us. So, don't be afraid. If God calls you to serve him, as he does if we're Christians, we're called to be part of his mission.

Don't be afraid because he's with us. Now, Matthew begins the gospel referring to the Messiah and the genealogy of Jesus. And then he says this in verse 23 of Matthew 1.

A virgin will conceive. He quotes Isaiah. He says, a virgin will conceive and give birth to a son and they will call him Emmanuel, which means God with us.

[41 : 38] And then he ends the gospel with these beautiful words. Surely I am with you always to the very end of the age. That is, God is with us.

Jesus is with us. The Holy Spirit is with us. Let us go out boldly. Let us go and share the good news. Let us get involved in God's mission.

He sends us to the nations. I don't know if any of you have seen the movie, Chariots of Fire.

Anyone? Some of us slightly older ones would definitely have seen it.

It was a fantastic movie. Oscar winning movie. And the hero of the movie, one of the main characters is Eric Liddell, who we, if you probably know, was won gold in the 400 meters in the 1924 Paris Olympics.

What many people don't know is that Eric Liddell, the next year, went to China as a missionary with the London Missionary Society. The same mission, actually, that my ancestors went to Africa with.

[42 : 40] And he went out. And he worked in Tianjin that I just mentioned earlier a moment ago.

Eric Liddell, an amazing man. But, you know, before he went, on the day that he left Scotland, Edinburgh, he took the train down to London.

And then he took from London. There used to be the old Siberian railroad that would go across that way to China.

But as he left Edinburgh, the streets were filled with people. Because he was a hero, a Scottish hero. A rugby player, Olympian champion, Olympic champion.

And he was sent off from Waverly Station. I was in Waverly Station, Edinburgh, just a year and a half ago when I was there. Under the castle.

Anyone been there? Anyone been to Edinburgh? Yeah. It's a fantastic old city. And there under the castle, the main Prince's Street, there's that Waverly Station.

[43 : 41] Famous station. He was carried on shoulders of the crowd. All of them singing away. And he got into the carriage.

And they wanted him to say a few final words. So Eric started singing. Singing a hymn. This is what he sang. Jesus shall reign where'er the sun.

He got everybody to sing. There's an old hymn that everybody knew. Jesus shall reign where'er the sun doth its successive journeys run.

You know? His kingdom stretch from shore to shore. Till moon shall wax and wane no more. Now, this old hymn may sound a bit old-fashioned to you.

But the sentiment is clear. And the writer, Isaac Watts and Eric Liddell, their whole passion was that Jesus should reign as king over the nations.

[44 : 43] Over the whole earth. His kingdom would stretch from shore to shore. May this be our desire too. To see God's kingdom spread through all the earth.

And we can play our part in sharing that wonderful news of our risen and soon-to-return king. Well, that's the end of Matthew's gospel, Pastor William.

So, well done in finishing it. Yeah. Let's pray, shall we? Dear Lord, we thank you for your word.

We thank you for Matthew's gospel that PCBC has been studying for a number of months now, Lord. We thank you for the wonderful challenge right at the end.

That we would hear your call. Know who we're serving. The King of kings and Lord of lords who sends us out. And may we know where you want us to go. What you want us to do, Lord.

[45 : 42] How we can better share the good news with those around us. To those to whom you are calling us. Maybe family.

Maybe people from another ethnic group. Lord, may we be faithful to share the good news with others.

Bless this church. May it continue to grow and be a light in the community. And not only here, but out beyond Pakuranga. Into other parts of the world through this church.

Thank you, Lord. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.