**Matthew 28**

I. Introduction

A. Matthew’s account of the resurrection begins at the beginning of a new day and the beginning of a new week

B. There’s a sense of newness because something new broke into human history that first Easter morning: resurrection life!

II. The risen Jesus brings with him a new (renewed) community (v. 1-10)

A. This new community includes the forgotten (women)

1. Women were the forgotten members of 1st century culture (they had very little rights and their testimony wasn’t even valid in the court of law)

2. Yet, they are faithful followers of Jesus oftentimes working in the background 9see Luke 8:1-3, Matthew 27:55, Matthew 28:1)

3. On most significant day in human history, Jesus puts these forgotten people front and center

 a. This is significant historically (points to the historicity of the gospels)

If you are 1st century biographer writing an account of a hero and trying to convince people of the truth that he rose from dead, the last thing you would want to include is that the first eyewitnesses were women. The only reason you would do that is because it actually happened that way and you are simply recording history as it happened.

b. This is significant theologically

Jesus intentionally chooses to appear first to these forgotten people (forgotten by the culture but not by him)

B. This new community includes the failures (the disciples)

 1. Consider how significantly the disciples had failed Jesus

 -They fell asleep in Gethsemane

 -They all abandoned him when he was arrested

 -Peter denied him three times

 2. Yet, Jesus still calls them his “brothers” (v. 10)

 -“Brothers” communicates that they are forgiven, that they are still family

C. The risen Christ continues to form his community of the forgotten and the failures

The one thing we all have in common in this community is our common experience of his undeserved grace

III. The risen Jesus brings with him a new mission (v. 19)

A. v. 16-20 is the only post-resurrection conversation Matthew records: apparently this mission was the most important thing he thought we needed to know

B. “Go, make disciples of all nations” (v. 19)

1. His first command to his disciples was “come follow me, and I will make you fishers of men”

2. Since then he has spent 3 years with them teaching them

3. Now he says, “Go fishing”: share the good news and catch people for God’s kingdom

C. This mission is challenging especially when you consider the community Jesus entrusts it to

1. They aren’t the most impressive group of people

 2. It doesn’t seem like a very good plan

D. This mission is challenging personally

1. We like to live comfortable lives and stick close to people who think like us. We are tempted to protect and insulate ourselves from the world.

2. Yet, Jesus is calling us to move out into the world and share the news of his death and resurrection

III. The Risen Jesus brings with him a new Presence (v. 20)

A. It’s his risen presence with his community that makes his mission possible

 1. He has all authority in heaven and earth (v. 18)

 2. He is with us (v. 20)

3. The book of Acts tells the story of the Risen Christ working through his community to fulfill his mission to spread his gospel to the world

B. “I will be with you” is one of the central promises God makes in Scripture

1. See Exodus 3:10-12, Joshua 1, Isaiah 43, Psalm 23

2. There is no promise that could be more comforting and encouraging than that—the God of the universe is with us!

3. Now the Risen Jesus (Immanuel = God with us) makes that same promise

C. What if we believed it?

1. What if we truly believed that someone was with us all the time, and that someone loves us and died for us, and that someone is in charge of the entire universe? How would we live differently?

 2. Consider Jesus’ presence with you through the various scenarios of life

-e.g. sharing the gospel with a friend, being called into your boss’ office to be let go, going through a painful breakup, sitting with a friend in a hospital bed

3. It should fill us with boundless confidence and comfort, but even if it doesn’t that’s ok.

 a. The woman were “afraid yet filled with joy” (v. 8)

 b. The men “worshipped but some doubted” (v. 17)

c. Most of us are a combination of joy and fear, worship and doubt, and those are precisely the kinds of people Jesus uses in his kingdom

**Discussion Questions**

1. The resurrection account is obviously very familiar territory for many of us. Was there anything from Sunday’s message that struck you in a new way or gave you a new or deeper understanding of the resurrection?

2. Consider the comments made on Sunday about the community that forms around the risen Jesus. How does that impact how you view the church community today and your posture towards it?

3. As you consider the mission Jesus gives his disciples in v. 19-20, take a moment to consider your own part in that mission. What comes up for you? For example, does the mission seem exciting, or overwhelming, or burdensome? Do you have specific ways you try to participate in that mission or are there certain gifts God has given you that you can use for that mission?

4. Consider the final question asked on Sunday: “What if we really believed it? What if we truly believed that someone was with us all the time, and that someone loves us and died for us, and that someone is in charge of the entire universe? How would we live differently?” How would you answer that question for yourself at this time?