

WEDNESDAY 27 April 2022 "Life On Purpose" (Matt. 28:16-20)

Good morning my "Walking with Jesus" friends,

When you hear the words "**Life Purpose**" I wonder what comes to your mind? Does it change if we phrase it like this: "Living On Purpose"? Or how about this: "The best use of my life today is: _____"? *Do you spend much time thinking about WHY you are alive today?*

Yesterday and Monday we've been walking with the disciples of Jesus back from Jerusalem toward their homes in the Galilee. Their Passover in Jerusalem was unforgettable and life changing, wasn't it? It would have been for you and me if we had been there! Everything in their lives was turned upside down in those three days... everything, including their life purpose! *I think it's safe to say as they arrive back home each and all of them have one big question... NOW WHAT?*

Clearly Jesus, even though unexplainably ALIVE, was not at all predictable. He appeared several times on resurrection Sunday to several different people, in several different places, through the day, and then was not seen again for a week. Then Jesus again appeared suddenly in a room where His closest friends had gathered with windows & doors securely locked! All these appearances were shocking and while convincing that He was alive, left His friends with more questions than answers. So now, what would they tell their family and friends as they arrive home in Galilee? And since they were men, their bigger question was: What do we DO now? Isn't that right guys? *We need to know what to DO every day.*

For the brothers Peter and Andrew, James and John, the answer was simple... put their fishing nets back in their boats and get back to work. They'd lived fishing on Lake Galilee since they were young enough for their Dads to teach them how to throw a net. *But Matthew couldn't go back to his job, it was gone and even if available, well there was no way Matthew was going back to deceitful, manipulative, tax collecting!*

Perhaps when they arrived at the fork in the road where the group split up, each going to their homes, they had agreed they'd get back together again in a few days, later up on the hillside, overlooking the lake, where Jesus often met with them and they'd try to figure out a plan. Matthew wrote down for us what happened in that reunion, so let's join them. I find it in the very last few verses of Matthew's written record, the first book of the New Testament, which bears his name. Matt. 28:16 says: ***"The 11 disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain where Jesus had told them to go. When they saw HIM, they worshiped Him; but some doubted."*** I'm so glad Matthew was honest about this encounter. How many times would you need to SEE the Risen Jesus to believe He really, truly is ALIVE after such a horrific beating and crucifixion and death?

In addition to SEEING this miracle of Jesus alive, what else would you need as convincing proof, so you no longer doubt? Would touching His resurrected body be enough? Would having a face-to-face conversation be enough? Would eating a meal together be enough? How about His forensic explanation of how His shredded, dead body is healed and alive again? I'm also glad Matthew doesn't tell us which disciples were worshiping and which were doubting? I wonder what I would have been doing.

Matthew continues his eyewitness report: **"Then Jesus came to them and said, 'All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to ME.'" (Matt. 28:18)** I think He paused right there, looked around the circle at each man, deep in his eyes, and smiled. Then He probably looked out over the lake. Oh yes, they remembered the night Jesus had come walking to them on that water in the middle of a ferocious storm... yes, I said walking ON the waves! That's **"All Authority"**. I suppose they remembered how Jesus fed more than 5000 people with a little boy's lunch that He multiplied! That's **"All Authority"**! They remembered many blind people to whom Jesus gave sight, and crippled people who stood and walked at His invitation, and demonically harassed people Jesus set free! **"All Authority"**!

As they looked back at the lake, oh yes, they remembered at least twice Jesus calmed a storm simply with a few words! **"All Authority"**! Oh, these men knew what Jesus' unlimited authority looked like when He unleashed it miraculously. *But they had no understanding of why Jesus did NOT use that authority to stop the horrific brutality of the crucifixion?* Some of them, like Simon the Zealot, could only imagine how that **'all authority'** could be harnessed to defeat the harsh Roman rule and establish a new kingdom of Israel with Jesus as King! **"All Authority"**!

But Jesus had repeatedly said He was going back to heaven, to be with His Father, in all the glory from which He had come to earth. So, of what value was **"All Authority"** if Jesus was going to leave, and presumably take that authority with Him to heaven? Look, Jesus is smiling as if He knows all they are thinking, and now He is speaking: **"Therefore, as you are going, make disciples of all peoples, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teach them to obey everything I have commanded you."** (Matt. 28:19,20) They understood... clearly. *This was their Life Purpose, for the remainder of their lifetime, each of them!* Their DAILY priority was to tell THEIR story of Jesus to anyone and everyone who would hear, as they were going about their normal everyday tasks. As they spoke of Jesus some would be very hungry to learn all they could, with those they were to teach them all they could remember hearing and learning from Jesus.

There would be others who would be indifferent about Jesus, far more interested in other things. For them, the disciples would not force it, even if it was their closest friends or family. They knew the adage, *"you can lead a horse to water, but you can't make him drink"*. Oh, it would be heartbreaking to watch most people have minimal interest in Jesus. *But for those few who were hungry...oh my how exciting to watch them come to know Jesus as these disciples did, and then go and tell their story to others.*

Jesus watched intently as His friends wrestled with their new life purpose on the hillside that day. Oh, they would need to find ways to feed their families and care for the mundane, essential things in life, but as they did that *they would always have their eyes and ears open to see who might be interested in hearing about Jesus!* And then Jesus gave them a promise... **"Surely I will be with you ALWAYS, even to the very end of the age."** Now wait a minute! How could Jesus leave them, returning to heaven, and yet be with them at the same time?

In the upper room in Jerusalem, on that Thursday evening as they shared the Passover meal together, Jesus had explained this to them, but in truth I think it's safe to say most of them had missed it. Jesus had said, **"I will be with you only a little longer... I will ask the Father and He will send you another Counselor, to be with you forever - the Spirit of Truth.... This Counselor, the Holy Spirit, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you. Peace, I leave with you, do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid... It is for your good that I am going to Him who sent me. Unless I go, the Counselor will not come to you, but as I go, I will send Him to you...And when the Spirit of Truth comes, He will guide you into all truth."** (John 14:16,17, 26,27; 16:5,7,13)

Jesus, the Son of God, would be with God the Father in heaven and God the Holy Spirit would come and live within each of these disciples and every other person who trusts in Jesus Christ to be their Savior and Lord. Thus today, you and I can be living everyday just as these disciples did, 'walking with Jesus', as God the Holy Spirit is IN us, guiding us, teaching us, empowering us, as Jesus did with them!

So let's sit on that hillside with the risen Jesus and these disciples thinking about what Jesus has said and how you and I can live on purpose, the way Jesus invited His friends to live. Filled and guided by His Holy Spirit and always ready to tell your story of Jesus, to anyone who could use God's help in life! And here's a song to help us consider that kind of living on Purpose!

Today's Scripture is Matthew 28:16-20.