

*16Now the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain to which Jesus had directed them. 17When they saw him, they worshiped him; but some doubted. 18And Jesus came and said to them, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. 19Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, 20and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age."*

Doubt – to be uncertain in opinion about – hold questionable – hesitate to believe – undecidedness of opinion or belief – doubt.

Mark Alan Powell – a professor at the Trinity Lutheran Seminary in Columbus, OH points out that there are two occasions in the gospel according to Matthew when the disciples worship Jesus. On both occasions there is a reference to doubt.

The first occasion is when the disciples are out in the boat battered by the waves and Jesus comes walking toward them on the sea. Peter says to Jesus, "Lord, if it is you command me to come to you on the water." Jesus said, "Come." So Peter got out of the boat, started walking on the water and came toward Jesus. But when he noticed the strong wind he became frightened and beginning to sink he cried out, "Lord, save me." Jesus immediately reached out his hand and caught him, saying to him, "You of little faith, why did you doubt?" When they got into the boat the wind ceased. And those in the boat worshipped him saying, "Truly you are the Son of God."

The second occasion is when the disciples worship Jesus is on a mountain in Galilee. The women who had come to the tomb to find it empty on Easter morning had been given instructions to tell the disciples to go to Galilee where Jesus would meet them. First an angel gave them these instructions – then as the women left the tomb Jesus himself appeared to them and they worshipped him and he told them to tell his brothers that he would meet them in Galilee. The woman passed on the message and the disciples went to the mountain to which Jesus had directed them. When they saw him they worshipped him and doubted.

Now Matthew does not tell us what they doubted or why they doubted – simply that they worshipped and doubted.

When God looks into your heart and mind on a Sunday morning what does God find there? Absolute devotion – perfect faith – unwavering commitment? Are you like rock on which a solid foundation can be built or like sand – shifting? Are you able to walk on water with Jesus or does the sound of the howling winds leave you sinking down?

When the disciples saw Jesus they worshipped him and doubted.

It was to these worshipping and doubting disciples that Jesus spoke this word, “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 I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always to the end of the age.”

Jesus who has all authority chose that day to entrust his work to worshipping and doubting disciples.

Jesus who has all authority chooses this day to entrust his work to you, his worshipping and doubting disciples. He sends you to make disciples of all nations so that they might be baptized in the name of the God who is Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Jesus sends you to make disciples so that they might be joined to the story of the God who said, “Let there be light and there was light” – the God who separates the light from the darkness. Jesus sends you to make disciples so that they might be joined to the people who were freed from slavery in Egypt on that night when the angel of death passed over the houses covered with the blood of the lamb. Jesus sends you to make disciples so that they might be joined to the story of Jesus who is God in human flesh - crucified and raised to live forever. Jesus sends you to make disciples so that they might be filled with the very breath of the God who created all things - the God who suffered and died and lives forever - filled with the life of God that we call the Holy Spirit. You who worship and doubt are sent to teach everything Jesus commands and to obey everything Jesus commands.

And remember, Jesus will be with you always.

In the early days of the church this word of Jesus sent people out into new places. Today the mission field is on your street and in your school, in your home and in your place of work. People do not know the story of Jesus; you can tell them.

Jesus will help you. Amen.