

Gospel of Matthew Chapter 28 -- John Karmelich

1. We are now starting the last lesson of Matthew, which is Chapter 28.
 - a) In Matthew 26 there were 75 verses.
 - b) In Matthew 27, there were 66 Verses.
 - c) Here in Matthew 28, we only have 20 Verses.
 - d) After the last two marathon sessions, it is time to lighten up. ☺
 - e) I should start by saying the chapter and verse numbers were added centuries after the text was written, but that is besides my point.
 - f) My point happens to be that after all of the “heaviness” of the trials and crucifixion, we now come to the happy ending, the story of Jesus resurrection.
 - g) In that sense, it is time to “lighten up”. The fact of the resurrection gives us both hope and rest. The resurrection gives us peace during those times of trials in our life.
2. Chapter 28 is the most important chapter in Matthew.
 - a) More important than the chapters about Jesus birth story.
 - b) It is more important the lessons on the Sermon on the Mount (Chapter 5-7).
 - c) It is more important than the all the miracles and teachings of the middle chapters.
 - d) And it is more important than the facts around the trials and crucifixion.
 - e) Without the resurrection, I am wasting my time writing these lessons.
 - f) Without the resurrection, you are wasting your time reading these lessons.
 - g) The resurrection is the validation that Jesus rose from the dead and God the Father accepted his death as payment for our sins. In a sense you can think of the resurrection as “God’s receipt” as proof that He accepted Jesus as payment for our sins.
3. If you ask me what is the most important chapter in the bible, I would argue 1st Corinthians, Chapter 15. This is nicknamed the “resurrection chapter” by many scholars.
 - a) The main topic of that chapter is the resurrection.
 - b) Paul says in effect, that if the resurrection isn’t true, we are wasting our time preaching Christ: “If only for this life we have hope in Christ, we are to be pitied more than all men.” (1st Corinthians 15:19, NIV).
 - c) That is why the last few chapters of each Gospel are so essential. They each give different accounts and different details about the events around the resurrection of Jesus.
4. I consider the fact of Jesus’ resurrection the greatest historical fact that ever happened.
 - a) When you consider the evidence we have for any other event in ancient history, I would argue there is more evidence for the fact of Jesus’ resurrection than any other event.
 - b) The fact of the Messiah’s resurrection is predicted in the Old Testament (See 1 Cor. 15:4).
 - i) Just where in the Old Testament it is predicted the Messiah would rise again on the third day is debated. My view, like many scholars is it is referring to Abraham’s offering of Isaac in Genesis Chapter 22.
 - a) When God told Abraham to offer his son Isaac, in Abraham’s mind, Isaac was as good as dead. It wasn’t until the 3rd day after the announcement that God told Abraham to offer a goat instead of his son. In a word-picture sense, his son was “resurrected” as something else was offered in his place.
 - b) I believe Abraham knew he was acting out prophecy because after the goat was offered, Abraham nicknamed the location “The-LORD-Will-Provide” in Genesis 22:7. Notice it is future tense, as if Abraham knew he acting out a future prophecy.

- c) Another question to ponder about the resurrection is: "Would you die for a lie?"
 - i) Some people are willing to be martyrs for what they believe is the truth.
 - ii) But if you knew something was a lie or fiction, are you willing to die for that fact? If you are tortured and hurt, are you willing to keep that lie?
 - iii) Personally, I hate pain. I would confess to just about anything to avoid pain. The only thing I would think of not confessing is any sort of denial that Jesus is God because my eternal salvation is greater than that pain.
 - iv) Almost all, if not all the disciples were tortured and killed. History records that Peter himself was also crucified. Suppose that the disciples "made up" the story of Jesus, as many bible critics will argue. The question is, if they made it up, why were they all willing to be tortured and killed for a lie? Why were they willing to be ex-communicated from their society, be treated as outlaws, hunted down, tortured and killed unless they believed the resurrection is true?
 - d) When you are lying on your deathbed, all the money you have made, the all the success you have had has little meaning. You wonder what will happen to you in the next life. Those who know the fact of the resurrection is true can die with a sense of peace. They don't have to worry if they were "good enough for God". This is because they, and we, can die perfect. The perfect sacrifice for sins has been made in our place. We, like Jesus will be resurrected because we are now perfect.
5. To live the life of Christianity is a combination of living in that sense of urgency for Jesus and at the same time having the peace within us of knowing that all of our sins are forgiven.
- a) With all due respect to our Roman Catholic friends, (who we Protestants agree with them upon the major issues of Christianity), there is no purgatory.
 - i) Catholics believe there is some place of a "temporary hell" where saved-people have to pay for the sins they committed in their lifetime here on earth. This is nonsense from a biblical standpoint. There is no hint of it in the bible anywhere.
 - ii) To believe in purgatory is to argue that Jesus price was not sufficient for all sins.
 - iii) There is only heaven and hell as Jesus has taught through this entire book.
 - b) The fact of the resurrection is God's validation that Jesus has paid the price for all sins for all time. He died for my sins and for your sins, past, present and future. That period at the end of the last sentence is symbolic meaning there is no additional price to be paid.
6. Which leads us to Chapter 28 of the Gospel of Matthew.
- a) Matthew spends relatively little time describing the events of the resurrection.
 - b) There are more details in the other Gospels.
 - c) Matthew's purpose is to show Jesus as the promised Messiah.
 - d) Matthew ends his Gospel message with Jesus command to go into the world and make disciples of all nations. This is commonly referred to as the "Great Commission". We'll discuss that further when we get to those verses.
 - e) I think Matthew ended on this point as if he wanted "The Great Commission" to be the last thing his readers remember about this book.
 - i) Sometimes we remember the "ending" of a book or movie better than the rest.
 - ii) I think that is Matthew's idea. To paraphrase, "Here is all of my proof that Jesus is the Promised Messiah. Now that you know that, do what he commands us to do and go and tell others about him.
7. OK, I promised to lighten up this time, and I meant it. ☺ Let's go to Verse 1:

8. Chapter 28, Verse 1: After the Sabbath, at dawn on the first day of the week, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary went to look at the tomb.
 - a) In the timeline of the last week of Jesus' life on earth, probably the only thing scholars agree upon is the fact that Jesus rose again on a Sunday morning.
 - b) There is a classical debate over whether the crucifixion took place on the Wednesday, Thursday, or Friday beforehand. Personally, I lean toward the Thursday day-crucifixion view, but if I'm wrong, I'm wrong.
 - c) The traditional view is Friday-crucifixion and thus we celebrate "Good Friday".
 - d) I could spend half of this lesson, explaining the different views. All I ask is that you, the reader, don't get hung up on it. The facts of the case are true, just the timeline is debated.
 - e) Verse one mentions two Mary's. One is Mary Magdalene and "the other Mary". This other Mary is not Jesus' mother. She is the mother of one of the apostles named "James". This can be very confusing, as this is not the same James who wrote the book of James.
 - i) We know this is Mary-mother-of-James from Mark's Gospel (Mark 15:40).
 - f) We learn from John's Gospel that Jesus' mother Mary was also at the cross at some point.
 - i) At this point, I don't think these women fully comprehended the resurrection.
 - ii) Luke 24 Verses 1-3 said they went to the tomb to finish a Jewish burial ritual that involves taking some spices and anointing the body.
9. Verse 2: 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. ³ His appearance was like lightning, and his clothes were white as snow. ⁴ The guards were so afraid of him that they shook and became like dead men.
 - a) Being from California, I was fascinated by the earthquake mentioned in Verse 2.
 - i) First of all, the earthquake was not strong enough to destroy the tomb.
 - ii) When earthquakes happen around here, it mostly gets people off of their normal routine and wonder, "What happened, and is everybody all right?"
 - iii) Since this was early morning, I suspect it shook everybody up and awake.
 - iv) This was "God's way" of drawing attention to the empty tomb.
 - v) The event of the death of Jesus was fresh in everybody's mind. The town of Jerusalem was still overflowing with people due to the Passover Holiday.
 - vi) Remember there was another earthquake three days earlier when Jesus died (See Matthew 27:51). That was the moment when the veil was ripped in two.
 - vii) This "aftershock", three days later, had to make those working in the Temple think, "Ok, what is it this time? The last time we had an earthquake the veil was torn. What significant event is going to happen this time?"
 - b) Now let's move on to the angel sitting on the moved rock. The text says the angel moved the rock and it was not caused by the quake. Besides if the earthquake were strong enough to move the rock, it would also destroy the tomb as well.
 - i) The angel's appearance was so bright, so light, it was like looking at lightning.
 - c) It is important to understand that the purpose of the angel rolling back the stone is not to let Jesus out, but to let others peak in and see the empty tomb.
 - i) Jesus, in his resurrected state, could walk through walls. In John's Gospel, Jesus suddenly appeared to the disciples as they were in a locked room (John 20:26).
 - a) Therefore, I think Jesus left the tomb with the stone in place.
 - b) We as humans can't walk through solid objects, thus the removal of the rock was for our place to look inside the empty tomb.

10. Verse 5: The angel said to the women, "Do not be afraid, for I know that you are looking for Jesus, who was crucified."
 - a) It is interesting to read about the guards fainting at the sight of the angels (Verse 4).
 - b) The guards fainted at the site of the angels. That is what Matthew is saying in a colorful, 1st century way. When the human mind and body can't handle the reality of a present situation, we faint as if to avoid that situation.
 - c) Yet a couple of women saw the same angels and did not faint at the site (Verse 5).
 - i) They were scared, but did not faint like the soldiers did.
 - d) The fainted soldiers as warriors were used to seeing strange things.
 - e) Here were a couple of "Jewish housewives" seeing an angel and not being scared.
 - f) The difference is the fact that these women were looking for Jesus.
 - g) As long as you are seeking Jesus and trusting in Jesus, we have no reason to be afraid of angels or any other created being.
 - h) On the topic of nonbelievers being in the Lord's presence, notice what the bible says: "It is a dreadful thing to fall into the hands of the living God." (Hebrews 10:31 NIV)
11. Verse 6: He is not here; he has risen, just as he said. Come and see the place where he lay.
⁷ 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."
 - a) I don't believe these women expected Jesus to rise from the dead. As I stated earlier, they went to the grave to complete a Jewish burial ritual.
 - i) Luke's account of this story adds this line: "Why do you look for the living among the dead?" (Luke 24:5, NIV)
 - b) The point of seeing the empty tomb is the reminder that we don't worship a dead martyr, but a living God.
 - c) Once we realize the tomb is empty and Jesus did rise from the dead, then God calls us to tell others. We'll discuss that further in a few verses in the "Great Commission" passage.
 - d) Arguably the most important word in these verses is the word "disciples" in Verse 7.
 - i) The angel says, "Then (you, the women) go quickly and tell his disciples".
 - ii) Notice the angel does not say, "You people are so dense. Jesus told you over and over again he would rise again, but you didn't get it. Now you're in trouble!" ☺
 - iii) The point of God's message (via the angel) is that the others are still his disciples. Despite the fact they ran away and deserted Jesus, they are still his disciples.
 - iv) I take comfort in that fact. I have my bad days where I am too timid to stand up for Jesus. As I have grown in my faith, I have become more confident in my belief in Jesus and have grown bolder.
 - a) When someone first becomes a Christian, they often face ridicule from their old friends. Shyness about their belief in Jesus is common. Jesus does not condemn us for that just as he does not condemn the disciples for the fact they ran away. If anything, Jesus is encouraging them.
 - e) I suspect one of the reasons Jesus asks to meet his disciples in Galilee and not Jerusalem is that the Galilee area is a "comfort zone".
 - i) The Sea of Galilee area is where the disciples were from.
 - ii) It is also away from the religious leaders of Jerusalem.
 - iii) Don't get me wrong. We will read in the Book of Acts that soon after the church was born, about 45 days later, that Peter and the disciples were back in Jerusalem preaching at the temple.
 - iv) Sometimes during times of timidity, take a "step back" into your comfort zone, pray and then take two steps forward. That is what I see here about Jesus commanding to meet the disciples back in Galilee.

12. Verse 8: So the women hurried away from the tomb, afraid yet filled with joy, and ran to tell his disciples. ⁹ Suddenly Jesus met them. "Greetings," he said. They came to him, clasped his feet and worshiped him. ¹⁰ Then Jesus said to them, "Do not be afraid. Go and tell my brothers to go to Galilee; there they will see me."
- a) First we had the angel tell the women to go to Galilee. Just to make sure they understood the message, Jesus "pops in" on the women on the way.
 - b) "Saints running in the way of obedience are likely to be met by Jesus." Charles Spurgeon, from his commentary on Matthew.
 - c) Notice Jesus calls his disciples "my brothers". This is another passage that shows that they are already forgiven for the "sin" of desertion at the time of Jesus' arrest.
 - d) These women were at the cross. They came to worship "the dead Jesus" at the cemetery. They were rewarded for their faith by being the first to see the risen Jesus.
 - i) I have found that if people are honestly seeking Jesus, they do find him. You won't necessarily get a visual appearance, but you will find him.
 - ii) "I love those who love me, and those who seek me diligently will find me." (Proverbs 8:17, NKJV)
 - e) When you read through all 4 gospels, you read of Jesus "popping up" in different places.
 - i) If Jesus didn't do that, critics would have said, "Jesus is not really dead, and he just walked from place to place to show himself to people".
 - ii) The fact that Jesus just suddenly "shows up" in different places is another proof of his resurrected state.
 - iii) I believe that the resurrected Jesus can be anywhere and everywhere at once.
 - a) The risen Jesus exists in more than 3 dimensions and exists outside of time.
 - b) That is how he can just "pop up" anywhere and everywhere.
 - f) I like the fact that the women were "afraid yet filled with joy" (Verse 8).
 - i) It is human nature to have fears, especially about seeing a resurrected Jesus.
 - ii) As one grows in their faith, I find the fear decreases and joy grows.
 - g) This is a good set of verses to show a Jehovah Witness.
 - i) They believe you should only worship God-the-Father and not worship Jesus.
 - ii) Here are the women worshipping at Jesus feet. Jesus never says, "Don't do that", just the part about "Don't be afraid".
 - iii) On a similar note, "Doubting Thomas" said to the resurrected Jesus, "My Lord and My God" in John 20:28. In that passage, Jesus did not rebuke Thomas for worshipping Jesus nor for calling Jesus "Lord and God".
13. Verse 11: 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. ¹² When the chief priests had met with the elders and devised a plan, they gave the soldiers a large sum of money, ¹³ telling them, "You are to say, 'His disciples came during the night and stole him away while we were asleep.' ¹⁴ If this report gets to the governor, we will satisfy him and keep you out of trouble." ¹⁵ 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.
- a) This is the story of the religious leaders bribing the soldiers who "fainted" on duty.
 - b) First of all, let's discuss this story from the perspective of the soldiers:
 - i) In Roman law, if you were guarding a prisoner, and the prisoner escaped, you must personally serve that sentence yourself. For example, if you were guarding a prisoner sentenced to five years in jail, and he escaped after two years, the guard must be in prison for the remaining three years. If you were guarding someone on death row who escaped, the guard must die.
 - ii) I personally think the soldier would rather commit suicide than report that they "fell asleep" on duty.

- iii) The fact that the soldiers reported the incident adds to the validity.
 - a) Roman soldiers most likely believed in many pagan Gods. Here was this alien being (an angel) sitting on top of the rock. If it was “just their imagination”, why did all the soldiers go and report it?
- iv) Notice the Roman soldiers went to the religious leaders to report the incident and not to Pontius Pilate. I suspect because they saw an angel, and knew that Jesus reported to be the Messiah, that this is a “religious matter”. Therefore, they went to the Priests. Further, if they went to Pilate, they might have been killed for allowing the “prisoner” to escape.
- v) It makes me wonder if any of those soldiers ever became Christians.
- vi) It is sad they took the bribe rather than accept the truth.
- vii) That is a sad commentary all through the last 2,000 years. Too many people would rather “take the bucks” rather than believe in Jesus. I have meet too many people who won’t become Christians because they are too busy with material things or they don’t want to give their money to a church or Christian cause.
- c) Next let’s discuss this story from the perspective of the Jewish leadership.
 - i) If you ever want proof, that there is a “point of no return”, it is these guys.
 - a) When the soldiers came back, did the religious leaders say, “Maybe we were wrong about this Jesus guy?”
 - b) Notice they did not say, “We don’t believe your story. Go search the town and see if you can find the body”.
 - ii) All the religious leaders did in response was to bribe the guards.
 - iii) There are those who believe you can “fix anything with enough money”.
 - a) There are those who say, “Why bother with religion? As long as you are making a good living, you can financially work your way out of any problem that might arise!” Unfortunately, God is not impressed with your net worth. That won’t help you get into heaven.
- d) Verse 14 says, “If this report gets to the governor, we (religious leaders) will satisfy him (Pilate) and keep you (the soldiers) out of trouble.”
 - i) If you remember, historically, Pilate was in trouble with the leadership in Rome at this point. He was in danger of being recalled.
 - ii) The religious leaders had a “trump card” they could use with Pilate. The Priests had some influence over who could be governor and therefore they could handle Pilate. Remember that Pilate was more interested in “keeping the peace” than accepting Jesus innocence.
- e) Verse 15 says, “And this story has been widely circulated... to this very day”.
 - i) I suspect over the next 30 years as the disciples were going around trying to convince people that Jesus had risen from the dead, a common response was, “I don’t buy your story. We know the guards fell asleep and you stole the body”.
 - ii) When people don’t want to believe in Jesus, they are willing to believe anything.
 - iii) The more you analyze the “logic” of the bribery story, the more you realize how impossible it for it to be true. How can the soldiers claim the body was stolen if they were fast asleep?
 - iv) I can’t prove this, but I suspect that one of the soldiers eventually told Matthew this whole story when Matthew wrote the Gospel roughly 20-30 years after this event took place.
 - a) I know human nature. People can’t keep a secret, even if they were bribed. The Roman soldiers saw the growing movement of early Christianity. I suspect one of them eventually said to Matthew, “Yeah, we took a bribe”.

14. Verse 16: Then the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain where Jesus had told them to go. ¹⁷ When they saw him, they worshiped him; but some doubted.
 - a) Here is the reference to the disciples obeying Jesus order to go to Galilee.
 - b) Notice that our Lord is faithful to be there when we do what we are instructed to do!
 - c) Notice in Verse 17 it says, "they worshiped him; but some doubted."
 - i) This is a reference to "doubting Thomas". There may have been others.
 - a) This is understandable. Let's face it, to see someone horrible beaten and killed and then see them alive again would bring doubts.
 - ii) In the Gospels you never read of Jesus condemning a disciples for their doubts.
 - iii) They get "rebuked", but never "excommunicated" for their doubts.
 - iv) We as Christians need to take comfort in that fact. I think we all go through periods in our faith when we have moments of doubts. You never once ever read of Jesus abandoning someone because of one of those moments.
15. Verse 18: Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me.
 - a) We can spend days on this verse, but luckily, I won't. ☺
 - b) The key word is all. One of my bible rules is, "All means all, and that is all, all means".
 - i) One of the reasons we pray to God the Father through Jesus is because all authority has been given to Jesus.
 - c) Why does God the Father give all authority to Jesus? The answer is so you can't do an end-run-around Jesus to get to God the Father!
 - i) "Moreover, the Father judges no one, but has entrusted all judgment to the Son, that all may honor the Son just as they honor the Father. (John 5:22-23a, NIV).
 - d) Jesus is God. The first few verses of John's gospel say in effect that all things that were created (including the earth, stars, sun, the angels, Satan himself) were made by Jesus.
 - i) It is not that God the Father created Jesus and Jesus made everything else".
 - a) Isaiah 44:24 says that God ("Jehovah") has made all things. This refers to Jesus equally as much as it applies to God the Father. Therefore, Isaiah is saying that Jesus is "Jehovah-God" as part of the Trinity.
 - ii) It is Jesus was with God the Father since time began. They are one, yet separate entities. It is part of the mystery of the trinity.
 - e) Since all authority has been given to Jesus, it also implies that Jesus allows all the evil that exists to happen.
 - i) Evil exists because God allows free will. I cannot explain all the horrible things that happen. I do know that God allows all of it, ultimately for his glory.
 - ii) I can sleep at night knowing there is eternal punishment waiting for those who do wrong and eternal salvation waiting for say, innocent children who are killed.
16. Verse 19: 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."
 - a) Here we have the "Great Commission" passage. This is a nickname given to these verses.
 - b) These verses are often used at missionary conferences. Missionaries use these verses as their "orders from headquarters" to go and preach the Gospel around the world.
 - c) I remember years ago, getting into a conversation that said, "Why do you Christians go around preaching the gospel to everyone? Are you that insecure in your own faith that you find it necessary to try to convert every stranger you meet?"
 - i) The answer is, we don't do it out of insecurity, we do it because our Lord commands us to do it."
 - ii) Heaven was never designed to be an exclusive club for us, and no one else. God never wants us to say, "I'm saved. I can sit on my couch and relax now".

- iii) The point of the Great Commission is Jesus saying in effect, “Look, everyone who does not believe the Gospel message will go to hell. Tell people the message in order to save them.
 - iv) Christians preach the gospel because “it is what we do”. It becomes part of our nature. If for example, Moses commanded, “Go and teach all nations to worship the God of the Bible, you would see “Jewish evangelism rallies”. The same would apply to any other religion. We do this because it is a command to do so.
- d) The Greek word for “go” (make disciples”) does not necessarily mean we all have to quit our jobs and become missionaries.
 - i) It implies that as we go through our daily lives we are to be witnesses for Jesus.
 - ii) It is not our job to convert people. That job is for the Holy Spirit. Our job is to present the message to people and let God take over from there.
- e) I want you to think about why Jesus gave us this commission. My favorite illustration on this topic is the “parachute and hot coffee” parable (not a biblical parable).
 - i) Suppose you are on an airplane flight. A stewardess says, “We’re sorry, but the landing gear is broken. We are going to have to jump. Hold on to this parachute until I give the word.
 - ii) The same stewardess tells another passenger. I see your back is hurting. Here, take this parachute and put it behind you and you will feel better.
 - iii) Later, the stewardess accidentally spills hot coffee on both passengers.
 - iv) The one with the backache says, “This parachute isn’t helping. I’m miserable because of the hot coffee.
 - v) The one who thinks the plane is going to crash clings tighter to the parachute, despite the pain of the hot coffee because their life depends on that parachute.
 - vi) We as Christians are like the passenger clinging to the parachute. We cling to Jesus no matter what happens in our life because our eternity depends upon it.
 - vii) For the Great Commission, our job is to tell others, “The plane is going to crash, please take this parachute.” That parachute is Jesus Christ.
 - viii) As I stated earlier we cannot force people to take the parachute.
 - ix) In their own “free-will”, they must decide if we are telling the truth about the plane crash. Our job is “just” to preach the Great Commission. It is the Holy Spirit’s job to do the conviction. (Source of illustration: Ray Comfort)
- f) Notice Jesus does not say, “and if they don’t believe you, go kill them”. ☺
 - i) Christianity was never meant to be preached with a gun or a knife in our hands.
 - ii) We want people to believe the Gospel message because it is the right thing to do, not out of fear of losing their mortal lives!
 - iii) Unfortunately, throughout history, many people were killed in the name of Christianity, simply because they refused to believe the Gospel Message.
 - a) This was true through much of the middle ages and some of the colonial periods of modern history.
 - iv) Our job is to preach the gospel message. If people don’t believe, we don’t do them harm, we simply move on.
- g) Notice Jesus says we are to baptize everyone in the “name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.”
 - i) Some cult groups will deny that the “Trinity” exists.
 - ii) They correctly point out that the word “Trinity” is not in the bible.
 - iii) Just because the word is not there, does not mean the principal is not there.
 - iv) Notice Jesus says we are to baptize in the name (that’s singular!) of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. It does not say “names” as if the three entities are plural.
 - v) The fact that Jesus says “name” implies a united singularity of the group, and thus the early church coined the phrase “Trinity”.

- h) In Verse 20, Jesus says that we are to “obey everything I have commanded you.”
 - i) I cannot give you a neat little one-sentence summary of what Jesus meant by that. He is saying in effect, “All of the things I have taught you over the past three and a half years that I have been with you...go live them!”
 - a) As I have stated many times through these lessons, the secret of living the Christian life is not trying harder, but letting God work through us.
 - ii) The reason we study the bible, and the gospels in particular is that Jesus commands us to obey all that is written in them.
 - i) The last phrase of the Gospel of Matthew says, “And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.”
 - i) That is a verse we need to take comfort upon.
 - ii) Jesus is always there. If you believe Jesus is the Messiah, if you believe Jesus is Lord, if you believe Jesus is God, then you must believe that Jesus is always there.
 - iii) No matter how tough the situation you are in, we need to take comfort in that fact. This is a promise.
 - iv) The fact that Jesus is with “you” applies to all believers. “The end of the age” is a general term for the Second Coming of Jesus. It could refer to the time where God creates a “new heavens and new earth” as described in earlier lessons.
 - j) Jesus says we are to “make disciples of all nations”.
 - i) Remember the word “disciple” and “discipline” have the same root word.
 - ii) The idea here is that we are not to get people to accept Jesus and then leave them alone. Part of the Great Commission is to help others grow in their faith. To be a disciple is to “discipline” your life as Jesus wants us to live.
 - iii) Therefore, being a bible teacher (adult or child), or being a counselor, or a pastor or raising your children with the Scriptures or even helping people in service and sharing Jesus with them is fulfilling the Great Commission.
 - iv) The other part of this phrase says that we are to “all nations”.
 - a) The idea behind that is that the message is not just for Jews only, but also to go to all parts of the world.
17. OK, I’m sticking to my promise to lighten up for the last lesson.
- a) I hope you have enjoyed reading these lessons as much as I have enjoyed writing them.
 - i) The best way to learn the bible is to teach it. That is a part of my motivation.
 - ii) The other motivation is I enjoy seeing people grow in their relationship with Christ. This is my way of fulfilling the Great Commission. By reading and applying these lessons, you the reader are becoming disciples of Jesus.
 - b) For those of you who have made it through every lesson on Matthew, I hope this has been a blessing to your life. Remember that some of my commentaries are specifically stated as “my opinions”. Further, whenever I paraphrase a point, remember to study the Word of God yourself to see if what I am saying is true.
 - i) In other words, “Don’t just take my word for it, study it yourself!”
 - c) Remember the following principal from Isaiah:
 - i) So is my word that goes out from my mouth:
It will not return to me empty, but will accomplish what I desire and achieve the purpose for which I sent it. (Isaiah 55:11, NIV)
 - ii) John’s translation: It is never a waste of time to study God’s word and to teach it to others. It will accomplish what God desires it to do.
 - d) On the next page is a list of sources used in this study. If you want to do further studies in the Gospel of Matthew I recommend all of them in no particular order of preference.
 - e) With that, I thank you for spending time in these lessons. May God continue to bless your studies as you grow in God’s Word. Amen!

Supplement: Bibliography

“If I have seen further, it is because I have stood on the shoulders of giants.”
(Isaac Newton)

Without prayer and the guidance of the Holy Spirit, all these commentaries are useless. My prayer as I prepare these lessons was for God to show me the things He wanted *me* to learn, and second, the lessons He wanted me to pass on in my writings. I have quoted many sources throughout these lessons. If any of these writers appeal to you, I invite you to read or listen to further commentaries as listed below. I have also quoted other sources not listed, and those names are usually listed in the lessons. These other authors were usually quoted from the materials listed below and taken from those sources.

First and foremost, the greatest commentary on the Bible is the Bible itself. I mostly quote The New International Version (NIV), The New King James Version (NKJV), The King James Version (KJV) and the paraphrased-translations: The Living Bible (TLB) and the Good News Bible (GNB). The Bible text used is from the NIV. I use the NIV in my text, as it is currently the most popular. I don't have a particular favorite translation and I use lots of translations.

Here are the commentaries I have referenced over the past lessons, (in no particular order). The reference to “audio” commentary means the information was gathered via the Internet in Real Audio® or MP3® Format, unless otherwise stated.

1. Commentary on Matthew by Jon Curson. It is in book form from Harvest House Publishing. It is also available for free in MP3® format <http://firefighters.org/index.htm>
2. Commentary on Matthew by David Guzik. It is available for free in text format. The web address is http://calvarychapel.com/simivalley/library_commentaries.html His commentary is also published in book format.
3. Audio Commentary on Matthew by Dr. David Hocking; Dr. Hocking's complete set of audio messages are available at <http://www.hopefortoday.org/html/audio.cfm#NT> Dr. Hocking's audio commentary on Chapters 1-10 is available for free via Real Audio® at http://www.hopefortoday.org/html/audio_library.htm
4. MacArthur's New Testament Commentary: Matthew (4 Volumes); By John MacArthur, Jr. Moody Press, Chicago, IL Copyright © 1985 by The Moody Bible Institute of Chicago; Also available in electronic format through Parsons Technology (“QuickVerse® 7.0”) Copyright © 1997, Parsons Technology, Inc., PO Box 100, Hiawatha, Iowa. All rights reserved.
5. Audio Commentary on Matthew by Chuck Missler, available at K-House Ministries 1-800-KHOUSE1. The web address is <http://www.khouse.org/> It is also available for free through MP3® <http://firefighters.org/html/library.cfm>
6. Audio Commentary on Matthew by Chuck Smith, from the “6,000 series”. It is available at Chapel Store, at Calvary Chapel, Costa Mesa, CA. Other sermons by Chuck Smith are available online at <http://www.thewordfortoday.org/>
7. The Gospel of the Kingdom by C.H. Spurgeon Pilgrim Publications, Pasadena Texas; 1974, 1978, 1996; ISBN 1-56186-202-9
8. The Expositor's Bible Encyclopedia, Zondervan Publications, (via CD-ROM 1998 release). This is a multi-volume encyclopedia with notes on every verse of the Bible. (It is available at Christian bookstores.) Paperback books are published on individual Bible books from this source.
9. The Life Application Bible, Zondervan Publishing <http://www.zondervanbibles.com/0310919770.htm>
10. Jewish New Testament Commentary: A Companion Volume to the Jewish New Testament -- David H. Stern; (June 1994) Jewish New Testament Pubns; ISBN: 9653590081; David Stern is a Messianic Jew writing a New Testament commentary from a Jewish-Christian perspective.
11. When Critics Ask: A Popular Handbook on Bible Difficulties -- Norman L. Geisler, Thomas Howe; Baker Book House 1999 (Available at Christian Bookstores.)