



MORRISON ZION EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH

www.mzluth.org

June 4, 2023

Pastor Randy Ott

1st Sunday after Pentecost/Holy Trinity

First Lesson: [Genesis 1:1-2:3](#)

Psalm of the Day: Psalm 150 CWS

Second Lesson: [2 Corinthians 13:11-14](#)

Gospel Lesson/Sermon Text: [Matthew 28:16-20](#)

The Holy Ministry Proclaims the Triune God Everything?

Welcome to worship today at Morrison Zion Lutheran Church. We exist to glorify God. We have set out to do this by gathering around the Gospel so that we may grow in the Gospel and go to others with this Gospel.

Grace, mercy and peace are yours through the work of our Triune God. Amen.

In Christ, dear fellow redeemed:

“Everything” seems like a word that is pretty easy to understand. It seems kind of cut and dried. But have you ever noticed how at different times “everything” means different things?

For example, when I go grocery shopping and I get home and I hear, “Did you get everything?” I say, “Yeah, I got everything I remembered because I didn’t take a list along.” That doesn’t necessarily mean I got everything though. It just means, in that case, everything I remembered.

Or when I was a kid and mom told me to go up to my room and put everything away where it is supposed to go, what did everything mean when I told her “Yeah, I got everything done”? I got everything picked up the closet would hold, or I got everything picked up that I really wanted to pick up and the rest of the stuff I didn’t care to pick up so it is still where it was. That’s what “everything” meant when I told her “Yeah, I got everything picked up.”

“Everything” sometimes means not quite everything. Maybe it means everything I remembered. Maybe it means everything I wanted to do.

I wonder if that’s what God thinks as He looks at us when He gives us this great commission. The great commission, which means “great command,” not the great suggestion, not the great encouragement; this is the command our God gave to us as

His people here on earth. We who have been made His own through the life and death of Jesus, we who have the Spirit living in us and who has given us the gift of faith to believe that we are God's children because God acted to make us such, He looked at us and said "Make disciples..." (that is the command) "...by going, by baptizing in the name of the Triune God, and by teaching them to obey **everything** I've commanded you." How often does God look down from heaven and "everything I have commanded you" becomes everything I remember, everything I have chosen to focus on, or everything I like instead of everything?

Now, you might be saying to yourself, *"Well, pastor, it said the Eleven went to the mountain that Jesus had told them to go to in Galilee, so this command is only for the Eleven. It's not really for us."* Look at what it says at the end. ***"And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."*** Now you're really thinking *"I'm set because my name isn't 'surely,' so he's not talking to me."* That's not how it works. Who is He with always to the very end of the age? The Eleven are gone. They are in heaven now. So who is He with to the end of the age? Those He has made His own children by giving them the gift of faith, that's who He is talking to here. Yes, He addressed it to the Eleven on the mountain there in Galilee, but these words apply to us also. So we have to think about them today. Everything? Yes, everything.

This would have been at least the third time Jesus had appeared to the Eleven after His resurrection. The first time He appeared to the group that was together, without Thomas there, was that evening of the first Easter. Then a week later He was there and saw them with Thomas. He had told them to go to Galilee, where He would come to them. So whether He appeared to them in between that or not, I don't recall off the top of my head, but they had least seen Him a few times. It says they were there in Galilee where He had told them to go and Jesus came to them and they worshiped Him. It says some doubted. I don't know what they doubted. We aren't told that. I don't think it was that they doubted He was alive or had risen from the dead because they had already seen Him a few times. What did they doubt? I kind of wish God had told me that, but He didn't.

I suppose they could have doubted that God had a plan. *"You rose from the dead. Why aren't you with us all the time? We liked it better when you were always here with us, teaching us. We were following you and we were seeing what you were doing. Now you're talking about going back to the Father"* (and all that stuff He had said on Maundy Thursday) *"and we know the way to the place you are going"* (and all those things that made their heads swim). I don't know if they doubted His plan or if they doubted something else, but they doubted.

That doesn't really surprise you, does it; that sinners whom God has called to faith at times doubt their God? Doesn't that happen to all of us? We all doubt at one time or another, even if it's not in our words or in our thoughts or in our actions. Do our actions

at times give evidence to the doubt that God had said "Make disciples by going, by baptizing, and by teaching everything"? Doubts are always going to be among God's people while we are on this side of heaven and it highlights how amazing and loving our God is that He deals with us where we are, in our doubts, in our uncertainties, in our worries, in our anxieties, and He still deals with us in love. I find that absolutely amazing and I hope you always will, too.

But to this group (there might have been others besides the Eleven there; we are told the Eleven were there specifically) He says, "Here are your marching orders." If the great commission is a sandwich, look at the pieces of bread on each side of it. First He says, **"All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me."** He is the Almighty God, who defeated death, conquered Satan, and destroyed the devil's work. He has all authority because He defeated the one to whom we belonged to and now we belong to Him. **"All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore..."** The great commission draws completely from all authority that Jesus has and He says, "Now I'm telling you, in my authority go and proclaim who I am and what I've done. Make disciples. Make followers of Jesus, believers in Jesus by going, by baptizing in the name of the Triune God, by teaching, and by teaching everything I have commanded you." Then look at the other side of the bread in the sandwich. **"And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."** The promise of His presence, His power, His strength, and His forgiveness as we seek to do what He has called us to do, it's all there. He is with us in His love. He isn't there to scare us or scold us. He is there to strengthen and sustain us.

The disciples' heads had to be spinning yet again. *"Make disciples of whom? Who did He say? Did I hear that right?"* Can you see them looking at each other going *"All nations? I liked it better when it was just the lost sheep of Israel. I'm used to talking to those people. All nations; how are we going to get to all nations? We don't even have cars yet, Jesus, how are we supposed to do this?"* Jesus was pretty serious. The other time He had told them "You will be my witnesses in Jerusalem," at that point, that's where they were, "in Judea," where they were comfortable, "in Samaria," where they were completely uncomfortable, and then "to the ends of the earth," which seemed completely and absolutely impossible but because of His authority and His strength and His presence, they were able to do it.

Now think about the guys that were able to do it. Think about them for a minute. Do you understand that you guys have the opportunity to know more theology and Scriptural truth than they did at that point in time when Jesus came to them and said "Get to all nations"? We have the opportunity. We have all the Scriptures. We have this time to study. We have this time to grow. They were the guys that were saying, when He ascended, "At this time are you going to establish the kingdom here on earth?" We

have the opportunity to have more spiritual knowledge than they did. He worked through them, but we think He can't work through us? We're calling God a liar, aren't we?

Look at the great commission again and what it means for us. It means the same thing as it meant for them. Make disciples by going. *"Going, really? I'm a lot more comfortable, Jesus, with just waiting for people to come. You mean I have to get up and go? I have to get up and talk to other people about Jesus? This is what you are calling me to do? Come on, Jesus! We have a sign out in front of the church (parallel to the road because all the cars drive 45mph past here) and they have the opportunity to turn their head quickly and see the times of service as they whiz by so we should just wait for them to come."* No! Jesus said go! Is "go" that hard to understand or is that kind of like an "everything" thing? Go when I remember? Go when I feel like it? "Go, you will be my witnesses. You tell what you know to be true." Again, He's not talking just to the professionals. He is talking to all believers.

God has called us all to be His witnesses, to share the truth of the Gospel. This is His command. "Go, make disciples by baptizing and then by teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you." That "everything" He commanded us includes going. We are way more comfortable with sitting back and waiting for someone to come. I don't know how many times I've been told, whether it's about members that have drifted away, "Oh, they'll come back when this or that happens," or other people, "Well, they know we are here. They can come to us." No, no, no, no. God said "Go." And we just don't want to do it. Either we know it all already and are eagerly and willingly doing it, or we just think it's kind of like "I did everything that was on the list, Jesus. I don't need to do this "go" stuff. I did what I remembered."

We are in June, so January, February, March, April, May, June, six months. Five months complete already. We had ten workshops on how to share the Gospel; eleven now because we had one yesterday. These are workshops where we equip and prepare ourselves to get ready to go and to talk about Jesus. What do we say, what to do we, how do we do it. Evidently our congregation is either really, really good at it already (because I think in eleven workshops we've had 40-50 people), or we just don't think it's our job and this isn't part of everything that God commanded us to do. We kind of approach it like I approached picking up my room when mom told me to pick up my room.

I've often wondered this... when dad got home and dad said "What did mom tell you to do today?" "Pick up my room." "Did you get everything done?" I probably turned around and went upstairs and started cleaning my room because dad was going to let me have it if I didn't get everything done. I've often wondered, why doesn't God scold us more, discipline us more, make us afraid to disobey? I was afraid to disobey my dad.

I loved him to pieces but if he said to do it, I was much more likely to do it than if mom said to do it. Mom was a pushover.

Do we look at God that way? Like He's just a pushover? Would we do it better if He was threatening us, punishing us, if we didn't do what He said? Humanly speaking that might make sense to us, but that's not how our God operates at all. Our God does not tell us to do any of these things out of guilt or out of fear. He does not say "Do this or else I won't love you anymore." Our God comes to us and says "I know how you think everything doesn't mean everything. I know how you think go doesn't mean go, and I still love you and I still sent my Son to die for all of these sins that you commit." He wants us to do the right thing because we love Him and we love the souls that he bled for.

It often seems it would be faster if we just scared each other, but don't do that. Don't do any of this, anything God asks you to do, out of fear or out of guilt. Do it because you have a God who loved you so much that He gave His only Son and He gave you the gift of faith. And then, because you love Him, go and teach everything that you know about Jesus to those who don't. Amen.

And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. [\(Philippians 4:7\)](#) Amen.