

The Resurrection Commission

by Ron Albertson

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Text: Matt. 28:1-10, 16-20

Today we are very proud our brilliant graduating High School seniors and celebrate your hard work. There is another group we are very proud of today, our outstanding Class of Confirmands of 2011.

When our young people decide to take the step of faith to receive Holy Baptism, chose to be confirmed as believing Christians, and be recognized as “Professing Members” of this local church and the United Methodist we are celebrating not only here in this historic congregation but there is great rejoicing in heaven, as Jesus put it. Can’t you hear it now? Over the last several months they have journeyed through the many experiences, expressions and understandings of our faith as disciples of Jesus Christ and our distinctiveness as United Methodists. With all that we believe, the bottom line is whether we live up to Christ’s call to be his disciples and to help make disciples of others for the transformation of the world.

The scripture we read today comes after his ministry, death and resurrection. The men and women who had followed Jesus didn’t just happen across him one day. He specifically called them and commanded them to follow him. The ones who obeyed became his disciples and devoted followers. That group was wider than just the named twelve, including many others and a number of women. As we read, the first “disciples” to discover the news of his resurrection were the two women named Mary, not his mother. He directed them to “**go and tell**” the others the good news. Later Jesus told the whole group gathered for his *bon voyage* party, so to speak, to **go and tell the whole world** the news that the **he, the Resurrected Messiah is the Savior of the whole world** and to **train others as his disciples**. They were to train others as he had trained them when he called them to follow him - to think and act as he did following his teachings, and make more disciples. They may not have had an idea just what he meant when he told them to take up their cross and follow him, (Mt. 10:38, 16:24, etc.) so he demonstrated it for them. They gained a pretty clear picture of just what was involved in being a disciple and how to lead others to become disciples. **He called them to be**

RESURRECTION-DISCIPLES.

Its interesting the root of the word **disciple** is the same root for the word **math**, as in mathematics. As anyone who has studied math knows, you don’t really understand math until you can actually DO math. Right? In my early college education I was on an engineering track, so I studied lots of math. I thought I knew a lot about math...but when I failed a calculus class and had to take it over and barely passed it the second try, I realized I wasn’t very good at actually doing math.... So I changed majors.

If we are going to be Jesus’ disciple we have to not only know our Master’s instructions, but we have to actually **DO** them, hold his values, be filled with his love, serve as he did. He expects us also to be **RESU**

It's not enough to know the stories, sing the songs and celebrate the holidays at Church. Being a disciple of Jesus means you live differently from those who aren't. You chose to use your money and time differently; you have different goals for your life that go beyond the grave. We who call ourselves Christian are to live as his disciples, **lives filled with love and joy and peace** in all circumstances. That may sound crazy, but that is what Jesus said, and offers, and expects of us. To be Jesus' disciple means to look more and more like him. Though we may not always live up to it, that is our life purpose, to keep growing every day. Baptism is God's mark on us as his own and his call to follow Jesus. Confirmation is our acceptance of that call, our **YES** to God to be Jesus' disciples.

There is a story about a city in Italy where stands a statue of a Grecian maiden with a beautiful face, graceful figure, and noble expression. One of the poor peasant girls came face to face with the statue one day and was so captivated by it that she stood staring at it. So, she went home and washed her face and combed her hair. The next day she came again and stared at the statue, and then she went home and mended her tattered clothes. She continued to come back to stare at the statue and day by day she changed, growing more graceful, her face more refined, until she greatly resembled the lovely features of the fine work of art. She was transformed in appearance into that which she gave her attention and followed as an example. That is what disciples of Jesus do though not in appearance only. They get to know him so well through study of his words and actions that they devotedly follow them and grow more and more like him.

Jesus came to show us that God's realm or kingdom has begun here on earth. He wants us to live full and blessed lives that find ultimate fulfillment in heaven. The way to heaven is Jesus' path. He said, "**I Am the WAY, the TRUTH, and the LIFE; the WAY to HEAVEN IS THROUGH ME.**" Our job as disciples is to make more and more disciples for him so that the human race and the whole world will be transformed into God's loving neighborhood. We can only do that by being filled up with God's Spirit of love and power. Then God's love will overflow to others. They will see Jesus in us and will want more of him. **How are we doing on that one, friends?** When we do our jobs of bringing people to meet Jesus, the Church is where we teach them to live Jesus' way and invite others to join us. That is why it is so important that we have a church membership, especially in this Church.

I heard about a little seven-year-old boy who went to an evangelistic service and came back every night until the last night, but he never went forward at the invitation to become a Christian. As the preacher was walking out to his car in the parking lot the little boy came up to him and asked, "Let me ask you something. You say I have to ask Jesus Christ into my life." The evangelist replied, "That's right, I did." The boy continued, "I'm seven years old. How big is Jesus?" He responded, "He's pretty good size because he's a carpenter." "That's what I thought, If I were to ask him into me, wouldn't he stick out?" (Ben Haden, Chattanooga, TN, told by Don Cheadle, Memorial Community Church, Blachly, Oregon)

What do you think? Is the Resurrected Jesus sticking out of your life all over? You have said YES to God. **Let's get serious about being RESURRECTION DISCIPLES.**