

Jesus has risen! He has left the tomb and is now meeting with the eleven disciples where he had already told them to meet. He has told them everything prior to his death. Now he is risen and there is still doubt. The Son of God rose from the dead and there is still doubt.

Today's scripture reading is small in comparison to a number of the readings we've had over the past couple of weeks. Over the past 2 weeks so much of Jesus' life is addressed. So, in some cases, it makes sense that the scripture readings are so long. But in some cases, like today's, so much meaning is put into so few words.

In the first two lines of the scripture, we are instantly reminded about how significant the previous week had been. Matthew makes a point about there being only 11 disciples and Jesus announces that he has absolute authority on heaven and Earth. He was betrayed, died, and reborn with God's grace and authority.

But in the middle of all of that, Matthew makes a point of saying that there is doubt. With everything they have seen, they still have doubt. Jesus told them that he would be betrayed and they would deny him. They saw those things happen. He told them that he would die and be resurrected by his Father. They saw that too and still doubted.

I don't know if I could say that I wouldn't have doubted either. I know so many people would say that they would have never doubted it. But, how do they know that? How can they say that with utmost certainty? We are all human and so many times, humans don't do the right things for the right reasons.

Two thousand years later and there is still doubt. People have doubts about whether there is a god. They have doubts about whether Jesus is the messiah or simply a teacher. They question the sincerity and the integrity of their leaders, friends, and family. It seems that trust as a whole has diminished over the years.

And that is in part why I have started including the commission at the end of our services lately. Jesus commissions us to go out and teach his lessons as he taught them to us. I don't expect all of us to go out and start talking about God to random strangers. I don't think that was what Jesus had envisioned.

No, what he continually has tried to teach us throughout the book of Matthew is to live a righteous life. By being righteous ourselves, we will teach others to be righteous. Teach by doing and not sharing empty words. It is hard to doubt someone's true intentions when you see how they behave.

Yes, people can lie and be deceitful. But their true colors will always show. They can't hide themselves forever. Eventually they will show who they truly are. And we won't need to wait and judge them. Jesus sees them for who they are and will separate them into goats or sheep. If we live our lives righteous and true, we won't need to worry.

And that is the best way for us to teach. In so many ways, children learn by watching our behaviors. Wednesday is currently going through her parrot phase or observational learning. She mimics everything that either Alyssa or myself do. So obviously, if we want her to behave in a specific way then we should act that way as well.

We can go back to the Sermon on the Mount and Jesus tells us this same thing in the Golden Rule. Do unto others as you would have them do unto you. If we behave in a righteous manner, then others should treat us in the same. We teach through our actions and not just our words. How much better of a world would we live in if that were always the case?

But probably the most important thing for us to remember out of this scripture reading is that he is always with us. It is so easy for us to lose sight of that. Our doubt grows and grows and we can easily think that Jesus and God have abandoned us.

Just because something happens in a way that we aren't expecting or we receive the end result that we do not want, it doesn't mean that Jesus isn't there for us. On the contrary, it can mean a number of different things.

It might not be our time, or he wants us to learn something so that we can share it and help others later. There are a number of different scenarios for why things happen the way they do. God directs the path we should take, but he doesn't make us take it. We have some responsibility ourselves in what happens in our lives.

Jesus loves us and directs us. He guides us through his compassion and wisdom. He has been given the authority to forgive us through his death and resurrection. Why wouldn't we want to share this and teach by being the example?

**God of action, you sent your disciples into the world to preach, teach, and make disciples of all nations. Make us instruments of proclamation, so that all might know of the love you have for humanity. We pray these things in the name of Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen.**