

Trinity Sunday Year A  
Christ Church Sparta, NC

The risen Christ walks with his disciples, talking with them. This is his last conversation with them in St. Matthew's Gospel. These are Christ's last words, his final exhortation. And what does Christ say to his disciples?

“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 that I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age.”

This passage is often referred to as the Great Commission. Jesus is sending his followers out into the world. “Go!” he commands them. And he promises that as they go, he is “with them” until the end of time. It is comforting for us to know that as we go, in his name, Jesus goes with us.

Without a doubt, this is our favorite part of Jesus' Great Commission.

Knowing that he will be with us until the end of time. We sometimes forget however, that the Great Commission is made up of two parts. Jesus' presence and his command to go! Jesus is on the move.

Of course, Jesus is always on the move in the Gospels. That's how he is presented, Jesus is a man on the go; he's in constant motion. St. Matthew tells many a story about times when Jesus speaks, teaches, heals, and then moves on to somewhere else. One can almost see the disciples tagging along behind Jesus, trying to keep up with him. Jesus is on the move and we can't follow him without moving as well.

I must admit, I'm not a big fan of Asian art but I do find myself somewhat captivated by the various representations of the Buddha that I've seen; serenely seated upon a lotus blossom, eyes closed, faint smile on his face, hands resting placidly upon his folded knees. The Buddha is the picture of serenity and peaceful contemplation. It's my understanding that those who see the divine emanating from the Buddha feel a great sense of serenity and calm that is presumed to be at the heart of the universe.

Yet that is a far cry from how the Gospels depict Jesus. Full of action, energy, always on the move, moving into, rather than out of the world, moving closer, ever closer to his fate in Jerusalem. Jesus seems to court trouble, cause conflict, rather than bring peace and serenity.

Do you remember the Gospel story we heard here on Easter Sunday? The women come out to the tomb while it was still dark. They are greeted there by a messenger in white. What does the angel say to them? “You are looking for Jesus who was crucified? He is not here. He is risen!”

Then the angel says, “He has gone on to Galilee before you. Go!”

How typical of Christ! Christ is raised. But he does not stay at the cemetery. He is on the move. Now, on this Trinity Sunday in the year of our Lord, 2026, Christ continues to be a man on the move.

The angel at Easter said to the women, “He has gone on to Galilee” but

also “there you will meet him.” I suppose that means, if you refuse to leave for Galilee, if you stay fixed and secure right where you are, then won’t meet Jesus.

The risen Christ first commands us to “Go!” and then he promises us that he will stick with us, even if we go to the ends of the earth. The risen Christ is going, and he commands us to go with him. And here’s my point: we can’t be with Jesus if we don’t go with Jesus.

Most people in the Episcopal Church are in their 50’s and 60’s. For some reason we, meaning the national church, stopped bringing younger people into the church years ago. We were content to be with ourselves, we chose to act more like Buddha, sitting on a lotus blossom, with predictable results I might add.

There was a day when the church moved with the population, as the population moved towards the frontier. I wonder if the new “frontier” of today’s church is a new generation of young adults who have not yet been reached for Christ and his church?

Be assured that the risen Christ is busy in this generation, just as he has always been. That's not the question. The question before us, in the light of this morning's Gospel, is will we be busy with him? Will we go where he goes?

Most people met Jesus on the road. When John the Baptist introduced Jesus to the world, he quoted the Prophet Isaiah, "prepare the way of the Lord, make his path straight. Every Valley shall be filled, and every mountain and hill shall be made low and all flesh shall see the Salvation of God".

In Jesus, God worked a highway construction project, making a road straight through the desert to enslaved humanity. Just as in the Exodus God made a way out of Egyptian slavery to the Promised Land, so Jesus is the way to God. While we tried to climb our way to God through our intellect, our morality, our architecture, our art, and our institutions, in Jesus Christ, God slipped in among us. The first name for the church was simply "the way", not our way to God but rather God's way to us.

All of the gospels present Jesus on a perpetual road trip - God in motion, urgently making a way to us in defeat of the desert in which we wander. No sooner does Jesus do something than immediately he hits the road to somewhere else. Some of Jesus' best words were spoken while on the run. Many have wanted to know more about the early childhood and teenage years of Jesus. If it weren't for Luke's nativity, we would be clueless about his youth. In Mark, probably the earliest of the gospels, Jesus just shows up out of nowhere without proper credentials, except for wild desert forerunner John the Baptist. It is as if the gospels want to make plain that Jesus cannot be explained as the next chapter in the long, gradual, forward advance of humanity; his birth to a virgin named Mary signifies that Jesus is present as miraculous gift of a gracious God, the God-given goal of all human history.

What was deemed important about Jesus was not his family or his youth but rather his ministry, his forward movement, his mission. Breaking like a wave across dusty Galilee, he thunders forth into a captive land - God at highest momentum, God immediately. Anybody

who wants to meet Jesus; anyone that wishes to understand Jesus or to be with Jesus, must be willing to relocate.

Discipleship is no settled matter; as faithful disciples, we must be willing to get off our lotus blossom and move if we are to keep up with the living God. Amen.