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What Now? / Matthew 28:18–20

This passage is the foundation for the Church's mission—it calls us to go, make disciples, baptize, teach, and trust in Christ's ongoing presence. It fits beautifully with themes of obedience, mission, community, and faithfulness.

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*Good morning, church family!*

Today is a day of celebration, reflection, and vision.

We are so glad you've joined us for this special service, marking **years of God's faithfulness** to this congregation. Whether you've been with us for a long time or this is your first Sunday here — welcome. You are part of the story God is writing in and through this church.

Over the years, we've seen God do incredible things — lives changed, families strengthened, hope restored, and the Gospel proclaimed. Today, we celebrate all of that. But we also look forward. Because we believe God is not finished — He's just getting started.

As part of our journey forward, we've been praying, dreaming, and discerning where God is leading us next. And today, I am excited to unveil our mission statement — a clear, Christ-centered declaration of who we are and why we exist as a church.

It isn't just words — it's a compass. It will guide our decisions, shape our ministries, and remind us why we gather, serve, give, and go.

So let's prepare our hearts. Let's worship with gratitude for what God has done — and with expectation for what's still to come.

Let's begin in prayer.

Heavenly Father,

We come before You today with hearts full of gratitude and praise. Thank You for Your faithfulness through the years — for every life touched, every soul saved, every act of love that has flowed through this church. You have been our foundation, our strength, and our guide.

On this anniversary day, we pause to remember Your goodness in our past, and we look ahead with hope to the future You are preparing.

As we unveil our mission statement, we ask for Your blessing. Let it not just be words we speak, but truth we live. May it reflect Your heart, align with Your will, and call us to greater purpose.

Holy Spirit, move in this place today. Stir our hearts as we worship, open our ears to Your Word, and unify us as one body, committed to Your mission.

May everything we do today bring glory to Jesus — the

head of this church and the author of our story.

In His powerful name we pray,  
**Amen.**

This morning's going to look a little different. We're going to sing one song up front this morning before I dismiss the Sunday School who I will bring back at the end of story time and then I'm going to do a small recap of each week followed by a prayer and a song as a response. So let us stand in worship and sing Build My Life. Let us praise the Lord.

Okay, Sunday School, you are free to go, but I'm going to call you all back at the end of the service for our shared story then.

So, let's see where this all began. We started with L - learning and living out the gospel. We looked at the passage in James 1:22-25 "But be doers of the word, and not merely hearers who deceive themselves. For if any are hearers of the word and not doers, they are like those who look at themselves in a mirror; for they look at themselves and, on going away, immediately forget what they were like. But those who look into the perfect law, the law of

liberty, and persevere, being not hearers who forget but doers who act—they will be blessed in their doing.” This was a focus on looking at ourself — if you were to look at yourself in the mirror, what are you reflecting to the world? Are you the hands and the feet of Jesus? Are you reflecting Jesus in everything you do? We need to begin by letting the truth of the gospel transform us. We don’t just believe in Jesus - we follow Him. This means regularly reading Scripture, wrestling with its meaning, and allowing grace to change the way we think, speak, and act. *God gave us Scripture and the Holy Spirit to understand God's Word, and he also has given us the responsibility to understand Scripture as it was not written to us, but for us.* What is God saying to us through the Bible? Scripture is not a rulebook—it’s a revelation. It shows us God’s character, His love, His justice, His promises, and His plan for the world. Without reading it, we’re left guessing what God is like, often shaping Him in our own image. In a world that’s always trying to define us—telling us who we should be or what we’re worth—Scripture speaks a better word. It reminds us that we are created in the image of God, deeply loved, fully forgiven, and called to a greater purpose. God’s truth cuts through the noise and silences the lies.

When life feels heavy, when temptation presses in, or when the path ahead is unclear, God’s Word becomes our anchor. And in moments of joy and hope, it reminds us of the Giver

of every good and perfect gift, drawing us into deeper gratitude, celebration, and praise. Reading the Bible isn't about duty; it's about drawing close to God and reflecting Jesus to others.

Let us pray,

Heavenly Father,

Thank You for the gift of Your Word—good news that transforms lives, heals hearts, and brings hope to a broken world.

Teach us to truly understand it—not just in our minds, but deep in our hearts. Help us to see Jesus clearly: His love, His sacrifice, and His victory. Let Your Word shape our thoughts, our choices, and our desires. Give us the courage to live it out daily—with humility, grace, and boldness. Let our lives reflect the kindness, truth, and mercy of Christ.

Holy Spirit, empower us to be doers of the Word, not just hearers. Use us to carry the light of the gospel into every place we go—our homes, schools, workplaces, and communities. In everything, may Jesus be glorified. Amen.

**You may remain seated as we sing Ancient Words**

The second week we looked at O - Obedience in Prayer. This is a focus on God. As it says in Philippians 4:6 “Do not

worry about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God.”

Prayer isn't just talking—it's trusting, listening, and surrendering.

Through prayer, we align our hearts with God's will. We don't obey out of fear, but out of love and relationship. Jesus prayed to the Father all the time. Jesus began His ministry with prayer at His baptism, showing us to start with God. He fasted and prayed for 40 days before facing temptation, teaching us that prayer strengthens us for trials. Before choosing the 12 disciples, He prayed—modeling how to seek God's guidance in big decisions. He taught His followers how to pray, and often withdrew to prayer after serving, showing the need for spiritual renewal. Before major miracles like feeding the 5000 or raising Lazarus, He prayed—revealing dependence on the Father and showing that prayer precedes God's power. At the Transfiguration, He prayed to connect deeply with God, reminding us that prayer transforms and refocuses us. In Gethsemane, Jesus prayed honestly in anguish, surrendering to God's will—teaching us to pray even in fear and pain. On the cross, He still prayed, showing we can turn to God even in suffering and feeling abandoned. After His resurrection, He prayed while breaking bread, opening His disciples' eyes—reminding us that prayer reveals Jesus

and restores connection. Every moment, Jesus showed that prayer fits every situation. He brought everything to the Father—and so can we. Prayer is not about saying perfect words - it's about bringing your heart to God, and in how you listen and respond in obedience. God is big enough for our raw emotions and holy enough for our reverence. God handles everything and anything. Prayer is not just about talking but also about getting into the quiet and listening. What is God saying to you? What is he asking of you? How are you responding to His will for your life?

Let us pray,

Thank You for the gift of prayer—a place where we meet with You, hear Your voice, and pour out our hearts. Help us not to treat it as a one-way conversation, but as a sacred space to listen, learn, and obey. Give us hearts that are soft to Your direction and wills that are ready to follow, even when it's hard or costly. Remind us that true prayer doesn't just speak—it surrenders. True prayer leads to action, trust, and obedience. When You call us to forgive, help us to release. When You lead us to go, help us to move.

When You ask us to stay, help us to trust. And when You ask us to serve, help us to give freely. Make us people who not only pray often, but live out what we pray.

May our obedience be an act of worship, a sign of love, and a testimony of trust. We want to follow You fully—step by step, prayer by prayer.

In Jesus' name,  
Amen.

**You can stand as we sing a couple verses of What a Friend  
we Have in Jesus**

Last week we looked at V - Valuing Community. A focus on others.

We were never meant to follow Jesus alone. The gospel calls us into community—into encouragement, correction, sharing, serving, and bearing one another's burdens. To value community means choosing unity over pride, grace over gossip, and presence over isolation. As it says in John 13:34–35 “I give you a new commandment, that you love one another. Just as I have loved you, you also should love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.”” And if we look to the early church in Acts 2:42 “They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers.” They loved and valued each other. We grow in the context of relationships. We were made to walk alongside others, to build each other up, to forgive, to serve. Community is where we practice the gospel. It's where we learn to love like Jesus—with patience, humility, and grace. It is through Jesus and the love I found in this community that I am where I am today,

not where I thought I would be at this point in my life, but far better than I ever expected. From the very beginning, found in Genesis, God designed us for community with each other. And as Paul wrote to the Corinthians, 1 Corinthians 12:4–6 “Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit; and there are varieties of services, but the same Lord; and there are varieties of activities, but it is the same God who activates all of them in everyone.” We are all unique, with a variety of gifts, yet we are to use these gifts for our common love for Jesus and each other. What the early church had in common was their love for Christ, sharing this with the world, with each other, and taking care of one another. Let us continue to replicate this love of Christ and for each other with the world. As we do, we will come together in prayer, praying for those on our hearts, so before we pray who do we need to name?

Father God,  
Thank You for creating us to live in community—not alone, but together as one body in Christ. Help us to value one another the way You value us—with love, grace, and humility.

Teach us to listen well, to serve joyfully, and to forgive quickly. Remind us that each person is a part of Your plan and has something to give. May our church be a place of belonging, where no one feels unseen or forgotten. May we

love our neighbors well, serve with open hands, and speak with compassion and conviction.

Lord, we lift up those among us, whether in this place, or in our hearts, who are hurting—those carrying heavy burdens, grieving in silence, or walking through pain we may not fully see. We pray specifically for....

Surround them with Your comfort. Let our love be a reflection of Yours—gentle, present, and faithful. Help us to notice, to reach out, and to be a source of encouragement and healing through our words and actions. Grow in us a spirit of unity, where differences don't divide but deepen our love. Let our fellowship reflect Your heart—open, welcoming, and full of truth. Use our community to encourage the weary, lift the broken, and shine Your light to the world. Bind us together in love, so that through us, others would see You.

In Jesus' name,  
Amen.

**You may remain seated as we sing a couple verses of  
They'll Know We Are Christians By Our Love**

And now if you see the last 3 weeks, L--O--V-- what letter do you think today is and what does it stand for?

You are correct on E - equipping disciples. A focus on

carrying out the mission of Jesus to the world.

In Matthew 28:19–20, known as the Great Commission, Jesus commands us, “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.””

In the gospel of Matthew right before this Mary Magdalene and the other Mary went to see the tomb when they discovered it was empty. The angel replied, do not be afraid. Jesus, who was crucified is not here but has been raised. They are then told to go quickly and tell his disciples and that Jesus is going ahead of them to Galilee where they will see him. They meet Jesus on the way, who reiterates the same message as the angel. I want to read to you verses 11-15:

Matthew 28:11–15 “While they were going, some of the guard went into the city and told the chief priests everything that had happened. After the priests had assembled with the elders, they devised a plan to give a large sum of money to the soldiers, telling them, “You must say, ‘His disciples came by night and stole him away while we were asleep.’ If this comes to the governor’s ears, we will satisfy him and keep you out of trouble.” So they took the money and did as they were directed. And this story is still told among the Jews to this day.”

Jesus told His disciples three times He would rise again, yet many were still surprised—and some doubted. Strangely, no one seemed to recall His words: “After three days I will rise.” You’d think someone might have said, “Isn’t today the third day? Let’s check the tomb.” Ironically, it was Jesus’ enemies—like the chief priests—who remembered. They feared the resurrection might actually happen, so they posted guards. When it did happen, and the guards reported it, the priests moved to damage control. They bribed the soldiers and spread a lie to cover what they couldn’t prevent. They invented a version of events to counter the truth. But while they used money and deception, Jesus used truth and authority. His mission—to send disciples to all nations—would outlast every scheme, because all authority belongs to Him. His enemies had a plan. Jesus had the truth.

The two Mary’s were the first evangelists commissioned by Jesus to “go and tell” the good news. Through their faithfulness they did exactly as they were commanded, go and tell, and this is how the eleven disciples gathered on the mountain to see Jesus, so that they could hear him and they would receive the same charge. From these two women, who then told the 11, who then told many others, we are here today.

Today is Pentecost Sunday. Equipping disciples means not only teaching knowledge about Jesus but preparing

believers to live empowered lives through the Holy Spirit. Discipleship includes spiritual formation, community, Scripture, and prayer—but it also requires the empowering presence of God’s Spirit to bring it all to life.

So Pentecost reminds us: We are not called to make disciples by our own strength. Equipping disciples is a Spirit-led mission. Just like at Pentecost, God gives what we need to carry out His work.

Even though we didn’t follow Jesus like the eleven, we are able to make disciples, “teaching them to obey everything” Jesus commanded, as Matthew wrote it all down for us. We have heard Jesus preach the Sermon on the Mount, heal the leper, centurion’s slave, and the paralytic. We watched Jesus calm the storm, casts out demons, raise a dead girl. We are witnesses to how Matthew became a disciple, how Judas betrayed Jesus, and how the chief priests and elders handed Jesus over to the Roman governor. When we join the table of the Last Supper, we take his words to Heart, “Take and eat; this is my body.” While the disciples slept, we heard him pray, “My Father, if it is possible, may this cup be taken from me.” We winced when the disciples betrayed him. We were ashamed when his enemies mocked him. We wept when the soldiers crucified him. And we marvel over the fact that God raised him from the dead. We know we are called to be part of the Great Commission, that Jesus was talking to us, as we are witnesses of these things

because the eleven disciples of Jesus were faithful to our resurrected Lord. And we have the Holy Spirit. We are living proof of the disciples making disciples.

Jesus' promise to the disciples "I am with you always, to the end of the age." This promise continues to ring true for us today.

**(Can someone go back and tell the kids to come back in as I finish up)**

God is always working, sometimes in the quiet, and other times in the busyness. Unbeknownst to me, in the fall when I sat down over a span of months, seeking God in our mission here at Billtown, the acronym came L, O, V, E with what it stands for. Shortly after this came together, the CBAC came out with their core priorities of which Renee McVicar, the executive minister, would mention, if you recollect, during her message called refocusing on our mission which we watched in January. Here are the CBAC's four core priorities and how they align with our mission statement that God laid on my heart prior. Their first one was - overflowing with the hope filled gospel (corresponding to our L - learning and living out the gospel). 2 - was overflowing with hope filled prayer (our O - obedience in prayer). 3 - overflowing with hope filled care for neighbours near and far (our V - valuing community) and 4 - overflowing with hope filled discipling in our community (our E - equipping disciples). It is incredible

how God works.

The gospel doesn't and can't stop with us. We are called to pass it on. Every believer is part of the mission—whether you're teaching, mentoring, serving, sharing your story or any other opportunities. We equip disciples by investing in others and helping them grow in their own walk with Jesus.

It is through community that I have experienced the heartbeat of discipleship — walking alongside others, growing together in Christ, and learning that discipleship is not just taught, it's lived. It's shared. And it's this kind of intentional, Spirit-led community that we are called to cultivate as a church. That's how we equip disciples who will go on to equip others. Jesus walked alongside his disciples, teaching them, showing them the commandments through his way of life, and we are called to do that ourselves. To walk alongside others, teaching them about Jesus, showing them Jesus in how we live. I am where I am today because of certain individuals who have poured a lot into my Christian walk, some of which continue to do so to this day. So, who is someone you could walk alongside spiritually or continue to walk alongside? What has God taught you that you can now pass on?

## Marilyn is going to come forward for the children's story:

Church: this whole thing began when I sat down with a mentor in the fall. They asked first if I had any questions and I didn't know what to even ask them as I was so new at things. As I've told people throughout this year, "I don't know what I don't know" so this mentor started by asking me a few questions. One of them was, do you have a mission statement at your church that everything you do is connected by? And it should be something that people can remember. At which point, they proceeded to show me theirs from their church, it wasn't just a sentence, but a visual statement, which started my brain thinking. Then a few weeks later we went to Challenge with the youth group and while we get Challenge "swag" (aka t-shirts) every year, we don't get them until we arrive, and we usually wear them the next day during our Love Out Loud events. There were a few groups that had their own swag from their churches, and a few of our youth's eye lit up and said, hey, we need something like that for next year to wear to challenge that has to do with our church, Billtown, so that got me thinking and planning in combination with our mission statement for our church. This is what I want to show you.

(Go to the next slide)

The mission statement is shaped like a circle, it's continuous, just like Jesus, who is eternal: "I am the Alpha and the Omega" (Revelation 22:13). A circle symbolizes unity and wholeness. Jesus heals what's broken (Isaiah 53:5) and unites all people into one body—the Church. In a circle, everyone stands equal around the center. And what's at the center? Jesus and the cross. With Him at the center of our lives and community, everyone belongs. Circles are also used in discipleship—small groups, prayer circles, roundtables—just as Jesus taught in close-knit gatherings. They help us grow together. The circle is also the shape of a wedding ring, symbolizing Jesus' covenant love as the Bridegroom (Revelation 19:7). So from a simple shape, we remember Jesus is eternal, His love is for all, He brings healing, and He calls us to grow together. And in the center of the circle is the word LOVE—summarizing the heart of following Jesus. Each letter represents a step of spiritual growth we've explored these past four weeks.

**When we Learn and Live out the Gospel (L),**  
we're changed from the inside out.

**When we Obey God through Prayer (O),**  
we deepen our relationship with Him.

**When we Value Community (V),**  
we grow with others in love and unity.

**And when we Equip Disciples (E),**

we carry the mission of Jesus to the world.

This is what it means to live in **LOVE**—  
not just as a feeling, but as a lifestyle rooted in the gospel.

At the very center of the word **LOVE** is **Jesus**—and at the center of His love is the **cross**. The cross is the ultimate expression of God’s love for humanity. John 3:16 tells us, *“For God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son, that whosoever believes in him will not perish but have everlasting life”*— a love so deep it led Jesus to lay down His life so we could be forgiven and restored. When we look at the cross, we see more than suffering; we see sacrificial love in its purest form. And when we live out love as followers of Christ, we are called to place **Jesus at the center**—letting His example shape how we serve, forgive, and care for others. True love begins, flows from, and points back to the cross.

As Jesus said, In Matthew 22:37-40, Jesus replied: “‘Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.’ This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’ All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments.”

And so, the swag I have created with all this in mind of our Mission Statement here at Billtown Baptist Church, that once I get your sizes, we will look at ordering and making sure those who would like one get one, and can wear to Challenge when we go as a group look like the following:

As well, I've created a bookmark for everyone to have for in their Bible to remind yourself of where God is leading us as a church. The front has the visual statement with the acronym spelled out on the back, reminding us of the greatest and second commandment found in Matthew 22. Children and youth can you help hand them out making sure everyone gets one?

Before we continue our fellowship together in a meal let us sing a new song called Send Me.

As we close this special service we give thanks for all God has done—and we look forward with purpose. Our mission is clear, and our hearts are committed: to love God, love people, and make and equip disciples of Jesus Christ. May this mission not just be words we remember, but a calling we live out—together, in faith, with courage, and for His

glory. The best is yet to come. Please stay as you are able to share in a meal and fellowship time together. While I will end in the blessing for the meal.

Gracious God,  
We thank You for this day of celebration, for Your faithfulness through the years, and for the mission You've placed before us. As we now gather around tables, we ask You to bless the food, the hands that prepared it, and the fellowship we share. May this meal nourish our bodies, and may our time together strengthen the bonds of love and unity within our church family. In Jesus' name we pray,  
**Amen.**