

MATTHEW 28

THE FEAR FACTOR

An aerosol propellant called 1,1,1, trichloroethane, which has been used in spray cans of household cleaners, is toxic when the product is used improperly. John Broder writes in the New York Times:

In the early 1980's, teenagers discovered they could get high by spraying the cleaner into a plastic bag and breathing the fumes. The label on the can clearly warned of death or serious injury if the product was inhaled, said Victor E. Schwartz, a Washington lawyer, but some young people ignored it, leading to at least one death. The company wanted to make the warning larger, but Mr. Schwartz argued against it, saying that teenagers would then assume there was more of the propellant in the product.

What do kids worry about more than death or injury?" Mr. Schwartz asked his clients. "How they look of course. So we wrote the warning to say that sniffing the stuff could cause hair loss or facial disfigurement. It doesn't, but it scared the target audience and we haven't had a liability claim since then."

What we fear controls us. What we fear results from our values. What is most important to you?

We have reached the final chapter of Matthew. Jesus has been crucified and buried. His mission on earth is almost over. He has been enthroned next to the Father and is now awaiting a rendezvous with His disciples. Things are obvious as we look back on them some 2,000 years hence, but on that morning, things were not so obvious. People were scared and in shock. Despite Jesus' warning, this is not how they thought this Passover would go down. The male disciples are in hiding. Most of those from Galilee are beside themselves. And a few of the lady disciples are now heading to the tomb in order to see to Jesus' body.

1 Now after the Sabbath, as the first day of the week began to dawn, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary came to see the tomb. 2 And behold, there was a great earthquake; for an angel of the Lord descended from heaven, and came and rolled back the stone from the door, and sat on it. 3 His countenance was like lightning, and his clothing as white as snow. 4 And the guards shook for fear of him, and became like dead men. 5 But the angel answered and said to the women, "Do not be afraid, for I know that you seek Jesus who was crucified. 6 He is not here; for He is risen, as He said.

Come, see the place where the Lord lay. 7 And go quickly and tell His disciples that He is risen from the dead, and indeed He is going before you into Galilee; there you will see Him. Behold, I have told you."

8 So they went out quickly from the tomb with fear and great joy, and ran to bring His disciples word.

- As the ladies approach the tomb, there is an earthquake as an angel rolls the stone from the tomb's entrance. The guards pass out for fear and the ladies probably just stand in astonishment.
- ***5 But the angel answered and said to the women, "Do not be afraid, for I know that you seek Jesus who was crucified. 6 He is not here; for He is risen, as He said. Come, see the place where the Lord lay. 7 And go quickly and tell His disciples that He is risen from the dead, and indeed He is going before you into Galilee; there you will see Him. Behold, I have told you."***
- ***8 So they went out quickly from the tomb with fear and great joy, and ran to bring His disciples word.***
- "Do not be afraid! I'm sure this was a natural thing to say. I would have either passed out or headed in the opposite direction. They weren't to fear the angel or the fact that Jesus wasn't there.
- Go quickly and tell His disciples that He is risen from the dead and will meet you in Galilee. You will see Him there.
- They obeyed.
- There were two groups at the tomb that Sunday morning. And they were there for two different reasons. More on that later.

9 And as they went to tell His disciples, behold, Jesus met them, saying, "Rejoice!" So they came and held Him by the feet and worshiped Him. 10 Then Jesus said to them, "Do not be afraid. Go and tell My brethren to go to Galilee, and there they will see Me."

- As they run back to the men in hiding, they meet Jesus! His first words to them are "Rejoice!" He isn't dead! He is alive! And they fall at His feet and worship Him. There is no record of hesitation, just rejoicing! But then Jesus says, "Do not be afraid! Go and tell the disciples to meet me in Galilee and they will see me there." This of course, mirrors what the angel said. And they obey.

11 Now while they were going, behold, some of the guard came into the city and reported to the chief priests all the things that had happened. 12 When they had assembled with the elders and consulted together, they gave a large sum of money to the soldiers, 13 saying, "Tell them, 'His disciples came at night and stole Him away while we slept.' 14 And if this comes to the governor's ears, we

will appease him and make you secure.” 15 So they took the money and did as they were instructed; and this saying is commonly reported among the Jews until this day.

- While the ladies were headed to find the disciples, some of the guards reported to the chief priests what had happened. The chief priests then met with some of the elders to discuss things and wind up giving the guards some hush money and a cover story – one that was still in circulation in Matthew’s day.
- Why did the guards report to the chief priests? For one reason that was the chain of command. But they were also scared. What they had seen scared them. And now they were in danger of being derelict in their duty. That scared them also. So they took the money and ran with the cover story.
- But think of the chief priests. They were scared also. Just a few hours prior, they thought they were holding all the cards. They had gotten rid of Jesus, the rabble-rouser. The people were on their side. The governor had signed off on the plot. Now they have a missing body – one for which they have no explanation. They only have a lie, and they know it is a lie. What if the guards share what happened with their wives or friends? What if the story gets out? Can they claim it’s “fake news?”
- They are in fear. Their whole world could be turned upside down. They are in fear.

16 Then the eleven disciples went away into Galilee, to the mountain which Jesus had appointed for them. 17 When they saw Him, they worshiped Him; but some doubted.

18 And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, “All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. 19 Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, 20 teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.” Amen.

- They went away into Galilee, to the appointed mountain. (Hermon?)
- They worshipped Him, but some doubted.
- Doubted – GR. not so much a lack of faith but unsure about the situation. How would Jesus react to their leaving Him in His moment of need? They feared also.
- All authority has been given Me... Jesus now quotes Daniel 7:13,14. This is the ascension/ enthronement language He quoted in Matthew 24. As you can see, He doesn’t use it in reference to a “coming” to earth, but to His ascension to the throne in Heaven. Now He holds the playbook until all things are put under His feet. (1 Cor. 15)
- He doesn’t rebuke the men. Instead He gives them their marching orders.

They are to go and make disciples of all the nations. And they are to baptize them as an outward sign of a new birth and life. And then He says that He will be with them to the end of the age.

- Why Hermon and why the language of making disciples of all the nations? (Dt. 32 and Psalm 82, et al. – explain)
- Everyone in the story was afraid. But the only ones who had a reason to fear were those who sought to keep Jesus in the grave. And why did they fear? Because their worldview, their lives, their way of life would have been wrong. They would have no justification for their actions. If Jesus rose from the grave, then He was truly the Son of God. And if that were true, then everything they believed and wanted to do with their lives and the lives of those around them would be wrong. Think about that. What would it be like to find out that your entire life was a lie? What would it be like to find out your entire worldview was a lie? That is too big of a pill for most to swallow.
- But on the other side of the coin, those who believed in Jesus, even if they still hadn't fully processed His resurrection, had nothing to fear. Not even those who left Him in His hour of need had reason to fear. And He wanted them to know that. Look at what He told the ladies to tell them.
- ***10 Then Jesus said to them, "Do not be afraid. Go and tell My brethren to go to Galilee, and there they will see Me."***
- He called them "brethren." And He refers to us in the same way.
- God's plan was and still is to bring to gather a family of believers that stretches across time. To believers, He has granted the power to become the "sons of God." We will reign with Him and even judge angels. We, His children have nothing to fear.
- He returned to the place where He baited Satan and his minions into having Him crucified, (Hermon) so that they could now hear that the plan to re-take the nations was commencing. The kingdom has begun to take shape and re-take territory.
- The territory is re-taken by making one disciple at a time. And we have those same marching orders.
- Restoration of Eden and the restoration of the soul.
- Pallets – recycled wood chips are worth \$30.00/ ton; recycled wood flooring = \$1,200/ ton; recycled as furniture = \$6,000/ ton.
- God is in the recycling business. He gathers and restores us in order that we take a part in restoring things to an Eden- like state. That is what happens at the end of the Bible. And it kicks off at the end of Matthew.
- **Don't fear! Rejoice! We have Jesus and He is risen!**