

Tusculum Hills Baptist Church
Paul Gunn, Pastor

Sermon title: The Immediacy of Jesus, Matthew 28

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INTRODUCTION: We've all had to wait in line. Some lines may be worth the wait; probably most are not.

- If we go to a restaurant, and there is a wait, I'm not inclined to stay if the wait is over 20 minutes.
- One of the worst waits is at the Department of Motor Vehicles. It's not the employees' fault; they are just under-staffed.
- A week ago, I helped a guy get into the VA hospital; wow, what a mess! The lobby was completely full of people waiting. Again, the employees were working hard; they were just under-staffed.
- A friend of mine has three creative children— Boulton, age 11; Porter, age 10; and William, who is age 9. I want to show you the instructions they created for how to ring a bell for help. [Shows picture] The list said press 10 times for help, press 5 times for no help, press 6 times for little to no help. And, then we have press no times for nothing, press 11 times for help, and press 9 times for a chance of help. I like that one—a chance of help. How many of you have pressed 9 times—for only chance of help? Do we trust God's timing?

Porter, the daughter, pressed the 9 times—for a chance of help. Boulton, her older brother, walked into the room backwards, seemingly inattentive. When Porter asked for a glass of water, he returned an hour later with a cube of ice and a single oyster cracker. Wow, doesn't that reaction qualify for a chance of help?

I laughed and laughed when I heard this story, and as a preacher, of course, I saw the illustration. What if we had to ring a bell and wait on Jesus? I am moved by the

immediacy of Jesus' ministry. Jesus acted quickly on things. Jesus was not a procrastinator. Sometimes we're waiting on Jesus, and sometimes we wonder about his timing.

There are four points to my message today that speak of Jesus' immediacy.

1. Jesus led his ministry with a sense of immediacy.
2. He expects us to respond to his call immediately.
3. Because of the work of Jesus Christ, our sins are forgiven immediately.
4. He expects us to follow his commission immediately.

First, JESUS LED HIS MINISTRY WITH A SENSE OF IMMEDIACY.

SCRIPTURE: Matthew 8:3 [A man had leprosy] ³*Jesus reached out his hand and touched the man. "I am willing," he said. "Be clean!" **Immediately** he was cleansed of his leprosy.*

SCRIPTURE: Matthew 14:22 [Jesus and his disciples were on a boat and Jesus decided to walk on water] ²²***Immediately** Jesus made the disciples get into the boat and go ahead of him to the other side, while he dismissed the crowd.*

SCRIPTURE: Matthew 14:27 ²⁷*But Jesus **immediately** said to them: "Take courage! It is I. Don't be afraid."*

SCRIPTURE: Matthew 14:31 ³¹***Immediately** Jesus reached out his hand and caught him. "You of little faith," he said, "why did you doubt?"*

SCRIPTURE: Matthew 20:34 [The blind–] ³⁴*Jesus had compassion on them and touched their eyes. **Immediately** they received their sight and followed him.*

SCRIPTURE: Matthew 21:19 ¹⁹*Seeing a fig tree by the road, he went up to it but found nothing on it except leaves. Then he said to it, "May you never bear fruit again!" **Immediately** the tree withered.*

SCRIPTURE: Mark 1:42 [The leper–] ⁴²***Immediately** the leprosy left him and he was cleansed.*

SCRIPTURE: Mark 2:8 [Jesus healed a paralyzed man and some didn't like it.]
⁸*Immediately Jesus knew in his spirit that this was what they were thinking in their hearts, and he said to them, "Why are you thinking these things?"*

SCRIPTURE: Mark 5:29 ²⁹*Immediately her bleeding stopped and she felt in her body that she was freed from her suffering.*

SCRIPTURE: Mark 5:42 ⁴² [There was a girl who was dead.] *Immediately the girls stood up and began to walk around (she was twelve years old). At this they were completely astonished.*

SCRIPTURE: Mark 6:45 [Jesus Walk on the Water] ⁴⁵*Immediately Jesus made his disciples get into the boat and go on ahead of him to Bethsaida, while he dismissed the crowd.*

Here is what I want you to see:

- When Jesus healed people, he didn't think about it. He didn't consult anyone. No one was partially healed. No one merely began the healing process. The Bible says they were immediately healed.
- Not only did Jesus lead his ministry with a sense of immediacy, but

Second, HE EXPECTS US TO RESPOND TO HIS CALL IMMEDIATELY.

What should our response be when Jesus calls out to us? Our response should be like the disciples. When James and John were fishing and Jesus called them to be his disciples, the Scripture says in Matthew 4:22, "...*immediately they left the boat and their father and followed him.*"

ILLUSTRATION: Why should our response be any less than immediate? When I worked for Air Force recruiting, I learned how recruiting those who had the sense of urgency moved. I learned quickly—window shoppers weren't serious. When I visited seminaries, I would have visitors to my table who said, "I almost joined the Air Force once" or, "I thought about joining the Air Force a long time ago." Or, they would say things like, "My uncle almost went to Vietnam." Those folks

wasted my time, and I quickly learned how to eliminate them and to move on to people who were serious.

APPLICATION: And likewise, I'll hear the same excuses when it comes to being a follower of Jesus Christ—"I thought about becoming a Christian once" or, "I've been thinking about becoming a Christian." You know, Jesus doesn't need any window shoppers. He doesn't need any halfhearted commitments. I believe if there's anything that's held the church back from redeeming the world, it's this very issue—lack of immediacy—lack of urgency.

What if Jesus' ministry had been held up by committee meetings? What if Jesus' ministry required a majority vote of his disciples? Jesus moved about, taught, and healed with a sense of immediacy—a sense of urgency. How will you respond to him today?

Join me in Matthew 28.

SCRIPTURE: Matthew 28:1-10 ¹*After the Sabbath, at dawn on the first day of the week, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary went to look at the tomb.*

²*There was a violent earthquake, for an angel of the Lord came down from heaven and, going to the tomb, rolled back the stone and sat on it. ³His appearance was like lightning, and his clothes were white as snow. ⁴The guards were so afraid of him that they shook and became like dead men.*

⁵*The angel said to the women, "Do not be afraid, for I know that you are looking for Jesus, who was crucified. ⁶He is not here; he is risen, just as he said. Come and see the place where he lay. ⁷Then go quickly and tell his disciples: 'He has risen from the dead and is going ahead of you into Galilee. There you will see him.' Now I have told you."*

⁸*So the women hurried away from the tomb, afraid yet filled with joy, and ran to tell his disciples. ⁹Suddenly Jesus met them. "Greetings," he said. They came to him, clasped his feet and worshipped him. ¹⁰Then Jesus said to them, "Do not be afraid. Go and tell my brothers to go to Galilee; there they will see me."*

EXPLANATION: When Jesus arose from the dead, he **AROSE**. He didn't have days of recovery from death. He didn't arise from the dead like a groggy, sleepyhead person! And, after he arose, he appeared to over 500 people. Do you realize there were more eye witnesses for Christ, than those who witnessed the signing of the Declaration of Independence? Five hundred people are more than we have here today.

Now, let's go back to the Scripture—

Here's what happened— the Roman guards came up with a scheme to save their hides by claiming the disciples stole the body of Jesus (See Matthew 28:13-15).

APPLICATION: People are still trying to come up with schemes today to detract people from becoming followers of Christ.

So let's review—

- Jesus led his ministry with a sense of immediacy,

-He expects us to respond to his call immediately, and—

Third, BECAUSE OF THE WORK OF JESUS CHRIST, OUR SINS ARE FORGIVEN IMMEDIATELY.

SCRIPTURE: Romans 10:9 ⁹*If you declare with your mouth, "Jesus is Lord," and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.*

EXPLANATION: It does not say, "You will get a number, and you have to stay in line."

And Peter, standing before the Sanhedrin in Acts 4 said,

SCRIPTURE: Acts 4:12 ¹²*"Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to mankind by which we must be saved."*

EXPLANATION: When you repent of sin, your sins are forgiven! Doing penance to atone for sins is a creation of man. It is not found in the Bible. The Bible never

says performing works or punishing oneself accomplishes anything, much less atoning for sin.

In fact, listen to what the Bible says in Isaiah 58:5.

SCRIPTURE: Isaiah 58:5 ⁵“*You humble yourselves by going through the motions of penance, bowing your heads like reeds bending in the wind. You dress in burlap and cover yourselves with ashes. Is this what you call fasting? Do you really think this will please the LORD?*”(New Living Translation)

The answer is no. The only thing that pleases the Lord is when we come to him in a spirit of repentance and in faith—accepting Jesus as Lord and Savior. The sinless life, death, burial, and miraculous resurrection of Jesus made him the sacrifice for man’s sins. What if Jesus had only partial power to forgive sin? What if Jesus offered to us a chance of help? We’d all be in serious trouble. We would be doomed.

Let me review—

- Jesus led his ministry with a sense of immediacy,
- He expects us to respond to his call immediately,
- Because of the work of Jesus Christ, our sins are forgiven immediately, and—

Fourth, and lastly, HE EXPECTS US TO FOLLOW HIS COMMISSION IMMEDIATELY.

SCRIPTURE: Matthew 28: 16-20 ¹⁶ *Then the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain where Jesus had told them to go.* ¹⁷ *When they saw him, they worshiped him; but some doubted.* ¹⁸ *Then Jesus came to them and said, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me.* ¹⁹ *Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,* ²⁰ *and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.”*

EXPLANATION: Jesus expects us to follow his commission immediately.

CONCLUSION: Now listen to me this morning—you know Jesus loves you. Jesus died on that cross—that awful cross—for you. He was buried in a borrowed tomb. And, then Jesus resurrected from the dead. He died for your sins in place of you. Jesus paid the price so you wouldn't have to pay the price. Do you understand that this morning?

The other day I had a conversation with a friend of mine who asked about the intellectual capability of some people to understand if they have mental handicaps. My answer to him came so easily—Jesus meets us where we are. No—you don't have to understand the whole Bible. No, you don't have to understand every sermon, but you do have to know this—Jesus came to save you. Jesus came to save you from your sins, to give you a hope of eternal life, and to give you an abundant life on this earth. This is why Jesus came. This is why we celebrate the resurrection—our hope in Christ.

[Pray]

I hope you've worshipped this morning.

I hope the words, the prayers, the message which was spoken, and the songs that were sung have made us kinder, gentler and more compassionate people. God bless you.

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