

(Matthew 28)

Prologue: A New Beginning

The Presswood family was gathered in the living room, the sun casting a warm glow through the window. The warmth of the sunlight seemed to wrap around them, while the faint rustle of leaves outside added to the cozy atmosphere. The texture of the soft cushions beneath them and the distant sound of birds outside made the setting feel even more serene. The warmth of the sunlight seemed to wrap around them, while the faint rustle of leaves outside added to the cozy atmosphere. They had just finished reading the final chapters of the Gospel of Matthew, reflecting on the profound events of Jesus' resurrection and His Great Commission. Ariel, with a thoughtful look on her face, flipped through the pages, her mind swirling with questions about what they had just read. Alice, with Mr. Fluffernutter resting on her lap, was eagerly waiting to hear more.

"Daddy," Ariel asked, "what does the resurrection really mean for us? I mean, it's great that Jesus came back to life, but how does that change everything?"

Ryan smiled, his eyes filled with joy. "The resurrection changes everything, Ariel. It means that death is no longer the end. Jesus conquered death, and because of that, we can have eternal life. His victory gives us hope, no matter what happens in this life. For me, knowing that Jesus rose from the dead means that I can face anything without fear, because He is always with me. The resurrection is the promise that, just like Jesus rose from the dead, we too can live forever with Him."

Ariel nodded, still reflecting. She felt a mixture of awe and uncertainty. "And then, He gave us a mission, right?"

"Exactly," Ryan said. "Before He ascended to heaven, Jesus gave His disciples—and all of us—a commission to share the good news with the world. The resurrection wasn't just for us to celebrate; it's a message to be shared with everyone."

Alice, holding Mr. Fluffernutter up like a puppet, added, her eyes sparkling with excitement, "We get to tell everyone about how Jesus is alive!" She bounced in her seat, her voice high-pitched with excitement, and her feet tapping the floor as if she could barely contain her energy. She bounced in her seat, her enthusiasm evident in every movement.

"That's right," Ryan said with a smile. "Let's use the Time Audit Machine to go back and witness the resurrection and the Great Commission. We'll see how Jesus gave His followers the hope of new life and the mission to share that hope with the world."

The Journey Begins: The Empty Tomb

Ariel leaned forward, her eyes wide as she peered into the tomb's shadowy interior. Her heart pounded in her chest, and a sense of awe washed over her. "It's empty," she whispered, her voice trembling with wonder. Alice, on the other hand, bounced on her toes, holding Mr. Fluffernutter high. "He's alive! Just

like He said! This is the best news ever!” The stone that had been sealing the tomb was rolled away, and two women, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary, stood in awe, staring inside.

“There they are,” Ryan said, pointing. “These women were the first to discover the empty tomb.”

Ariel’s eyes widened, and she felt a shiver run down her spine. “The tomb is empty? Where’s Jesus?”

“Jesus is alive,” Ryan said, his voice filled with excitement. “He rose from the dead, just as He promised. This is the moment that changes everything.”

The Angel’s Message: He is Risen (Matthew 28:5-7)

A burst of light filled the air as the angel appeared, his robe shimmering like snow in the sunlight. The women fell back, shielding their eyes, their breaths quick and shallow. “Fear not,” the angel’s voice rang out, steady and filled with joy.

“Fear not ye: for I know that ye seek Jesus, which was crucified. He is not here: for He is risen, as He said. Come, see the place where the Lord lay.” (Matthew 28:5-6)

Ariel’s voice was filled with wonder. “He is risen! Just like He said!”

“Yes, Ariel,” Ryan said. “Jesus’ resurrection was the fulfillment of everything He had promised. He was not just another man—He was the Son of God, and His victory over death proves that He is who He said He is.”

The angel then gave the women a message:

“And go quickly, and tell His disciples that He is risen from the dead; and, behold, He goeth before you into Galilee; there shall ye see Him: lo, I have told you.” (Matthew 28:7)

Ariel’s pen flew across her notebook. ““Go and tell,”” she murmured, underlining the phrase. Her brow furrowed as she thought about the weight of the command. How could she share something so big at school? What if no one listened? It wasn’t just a message for the women—it was for everyone. But how could she share something so big at school? What if no one listened? The first message of the resurrection was given to the women to share with the disciples. And from there, the good news was to be spread to the world.”

The Women’s Encounter with Jesus (Matthew 28:8-10)

The two women hurried away from the tomb, their hearts full of joy and amazement. Mary Magdalene fell to her knees, tears streaming down her face as she clung to Jesus’ feet. Her heart pounded with a mixture of awe and overwhelming joy, the physical sensation of His presence making her feel both small and deeply loved. “Rabboni,” she whispered, her voice breaking with joy. Beside her, the other Mary covered her mouth, laughter mingling with sobs. Jesus smiled gently, His presence radiating peace. Suddenly, they encountered Jesus Himself, and behold, Jesus met them, saying, All hail. And they came and held Him by the feet, and worshipped Him.” (Matthew 28:9)

Alice looked up, her eyes wide with excitement. “They saw Jesus alive! Just like He said!”

Alice hugged Mr. Fluffernutter tightly. “I don’t know how to go to the whole world,” she said, her brow furrowed. Then her face lit up. “But I know Jesus will be with me. That’s what He promised!”

“Yes, and they worshipped Him right there,” Ryan said. “This is such a beautiful moment. The resurrection isn’t just a fact to be believed—it’s a relationship to be experienced. Jesus was showing His followers that He was truly alive, and that He was present with them, just as He promised.”

Jesus spoke to them, saying:

“Be not afraid: go tell My brethren that they go into Galilee, and there shall they see Me.” (Matthew 28:10)

The Great Commission: Go and Make Disciples (Matthew 28:16-20)

Later, as the disciples gathered in Galilee, Jesus appeared to them on a mountain. The mountain air was crisp and filled with the scent of wildflowers. The gentle breeze carried the soft rustling of leaves, and the distant chirping of birds added a serene soundtrack to the moment. The disciples stood in a semi-circle, the wind tugging at their robes as Jesus’ voice carried across the hillside. Some of the disciples exchanged glances, their expressions a mix of awe and determination. Each word felt heavy with meaning, settling into their hearts like seeds ready to grow. He came to them with a powerful message, saying:

“All power is given unto Me in heaven and in earth.” (Matthew 28:18)

Ariel looked up. “Jesus is the King of everything—He has all power!”

“Yes, He does,” Ryan said. “Because Jesus rose from the dead, He has the authority to send His followers out into the world with His message of hope and salvation. His resurrection gives Him the power to accomplish everything He has called us to do.”

Then, Jesus gave His disciples the Great Commission:

“Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.” (Matthew 28:19)

“The whole world?” Ariel’s voice rose in disbelief, her eyes widening. “That’s... impossible!” She looked at Ryan, her shoulders sagging slightly with the weight of the thought.

Ryan knelt beside her, his hand on her shoulder, his eyes soft with encouragement. Ariel hesitated, her brow furrowed. “Think of it like this: it starts with one. One friend you share with. One person you help. That’s how the world changes.” Ariel looked at him, her eyes searching his face for reassurance, and slowly nodded, feeling a small spark of hope.

Ryan paused, making sure Ariel and Alice were following along. “This is a big mission, isn’t it? Jesus told His disciples—and all of us—to go and make disciples of all nations. He didn’t just want them to stay where they were; He wanted them to share His message of love and forgiveness with the whole world.”

“Teach them what?” Ariel asked.

“Teach them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you,” Ryan said, quoting Jesus’ words. “We are called to live according to Jesus’ teachings and to show others how to follow Him. It’s not just about talking; it’s about living in a way that reflects His love and His truth.”

Jesus concluded with an incredible promise:

“Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world.” (Matthew 28:20)

Ariel’s face lit up. “So, Jesus will always be with us?”

“Yes, He will,” Ryan said. “His resurrection shows that He is alive, and His promise is that He will be with us—guiding us, empowering us, and helping us—every step of the way.”

The Significance of the Great Commission

Ryan turned to Ariel and Alice, his voice filled with purpose. “The Great Commission is Jesus’ call to all of us, not just to the disciples. We’re all part of God’s mission to share the good news of Jesus with the world. When we serve others, share our faith, and love people the way Jesus loves us, we are fulfilling this commission.”

“I think I can tell my friend Emily about Jesus,” Ariel said, her voice hesitant but determined.

Alice twirled in place, clutching Mr. Fluffernutter. “And I’ll tell everyone at tea time!” she declared.

Ryan chuckled. “Looks like the Great Commission is already starting here.”

Ariel nodded. “So, we’re part of the mission too?” When we serve others, share our faith, and love people the way Jesus loves us, we are fulfilling this commission.”

Ariel nodded. “So, we’re part of the mission too?”

“Absolutely,” Ryan said. “Every Christian has a part to play in spreading the message of Jesus. Whether we’re sharing with our friends, serving our neighbors, or showing love to those around us, we’re all helping to share the hope of the resurrection with the world.”

Alice looked up. “So, we’re telling people that Jesus is alive?”

“Yes, that’s the message,” Ryan said. “Because Jesus is alive, we have hope. And it’s our job to share that hope with everyone we meet.”

Returning Home: Living in the Resurrection

Back in the garage, the Time Audit Machine powered down, leaving the family reflective and inspired. Ariel flipped through her notes, while Alice gathered all her stuffed animals into a circle, arranging them meticulously. “Mr. Fluffernutter, you’re in charge of the feast!” she declared with a giggle. “We have to celebrate! Jesus is alive!” She set up a pretend ‘resurrection celebration’ for Mr. Fluffernutter and her other stuffed animals, placing tiny cups and plates in front of each one as if they were all sharing in the joy.

Ariel stared at the Bible in her lap, her fingers tracing the edge of the page. A mix of emotions swirled within her—hope, uncertainty, and a desire to understand more deeply. She looked up at Ryan, her voice soft. “It’s amazing that Jesus rose from the dead,” she said, “but I don’t understand how it changes what I do tomorrow. Does it make a difference at school? With my friends?”

Ryan knelt beside her, his voice gentle. “I know it can be hard to understand, sweetheart. The resurrection means that every day we can live with hope, knowing that Jesus is with us. It means that

we can be brave and kind, even when it's hard, because Jesus has already won the victory. When you're at school, you can show His love by being a friend to someone who feels alone, or by being honest and kind, even if others aren't. That's how the resurrection changes tomorrow—it gives us a reason to live differently, to make choices that reflect Jesus' love.”

Ariel's eyes were thoughtful as she nodded slowly. “So, it's like... living like Jesus is always with me?”

“Yes, exactly,” Ryan said, smiling. “And you're never alone because He is alive, and He is always with you.”

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“Yes, exactly,” Ryan said, smiling. “And you're never alone because He is alive, and He is always with you.”

Reflection: The Power of the Resurrection

That evening, Ariel read aloud from Matthew 28:

““And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto Me in heaven and in earth.””

Ariel wrote in her journal, her pen scratching across the page. “The resurrection means I don't have to be afraid of what happens next. Jesus is alive, and that means everything will be okay. I just need to trust Him—and tell others about His love.” As she finished writing, she paused, feeling a sense of determination settle in her chest. She knew that even if it felt scary, she could take small steps to share this hope with those around her.

“Because Jesus is alive,” Ryan said, “we can live with hope and purpose. His resurrection means that we have the power to live for Him, and the promise that He will always be with us.”

Ariel nodded. “And we get to share that hope with others.”

Alice hugged Mr. Fluffernutter tightly. “I think Jesus is the best! And I'm going to tell everyone He's alive!”

Takeaway: Living with the Hope of the Resurrection

In Matthew 28, we see the ultimate victory of Jesus' resurrection and the powerful commission He gave to His followers. The resurrection means that we have new life in Christ, and that we are called to share that hope with the world. Through the Great Commission, Jesus calls all of us to go and make disciples, baptizing and teaching others about His love and salvation. As we live in the hope of His resurrection, we are empowered to fulfill His mission, knowing that He is with us always.