Pastor Richard Allen Farmer

Crossroads Church

5587 Redan Road

Stone Mountain, GA 30088

Templates of Transition, Part 2

Text: Matthew 28:16-20

It is John’s gospel that documents the language that Jesus started using in the final months of His ministry. Jesus delivers words dripping with finality.

I go... (John 14:2)

If I do not go, the Comforter will not come. (John 16:5-7)

My peace I leave with you. (John 14:27)

Go?

Your leaving is to my advantage??

Jesus says this to group of people who have made significant changes in order to follow Him. Some left their jobs and families to travel with Him (Matthew 4:18-22). In their thinking, this tour is supposed to last a while. Now, Jesus is speaking the language of departure more than the language of discipleship. He is still loving but He’s also leaving. By the time we get to this commissioning text in Matthew 28, it’s over. Jesus has died, been buried, has risen from the dead, and is now getting ready to leave the earth.

This passage is called the great commission, that is, the followers of Jesus are sent out (commissioned) to continue the teaching of Jesus. As these followers or disciples of Jesus transition to a life without Jesus, they receive some reminders.

1. You have authority. Use it. This is in Jesus’ first line. All authority in heaven and earth has been given to Jesus...and He shares it. (Luke 10:1-9, esp. 9; Markan version of the great commission: 16:17)
2. Replicate the ministry you’ve received. Preach, teach, baptize.

I have imagined the responses of these disciples. In my imagination, they were using the language of inability.

* We can’t do this.
* We don’t know enough.
* You need to stay longer until we get this whole ministry thing down.
* We are not ready.

This is a daunting task, a complex and frightening assignment.

It is the last line of Jesus that makes this transition seem possible. These disciples will transition from life *with* Jesus to life w*ithout* Him.

In a phrase that is as comforting as it is poetic, Jesus said, *I am with you always, even to the end...*

**ILLUS**.

A couple of years ago, I asked the pastor emeritus of Fairfield Baptist Church, Rev. Micheal Benton, if he’d like to go flying with me. He said, “You haven’t read your Bible. Jesus said, ‘Low, I am with you always’. I’m not getting in a small plane”. 😀

Jesus promises to be present while absent.

It is the persistent presence of The Eternal that makes this difference for these disciples who have heard the language of departure and finality from their Master.

I recently spoke to a widow who went to a family wedding. She said her late husband would have loved it. Then she said, “He was there in spirit”.

That’s Jesus in this text. Jesus will leave His followers physically, but He will be with them always, in the person of the Holy Spirit.

Beloved Crossroads, I will leave you soon. However, Jesus has promised His presence to you, and He will be with you...ALWAYS!!!

Amen