

Sermon for April 12, 2020

BMZ Regional Church

Series: RelationSHIPS!

Text: Matthew 28:16-20, James 4:8, Psalm 139:1-7, Acts 4:13, John 10:10

Title: "LordSHIP Part 1: Get Out!"

Introduction: Please LISTEN as I READ from the Book of Mark ... Mark 16:2-7 =
² *Very early on Sunday morning, just at sunrise, they went to the tomb.* ³ *On the way they were asking each other, "Who will roll away the stone for us from the entrance to the tomb?"* ⁴ *But as they arrived, they looked up and saw that the stone, which was very large, had already been rolled aside.* ⁵ *When they entered the tomb, they saw a young man clothed in a white robe sitting on the right side. The women were shocked,* ⁶ *but the angel said, "Don't be alarmed. You are looking for Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified. He isn't here! He is risen from the dead! Look, this is where they laid his body.* ⁷ *Now go and tell his disciples, including Peter, that Jesus is going ahead of you to Galilee. You will see him there, just as he told you before he died."* ¹

Bodily Resurrection! He is WORTHY and Fully CAPABLE of being LORD! Do NOT forget to be in AWE of JESUS TODAY! Here's the thing: WE, TODAY in 2020 can COUNT on the POWER of the RESURRECTION to CARRY us through this PANDEMIC ... and to CARRY us into a RELATIONSHIP with our RISEN LORD!

Therefore ... Good morning BMZ! HAPPY EASTER! So glad you are here as we CELEBRATE the PHYSICAL RESURRECTION of JESUS and KICK OFF our series, **"RelationSHIPS!"**.

Do you all remember playing the game "Battleship"? FUN GAME (Quarantine entertainment)! Do you remember the commercials? "F-5" "You sank my battleship!"

Well, that's kind of what we are talking about in THIS SERIES. MAYBE you've NOTICED our lives are ENTWINED in relationships. And it seems like there's always ONE relationship that HITS the ROCKS. Why is it so hard to keep our relationships AFLOAT? Get it? Ships? We have FAMILY / FRIEND / WORK / DATING / MARRIAGE RELATIONSHIPS and we often JUGGLE to try to keep them all running smoothly, right? Well, BEFORE we go FURTHER, let me tell you: they will NEVER be PERFECT (we are human and imperfect), BUT they can be BETTER!

We SOMETIMES FORGET: God CREATED US! THEN, God was kind enough to TELL us HOW to live at our HIGHEST efficiency and effectiveness. WE can LEARN a LOT about RELATIONSHIPS from the ONE who CREATED US! Over the next few weeks, we are going to LISTEN to what GOD has to SAY about RELATIONSHIPS...

IF you haven't already, GRAB your MESSAGE NOTES ... Hit the "TAKE NOTES" Button on the right/below the screen. Also, Hit the BUTTON that says "CONNECTION CARD" ... *You will see there are blanks to fill in ... Please take the time to do so. Write down whatever else you think is important to you and your faith journey. After worship, SEND your CONNECTION CARD and FILE your MESSAGE NOTES DIGITALLY or PAPERLY. Please Re-read the Scripture and the notes to keep growing and learning. For those of you on-line, you can go to our website, www.bmzchurch.org ... LET'S PRAY!*

IF God KNOWS more about RELATIONSHIPS than anyone and we are going to LISTEN to God, guess what that means? It means we MUST be in a RELATIONSHIP with God. **If we want ANY of our relationships to go well, the first thing is to get into a good relationship with GOD!**

¹ Tyndale House Publishers. (2015). *Holy Bible, New Living Translation* (Mk 16:2-7). Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House Publishers.

Ever FELT LIKE you did NOT know HOW to be in a RELATIONSHIP with God? Sometimes GOD seems so FAR AWAY ...

QUESTION: If you could pick ONE thing as the CENTRAL THEME of God's Word, what would that be? If you pick up many Christian books these days, you might hear: **"He will bless you!"** That's in there, but it's NOT the central theme. If you listen to me too much, you might think: **"God will forgive you!"** A VITAL MESSAGE, but I believe there's something ELSE DRIVING the WHOLE HISTORY of the BIBLE.

Here's MY ARGUMENT for the CENTRAL THEME / PROMISE of Scripture: **GOD WILL BE WITH YOU.** Isn't that GREAT? No matter WHAT CIRCUMSTANCE you're in, no matter WHERE you are, no matter what you've DONE or SAID or FELT or THOUGHT or EXPERIENCED; God says HE will be WITH YOU! Scripture tells us God will NEVER LEAVE NOR FORSAKE you and God's Spirit is right INSIDE of us (now that's close!) So, WHY do we FEEL like GOD is SO FAR AWAY?

Our Bibles TELL US about the Hebrew people out in the WILDERNESS and God shows them the way by giving them a CLOUD to follow during the DAY and a PILLAR of FIRE at NIGHT. God is WITH THEM, giving them DIRECTION.

Later in our Bible, JESUS SHOWS UP. Jesus is God in human form ... He HEALS and FEEDS and HELPS and TEACHES PEOPLE how to have LIFE ... BETTER! Then He HANGS on a CROSS to take away the SIN that SEPARATES us from GOD. BUT, IF Jesus DIED to take away SIN that stands between us and him, WHY does it FEEL LIKE we're STILL NOT that CLOSE to Jesus and sometimes WONDER IF He's EVEN THERE? If we are supposed to live life WITH God, WHY does GOD sometimes SEEM HARD to FIND?

Well, the DISCONNECT is NOT on GOD'S END ... **JAMES 4:8a = ⁸ Come close to God, and God will come close to you.**² So IF I want God to COME CLOSE to ME, I must GET CLOSE to GOD! Now we are getting somewhere! NOW, I need to know HOW to get CLOSE to GOD! Today will HELP!

Our Scripture for today comes from the END of the Book of Matthew. Jesus has DIED on the CROSS, been RESURRECTED and APPEARED in BODILY FORM to His Disciples NUMEROUS TIMES. And, as we think about the RESURRECTION of JESUS on this EASTER Sunday, let's PAY ATTENTION to His LAST WORDS in the Resurrected Body according to MATTHEW ... The GREAT COMMISSION!

MATTHEW 28:16-20 = ¹⁶ Then the eleven disciples left for Galilee, going to the mountain where Jesus had told them to go. ¹⁷ When they saw him, they worshiped him—but some of them doubted! ¹⁸ Jesus came and told his disciples, "I have been given all authority in heaven and on earth. ¹⁹ Therefore, go and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. ²⁰ Teach these new disciples to obey all the commands I have given you. And be sure of this: I am with you always, even to the end of the age."³ And JESUS is TRUE to His WORD! Later, Jesus gave the Holy Spirit and the Disciples/Apostles were FILLED with the Spirit of Jesus! By the Power of the Holy Spirit, they (and us) had JESUS WITH THEM always!

Do NOT MISS ... There is a CONTEXT or PREREQUISITE to Jesus saying, **"I am with you always..."** Verse 19 = **"Therefore, GO..."** WAIT! What was that? **"GO"** and I will BE WITH YOU! Jesus says, **"I am with you ... AS YOU GO and DO what I've told you!"** **"As you are OBEDIENT to ME, I'm there!"**

² Tyndale House Publishers. (2015). *Holy Bible, New Living Translation* (Jas 4:8). Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House Publishers.
³ Tyndale House Publishers. (2015). *Holy Bible, New Living Translation* (Mt 28:16-20). Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House Publishers.

TO BUILD A RELATIONSHIP WITH JESUS, I NEED TO:

#1 = GO!

NO SURPRISE = Jesus ALWAYS challenged the Disciples to 'GO'. Jesus called fishermen ... FAMILY BUSINESS ... SPEND the REST of their lives doing. Fathers, Grandfathers, etc. They GREW UP FISHING and had ACQUIRED ALL the SKILLS they would need for LIFE when they were TEENAGERS. No thinking, just doing. Never have to LEARN ANYTHING NEW. DONE. Then JESUS says to FOUR of them, ***"If you want to PARTNER with ME, put down your nets (COMFORT ZONE) and let's GO! I'm going to TEACH you SOMETHING NEW!"***

They do it! They DROP their NETS, their SECURITY, their PERCEIVED CONTROL on the REST of their LIVES and GET OUT of their COMFORT ZONE!

PETER = On the Sea of Galilee during a STORM. Peter wants to be CLOSE to Jesus, but it means Peter must GET OUT of the BOAT and WALK on WATER. Do you know WHY? Because that's WHERE JESUS WAS! *"Come close to me..."* Peter had to GET OUT of his comfort zone to be with Jesus! It was CRAZY! It was JESUS' IDEA!

I don't think the Disciples were surprised Jesus said He would be WITH THEM IF they 'GO'! They'd discovered many times ... to HANG CLOSE with Jesus, **He was always available – just outside of their COMFORT ZONE!**

WE might as well GET USED to it TOO ... IF we WANT to BE WITH JESUS; it WILL BE SOMEWHERE OUTSIDE of where we CURRENTLY RESIDE! That's HOW God WORKS! God MOVES toward THINGS IMPORTANT to HIM ... and THOSE THINGS generally make us UNCOMFORTABLE. God MOVES us to PLACES where we can NOT TRUST ourselves ... we MUST TRUST GOD! God moves toward the HURTING / POOR / HUNGRY / ABANDONED... IF we want to BE WITH GOD, we will NEED to GET OUT of our COMFORT ZONE!

When we RELY on God, we BUILD our RELATIONSHIP with God ... and that is what GOD WANTS to HAPPEN! Know HOW to GAUGE if you are WITH GOD?

If you can handle it, no need for God! You're NOT doing God's thing anyway! If you're comfortable; don't need God! Not living by FAITH!

#2 = Get OUT!

How many of you wear a WATCH? Do you ever notice when you get a NEW watch you are fully aware of it? But, after a few days, you FORGET it's THERE...

When I was in 5th grade we moved to Neenah, WI. One of the things Neenah is known for is TRAINS. If you were ever late for anything in Neenah, all you had to say was "TRAIN" and everyone understood. When I first moved there, the trains would WAKE ME UP at night. But, after a while I got used to them and just slept right through them. This has a NAME. It's called "**HABITUATION**". We become DESENSITIZED to things that are still there. We become IMMUNE. We get USED TO IT!

Have you ever been in a RUT? It's amazing HOW a RUT can BLIND us and DESENSITIZE us from what is REAL and TRUE. So, it makes sense that God would say, ***"If we are looking for Me, I am waiting for you just outside your comfort zone..."***

This is IMPORTANT ... Jesus said ... **John 10:10 = ¹⁰ The thief's purpose is to steal and kill and destroy. My purpose is to give them a rich and satisfying life.** ⁴ He came that our "**JOY might be FULL**"! IOW, Jesus came so we could REALLY LIVE! That 'JOY' is WAITING for YOU ... JUST OUTSIDE your COMFORT ZONE!

⁴ Tyndale House Publishers. (2015). *Holy Bible, New Living Translation* (Jn 10:10). Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House Publishers.

BTW, God will NEVER DRAG you outside your comfort zone. It's UP to YOU to STEP out of it! Have you ever been AROUND someone who has been on a MISSION TRIP? They get WEIRD! *"Dude, everything was crazy! We flew down to Florida and the Pastor was wearing this grass skirt because it was his birthday and we all laughed at him. And then Tanya lost her luggage, so we had to go get that... Then, we took a ship-type thing from Miami over to Grand Bahama Island, but we couldn't get our building materials because there was some problem with customs, so we just did what we could until we could get our stuff and then when we got the building material we only had 3.5 days to build this whole house, so we worked like crazy from early in the morning until late. And it was HOT! I was dripping with sweat like, the whole time and I was SO TIRED and HUNGRY at the end of the day that when the women from the church we were working at served us chicken and it was GREEN ... we didn't care. We ate it like we hadn't eaten in weeks! And one guy got really dehydrated and we had to revive him... And it was awesome!" "What?"*

"Yeah, something really cool happened ... it was like God showed up! I'm not sure what it was ... if I just had to get out and be somewhere different, but it was like God was really close to us..." When we're OBEDIENT, this is what HAPPENS!

You know, if you're LOOKING for God; He's probably JUST OUTSIDE your COMFORT ZONE. It's like God is ALWAYS THERE, BUT to SEE God, we NEED to get AWAY from the DAILY HUM of LIFE and GO in the same direction God is going. **#3 = Let Jesus IN!**

WRITE that down. Not only do we NEED to get out of our comfort zones ... There is SOMETHING ELSE going on. We need to LET JESUS IN!

Okay, this is my dog, BRUEGGER (picture). BRUEGGER'S a great dog! He GREETs me with a whole BUNCH of WIGGLES... But, as much as BRUEGGER loves me, his Master (Doug = *"you are my master and I am your dog!"*), there are times BRUEGGER AVOIDS ME. There are times I'm in the house and call BRUEGGER and he WON'T COME. He goes to SARAH! Guess why?

Right! He knows I KNOW he's DONE something WRONG! He CHEWED something up or he's been STEALING from the GARBAGE. What keeps a loving DOG away from his MASTER? He knows he's DONE something WRONG!

What keeps US AWAY from OUR LOVING MASTER? We KNOW God KNOWS we've done something wrong! Right? Listen, GOD KNOWS ... **Psalm 139:1-7 = ¹ O LORD, you have examined my heart and know everything about me. ² You know when I sit down or stand up. You know my thoughts even when I'm far away. ³ You see me when I travel and when I rest at home. You know everything I do. ⁴ You know what I am going to say even before I say it, LORD. ⁵ You go before me and follow me. You place your hand of blessing on my head. ⁶ Such knowledge is too wonderful for me, too great for me to understand! ⁷ I can never escape from your Spirit! I can never get away from your presence!** ⁵ – God you know me and my thoughts...

Here's the deal ... I know God sounds like a of BIG BROTHER looking over our shoulder, BUT God WATCHES us and KNOWS us BECAUSE He LOVES US! IF God already KNOWS ALL about US ... WHY are trying to HIDE? Why wouldn't we let God into our space? Not only are we NOT WILLING to STEP OUT of our COMFORT ZONE, we're NOT WILLING to LET God IN EITHER!

Listen, YOU CAN'T make God LOVE you any MORE / LESS by your ACTIONS! God is like a PARENT. Even when we mess up, God LOVES us. But, like a PARENT you KNOW LOVES YOU ... don't you want to MAKE them PROUD of you?

We need to ALLOW JESUS to get INTO our BUSINESS and LOVE US through some CHANGES in our ATTITUDE/BEHAVIORS and LIFESTYLES...

#4 = BUILD the SHIP!

If the last Scripture out of Psalms SCARED you a LITTLE; please know WHY God is WATCHING us so CLOSELY. God wants what is BEST for US!

Here is one of my favorite quotes from C.S. Lewis: *"If we consider the unblushing promises of reward and the staggering nature of the rewards promised in the Gospels, it would seem that Our Lord finds our desires not too strong, but too weak. We are half-hearted creatures, fooling about with drink and sex and ambition when infinite joy is offered to us, like an ignorant child who wants to go on making mud pies in a slum because he cannot imagine what is meant by the offer of a holiday at the sea. We are far too easily pleased."*

When my OLDER KIDS were YOUNGER, we were going through the Culver's DRIVE THRU and with kid's meals, you get a FREE SCOOP of CUSTARD. I had two of my daughters with me and one asked if she could have a CANDY TOPPING for her custard (she asked because she knew it would cost \$\$). We agreed and ordered the custard. The girl working there then told us with free scoops you can get ONE TOPPING FREE ANYTIME. Molly's response was: *"All these years..."* She never knew it and realized how many times she could have had KIT KAT CRUMBLES on it...

Sometimes we get so CAUGHT UP in all the things we love, like our STUFF and ENTERTAINMENT, a great JOB with good PAY, true FRIENDS and wonderful FAMILY. All are GIFTS from God, and TOO OFTEN we fall in love with these gifts.

But there is something PRICELESS, MORE VALUABLE; LONGER LASTING than ALL those gifts COMBINED ... The GIVER of the gifts. Our HEAVENLY FATHER ... the Maker of the universe wants a RELATIONSHIP with ME! I get so BUSY and DISTRACTED playing with "MUD PIES" that I miss the opportunity to take a VACATION WITH GOD to a beautiful SANDY ocean BEACH. I could have had FREE TOPPINGS! BUT I get caught up in what I THINK is REAL LIFE.

HOW do we live OUTSIDE our COMFORT ZONE? WHAT do we need to get RIGHT in our LIVES so we can TRULY FOLLOW JESUS?

Luke to Acts ... In LUKE, Jesus was SHOWING the Disciples HOW to LIVE by GODLY PRINCIPLES and MINISTER to the WORLD. They were STUMBLING along, kind of CONFUSED as they FOLLOWED Jesus' LEAD...

In Acts, the DISCIPLES must LIVE OUT what Jesus DID. Take OVER the MINISTRY of TEACHING and HEALING and you know WHAT people observing the Apostles SAID? ACTS 4:13 = ¹³ *The members of the council were amazed when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, for they could see that they were ordinary men with no special training in the Scriptures. They also recognized them as men who had been with Jesus.*⁶ They were RECOGNIZED as MEN who had BEEN with JESUS! They had a LORDSHIP RELATIONSHIP! WHEN we step OUT of our COMFORT ZONE and start SPENDING TIME with JESUS, LIFE becomes REAL! WORSHIP becomes REAL! Our RELATIONSHIPS become REAL ... GODLY!

⁶ Tyndale House Publishers. (2015). *Holy Bible, New Living Translation* (Ac 4:13). Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House Publishers.

WHEN we have a RELATIONSHIP with JESUS and it becomes PERSONAL, the things that MATTER to JESUS, MATTER to US! It MATTERS that we GO INTO ALL the WORLD and MAKE DISCIPLES for JESUS! And THAT WORK will take you OUT of your COMFORT ZONE and INTO a FAITH RELATIONSHIP with JESUS!

If you get your relationship right with God ... Get ready for adventure!

Let's Pray!

Next Steps: *Memorize Matthew 28:18-20 (The Great Commission)*
Read Acts 3 and 4
I will take steps to Build the Ship with Jesus as Lord this week.
Invite Someone to attend worship at BMZ Church Online with me next week.

Hosting (Closing)

HEY, it has been a GREAT DAY here at BMZ... Glad you've been here with us! In a moment, we are going to RECEIVE the OFFERING so please take this time to finish COMPLETING any information

- Or NEXT STEPS on your CONNECTION CARD (**FULLY FILLED OUT!!**)
- AND when our ushers come around to RECEIVE our OFFERING
- You can drop that card in the offering basket.

IF you are a First-Time Guest with us today

- We are so glad you joined us ... And we have a GIFT for you. It's this book "**UNSHAKABLE**" and it's at the BACK TABLE / By the DOORS...
- all you need to do is HIT "SEND" your COMPLETED Connection Card

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As our ushers GET READY to come forward

- I just want to remind you that ... STEWARDSHIP is DISCIPLESHIP ... we RECEIVE an OFFERING EVERY Sunday BECAUSE it's BIBLICAL ... AND, it HELPS us GROW in our FAITH!
- STEWARDSHIP VERSE ... PSALM 139:1 = ***O Lord, you have examined my heart and know everything about me.***
- FIRST of our EARNINGS go back to the ONE who Blessed us in the 1st place! That's why WE/I do Automated Giving! I get paid ... the TITHE comes OUT FIRST!
- God's plan for BUILDING His Church was through TITHING and GIVING of the FOLLOWERS ... Share the GOOD NEWS! To REFRESH OTHERS!
- As Developing Followers of Jesus Christ, WE need to KNOW what the BIBLE says about GIVING ... NOT just what we THINK it should say.
- **MONEY is a HEART ISSUE.** And, GOD wants what is BEST for your HEART! Listen, if GOD LOVES US so much that HE is willing to GIVE UP His OWN SON FOR US, WHY would GOD LEAD us ASTRAY in FINANCES?!
- USHERS ...
- Next Week: "**LORDSHIP Part 2 as we continue 'RelationSHIPS'!**"

"Truth without Grace is Fundamentalism (Brutality). Grace without Truth is Sentimentalism (Hypocrisy)."
Special thanks to Andy Stanley, Nelson Searcy, and R.A. Pegram for outlines and ideas for this worship series.