

Remnant Life Church  
August 25, 2024  
**An Uncommon Mission**  
John 20:21

What determines the meaning of a verse or even a word in the Bible?

- As I have talked with you many times, there are two primary components that determine meaning and impact our understanding of Scripture
  - The first is the revelation of the Holy Spirit
    - That is why we ask God for understanding when we read the Word
    - It is also an acknowledgment that our knowing is not of our own but given by God
  - Second is context
    - The challenge of context begins with the number of times the original writings have been translated
      - The original Greek of the NT and Hebrew of the OT were first written in the common languages of the time
      - But there were many influences on the text over the next several hundred years
        - These included the Apostolic Fathers or earliest church leaders
        - The scribes
        - A group called the Essenes (although their translations were often not true to the original text)
        - Even Alexander the Great and the spread of the Hellenistic culture and language over much of the ancient world
          - Greek over Hebrew during this time for the scattered Jews
      - Then, nearly 400 years after the death of Jesus, both the Old and New Testaments were translated into Latin primarily by a monk named Jerome
        - It was this translation that allowed the Bible to spread throughout Europe
        - Translated into the Germanic languages and eventually English
    - We then consider what is written surrounding our passage
      - IOW, what is its meaning in relation to the verses or chapters before and after it
        - When Paul writes to the church in Corinth, we read his words with what else he wrote to them in order to understand his meaning and purpose
        - **I Corinthians 13** (love) is read in relation to chapters 12 and 14
      - We then consider the entire book
      - As well as all the other books written by Paul

- Then alongside other writers with similar types of text or topics such as Peter and John
  - Finally, with the rest of the NT
- This is all done in order to prevent a verse or word from being taken out of context and its meaning twisted
  - Done throughout history
  - The Crusades were an effort to continue the Old Testament directives of killing your enemies in their effort to spread Christianity
  - Whole sects and cults have been created by single Bible verses interpreted inaccurately
  - You must fully recognize and embrace the context of a verse in order to rightly understand its meaning

Having said all of that...our text this morning...is one verse

- Can you trust me that I present it to you with the context intact?

### READ – John 20:21

- A quick, first-time reading of this verse would likely lead the reader to interpret this as, “My Father sent me to do this ministry; now it's your turn.”
  - But there is so much more to this verse that deepens its meaning and the mission it presents
  - What this verse, in its proper context is saying is, “In the very same way My Father sent Me, that is how I am now sending you.”
  - What we must then ask in light of that fuller meaning is, “How did God send Jesus?”

Well, in Paul’s letter to the church in Phillipi, he gives us a clearer understanding of what that mission entailed

- **Phil 2:6-11** - *Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be used to his own advantage; rather, he made himself nothing by taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to death—even death on a cross! Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name, that at the name of Jesus, every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue acknowledge that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.*
- Consider what this uncommon mission meant for Jesus and ask yourself if your life reflects the same selfless heart
  - He went from heavenly riches to earthly rags
    - There are few things in our culture today valued more than wealth
    - Fully 1/3 to 1/2 of our waking hours are devoted to work – meaning earning money
    - That translates to approximately 90,000 hours over your lifetime

- I don't believe that we are to live our lives purposely in poverty or rags, but it does speak to the priority we give wealth
    - Again, money is not the root of evil it is what place it has in our lives over charity, giving, generosity, and caring for the needs of others
      - In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus tells the people not to be concerned about their material needs
      - Instead, store up treasures in heaven that are everlasting
  - He went from exaltation to humiliation
    - The purpose of the angels is twofold
      - One is as the messengers of God
      - The other is they are the worshippers of God
        - In Isaiah 6, vision of the seraphim (a type of angel) flying around the throne of God, singing in worship and adoration
    - Jesus was not only not worshipped, He was humiliated on the cross
      - The purpose of the cross was not only the death of the condemned
      - It was the full and total disgracing of the man to break him not only physically but emotionally as well
        - **Acts 8:32-33** - *He was led like a sheep to the slaughter, and as a lamb before its shearer is silent, so he did not open his mouth. In his humiliation he was deprived of justice. Who can speak of his descendants? For his life was taken from the earth.*
        - This is a prophetic quote of Isaiah's writing in **Isaiah 53**
      - Is your reputation more important to you than standing for the truth of God and His Word?
  - He went from having all authority to being obedient
    - Have you even been demoted from a position of authority to one of having to do what you are told by people you used to tell what to do?
    - Jesus not only set aside (He did not lose it or have it taken from Him) His authority but His obedience to His Father's plan led Him to die a horrible death
    - *And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to death—even death on a cross!*
- In the interest of time, consider what else Jesus' mission required – the very same one He is calling us to
  - He went from ultimate significance to ultimate rejection
  - From comfort to hardship
  - From safety to danger
  - From glory to sacrifice
  - And from life to death
- And He calls us to go into the world in the exact same way

But this is less about matching the physical element of Jesus' life and ministry and more about your attitude regarding how you live every day

- Does your attitude of living match that of Jesus?
- Is the mission of your life serious enough to you that you are willing to go into the depths of this world or do you try and balance yourself with part of yourself in the world and part of yourself out?
  - This is what we are warned about doing when we read in **Rev. 3** when John writes of the church in Laodicea that they are lukewarm – uncommitted - and Jesus said He will spit them out of His mouth
  - The depths of this world could be another country, but there are more likely more familiar places much closer
    - How about the depths of where you work?
    - The places where you play or gather socially?
    - Your neighborhood
    - Even your own family
  - Do you live the gospel in humility for everyone to see?
    - Or are you driven by the same desire for wealth, recognition, and achievement?
    - The same emotions
    - The same faults that you refuse to release

Some of the research content for this sermon is from a devotional that I use

- When I had finished writing I decided to look at the date this particular devotional was written for, and it turned out to be July 29
- That was the same date my mother died
  - She was such an example of that humble attitude, demonstrating it everywhere she went
  - It is one I pray I received from her in my efforts to live that way every day

God did not send Jesus to be comfortable or non-confrontational

- He was both uncomfortable and confrontational
- But His discomfort was sacrificial in nature and for a great purpose, and His conformation was always in love