

# Go Tell It on the Mountain

“Testify.”

**Matthew 28:16-20**

Last in the series, *Lights! Camera! Action!* (“Church” is a verb, you know)

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## King of Kings

Have you ever surfed through the channels and ended up watching one of those old classic movies? I mean one of those from the classic era of cinema, with casts of thousands and grandiose scripts. I remember once I did that – a long time ago, before we had the hundreds of channels to choose from.

I landed on one of those classic Jesus films: maybe the '61 Samuel Bronston production of *King of Kings*. The scene that stayed with me through the years was right after the resurrection. Suddenly it was Easter and the City of Jerusalem, which had been filled with cruelty and tragedy, suddenly burst into joy. People filled the streets like Labor Day in Royal Oak – laughing and singing and dancing with joy. Tears were rolling down their grinning faces.

Kind of like Detroit when the Tigers win the series, times one thousand.

Like they were liberated.

The enemy defeated. Gone.

Once beaten down by every weight of sin and oppression – now there was

Life.

And if you believe the Bible your first thought is

*Yes. That's the way it is.*

Because that is the way it is. I know it. The film's message of *what Jesus' victory means* is right.

But what actually *isn't realistic* is the way the film showed what happened after Jesus won. Easter Sunday and then Monday and every day after that: Jerusalem and

the rest of the world went on with just about the same cruelty and futility as they had before.

### **Reality**

The fact is, the news didn't get out to everybody. There was still poverty and injustice, greed and war. The people who have had things have stayed scared to death they'd lose what they had. And people who haven't had things have still either been resigned to suffer or use violence to take what they need and turn the tables. There hasn't been much sharing of bread or cloaks or turning cheeks or doing unto others as people would have others do to them. People still keep fighting.

It's like the best news of the ages has happened and not many people know.

Jesus lived so the world might have life and love, justice and joy. It's what he taught. It's what he did. Then he died rather than let this life be taken away. But as far as any crowds were concerned his resurrection was almost a secret.

His disciples could see the resurrected Jesus with their eyes for a while. Then he was going to leave their sight but not their hearts; and he gathered them on the mountain. These were his last words.

Go out and train everyone you meet, far and near, in this way of life, marking them by baptism...

He sent them out. And they went out. And since then that's the only way people have found out.

In fact, it's the only way *you* found out.

Isn't it?

So when we have a baptism or welcome someone into the membership of the church we all say

We renew our covenant faithfully to participate in the ministries of the Church by our...witness: that in everything God may be glorified through Jesus Christ.

We'll be witnesses – character witnesses for Jesus – willing to go out and, when we get the chance to talk about him: *talk* about him.

Witnesses – living out the kind of life he said the whole world needs to have.

### **If Church Were a Verb**

If that were to happen, maybe church would be a verb: not just something to go to or have, but something we do together. Like the Body of Christ is not a corpse, lifeless and pointless; but like the Body of Christ is alive. It's when we *do church*: at prayer for each other and God's work in the world; present hanging out with people we're bound to in love; giving ourselves instead of just grabbing what we can; serving to be the acting hands and feet of Christ; and witnessing so everyone gets a chance to know Jesus' way. *Doing church*.

What if we were to actually make church a verb?

What if...

Maybe that's what it takes for Easter to be more than a secret.

Maybe that's what it takes to end the cruelty

And finally have the day when the crowds get to dance in the streets.