

Trinity A – Matt 28:156-20, “Connected, Charged and Sent”

1. This week I was told about a solar-powered boat that was moored in Cairns for maintenance.

Did you see it on the news or read about it in the paper? The Turanor is a \$16.7 million dollar catamaran that is over 31 meters long, weighs over 90 tonnes and is covered with 537 square meters of solar panels with around 38,000 solar cells. *These solar panels charge batteries that run the electric engines that propel this amazing boat forwards.* The Turanor is taking its message of renewable energy all over the world – not to every nation (like Jesus is)...but to many nations.

Which got me thinking...what would happen to the message if the batteries failed? Surely there would be a backup plan! But what would happen to the message if something unforeseen happened to the technology and they couldn't re-charge the batteries for some reason? *They might be floating out at sea for a while...*

The Turanor is completely reliant on the power and energy of the Sun.

Now the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain to which Jesus had directed them. ¹⁷ When they saw him, they worshiped him; but some doubted. ¹⁸ And Jesus came and said to them, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. ¹⁹ Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, ²⁰ and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age."

2. The disciples in our gospel reading today were a solar panel short of a full complement!

“Now the eleven disciples went to Galilee...” We could be forgiven for missing this – but it's important to see that eleven disciples went to Galilee, not twelve.

As far as the bible is concerned, eleven is not twelve. (Maybe you picked that up too!) Twelve is a nice complete number in Scripture, but clearly the text says there are only eleven.

It's imperfect. Eleven points to the fact that there is a bit of limping going on as far as the disciples are concerned. Eleven is like having a solar powered boat in the water – but you're missing a few solar panels. That means less power and charge for the batteries!

Where's No. 12? Who's missing? [Judas is missing] Why is Judas missing? [Yes, Judas betrayed Jesus and was lost]. SO yes there is one physically absent...

What if we think even bigger than Judas, asking ourselves who's missing in terms of 'world-scale' or on a scale of every nation? *Now who's missing in this picture?*

If you're thinking of 'every person who doesn't worship God through the risen and exalted Jesus who stands calling people to himself' - then you'd be right.'

I'm also thinking of the people I know in my life – people I love – who are missing that I want to be here. You will have people in your lives too, who aren't here, or refuse to be here or can't be here – and you see an empty space where they could be worshipping the Holy and Mighty God of the nations and rejoicing in Him.

Maybe today you see empty seats that used to be filled with people who were worshipping here but have gone away – or the people who come for baptism and then seem to disappear...

3. Make no mistake - today is about people 'out there' – but it speaks to us too.

Even amongst all of us here today, people baptized in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, there is a part of us that is absent – leaving an imperfect eleven to limp along with a half charged battery.

That's because we don't put our whole selves into our identity as the baptized children of God. We are not always present and ready for duty when and where we should be.

The sad truth is that there is a bit of Judas in me and in you that is willing to betray Jesus at a moment's notice.

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It's okay when being a Christian means smooth sailing, but when we're challenged; when we're called out of our comfort zone; when the cross we've been marked with gets heavy and the ministry looks demanding or uncomfortable or outside our own life experiences - then do we opt out on Jesus?

Do we walk away with a bag full of self-justifying reasons why we can't stand together and minister together as the called, equipped and Spirit filled people of God?

We're eleven and not twelve – imperfect. We're absent; we walk away and even betray Jesus. We doubt His power to save us and rescue the one's we love. **So did the disciples in the bible.**

That doesn't mean it's okay – because it's not okay and we can't pretend it is. We're not without help though...

4. It's exactly in your weakness that Jesus' power is made perfect isn't it?

For all the times we excuse ourselves and are absent for duty – Jesus never gave up, never walked away, never hid from the hard stuff – but endured even to the point of excruciating pain and crucifixion. Our betrayal and our sins are all nailed to His cross, carried by Jesus and dealt with by Him - **permanently.**

Our self-justification yields to Jesus – who instead gives us the gift of His righteousness, His restoring love which we receive constantly from God. Sounds a lot like our baptismal life doesn't it?

We're not reliant upon ourselves anymore, but we are completely and totally dependent on God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit for everything we are, everything we have and in the ministry we're sent out to do.

We're charged and sent out radiant and full as God shines His face upon us and is gracious to us.

We go and we minister as baptised people; forgiven people. *That changes things for all of us.*

It doesn't mean we won't struggle with doubts. Like the imperfect eleven, we all struggle with doubt, but Jesus is present with us and continues to carry us, restore us and point us toward our baptismal identity & His forgiveness at work in our lives. Remember this whenever you hear Him declare to you:

“On behalf of my Lord Jesus Christ AND BY HIS COMMAND, I forgive all your sins in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit – PEACE BE WITH YOU!”

This changes everything. Sin is like an electrical short that drains us, but Jesus' words are like a powerful electrical current that jump starts our hearts and sets them ablaze with a fire and passion to follow Jesus, walking in accordance with His will and calling in our lives.

The good news we've received is powerful. It enlivens the dead and powerless. We know that because that's what God's work does in us. It frees us to love our neighbour as ourselves as Jesus called us to. It frees us to reach out dynamically with compassion and love and mercy to all nations – exactly because we've received the same from God.

This love is a force that gets more powerful as new believers are baptized and connected to the body of Christ – like the seven people baptized here last Sunday.

It means you're not alone – we're part of a whole where Jesus is present with us until the very end of the age. We're imperfect, but connected to Jesus through those saving waters connected with God's word (baptism). We are strong in so much that we're in Him. The shortfall of an eleven is overcome with the perfection and presence of Jesus among His disciples! (He Qei?)

5. What happens when you connect the Holy Trinity of Father, Son and Holy Spirit to a battery of believers?

You get a powerful combination. You get an electrifying result - a physical going out, baptizing, teaching and obeying.

In our parish it takes many forms! Do you know what they are?

- It looks like a core group of people leading a new youth ministry at Peace Lutheran College.
- It looks like Positive ageing,

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- H2H Confirmation ministry,
- people sharing highs and lows at home and blessing each other in Worship,
- people coming for baptism,
- people telling others about baptism and gladly and willingly praying for them,
- People engaging with the word and hungry to learn more.
- It looks like people using bible stories to teach the English language,
- People delivering LLL tracts and visiting people in their homes, in hospital beds and nursing homes.
- It looks like Christians being Christians in sports teams and at work and school.
- It’s a discussion at the supermarket or a friendly note to someone you haven’t seen at worship for a while.
- It looks like Bible song in the Tablelands (and maybe even here in Cairns) – singing and signing the Scriptures to Auslan and upping our biblical literacy in new and fun ways.
- Its people honouring the house of God by cleaning, mowing and preparing it (candles, paraments, audio) for an encounter where Heaven meets earth in worship.
- It’s musicians and a host of people using their gifts to enhance worship in the church.
- It looks like hospitality before and after the services in God’s house.
- people willingly giving their tithes and offerings for the work of ministry in this place. (and much more)

We aren’t involved in all of these things for the sake of doing something – or looking busy. We’re involved in Gospel ministry for the sake of making disciples. Seeing people without hope confessing with their lips “Jesus Christ is Lord!” People connected, charged and participating in an eternal vision.

We rightly think ‘making disciples’ = baptism.

It’s great when Gospel ministry culminates with adults and children coming to be baptised. But that’s not the end goal of the journey is it?

It’s the beginning of life-long learning... obeying and worship!

Ministry happens here with the prayer and hope that people will ultimately discover rest for their souls in the presence of our mighty God – F/S/HS – Worship.

The goal is always worship – in Spirit and truth, with lives connected to Jesus and His cross and open hands cupped to receive everything God has for us in HC.

6. Today we celebrate The Holy Trinity.

One God in three persons who acts to produce an electrical effect in the lives of the nations: ***the mighty saving mission of Jesus and his gospel, taken out into the world by you and me and Christians all over the globe. Are you ready to take hold of these promises and carry them into the week ahead of you?***

You are ambassadors of Jesus Christ. You are missionaries in your homes and in this community. You have with you a power source infinitely more powerful than solar energy that propels expensive boats like the Turanor (as impressive as it is).

Your God formed the sun when he spoke it into being!

He makes His face to shine upon you today, He enlivens you, lifts you up, gives life and vitality. And together He’s called us to go out baptizing, teaching and obeying...

May God bless, equip and re-charge you as you participate in the powerful and dynamic gospel of Jesus today and as you leave this place today. Amen.