

“The Final Marching Orders of King Jesus”

Matthew 28:18-20

Introduction: 1) It is embedded in our mission statement: “SEBTS seeks to glorify the Lord Jesus Christ by equipping students to serve the church and fulfill the Great Commission.” The phrase the “Great Commission,” is actually not found in the Bible. However, it accurately captures the last words, the final marching orders of King Jesus. It is the banner under which you entered SEBTS. It is the banner under which you depart. Our prayer is you will be a Great Commission graduate who will GO and be a Great Commission Christian until you take your final breath!

Transition: Jesus last words were meant to be “lasting words.” This was what was on His heart. They inform us what our divine assignment is until He comes again.

2) The last words of Jesus were not uttered by a dying man. They were given by the resurrected King! His mind was clear and His orders plain concerning the church’s mission until He comes again at the “end of the age” (v. 20).

3) These marching orders are for you and they are for me! What then should occupy us until we see Him face to face in death or at His coming? It is the Great Commission. This is our priority. Note 3 simple components of it that should be our guide in life and ministry.

I. Acknowledge His Power. 28:18

- All (4X) – All authority belongs to Christ!
- Echoes of Daniel 7:13-14 and the apocalyptic Son of Man who will receive from God an everlasting kingdom.
- John Piper, “The risen Christ is great, greater than you ever imagined. Here is our witness to the world: the risen Christ is your King, and He has absolute unlimited authority over your life. If you do not bow and worship Him and trust Him and obey Him, you commit high treason against your King, who is God over all.” This king has all power and He makes that power available to us as we GO.
- Hudson Taylor, great missionary to China well said in this context: “God’s work done in God’s way will never lack God’s supply!”

Transition: Our King has all power!

II. Obey His Plan. 28:19-20

- The imperative: “make disciples”
- The 3 participles orbiting around this imperative receive imperative force.
Go. Baptize. Teach. This is how we make disciples.
- And, there is no need to stop and pray and ask God should we go to the nations and make disciples. We are told to GO!

- GO, to the 7,078 unreached people groups that total 3.14 billion who have little or no witness of the gospel. GO to the unreached and underserved areas of North America that are spiritually dark without the gospel.
- John Keith Falconer, English aristocrat, Arabic scholar at Cambridge, athlete and world cycling champion in 1878, was a missionary to Yemen. He died at the age of 31 (May 11, 1887) from Malaria and was buried there. I love what he said: “I have but one candle of life to burn, and I would rather burn it out in a land filled with darkness than in a land flooded with darkness.”
- C.T. Studd (1880-1931) one of the Cambridge 7 served as a missionary in China, India and Africa. He died in the Congo and was buried there in a simple grave. What did he believe? “Some wish to live within the sound of a [church] bell; I wish to run a rescue mission within a yard of hell!” And his last words: “Hallelujah!”
- David Livingstone, missionary to Africa, who died on his knees in prayer and whose heart was buried under a Mvula tree near where he died (1873): “Sympathy is no substitute for action. Without Christ not one step; with Him, anywhere!” Obey His plan!

III. Trust in His Promise. 28:20

- Who makes it? King Jesus
What is it? I am with you

How long is it? Always! Til the end of the age.

- Hudson Taylor, founder of CIM: “God isn’t looking for people of great faith, but for individuals ready to follow Him.” And when you follow Him, He will be with you!

Conclusion:

- 1) In the context of eschatological debates the wonderful N.T. scholar George E. Ladd, with great insight and wisdom, said to those who would become paralyzed by unnecessary squabbles, “If a relatively small minority of God’s people took this text seriously [Matt 24:14] and responded to its challenge, we could finish the task of worldwide evangelization in our own generation. God alone knows the definition of terms. I cannot precisely define who all the nations are. Only God knows the exact meaning of evangelize. He alone will know when that goal is fulfilled. But I do not need to know. I know only one thing: Christ has not yet returned; therefore, the task is not yet done. When it is done, Christ will come. Our responsibility is not to insist on defining the terms; our responsibility is to complete the task. So long as Christ does not return, our work is undone. Let us get busy and complete our mission.”
- 2) As you graduate my simple prayer for each of you is this: “The will of God: nothing less, nothing more, and nothing else!” Or as Nikolaus Ludwig Count

von Zinzendorf of the Moravians (1700-60) said, “I have but one passion – it is Christ and Christ alone!”

3) Question: What, who, is your passion?