

Our Commitment to the Great Commission

Matthew 28:16-20

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Introduction: Opening illustration: the life & witness of Dr. A. J. Gordon. He often said, “The Christian is not to stand in the world & witness to Christ, but to stand in Christ & witness to the world.” As we worship together today, let’s review just why the West Hampden Baptist Church exists. Could we honestly say that we have an evidenced commitment to the Great Commandment & the Great Commission in order to have an effective church? We have previously examined the Great Commandment of Matthew 22:34-40 (consisting of our love for God & our love for others). We have the Great Commission recorded not only here in Matthew 28:16-20, but also in Mark 16:15, Luke 24:46-48, John 20:21, & Acts 1:8. Note with me this morning our marching orders from the King of glory. We are commanded, “*Go ye therefore, & teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, & of the Son, & of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: &, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen.*” As God’s servants, we have been given marching orders from the Lord of lords & King of kings. Consider the chorus: “Set My Soul Afire, Lord.”

I. The **appointed** place of the marching orders (:16-17)

A. The **place** > Galilee (:16).

1. A familiar location – these mountains had been the setting for His Sermon on the Mount (Mt. 5-7) & His Transfiguration (Mt. 17:1-8) [Mount Hermon?].

2. A fitting location – able to accommodate a large group of people & provide some privacy

Application: “Those who would maintain communion with Christ must attend Him where He has appointed” (Henry). Do you have such an appointed place as well as an appointed time?

B. The **people** > disciples & others (:17).

1. The eleven disciples (Judas had committed suicide earlier).

2. The crowd of 500 brethren mentioned in I Corinthians 15:6.

C. The **perplexity** > different responses (:17).

1. Most worshiped Him – only God is to be worshiped; another indication of Christ’s deity

2. Some doubted – not necessarily Christ’s resurrection, but whether this was indeed Him

II. The **authoritative** power of the marching orders (:18)

A. It is “**given**” power.

1. It is given by the Father to the Son – John 13:3, 17:2 (& cf. Mt. 9:8; 20:23; 21:25).

2. It designates permission & authority as well as suggests the power to enforce such authority.

B. It is “**great**” power.

1. In heaven – complete & universal authority (over the angels, Eph. 1:20-21).

2. In earth – authority to offer salvation in His name & demand submission to His name.

Summary: Contrast the temporal authority of an earthly king with the universal & eternal authority of the King of kings & Lord of lords. [Do you report daily for duty to receiver orders?]

III. The **anticipated** plan of the marching orders (:19-20a)

A. **Evangelize** (“*teach all nations*”) [the first of 3 participles: going, baptizing, & teaching].

1. The assumption:

a. “*Go ye...*” – literally, “as ye go” (not a question as to whether we should go).

b. “*Therefore*” – based on Christ’s authoritative power in heaven & earth.

2. The action:

a. The term, “*teach*” is literally, “to disciple” (Mt. 13:52, “*instructed*”; Acts 14:21; John. 4:1)

b. The task, requires both a human servant (“*ye*”) & the Holy Spirit (cf. John 3:1-7)

B. Baptize (“*baptizing them in the name...* ”)

1. The “why” of baptism:
 - a. Involves submission – one’s simple obedience to Christ’s command.
 - b. Involves demonstration – one’s union with Christ (Romans 6:3).
 - c. Involves proclamation – one’s public confession of Christ (Acts 2:38).
2. The “how” of baptism:
 - a. Immersion > “*baptizo*” means to dip, plunge, submerge.
 - b. Identification > “*in the name...* ” – note: (1) a singular “name” (One God in three Persons) & (2) a sacred name (His name represents Himself, His sacred character).

Application: Have you been Scripturally baptized?

C. Catechize (“*Teaching them to observe...* ”)

1. *Teach*:
 - a. Requires a “researched” (well-versed) teacher (see Ezra 7:10).
 - b. Requires a “receptive” pupil (see Acts 10:33 & 17:11).
2. Teach to *observe*:
 - a. To obey, keep, respond.
 - b. “A disciple is not one who has already learned, but one who is always learning. The ‘school-days’ of a Christian are never over” (Tasker).
3. Teach to observe *all things*:
 - a. Note: “*all*” – without exception (cf. Acts 20:27, “*all the counsel of God*”).
 - b. Note: “*whatsoever I have commanded you*” – previous reception.

IV. The additional promise of the marching orders (:20b)

A. Christ promises, “*I am with you always*” (literally, “all the days”).

1. His *constant* presence; all the days, every day.
2. “...Days of strength & of weakness, days of success & failure, of joy & of sorrow, of youth & of age, days of life & day of death – all the days” (Broadus).

B. Christ promises, “...*even unto the end of the world*” (“the age”).

1. His *continual* presence; though about to leave them physically, He promises His spiritual presence.
2. To the end of the world; the consummation of the age.

Conclusion: Are you obeying the marching orders of the King of kings? Do you present yourself for duty each morning, meeting in an appointed place to hear from heaven & yield your allegiance? Do you submit daily to His authoritative power as you present yourself for service? Are you actively involved in His plan of evangelizing, baptizing, & catechizing? Can you claim His promise that He will be constantly & continually with you each day of your life?

Consider the story of the Christian man some years ago in St. Louis. Having completed some business with a certain lawyer in that city, the Christian said to the lawyer, “I have often wanted to ask you a question, but I have been a coward.” The lawyer, taken by surprise, answered, “I didn’t think you were afraid of anything! What is the question?” The man replied, “Why aren’t you a Christian?” The lawyer then hung his head in shame as he spoke, “You know my weakness. Isn’t there something in the Bible about drunkards having no part in the kingdom of God?” The Christian continued, “That’s not what I’m asking you. I want to know why you aren’t a Christian.” The lawyer then answered, “Well, I can’t recall that anybody asked me, & I’m sure nobody ever told me how to become a Christian!” With that, the gospel was presented & that lawyer prayed for God to save him. He had immediate victory over his drinking problem as well. That lawyer’s name? Cyrus I. Scofield – the man who later edited one of the most widely used study Bibles in the world. How about you? Are you a reluctant witness like that man? Will you take heart this morning in the promise of the Savior & hold forth the proclamation of the gospel? Hear again our marching orders, “*All power is given unto Me in heaven & in earth, Go ye therefore...* ”