

**Slide 1**

# **Lasting Words**

## **MATTHEW 28:16-20**

### **Introduction**

1. I don't know who originated this statement, but it is important to consider this morning: "Last words are lasting words."
2. The last words spoken by a . . .
  - a. valedictorian at his or her graduation ceremony are meant to inspire the graduating students to go forth and accomplish great things.
  - b. coach before a championship game challenge the players to their best efforts in the game before them.
  - c. preacher to a couple as he binds them together in wedlock are intended to remind them of the nature of the union into which they are entering.
3. Matthew's gospel which forms the beginning of our New Testament is different from the other gospels in that . . .
  - a. It has the shortest of all the resurrection accounts.
  - b. It speaks nothing of Jesus' resurrection appearances in Judea apart from the appearance to the two Marys on their way to tell the disciples of His resurrection.
  - c. Unlike Mark & Luke, it does not record Jesus' ascension into heaven.
4. The last words which Matthew records for us in His account are words of Jesus which He wanted to last in our minds.
5. They are what some have come to call "the marching orders of the King."
6. These words of Jesus are known to us as "the Great Commission."
7. This morning, I would like for us to examine these words of our Lord and the charge He gave to His disciples and to us because they identify our mission until He comes again at "the end of the age" (v. 20).

**Slide 2**

## **I. The Scene Of The Great Commission**

### **A. THE MEETING PLACE IN GALILEE**

“But the eleven disciples proceeded to Galilee, to the mountain which Jesus had designated.” (Matthew 28:16, NASB95)

1. Judas, the disciple who betrayed Jesus in the Garden, is no more.
2. Matthew tells us that “he went away and hanged himself” (Matthew 27:5).
3. Prior to His crucifixion, Jesus had told them that after He had been raised, He would go ahead of them to Galilee (Matthew 226:32).
4. The morning of His resurrection, the angel at the tomb told Mary Magdalene and the other Mary to “Go quickly and tell His disciples that He has risen from the dead; and behold, He is going ahead of you into Galilee, there you will see Him” (Matthew 28:7).
5. As they were going to tell the disciples, Jesus met them and reiterated what the angel had just said, “go and take word to My brethren to leave for Galilee and there they will see Me” (Matthew 28:10).
6. Here, Matthew tells us that Jesus had designated the mountain where they were to meet Him.

**2a**

### **B. THE DISCIPLES REACTION TO JESUS**

“When they saw Him, they worshiped Him; but some were doubtful.”

(Matthew 28:17, NASB95)

1. When the disciples saw Jesus “they worshiped Him.”
2. Imagine their joy. It is only natural that they would respond in such a way.
3. Some, however, “were doubtful.”

4. The word which Matthew uses here suggest "hesitation or indecision" rather than unbelief.
5. These men were struggling to comprehend what they were seeing before them.
  - a. Two of Jesus' followers who walked with Him on the road to Emmaus did not know who He was (Luke 24:16).
  - b. The disciples in the boat on the Sea of Galilee did not recognize the resurrected Jesus on the shore (John 21:4).
6. It was to these eleven men that Jesus spoke and gave them the Great Commission.

## **II. Why Do We Call It The Great Commission?**

### **A. IT IS GREAT BECAUSE OF THE AUTHORITY BEHIND IT**

"All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth" (Matthew 28:18).

1. When Jesus spoke these words, He was in a far different position than in the early days of His ministry when a scribe came up to Him and said, "Teacher, I will follow You wherever You go" (Matthew 8:20).
2. His response at that time was "The foxes have holes and the birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay His head" (Matthew 8:20; cf. Luke 9:58).
3. Some 600 years earlier, Daniel had spoken of His authority when, in a vision, he saw . . .

". . . with the clouds of heaven One like a Son of Man coming, and He came up to the Ancient of Days and was presented before Him. And to Him was given dominion, glory and a kingdom, that all the peoples, nations and men of every language might serve Him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion which will not pass away; and His kingdom is one which will not be

destroyed” (Daniel 7:13-14, NASB95).

4. Because He has all authority “in heaven and on earth,” . . .
  - a. no one is above Him and no one can supplant Him.
  - b. His disciples would be able to carry out His command.
5. Without His authority, the mission of the apostles and our mission today would be doomed.

## **B. IT IS GREAT BECAUSE OF ITS INCLUSIVE NATURE**

“Go therefore and make disciples of all nations . . .” (Matthew 28:19a).

1. Jesus told the eleven apostles to “make disciples of all nations.”
2. The apostles mission and ours as well is one with a worldwide scope.
3. Our goal is to make all the world His disciples.
4. We seek to win all people to Christ.
5. No one is to be excluded.

## **C. IT IS GREAT BECAUSE OF THE BREADTH OF IT’S INSTRUCTION**

“. . . teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you” (Matthew 28:20).

1. The apostles went everywhere teaching the new disciples to observe everything which Jesus had taught them.
2. At the end of His third missionary journey, when Paul met with the elders from Ephesus, he told them,
  - a. “I did not shrink from declaring to you anything that was profitable” (Acts 20:20).
  - b. “I did not shrink from declaring to you the whole purpose of God” (Acts 20:27).
3. Like Paul, we must make sure that we do not leave anything out, but teach new Christians to observe all that Jesus commanded His apostles.

### **III. What Does The Great Commission Require Of Us?**

#### **A. "Go"**

1. The first thing which Jesus told His disciples to do is "go."
2. This word in the Greek language in which our New Testaments were originally written is an "aorist participle" which is best rendered as "having gone" or "when you have gone."
3. Our fulfillment of Jesus' command begins with our going.
4. Going, however, means more than traveling across geographical borders, though this is part of it.
5. It means we as disciples are active:
  - a. We cross the room, the street.
  - b. We step outside our comfort zone to make the gospel accessible to someone.
6. We live every day with a purpose.

#### **B. "MAKE DISCIPLES OF ALL NATIONS"**

1. What is a disciple?
  - a. A disciple is both a learner and a follower.
  - b. It is someone who recognizes Jesus as his teacher and learns from Him.
  - c. Disciples are wholeheartedly committed to Jesus.
  - d. Our mission is to reproduce in others what Jesus has produced in us: faith, obedience, growth, compassion, love and a bold message of truth.
2. How do we make disciples?
  - a. By "baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit" (v. 19b).

- 1) This is what Peter and the rest of the apostles did in Jerusalem on that Pentecost morning (Acts 2:41).

“So then, those who had received his word were baptized; and that day there were added about three thousand souls” (Acts 2:41; NASB95).
  - 2) This is what the evangelist Philip did when “an angel of the Lord” instructed him to go south to a lonely stretch of road which led from Jerusalem southeast to the city of Gaza (Acts 8:26).
    - a) There he encountered an Ethiopian official who served in the queen’s court who had been to Jerusalem to worship and was on his way back home.
    - b) Philip took the Ethiopian where he was at in the Scriptures and “preached Jesus to him” (Acts 8:35).
    - c) When they came to a body of water by the road, the official said, “Look! Water! What prevents me from being baptized?” (Acts 8:36).
    - d) Both Philip and the official went down into the water where Philip baptized him.
  - 3) This is what a disciple named Ananias did for a man named Saul who had been persecuting the church (Acts 9:10-19).
  - 4) Those who are baptized take on a new identification.
  - 5) No longer are they trapped in Satan’s “domain of darkness.”
  - 6) Through their baptism God rescues them and transfers them into “the kingdom of His beloved Son” (Colossians 1:13).
  - 7) They become “children” and “heirs of God,” as well as “fellow heirs with Christ” (Romans 8:16, 17).
  - 8) They are also “brothers and sisters” in a new family “of believers.”
- b. By “teaching them [those baptized] to observe all that I have commanded

you” (v. 20a).

- 1) Not only do we teach content, we train those who are Christians into obedient action.
- 2) We take believers at every stage of spiritual maturity to the next stage of growth.
- 3) The goal of our teaching according to the apostle Paul in Ephesians 4:13 is that “we all reach unity in the faith, and in the knowledge of God’s Son, growing into mature man with a stature measured by Christ’s fulness” (ESV).
- 4) Each of us must see ourselves as learners in a family of teachers, who are themselves learners.

### **III. Final Words Of Assurance**

“And lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age” (Matthew 28:20b, NASB95).

#### **A. “I AM WITH YOU”**

1. Jesus Himself, Immanuel (“God with us,” Matthew 1:23 ) is the one who is with us.
2. The One who, according to Hebrews 1:3, “upholds all things by the word of His power” (Hebrews 1:3).
3. Notice, He did not say, “I will be with you,” but “I am with you.”

#### **B. “I AM WITH YOU ALWAYS, EVEN TO THE END OF THE AGE”**

1. Jesus’ presence was not temporary, only for the first-century disciples.
2. No, He promised to be with us “always,” to the end of the world and to the end of time.

## **Conclusion**

1. Are you a disciple of Jesus Christ?
2. You are if you have been baptized “in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit” (Matthew 28:19) **and are now seeking to** “grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ” (2 Peter 3:18).
3. However, if you haven’t yet come to Christ in obedient faith, why not do so today?