

Subject: *The King's Final Command*

Scripture: *Matthew 28:16-20*

Next Tuesday our nation will elect a new president, but we will still have the same king. Matthew presents Jesus as King. He tells of the King's arrival in Bethlehem, the King's dedication at His baptism, the King's temptation by Satan, the King's instruction, the King's power (over disease, demons, and death), the King's opposition, the King's presentation, the King's prophecy, the King's death and resurrection, and now the King's last command.

THE KING'S APPEARANCE (vs. 16-17)

Jesus appeared to the disciples in Galilee. This was one of several times when Jesus appeared after His resurrection to prove He was alive. This time Jesus appeared in Galilee where He had spent so much time in ministry. Galilee was home to all but one of His disciples, Judas Iscariot. The eleven disciples were there, but others were also present because the Bible says when they saw Him some worshiped and some doubted. This statement confirms the accuracy and integrity of the Scripture. Matthew recorded the doubters as well as the worshipers. The Bible tells it just like it is. This statement also reveals the different responses of the people. Some understood that Jesus was God's Son who was rose from the dead and worshiped Him. But others, for whatever reason, had their doubts and refused to believe. Matthew also tells us in verses 11-15, that the Jewish leaders bribed the Roman soldiers to lie and say that Jesus' body was stolen. This lie was widely circulated and many people believed it.

THE KING'S AUTHORITY (vs. 18)

The first thing Jesus did was remind them of His authority. This was important for two reasons. First, He had the authority to tell them what to do. Second, He was giving them the authority to carry out His command. He not only had authority, but He authorized them to carry out their assignment.

It has been a privilege to honor all our veterans today. They served at different times, in difference branches of service, and they had different jobs to fill, but they all had one thing in common when they served our country. They were all under authority. They were all trained to take orders. When you first arrive at boot camp, there are some men called drill instructors that greet you and tell you who is in charge. They don't make suggestions; they give commands. They don't ask for opinions or feedback. They do the talking. You do the listening and obeying.

When Jesus gave the Great Commission, it was not a suggestion or an option. He gave us a command, an order to carry out. If we truly believe in Jesus, we will submit to Him. There's a story that illustrates the nature of real faith. See ***Matthew 8:5-10***.

The Roman centurion understood authority and how the chain of command worked. He knew what it was to obey those above him and to be obeyed by those under him. He stated what every military person learns in basic training. There is a chain of command and it must be followed. I think somewhere along the way the church has failed to train its people about the Lord's authority and chain of command. If the Lord says it, that settles it. His commands are not for us to consider, discuss, or approve. They are for us to obey.

In our text Jesus gave His final command to the disciples. Final words are very important, carefully chosen and clear words. I remember when our son David and his fellow Marines deployed to Afghanistan. The commanding officer spoke and the troops and family members gathered around to listen. He spoke with authority as he reminded them of their preparation for the assignment, of their duty and honor in carrying out the assignment, and the confidence he had in them to get the job done.

THE KING'S ASSIGNMENT (vs. 19-20)

Jesus makes it simple. We are to go and teach all nations (make disciples of all nations), baptize them, and then teach them everything He has commanded. Let's break it down.

- Go and make disciples

A disciple is a believer and a follower. A disciple is one who is committed to Jesus as Lord and Savior. Being a disciple is not someone who just makes a one-time decision to believe in Christ. Making a decision for Christ is the first step in being a disciple, but it's not the only step. A person can make a decision one day, but it takes time to tell if he is a real disciple or a true follower. ***John 8:31** Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on him, If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed.* In the Marine Corps when a young man goes to Parris Island for basic training he is not a Marine when he arrives on the island. He is referred to as a recruit. He becomes a Marine at the end of his basic training. In the same way a person makes a decision to follow Christ, but he is not a disciple that day. He becomes a disciple as he follows Christ and obeys Christ. There is a big sign over the main road on Parris Island that says: "WE MAKE MARINES." I think every church should have a sign that says: "WE MAKE DISCIPLES."

- Baptize them

Baptism is an outward sign of an inward commitment. It's like wearing a uniform. It is a public testimony of our identification with Christ in His death, burial, and resurrection.

- Teach them to obey what Christ commanded

Our assignment is not done when we reach the lost and get them saved. The assignment is not done when we baptize them. Our assignment is not done until we teach them how to live for Jesus. We must teach them and they must learn. When Peter told those people in Acts 2, "Repent and be baptized every one of you." The Bible says "They continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine (teaching)" (Acts 2:38, 42). The church is responsible to teach and train and the individual believer is responsible to be taught and trained. It works both ways. The ultimate goal is to teach and train disciples to represent Christ faithfully in this world. Every soldier, sailor, airman, and Marine is a reflection of his branch of service and his country.

THE KING'S ASSURANCE (vs. 20b)

Jesus gave us some very comforting and assuring words at the end of His command. He promised to be with us as we carry out His orders. He will help us. He will guide us. How do we know this command is for us and not just for the disciples at that time? He said He would be with us until the end of the age. He is committed to us and to the mission. He

cannot fail. He must prevail. This is a big assignment, but He is a big God. Notice the words: “all power, all nations, all things, always.”

APPLYING THIS MESSAGE TO YOUR LIFE:

- This command applies both to unbelievers and believers
- Unbelievers should submit to the Lord, be baptized, and learn to obey Him
- Believers should submit to the Lord, obey Him, and teach others to do the same
- Believers should obey this command until the Lord comes or calls us home

It's easy to join the church, but it's hard to be a disciple of Jesus Christ. To do that we must have a humble heart, be alert, attentive, and teachable. And we should be forever grateful for the privilege we have to follow the Lord and serve Him.