

## MISSIONARY MARCHING ORDERS

Matthew 28:18-20

***“All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age. Amen.”***

In 1851, Queen Victoria and the city of London played host to "The Great Exhibition of the Works of Industry of All Nations." It was the "World's Fair" of industry, an opportunity for inventors to show the most innovative industrial equipment of the day. At that time, the steam engine was being adapted to do all kinds of work.

Displayed at the Exhibition were steam plows, steam organs, steam looms – even a steam cannon. The machine that took first place was a masterpiece of 7000 moving parts. There were gears, pulleys, pistons, bells and whistles, all perfectly synchronized, moving together by the power of steam. Queen Victoria was awed by the genius displayed in this invention, as were all who saw it. It was the centerpiece of the exhibition.

Do you want to know what this machine produced? Absolutely nothing! The steam flowed, 7,000 parts pumped, twisted, and turned together to accomplish exactly nothing. Although the inventor proved beyond any doubt that he understood the principles of steam mechanics, he was unable to find any useful function for his machine to perform. All the power and work of his invention was wasted. It was spent to no avail.

Do you know that the same thing can happen to churches? We can have all sorts of programs, services and activities of every kind imaginable, and yet not be doing the main thing. Keeping the main thing the main thing is the main thing!

In the passage of Scripture in Matthew chapter 28 is the main thing. What is the main thing? Let us break it down into 3 separate sections. Here we have:

- **The Great Convention;**
- **The Great Commission;**
- **The Great Consolation.**

Let us examine each in the above order. First we see:

### **I. THE GREAT CONVENTION. - V. 16-18a**

Here on this mountain-top was a convening, a rendezvous, a reunion of the Master and His men. Visualize the scene: a Lone Figure stands on an obscure hilltop, with a band of eleven rag-tag men with dubious credentials. To them this Lone Figure gives a worldwide assignment to “Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations.” Anyone standing nearby who did not know Who was speaking would have laughed at this little band and the improbability of them doing anything of significance.

Certainly that was an inauspicious beginning to a global enterprise. However, unless we

understand the implications of this Great Convention we will fail to fully comprehend the intent and import of what Jesus commanded before this meeting on the mountain ended. What we have here is the preface to the Marching Orders that Jesus is going to give. There are 3 facts that come to light in the early stages of this meeting on that mountain Top that are essential to our understanding the Marching Orders that Jesus gave. The 3 facts are:

The Agents for Global Outreach,  
The Absolute for Global Outreach and  
The Authority for Global Outreach.

Let us look at each briefly. First,

**A. The Agents For Global Outreach.** v.16 “the eleven disciples”.

These are the 11 men who were hand-picked by Jesus Christ. They are called, “disciples.” A disciple is one who submits to the disciplines of the Discipler - in this case, Jesus Christ.

Are you a present-day disciple of Jesus Christ? He said, “Whoever does not bear his cross and come after me cannot be my disciple.” There are two appeals in the New Testament: “Come unto me” and “Come after me.” Have we accepted both invitations and are we submitting to the disciplines of Jesus Christ? If so, then we too are agents for the Global Outreach Operation Jesus Christ launched. Second,

**B. The Absolute For Global Outreach.** v.16

Notice carefully the words, “to the mountain which Jesus had appointed for them.” Compare Matthew 28:10 “tell my brethren to go to Galilee, and there they will see me.”

Two women had seen the recently resurrected Savior and He gave them a message for His disciples: “meet me on the mountain.” What is the absolute qualification, the indispensable requirement, the essential quality for a disciple of Jesus to be involved in Global Outreach Operation? **O B E D I E N C E !!**

Jesus had picked out a specific mountain and He sent word for them to go there. All 11 obeyed! The order to go to a particular place was simple. If we do not obey Him in the simple directives He gives, we are not qualified to be entrusted with a greater mission!

Jesus articulated this principle in Luke 16:10 in these words: “He who is faithful in what is least is faithful also in much.” Obedience in the little things qualifies us for greater endeavors for our Lord. Third,

**C. The Authority For Global Outreach.** v.18 “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me.”

Jesus Christ is the ultimate Authority! Does any would-be disciple wish to challenge that statement or to argue that point? Of course not! Eph.1:22 tells us that the Father “put all things under his feet, and gave Him to be head over all things to the church.”

The Lord Jesus has the authority to dispatch His servants! King Jesus has the authority to command His army! These 3 facts stated here in v.16-18 again are: The Agents for Global Outreach – disciples; The Absolute For Global Outreach – obedience; The Authority For Global Outreach – Jesus Christ.

These 3 facts must not be hastily overlooked for they set the stage for the issuing of the Marching Orders themselves. And, if we do not recognize these principles we will take our Marching Orders lightly, and that, I believe, is what many of those who take the name “Christian” have done.

Now, to the Marching Orders themselves and that brings us to the next section in these verses which is:

## **II. THE GREAT COMMISSION** v.18b–20b.

“Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you....”

At the Great Convention is given the Great Commission. The Great Commission is given by the Great Commissioner! The Speaker issuing the Marching Orders was no ordinary person and the cause no ordinary cause and therein lies the dual dynamic that has insured success from that day to this day.

The Lord Jesus is still enlisting personnel - are you involved in Global Outreach? That is the main thing! This paragraph tells us of what the mission consists. You will never have a greater, grander or more glorious purpose in life than that which is presented here.

Here Jesus articulates the church’s Marching Orders for World Outreach. There are four commands that He gave us to carry out. What are they?

### **A. Mobilize.** v.19 “Go”

The first command in our Marching Orders is simply “Go”! Forward, march! Be pro-active, set in motion, move! Go with the Gospel! Go where you live - go wherever God sends.

**Illust.** Do you remember Jesus’ first miracle? He turned water into wine – right? At that wedding feast Jesus mother said to the servants, “Do whatever He tells you.” (John 2:5). That is good advice!

He said, “all authority is given to me.” Some other translations say, “all power.” Both are correct interpretations of the original language. What kind of authority would a person have who had no power? What kind of power would a person have who did not have the authority to use it?

Jesus is saying, “I have all power necessary to accomplish the mission and I have the authority to send you on this mission – do as you are told!”

**Illust.** A fellow who had previously been in the military service was filling out a form for

insurance. When he came to the question, “What did you do in the military service?” He wrote, “As I was told!”

Disciples of Christ are not to be immobilized – we are to be mobilized – “go” is the first command in our Marching Orders. The second is:

**B. Evangelize.** v.19 “....and make disciples of all the nations”.

How is that accomplished? Mark 13:10 gives the clear answer: “The gospel must be preached to all nations.” Mark 16:15 adds: “Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature.”

In the Book of Acts we read about Paul and Barnabas going to the city of Derbe and we are told that they, “preached the gospel to that city .... and made many disciples.” (Acts 14:21) The implication is that a disciple is made when the gospel message is savingly believed. To evangelize means the act of disseminating and propagating the Gospel. Are you involved in the work of evangelizing? We can evangelize by life, by lip and by literature.

The second command in our Missionary Marching Orders is to Evangelize – The 3<sup>rd</sup> is to:

**C. Baptize.** v.19 “...baptizing them ....”

Baptism is to be the first step of obedience after one decides to declare for Christ and follow Him; baptism is one of two ordinances given to the church to observe – the Lord’s Supper is the other.

Not everyone should or can do the actual act of baptizing, However, those who are scripturally evangelized should be baptized by one credentialized to baptize. Baptism is an outward picture of an inward reality. It is a silent sermon. The one being baptized, by submitting to believer’s baptism, is saying, “I have died with Christ, been buried with Him and raised with Him.” Baptism is public identification with Jesus Christ as one’s Savior and Lord.

The 4<sup>th</sup> command in our Marching Orders is:

**D. Stabilize.** v.20 “teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you.”

We are to teach new disciples what Jesus had taught the original disciples. Pass it on. Be a channel, not a reservoir!

Teaching the Word of God stabilizes believers in the Faith. Our Commission is not completed when we lead others to faith in Christ. They must be founded upon, grounded in and bonded by the teaching of the Word of truth. What a privilege to bring the Good News to people and then teach them the Good Book—whether around the block or around the world! I have had the privilege of traveling in many countries and ministering God’s Word to hungry souls. How blessed I have been! I trust that I have also been a blessing.

Some may say, “Am I to do all that? Mobilize, evangelize, baptize, stabilize? Yes, in one of two ways:

1. Some do it exclusively – that is they literally spend their lives engaged in all these activities.

2. Some carry out these orders corporately. That is they are involved in these activities through the corporate body of the church. However, the big question is: "Are you consciously involved in some phase of carrying out the Great Commission?"

Once again, the 4 commands of our Marching Order's are:

- Mobilize- "go"
- Evangelize – "make disciples"
- Baptize – "baptizing them"
- Stabilize – "teaching them...."

Are you obeying the Marching Orders given by our Commander-In- Chief who has all authority and power in heaven and earth?

**Illust.** The popular teacher, preacher and author, Howard Hendricks, warns against confining the gospel in a church building. He wrote: "I can't find a verse of scripture that commands a lost person to go to church; I know a lot of scriptures that command believers to go into a lost world." (Daily Bread 10-25-00)

There is one additional truth: out of the Great Convention came the Great Commission which ends with:

**III. THE GREAT CONSOLATION.** v.20b "and surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."

The Great Convention at which the Great Commission was given ends with the Great Consolation. Without the Great Consolation the Great Commission would not succeed. The Great consolation provides us with two consoling promises: There is the promise of:

**A. *The Lord's Presence.*** "Surely I am with you always, even to the end of the age."

In John 17:18 Jesus was talking to His Father and He said, "As you sent me into the world, I also have sent them into the world." But, as Paul Harvey was famous for saying, "Now for the rest of the story." And the rest of the story is in verse 20, "I am with you" - "I send you, but I will go with you!" That's the rest of the story!

"Anywhere with Jesus,  
I can safely go,  
Anywhere He leads me  
In this world below."

Hebrews 13:8 repeats the promise in these words, "I will never leave you nor forsake you." When we go across the street, across town or across an ocean – we have a Partner. That Partner is Jesus Christ, the One who launched the Great Invasion of the world with His Truth Squad!

Then, there is the promise of:

### **B. The Lord's Power.**

Acts 1:8 "You shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses of Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth."

Our Lord does not send out His truth troops without empowering them to do what He commands them to do. His presence is His power so, we go in the strength of the Lord.

How long? Matthew 28:20 "To the end of the age"; How far? Acts 1:8 "To the end of the earth." These two promises are certainly consoling to the obedient disciple living and witnessing in a hostile world, aren't they?

### **SUMMARY**

What have we seen in these Scriptures? We looked at:

#### **THE GREAT CONVENTION which tells us:**

Who is commanding believers to go – The Lord Jesus;  
Who is to March with the message - Disciples;  
What our Commander-In-Chief expects – Obedience.

#### **THE GREAT COMMISSION which is to:**

Mobilize - "go";  
Evangelize – "make disciples";  
Baptize – "baptize them ...";  
Stabilize - "teach them ....."

#### **THE GREAT CONSOLATION which promises:**

The Lord's Presence and  
The Lord's Power.

Here we have the Marching Orders For Global Outreach. When we hear words from Jesus like these in these verses, we tend to say, "But I'm not a Missionary, an Evangelist or a Pastor. I'm not really good at communicating my faith" And we go away feeling guilty. I do not want you to leave feeling you've had a load of guilt dumped on you. I believe the problem is that we are not hearing what Jesus is saying. What He is *not* saying is this: "I'm expecting you to do my work for me."

What He *is* saying is, "I want to do my work through you. You give me a body and I will live in it and do my work through you." That is why He says, "I am with you always". The One who has all authority and all power is with us because He is in us.

I have had the opportunity to speak in many churches that were conducting Missions Conferences. I have usually tried to remember to say, "There are 3 actions that one can take and some can take more than one:

- First, we could go somewhere –  
across the fence, across the street, across town, to another country, etc.;
- Second, we could let go –  
that is a church can let go of members whom the Lord calls and/or a family can let

- members of the family to go;
- Third, we can help go –  
that is, we can support the cause of Christ with our prayers and finances.

As in a war, not everyone goes out on the front line of battle. There are usually more behind the scenes than on the front line. But all should be involved.

### CONCLUSION

This meeting on the mountain was truly a mountain-top experience for the disciples, wasn't it? Would they go down from the mountain, get a T-shirt that said, "I've Been To The Mountain With Jesus" and then return to routine living? I don't think so!

**Illust.** The purpose of the steam operated contraption that I talked about earlier was to demonstrate, by superfluous motion, the possibilities of steam power. Consequently, it did nothing of significance. It reminds me of many Christians and churches – lots of motion and promotion but little devotion in accomplishing, in God's power, Jesus' Marching Orders.

Rick Warren writes in his popular book, *The Purpose Driven Church*, that our purpose "is not merely a target that you aim for; it is your congregation's reason for being ... [it] will provide the direction, the vitality, the boundaries, and the driving force for everything you do." (p. 109)

When a church ministers on purpose, they can expect to make a positive and progressive impact in the world. And Jesus has defined our purpose here in Matthew chapter 28. After Jesus gave His Marching Orders to the disciples He ascended back to heaven from that mountain top. Acts chapter 1 records the event of His ascension.

As the disciples stood awestricken, gazing upward, an angel appeared and said, "Men of Galilee, why do you stand gazing up into heaven? This same Jesus ... will come back". While He is away we have work to do. When He comes back will He find us Marching to His Orders? Or will He find us just keeping our dazzling machines running at full speed but accomplishing nothing?

If you had been on that hilltop that day, would you have just gone back to your home, settled down in your comfort zone? Eleven disciples – you and I are number 12 – we are the replacements for Judas the drop-out. Will you be a drop-out also?

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