

# Empire Church of the Brethren

## Sunday Service Sermons

15 February 2026

What the Church Must Remember

Text: "Go you therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit: Teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you: and lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen". *Matt. 28:19-20*

A person's last words are immeasurably valuable.

My father made me promise to take care of my mother before he would die.

That kind of a promise is binding like no other.

The words before death are significant because often they crystallize the actions of the individual's life.

They can also reflect the priorities of that person's life.

Here are some examples of the last words of famous people.

Beethoven's last words were "Too bad! It's too late."

St Francis of Assisi's last words were "Welcome, Sister Death,"

Knowing death was imminent, John Wesley said, "The best part is God is with us."

When Woodrow Wilson's physician told him he was dying, President Wilson replied, "I am ready."

Today we look at the last words of our Savior.

Jesus talks to the church about his work in the world.

He reminds the church of its task to do his work.

He wants the church to remember some important things.

The Church Must Make Disciples.

In the first part of *verse 19*, our Lord says just before he ascends, "Go you therefore, and teach all nations."

The imperative verb "teach" expresses the command "Go, make disciples."

This needs further study.

Who is to be discipled?

Jesus says that all nations are to be discipled.

The gospel is for the whole world.

How are we to disciple?

It is to be done by evangelism, by sharing the good news with others.

A tender story about John A Broadus, former president of Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, illustrates the point.

When Broadus was only sixteen, he became a Christian.

Encouraged to talk to his unsaved friends about Jesus, young Broadus spoke to a mentally retarded friend named Sandy about his need to be saved.

Sandy made a profession of faith.

Whenever they met after that, Sandy would smile and say, "Howdy, John, Thankee, John."

Broadus later related, "And if ever I reach the heavenly home and walk the golden streets, I know the first person to meet me will be Sandy, coming and saying again" "howdy, John, Thankee, John."

It is OUR business to make disciples.

The church must mark disciples.

When people enter military service, they swear allegiance to the constitution of the United States.

That makes them soldiers.

When they are assigned to a base, they are given uniforms.

That marks them as soldiers.

Baptism is that initial act in the life of new believers that marks them as believers.

Jesus is referring to this in *verse 19* when he says, “baptizing them in the name of the Father, and the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.”

Who is to be baptized?

The answer is clear: those who have been taught.

Why are they to be baptized?

Jesus commands it.

Cornelius, Lydia, and the Ethiopian eunuch all responded to the teachings about Christ with baptism.

How is it to be done?

It is to be done publicly, “in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit,” and preferably by immersion, for that is what the word means in the original Greek.

The church must strengthen its disciples.

*Verse 20* mandates that the church strengthen its disciples. Teaching them to observe all things that Jesus has commanded.

Too many of our churches are strong in making and marking disciples but weak in maturing them.

The neglect is tragic.

What needs to be taught to strengthen disciples?

Jesus gives us the answer: “All things that I have commanded you.”

These precepts are found in the New Testament.

Why are these things to be taught?

Jesus has commanded believers to “observe all things.”

More than the sacrifice of fatted rams, the Lord God wants the obedience of his people.

Keith Green wrote a song about that.

The words go, “To obey is better than sacrifice, I don’t need your money I want your life.”

God wants our life to use it to spread the good news to others.

When Pompeii was destroyed by the eruption of Mount Vesuvius in AD 79, the heat and ashes suddenly overwhelmed many of the citizens of the city.

They were killed instantly, while even in motion, and were preserved in their activity.

Among those suddenly turned to stone was a Roman soldier.

When excavated centuries later, he was standing at his post guarding the doomed city.

We must not be dead, frozen soldiers who only stand mechanically at our posts.

Rather, we must be alive and vigorous, remembering these things Christ told us to do.

What kind of ground are you?

The seed of the Gospel has been sown into you, what will you produce?

Are you hard as the pathway.

Some seed fell on the pathway and was not able to sprout.

And it was trampled and killed by passing traffic.

Seed cannot take root on a much-traveled and smooth pathway.

People who are only paths over which daily traffic passes will hardly provide soil into which the eternal seed can be deposited and grow.

Are you rocky soil?

Shallow soil into which the seed of the Gospel has been sowed.

You take notice and appear to listen with interest and concern.

But one day it is all over.

The heart that for a while was glowing coal of fire suddenly becomes a cold black lump.

Are you thorny ground?

Good soil but dominated by weeds, thorns, and thistles.

Do the cares, riches, and pleasures of life overpower you and keep you from spreading the good news.

Are you the Good Soil?

Hearts who not only hear the Word, but also hold fast to it.

Taking the Word of God seriously and witnessing to neighbors as brothers and sister in Christ, seeing yourself as accountable before God for your actions every day of the week.

Realizing that you belong to Him and therefore He has a right do so with your life as he wills and that which increases His Kingdom in heaven.

God's grace is not a cheap grace.

It costs all that we have.

People can loaf their way into hell; but the kingdom of God is seized by force.

In the quiet fields where the seed is being sown, far more is happening than at the crossroads where traffic lights flash their busy signals.

Will you join God in saving the lost?

Will you be a light unto the darkness?

Will you help bring the Kingdom of God to the earth as it is in heaven?

Will you make His name Hallowed?

His will done here as there?

So he can give you your daily bread.

And you can forgive others as he has forgiven you.

Then and only then will his be the Kingdom, the Power, and the Glory forever!

Amen? Ah, yes, Amen!