

Slavic Gospel Association

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[0 : 00] Some years ago, for one of the Slavic Gospel Association residential conferences, we chose a strap line or a title for the conference and it was his last command.

The slogan was created, Coke is it. It was created so that the message would get out that every town, every city, every village, every hamlet would hear of Coke and they would taste it. And I think you should agree with me tonight that they made a pretty good job of that because wherever you go in the world, you'll find Coke. And you'll find that people have heard about Coke and they have tasted Coke and they have experienced Coke for all that that might be worth. But it is certainly a message that has spread all over the world. And yet tonight in a missionary meeting, I say it reverently, but I say tonight the gospel is it.

Because the gospel is the greatest message that the world will ever hear and it is a great responsibility of the church. And so we find here in the scriptures that were read to us this evening, the latter part of Matthew chapter 28, we have the command of Christ to the church.

[1 : 26] And his last command, our first concern. As we think about this tonight, I just want to leave a few thoughts with you. And the first one is the great privilege of it all, the great privilege to go.

Here we read in verse 19, go therefore and make disciples of all nations. Go therefore, the word of God commands us. And in that goal, there is the privilege, the great privilege of going.

I believe, my friends, it's a great privilege to go and a great privilege to be involved in the great commission that Jesus Christ has given to us because of the master that we serve.

You in Matthew 6, 24, no man can serve two masters. For either he will hate the one and love the other or else he will hold to one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon or money.

We have a choice to make. We cannot serve two masters. The word of God is so clear about that. And we read in John chapter 8 and verse 34, whosoever commits sin is the servant of sin.

[2 : 34] He's in bondage to sin. He's enslaved to sin. And yet with those wonderful words in John 10, verse 10, where it says, The thief cometh not but to steal, to kill, to destroy.

And that is true. And that is master Satan and what he has come to do to people, to individuals' lives. He's come to steal, to kill, to destroy. But my friends, isn't it wonderful?

The verse doesn't stop there. But Jesus has come that you might have life. And that you might have it more abundantly. And those wonderful words in John 8, verse 36, where it says that if the Son shall make you free, you will be free indeed.

Friends, it is a wonderful thing to be set free by the power of Jesus Christ, isn't it? You know, friends, we're not in bondage tonight. If we are truly belonging to Jesus, we are in liberty this evening.

For whom the Son sets free is free indeed. The world may look upon us and consider us to be in bondage. We're in church. We have to read our Bibles. We have to pray.

[3 : 39] We have to go to prayer meeting on a Thursday night. We have to do all of these things. You know, friends, the wonderful thing is we don't have to do that. It's not that we have to do it. We do it because we want to. We're in liberty.

But it's the unsaved people tonight who are in bondage and they're enslaved to sin. And friends, I want to say tonight it's a privilege to go because of the Master that I serve.

Jesus Christ, the Son of God, who gave himself for me. Then no sacrifice is too great to make for him. What a wonderful Master we serve tonight.

Do you serve Master King Jesus? Are you still in bondage to sin and enslaved to sin? There's liberty. There's freedom in Jesus. Friends, it's a privilege to go because of the Master we serve.

But it's a privilege to go because of the message that we proclaim. Paul the Apostle writing to the church at Rome, he said, I'm not ashamed of the gospel of Christ for it's the power of God unto salvation.

[4 : 40] My friends, you know, when Paul was writing his epistles, his letters, what did he write? He just didn't speak of the gospel. He spoke of it as a glorious gospel. And I don't know how you feel about the gospel, my friends.

It warms my heart. It's something very, very precious. Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners. Isn't that wonderful? What a message. Oh, my friends, we think of the glorious message of the gospel.

It's a message that condemns, but it's a message that changes. I often say to people, the gospel, there's the negative and the positive. And you know the negative? If we don't get the negative, we'll never get the positive.

And the negative of the gospel is, for all have sinned and come short of God's standard. But the positive part is, as Paul writes to the church at Corinth in 2 Corinthians 5, verse 17, if any man be in Christ, he's a new creature.

The old things have passed away. All things have become new. The gospel is something that transforms lives. And Jesus said, But that ye may know that the Son of Man has power on earth to forgive sins.

[5 : 47] What a message, my friends. As I stand before you, I'm a sinner saved by grace. My parents loved Jesus. They prayed for their boys, that God would save them.

They had four boys. And when they put us off to bed, we didn't always do what we're told. We didn't always go to bed. But when Mom and Dad got us out of the living room and up the stairs, and they thought we were in bed, they had business to do with God.

And sometimes as young boys, we'd come to the top of the stairs, we would lie, we would listen to our parents as they wept and prayed before God, that God would save their boys. But that didn't make me a Christian.

But oh, the glorious message of the gospel touched my heart, and I was transformed by it and changed. And my friends, it's a glorious message. It's a privilege to go because of the Master we serve and the message we proclaim.

But let me say it's a privilege to go tonight because of the mission that we're engaged in. The untold billions are still untold. My friends, when we think of the mission we're engaged in, it's a great work because of its immensity.

[6 : 52] There are eight billion people in the world tonight, and less than half of them have heard about Jesus. It's a great work because of its immensity, but it's a great work because of its importance.

This work is not for time. This work is for eternity. The Lord exhorts us to lay up treasure in heaven where neither moth nor rust doth grow up, where thieves cannot break through or steal.

You know, friends, everything else, this temporal material, it will pass away, but this work is so important because this will not only last for time, this will last for eternity.

Tonight, friends, it's a privilege to go because of the Master we serve, the message we proclaim, and the mission that we're engaged in.

I want to say secondly tonight, not only is it the great privilege, but there's a great program here for us because the Word of God tells us here in verse 19 where to go and make disciples.

[7 : 58] The Greek verb translated go is really while you are going, make disciples of all nations. No matter where we are, we should be witnessing for Jesus Christ.

We should be seeking to win people to the Lord. Deep in every Christian, there's awareness that we are on this planet for purposes greater than having a career or paying the bills, loving our families and fulfilling our roles as citizens.

There is one supreme rule that we can only fulfill while here on earth that will have eternal consequences, and that is making His last command our first concern.

In the short time God has given to us on earth, we can make an impact that will outlast us here on earth and indeed will last for eternity. Therefore, go and make disciples of all nations.

The great program that God has given to us it was Archbishop William Temple who said in 1945, the church is the only society on earth that exists for the benefit of its non-members.

[9 : 15] Friends, we're here tonight in a missionary meeting how good it is to hear what God is doing across the world in Central Asia and the great program to go and to make disciples, but friends, we have a great responsibility, haven't we?

Not only is there a privilege to go, but there is the great privilege, there is the great program, but then thirdly, there's the great promise because He says, Lo, I'm with you always, even unto the end of the age.

You're the one who has all authority in heaven and earth. We read off in verse 18, He's not so much that He goes with us.

What He's saying is here, it's rather that we go with Him. What He's saying here, if you go with me in the Great Commission, if you get involved in the Great Commission, then I am with you until the end of the age.

How wonderful, my friends, just to know that He does go with us. Jesus is not like a general waving His troops off as they go into battle, as He remains safe behind the lines. No, the wonderful truth is, as we advance with the gospel, my friends, He has promised to go with us to the very end.

[10 : 29] Wherever the Great Commission will take us or bring us, He has promised that He'd be with us. You know, as we look over church history, as we think of missionaries who have gone, we see many proofs of the trustworthiness of this pledge that God has made to those who have gone in the Great Commission and have become martyrs and laid down their lives for the sake of the gospel.

During the 1964 Simba rebellion in Congo, Dennis and Nora Perry went to the Congo with their two children. They were from England. When they arrived, they were in prison for over three months and every day their little 10-year-old daughter, Grace, kept singing her favourite song, Burdens Are Lifted at Calvary.

Jesus is very near. The day arrived when the Simbas took the Perry family out to shoot them. And as the family were being marched before the firing squad, Little Grace started to sing her song again.

Burdens Are Lifted at Calvary. Jesus is very near. It's not surprising that they called Little Grace the little martyr of Congo. But there was one thing that family knew, that God was very near.

They were fulfilling the Great Commission. They went with the call of God. Yes, it meant them laying down their lives for the sake of the gospel. But my friends, there was one thing for certain, Jesus was with them to the very end.

[11 : 54] Think of the Sharp family as well who went to Congo. During that rebellion, they conducted a short service for the missionaries returning home. And the Sharp family gathered around their little portable organ and the sang Burdens Are Lifted at Calvary.

Jesus is very near. It was the last song that the missionaries heard them sing. A few days later, the Simbas took, broke into the hospital and murdered the doctor while he was performing surgery and shot his wife and children and threw their bodies into the river.

But whatever it cost them, Jesus was very near. And wherever he leads me, I will go.

Because his promise is sure, he'll be with me to the very end of the age.

It's a great privilege. It's a great program. It's a great promise. But I come and I'm strained from the text for this isn't found in the text tonight.

[13 : 00] But friends, maybe there's a great problem as we're in this missionary meeting. And the question for us tonight is, is his last command our first concern? When we awake in the morning, do we think of the billions who have never been reached for Jesus?

I know, you know, we live in a day and age and it's very easy to get distracted and there's so much going on around us. It's so difficult to keep focused.

And you might say, well, it's okay for the minister, it's okay for a missionary, they have nothing else to do, only to keep focused. But I want to say, my friends, we can be so busy in the Lord's work that sometimes we miss the very best.

I believe there's the barrenness of a busy life. I trust that God will spare us from just routine, that God will spare us from just doing missionary work for the sake of doing it, but that we'll do it because his last command is my first concern.

How good it is to serve the Lord. We have only one life to live. I think it was C.T. Studd, one of the Cambridge Seven who went to serve God in China, a brilliant man, but God called him and he went as one of the Cambridge Seven.

[14 : 27] I think it was C.T. Studd who said these words, I've only one life to live, it will soon be passed and only what's done for Christ will last. Do you know this life of ours?

it's a vapor. It appears for a little while and then it's gone. And really, my friends, what really matters in our lives is what we do for God.

I remember dear missionary Molly Harvey, she's with the Lord, but she was an amazing little woman. I met her when she was in her 90s and I'm sharing this with you because her words have really impacted my life.

She was called of God to go to Brazil, to the Amazon, to serve God. And before she could go, she had to have a medical check and she went to the Royal Victoria Hospital in Belfast and the medical team, they examined her and they said, we're sorry, you cannot go, your heart is weak and you will never survive living in Amazon.

But Molly was called of God and she went, she served God for almost 40 years in the Amazon and she often said, the doctors who told me not to go are all dead and I'm still alive.

[15 : 44] But it was her words that have really impacted my life and this is what Molly Harvey often said, don't count your years, but make your years count.

It's wonderful to be saved by God's grace, isn't it? It's so good to know Christ in a personal way, in a powerful way, a transforming way.

It's wonderful to be able to say tonight, I'm going home to glory soon to see the city bright. But when I stand before him, my friends, I want to hear those words, well done, you good and faithful, servant.

It's only how I serve him, it's only how I live my life here, isn't it? We have one life to live. Thank God for one life. And just to live it for Jesus, just to serve him, to love him, to give him all that I have, that this one life might count for God, for his glory.

for the extension of his great kingdom. Do you love him tonight? Wouldn't this be a wonderful night to find him, to surrender to him, to be transformed by him, and to have that blessed assurance that Jesus is mine.

[17 : 18] And then, my friends, to go out to serve him as in a world that's no friend of God, it's no friend of grace. God bless you, but what a joy to serve Jesus.

God bless you, to serve Jesus. We trust that God will bless his word to all of our hearts and make us just what he wants us to be and that we will be available for his glory.

Let's pray. Our God and our Father, we thank you to be in the house of God in the presence of the Lord.

We thank you, O God, for your precious word that speaks deeply into our hearts. It transforms us, Lord. It draws us to you. It does something amazing within us.

And Lord, we just prayed your word tonight. We'll just do what it needs to do and that your name will be honored and glorified. In Jesus' name we pray.

[18 : 22] Amen.