

Foundation publishes Baptist ethicist Maston's final book

January 17, 2024

The final book written by famed Baptist ethicist T.B. Maston is reaching readers in the early months of 2024, more than 35 years after his death.



T.B. Maston

Maston taught Christian ethics—the application of Jesus' teachings to everyday living—at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth more than 40 years.

Near the end of his life, he wrote *Little Words That Challenge*, devotional reflections on the meaning of nine brief verbs from the Bible, to inspire and challenge new Baptist foreign missionaries.

The [T.B. Maston Foundation](#) has released the forward, introduction and first chapter of *Little Words That Challenge* [online](#). The foundation plans to release an additional chapter of the previously unpublished book every two to four weeks, Executive Director David Morgan said.

The book focuses on Jesus' core teaching, using nine verbs that populate his speech: come, know, seek, ask, abide, send, walk, love and wait.

Few scholars and devotional writers have reviewed these "imperatives from

Jesus,” noted Bill Tillman, the book’s lead editor. Tillman retired from Hardin-Simmons University’s Logsdon School of Theology, where he held the T.B. Maston Chair of Christian Ethics. He previously edited several of Maston’s books and is the coordinator of the Center for Congregational Ethics.

“Too often, these selected verbs have been ignored, projected only superficially,” Tillman said. “Maston demonstrated that a focus on a few words ... have an energy. Themes that have stood the test of time are wonderful illustrations that (short) verbs from Jesus are not faddish but the bases for a movement.”

Little Words That Challenge will extend Maston’s influence to a new generation, predicted Carol Holcomb, a church historian and professor in the College of Christian Studies at the University of Mary Hardin-Baylor.

“T.B. Maston shaped a generation of Baptist leaders during his 40-plus years as professor of Christian ethics,” she said. “Maston’s voice was amplified through the thousands of students who carried his ethical vision from his classroom into their careers as ministers, professors, missionaries, denominational leaders and public activists. ... A new generation will be inspired by Maston’s keen sense of justice, uncompromising ethics and unwavering compassion.”

The book accurately reflects Maston’s character as well as his teaching, Morgan added.

“*Little Words That Challenge* explores a core theme in the life and teaching of Maston: Walk as Jesus walked,” he said. “There may be no better way to accomplish this than to heed imperatives from the lips of Jesus. ... With splendid simplicity and a caring heart, *Little Words* offers both motivation and guidance for those who desire to fully live the Christian life.”

The Maston Foundation, founded in 1986, is a nonprofit organization that

awards scholarships to graduate students majoring in Christian ethics. The foundation also conducts student retreats, including one each year for Young Maston Scholars, undergraduate students recommended by their universities' Christian studies faculty.