



The Sending of the Twelve in Matthew Pt 5: Exhortations and Encouragements!

February 3, 2019

Holy Text: Matthew 10:16-33 (emphasis on v.7)

Last week, we looked at the prophetic and powerful message given by King Jesus that obedient citizens of His Kingdom were and are sent out to preach:

Matthew 10:7 (KJV) And as ye go, preach, saying, The kingdom of heaven is at hand.

Mark 6:12 (KJV) And they went out, and preached that men should repent.

Luke 9:6 (KJV) And they departed, and went through the towns, preaching the gospel, and healing everywhere.

As our LORD's prophetic voice (indeed, that's what all true disciples are), we must exhort and encourage men in:

1. The presence of the King among those who hear!
2. The call to submit to the rule of the King!
3. The blessings of the King when He is accepted!
4. The sure judgment of the King when He is rejected!
5. The willingness of the King to welcome more subjects!

To proclaim that *the Kingdom is at hand*, from our perspective, means we herald that God is come near in Christ, provided an atonement for our sins in Christ, and is coming back, having given judgment to Christ! (John 5:22)

As we closed, we said we must; "Put on the mantle. Take the horn. Gird up our loins. Preach! 'And as ye go, preach, saying, The kingdom of heaven is at hand.'" Matthew 10:7 (KJV)

Exhortations and Encouragements

1. As we look at our LORD's words in today's text, we must note again that the biblical testimony is that prophets are most often sent into very difficult ministry environments.
2. The message of the prophet (essentially, "repent and turn") is often hard for the hearer to truly hear.
3. As we've said previously, even though Israel was supposed to be the "holy nation" and Jerusalem "the holy city," there was an abundance of spiritual warfare and very hard hearts, especially among the religious class.
4. The disciples were given "exhortations and encouragement" in line with their prophetic mission.
5. Let us learn from them as we minister in an increasingly hostile environment ourselves!

Matthew 10:16 *Behold, I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves: be ye therefore wise as serpents, and harmless as doves.*

- The picture here is one of vulnerability for the servants of Christ. Sheep are prey for wolves...prey with very little means of defending themselves against a much stronger and faster predator.
- Sheep, in general, are also not very smart, whereas wolves are known for their intelligence, organizational hierarchy, and ability to hunt in packs.
- Therefore, Jesus tells His disciples "Be gentle among men; also be smart!" "Be nurturing but do not be naive!"

- We too are “sheep among wolves.” How often do we see, even in the modern day, a Christian’s kind but prophetic words swallowed up in vitriol, or a Christian’s godly intentions drawing the ire of society at large?
- **Application: Be gentle and kind in your dealings with men, but be shrewd. Be in, not “of.” Lead with joy and love but be prepared for spiritual realities.**

Matthew 10:17-18 *But beware of men: for they will deliver you up to the councils, and they will scourge you in their synagogues; And ye shall be brought before governors and kings for my sake, for a testimony against them and the Gentiles.*

- Jesus exhorts (warns) His disciples concerning specific kinds of persecution—in this case, trial and imprisonment.
- Immediately, our minds flash to Peter’s and John’s arrest in Acts 4, or the entire band’s arrest in Acts 5, or Paul’s and Silas’ arrest and beating in Acts 16.
- Does this still happen today? Yes! According to opendoorusa.org, every month:
 - 255 Christians are killed
 - 104 are abducted
 - 180 Christian women are raped, sexually harassed or forced into marriage
 - 66 churches are attacked
 - 160 Christians are detained without trial and imprisoned
 - 215 million Christians experience high levels of persecution in the countries on the World Watch List. This represents 1 in 12 Christians worldwide.
 - During the World Watch List 2018 reporting period: 3,066 Christians were killed; 1,252 were abducted; 1,020 were raped or sexually harassed; and 793 churches were attacked.
 - Islamic oppression fuels Christian persecution in 8 of the top 10 countries.

Matthew 10:19-20 *But when they deliver you up, take no thought how or what ye shall speak: for it shall be given you in that same hour what ye shall speak. For it is not ye that speak, but the Spirit of your Father which speaketh in you.*

- Jesus said not “if” but “when!” Nevertheless, they were to take comfort that the Holy Ghost would help them testify in that hour to the things of God.
- Jesus said, *"Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come. He shall glorify me: for he shall receive of mine, and shall shew it unto you. All things that the Father hath are mine: therefore said I, that he shall take of mine, and shall shew it unto you."* John 16:13-15
- **Application: Disciples are commanded to be His witnesses (a legal term) in the world. (Acts 1:8) When that time comes, we can trust the Spirit of God to help us!**

Matthew 10:21 *And the brother shall deliver up the brother to death, and the father the child: and the children shall rise up against their parents, and cause them to be put to death.*

- Christ prophesies that His person and message would be the source of relational conflict. He said this in other places as well, as we will see (Matt 10:34-39).
- One can see how this could be consistently true in a predominately unbelieving culture (Jewish or pagan), particularly when all this Jesus stuff would be new to so many people. Conversion to Christianity has separated many friends and many families over the last 2000 years.
- **Application: Our LORD's disciples must love Jesus more than anything or anyone else, even to the point of (sadly) suffering personal loss.**

Matthew 10:22-23 *And ye shall be hated of all men for my name's sake: but he that endureth to the end shall be saved. But when they persecute you in this city, flee ye into another: for verily I say unto you, Ye shall not have gone over the cities of Israel, till the Son of man be come.*

- Jesus plainly tells His disciples that they would be hated and calls them to endure, regardless of what comes. He prophesies their persecution. A quick reading of Acts demonstrates the truth of our LORD's words.
- My view of the end of verse 22 looks forward to a time of great persecution towards our LORD's disciples and His church. Therefore "saved" here is not salvation from sin, but from premature execution before one's Kingdom mission is accomplished.
- Based on verse 23, the context seems to confirm a temporary physical "salvation" until the Son of Man "comes." Note the time marker of "going over" or "going through" all the towns in Israel.
- For our statement on our LORD's prophecy of His coming, see our teachings through Mark 13. (Search Mark 13 on crcchesapeake.org)
- **Application: Hatred and persecution can and will come for the name of Jesus. Are you ready to "endure until the end?"**

Matthew 10:24-25 *The disciple is not above his master, nor the servant above his lord. It is enough for the disciple that he be as his master, and the servant as his lord. If they have called the master of the house Beelzebub, how much more shall they call them of his household?*

- These verses contain wonderful encouragement! When disciples suffer, they are following in the LORD's footsteps! (1 Pet 2:21) When disciples are called blasphemous names, they are enduring hardship as members of Christ's household! Indeed:

"Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake. Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you." Matthew 5:10-12

- **Application: Rejoice!**

Matthew 10:26 *Fear them not therefore: for there is nothing covered, that shall not be revealed; and hid, that shall not be known.*

- Jesus said “Fear them not!” Oh how we need this mindset today! This is the New Testament equivalent of:

"Only be thou strong and very courageous, that thou mayest observe to do according to all the law, which Moses my servant commanded thee: turn not from it to the right hand or to the left, that thou mayest prosper whithersoever thou goest." Joshua 1:7

- Why should they not fear? Because, “however they may slander you now, your innocence will at length appear.” —John Wesley
- In other words, eventually, despite persecution, the truth of the testimony of Jesus will be made manifest and the persecuted will be vindicated.
- **Application: Do not fear to speak the things of God!**

Matthew 10:27 *What I tell you in darkness, that speak ye in light: and what ye hear in the ear, that preach ye upon the housetops.*

- Jesus plainly tells the disciples to teach what they have learned. Not only that, but do so in a way that the world can hear. This is precisely what they began to do at Pentecost.
- This statement is made all the more compelling when one remembers their environment: skeptical, sometimes hostile, and certainly demonically active!
- **Application: Be loving but be bold! Teach what you have been taught. Freely you have received; freely give! Do not be ashamed of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, “for it is the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek.” (Rom 1:16)**

Matthew 10:28 *And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.*

- Jesus implied that the disciples could suffer persecution, but also be killed for their preaching.
- In the face of death, they were not to fear!
- Paul exemplified such fearlessness. He said, *"According to my earnest expectation and my hope, that in nothing I shall be ashamed, but that with all boldness, as always, so now also Christ shall be magnified in my body, whether it be by life, or by death. For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain." Philippians 1:20-21*
- And die they did:
 - Philip: Crucified, Phrygia, A.D. 54
 - Matthew: Beheaded, Ethiopia, A.D. 60
 - Barnabas: Burned to death, Cyprus, A.D. 64
 - Mark: Dragged to death, Cyprus, A.D. 64

- James (the Less): Clubbed to death, Jerusalem, A.D. 66
- Paul: Beheaded, Rome, A.D. 66
- Peter: Crucified, Rome, A.D. 69
- Andrew: Crucified, Achaia, A.D. 70
- Thomas: Speared to death, Calamina, A.D. 70
- Luke: Hanged, Athens, A.D. 93

- **Application: Love Jesus to such an extent that you are willing to die. Yes, be willing to die for the Savior. How might Christians with such passion impact the world?**

Matthew 10:29-31 *Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing? and one of them shall not fall on the ground without your Father. But the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Fear ye not therefore, ye are of more value than many sparrows.*

- Precious friends, despite the strong possibility of persecution for the truths of God, KNOW THAT HE LOVES YOU!
- Here, our LORD paints a beautiful picture of the Father's love and care for his creation. NLT says, "What is the price of two sparrows—one copper coin? But not a single sparrow can fall to the ground without your Father knowing it." Matthew 10:29 (NLT)
- But our LORD's greatest earthly creations aren't in the animal kingdom. His greatest earthly creation is you. Only human beings are made in God's image (Imago Dei).
- And not only does He love you, but implied in the text is a level of care we find hard to understand. Mathew Henry wrote:

This is a proverbial expression, denoting the account which God takes and keeps of all the concerns of his people, even of those that are most minute, and least regarded. This is not to be made a matter of curious enquiry, but of encouragement to live in a continual dependence upon God's providential care, which extends itself to all occurrences, yet without disparagement to the infinite glory, or disturbance to the infinite rest, of the Eternal Mind. If God numbers their hairs, much more does he number their heads, and take care of their lives, their comforts, their souls. It intimates, that God takes more care of them, than they do of themselves.

- **Application: When times get hard because of your witness and testimony, know that you are valued above all earthly things by God Himself. He sees, knows, understands. He will never leave nor forsake you. (Heb 13:5) Based on such love, declare, "The Lord is my helper; I will not fear; what can man do to me?" (Heb 13:6, ESV)**

Matthew 10:32-33 *Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven. But whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father which is in heaven.*

- Finally, Jesus reassures his disciples that their suffering will not be in vain.
- Because their confession before men carries such a high price, Jesus points them to something greater: their heavenly inheritance.
- By contrast, Jesus intimates that those who don't love Him enough to suffer the wrath of man for His sake don't truly love him and will therefore be denied before his father in heaven. This is a common line of

demarcation between the true and the false disciple in the Gospels and Epistles (see: Mark 8:38; Luke 12:9; 2 Tim 2:12; 1 John 2:23; Rev 3:8).

- John MacArthur clarifies:

This describes a soul-damning denial of Christ—not the sort of temporary wavering Peter was guilty of ([Luk 22:56-62](#))—but the sin of those who through fear, shame, neglect, delay, or love of the world reject all evidence and revelation and decline to confess Christ as Savior and King, until it is too late.

- **Application: Make your calling and election sure. (2 Pet 1:10) Ask yourself, “What does Jesus truly mean to me?”**

Amen.