

Matthew 10:24-33: A disciple is not above his teacher, nor a servant above his master. ²⁵ It is enough for the disciple to be like his teacher, and the servant like his master. If they have called the master of the house Beelzebul, how much more will they malign those of his household. ²⁶ So **have no fear** of them, for nothing is covered that will not be revealed, or hidden that will not be known. ²⁷ What I tell you in the dark, say in the light, and what you hear whispered, proclaim on the housetops. ²⁸ And **do not fear** those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. Rather **fear him** who can destroy both soul and body in hell. ²⁹ Are not two sparrows sold for a penny? And not one of them will fall to the ground apart from your Father. ³⁰ But even the hairs of your head are all numbered. ³¹ **Fear not**, therefore; you are of more value than many sparrows. ³² So everyone who acknowledges me before men, I also will acknowledge before my Father who is in heaven, ³³ but whoever denies me before men, I also will deny before my Father who is in heaven.

Intro: Last week, we continued to explore the instructions Jesus gave to His twelve Apostles as He prepared them to be sent out on their first mission of spreading the Gospel of the Kingdom. We saw Jesus give them a series of warnings and encouragements focusing on **facing persecution and opposition** to them and their message. Christ's messengers **will face opposition and suffer for His sake**. Today we see more of Jesus' instructions to the twelve with more attention given to how they will suffer and more encouragement to be faithful, fear not, trust in God, and He promises them that He will acknowledge them before God the Father for their faithful service. **Fear not!**

1. Jesus Reminds His Apostles That Since He Has Suffered, They Also Will Suffer

Matthew 10:24-25: A disciple is not above his teacher, nor a servant above his master. ²⁵ It is enough for the disciple to be like his teacher, and the servant like his master. If they have called the master of the house Beelzebul, how much more will they malign those of his household.

a. Disciples and servants aren't more privileged than their teachers and masters: V. 24-25: A disciple is not above his teacher, nor a servant above his master. ²⁵ It is enough for the disciple to be like his teacher, and the servant like his master.

- Disciples and servants will be like their teachers and masters – their goal is to be like them, to imitate them.

b. Disciples/servants will endure the same slander, persecution, & ridicule as their teachers and masters: V. 25: If they have called the master of the house Beelzebul, how much more will they malign those of his household.

Beelzebul: Pagan god?; Lord of flies?; Lord of dung?; Lord of the house?: **Matthew 12:24:** But when the Pharisees heard it, they said, "It is only by **Beelzebul, the prince of demons**, that this man casts out demons."

Platt: The reality we must face is this: The danger of our lives increases in proportion to the depth of our relationship with Christ . . . Everyone who wants a safe, carefree life free from danger should stay away from Jesus. The world responds with hostility to Him. So as we are conformed to Christ more and more, the world will respond to us more and more as they responded to Him. If you want to avoid being betrayed, hated, or persecuted, then don't become like Christ! We are so prone to sit back and settle for religious routine and comfortable Christianity, because it's safe. And the world likes us in that mode. As long as we live lives just like everyone else – going to church on Sunday and keeping our faith to ourselves – we will face little risk in this world. The only problem is that we will know so little of Christ. But when we do know Christ, and when we're becoming like Him and proclaiming Him, things will not be easy for us. The more Christ is manifest in your life and in your family, the harder it will get for you in this world.

c. Take heart! Be encouraged! If you are slandered, persecuted, and ridiculed like this (for righteousness' sake!), it is evidence that you belong to Jesus Christ! John Piper: If you are maligned, you are in the house!

2. Jesus Commands His Apostles Not To Fear Because The Truth Will Be Made Known

Matt. 10:26-27: So have no fear of them, for nothing is covered that will not be revealed, or hidden that will not be known. ²⁷ What I tell you in the dark, say in the light, & what you hear whispered, proclaim on the housetops.

a. Do not fear because the truth will be made known someday: The truth will come out someday! It came out about Jesus! He is not demonic! God raised Him from the dead! He is the God-Man! He is LORD! He is King!

And the truth will come out about you! All the lies, slander, and evil spoken about you will be shown to be lies!
You are not proud and arrogant for wanting others to be converted from their false religions to Christ!
You are not hateful, unloving, and bigots for believing marriage is between a man and woman!
You don't hate women for believing abortion is murder & God assigns gender roles in the home and in the church!
You are not abusive parents if you lovingly and rightly apply the rod to disobedient children's rear ends!
You are not wasting your time and money investing in the church and the spiritual disciplines!
You are not a religious nut for being a nobody, trying to tell everybody, about Somebody, who can save anybody!

The truth about God will come out! The truth about the Bible will come out! The truth about Jesus will come out!
The truth about who's right and who's wrong in all the debates and lies about God will come out!

- **Romans 2:16:** on that day when, according to my gospel, God judges the secrets of men by Christ Jesus.
- **1 Corinthians 4:5:** Therefore do not pronounce judgment before the time, before the Lord comes, who will bring to light the things now hidden in darkness and will disclose the purposes of the heart.
- **Hebrews 4:13:** And no creature is hidden from his sight, but all are naked and exposed to the eyes of him to whom we must give account. **GOSPEL!**

b. Don't be a hypocrite: Don't lie to yourself and others. Don't live one kind of life here, and another at home.

c. You go and speak the truth openly now: V. 27: What I tell you in the dark, say in the light, & what you hear whispered, proclaim on the housetops. **Commentator:** Refuse to be silent!

3. Jesus Commands His Apostles Not To Fear Because All Their Enemies Can Do Is Kill Them Temporarily
Matthew 10:28: And do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. Rather fear him who can destroy both soul and body in hell.

a. Do not fear men: Don't fear those who can only kill your body but not your soul. Men can't ultimately harm you! Don't fear their slander. Don't fear their name calling and lies about you. Don't fear their swords/guns/death!

Mere humans do fear those things. You are not mere humans: 1 Corinthians 3:3-4: for you are still of the flesh. For while there is jealousy and strife among you, are you not of the flesh and behaving only in a human way? ⁴ For when one says, "I follow Paul," and another, "I follow Apollos," are you not being merely human?

James Boice/William Barclay: Story of Hugh Latimer, a preacher during the English Reformation; He was preaching before King Henry VIII and was about to say something he knew the King would not like to hear. So he started talking to himself out loud in the pulpit: "Latimer! Latimer! Be careful what you say. The king is here." But after a pause, he said again out loud: "Latimer! Latimer! Be careful what you say. The King of kings is here!"

b. Fear God who can destroy both soul & body in hell: Men aren't dangerous to you, God is dangerous to you! God has the power to kill your body too, but He also has the power to cast both body & soul in hell to be tormented forever & ever under His righteous, good, & just wrath & anger. Hell is so bad because God is so good!

Mark 9:43-48: And if your hand causes you to sin, cut it off. It is better for you to enter life crippled than with two hands **to go to hell, to the unquenchable fire.** And if your foot causes you to sin, cut it off. It is better for you to enter life lame than with two feet **to be thrown into hell.** And if your eye causes you to sin, tear it out. It is better for you to enter the kingdom of God with one eye than with two eyes **to be thrown into hell, 'where their worm does not die and the fire is not quenched.'**

Ligon Duncan: Isn't it interesting here, that Jesus is giving His disciples encouragement based on the doctrine of hell. That's so alien to our minds. That the doctrine of hell is a doctrine that most Christians today would love to just forget, just shove it back on the back corner of the shelf, and let the dust collect. We know it's not popular with our contemporaries, and it hurts us to even think about. It hurts us to do exposition of the Scriptures which teach it. But I want you to see your Lord here is giving you an encouragement based on the doctrine of hell. He's saying here, that we must remember that God will set things right. And that is going to involve both reward and punishment. And we must never forget that. He will set things right. He will bring things to light in the end. And He has the power over death and hell. We must take that with deadly seriousness, my friends, no matter how much we are ridiculed for this belief. Only a few years ago, a Christian minister in Britain was making fun, publicly, in a magazine article about the doctrine of hell, as if there were people out there clamoring for the doctrine of hell to be preached every Sunday. He ridiculed it again, advancing his own reputation by attacking an unpopular doctrine. One of my friends, a very celebrated journalist in Scotland, wrote a response to this man's public attack on the Christian doctrine of hell, and it was published in the largest newspaper in Scotland. This young man had been voted the journalist of the year, and he put his career on the line, in responding in an article. I'll tell you as an aside, his article received more mail than any article in the history of the Glasgow Herald. Not all of it, of course, was positive, but he gave a faithful testimony to Christian belief. And listen to some of the things that he said. "Hell flows logically from the teaching of Scripture. The terrible end that awaits the ungodly is stressed from Genesis to Revelation. It is as much a part of the New Testament as of the Old. Indeed, Jesus in the gospel refers more often to hell than anyone else in the Bible. He believes in it, in sober earnest. After all, He created it. For hell is not the kingdom of Satan; hell is Satan's prison." And so he responded to the charges of those who mocked this doctrine. The doctrine of hell is here in point by Christ, to encourage Christians realizing the seriousness of our discipleship, and realizing that we are not playing games here. The message that we preach has eternal consequences . . . it has eternal significance, how they will respond to the gospel.

Is fear of God's punishment in hell one way Christians should be motivated to obey God? Jesus says yes! Jesus says one way His Apostles should overcome all fear of man is by fearing God – and the reason given that they should fear God is because God has the power to cast into hell. It's clear as crystal!

- **Kevin DeYoung:** The Grace of Fear: We see a different kind of motivation in Colossians 3:6. Paul tells the Colossians to put away earthly desires & then says, "On account of these the wrath of God is coming." Paul is motivating them by the grace of fear. Some people have a very hard time understanding that threats & warnings are in the Bible for our sanctification. Of course, it's wonderfully true that God will keep his elect & preserve them to the end. But how do you think he accomplishes this work of preservation? One way is by warning them of what will happen if they do not persevere. In God's people, warnings like the one in verse 6 stir us up to love and good deeds. The Christian doesn't despair at these threats of judgment. He pleads, "O Lord, keep me in the love of God as you have promised." We ought to see the warnings in Hebrews & in passages like this as God's means of preserving the saints. Sometimes in an effort to be gospel centered, we shy away from the warnings in Scripture. I understand the impulse. We know that many tender souls need to hear how much God loves them. We need to hear about our new identity in Christ. We need to know God is for us and not against us. But there are also hard hearts in the church – maybe some reading this book – who need to know that the way they are living right now and the stuff they are into right now is why the wrath of God is coming. Some people need to be shaken from their lethargy & realize that the wrath of God will be poured out on the earth for the things they consider light & trivial offenses. Some people need the literal hell scared out of them. But you say, "Shouldn't we be emphasizing God's grace? Isn't it all of grace? Shouldn't our preaching & counseling be all about grace?" And, of course, it should be. But what makes us think that the warning of God's wrath is not his grace to us? We are not giving to our friends, or to ourselves, or to our people, all the grace that God has for us if we do not make known that the wrath of God is coming. God is nothing but grace to his children, but this grace can come to us in brighter and darker hues.

4. Jesus Commands His Apostles Not To Fear Because Their Father Cares For Them In Every Detail

Matthew 10:29-31: Are not two sparrows sold for a penny? & not one of them will fall to the ground apart from your Father. But even the hairs of your head are all numbered. Fear not, therefore; you are of more value than many sparrows.

a. Our Father knows, cares for, & ordains/controls the flight paths of small, insignificant sparrows: Our Father is involved in the details of everything! Even the smallest things! His attention is on worthless birds, & He cares for them! He knows everything about them!

- **Proverbs 16:33:** The lot is cast into the lap, but its every decision is from the LORD.

- **Proverbs 21:1:** The king's heart is a stream of water in the hand of the LORD; he turns it wherever he will.

- **Ephesians 1:11:** In him we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to the purpose of **him who works all things according to the counsel of his will**

b. V. 30: But even the hairs of your head are all numbered: Your Father knows everything about you! He knows what you will suffer! He knows all about all of your sufferings and pains! You are not alone!

c. V. 31: Fear not, therefore; you are of more value than many sparrows: Since your Father knows everything about sparrows (& you); & since He ordains everything in a sparrow's life; & since He cares for little, insignificant birds: how much more does He know you, ordain everything in your life, & care for everything in your life!

All My Ways Are Known To You (CityAlight): In days of peace and days of rest; In times of loss and loneliness Though rich or poor, Your Word is true; That all my ways are known to You!

- No trial has come beyond Your hand; No step I walk beyond Your plan

The path is dark outside my view; Still all my ways are known to You!

- And oh what peace that I have found; Wherever I may be

For all my ways are known to You; Hallelujah, they are known to You!

- I do not fear the final night; For death will be the door to life

You take my hand and lead me through; For all my ways are known to You!

- Open up my eyes so I may see; That You have made these ways for me

Open up my eyes so I may see; That You my God, will walk with me!

5. Jesus Promises Great Reward For Faithfulness And Great Shame For Unfaithfulness

Matthew 10:32-33: So everyone who acknowledges me before men, I also will acknowledge before my Father who is in heaven,³³ but whoever denies me before men, I also will deny before my Father who is in heaven.

a. We must confess/acknowledge Christ to be saved: Romans 10:9: if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.

b. What you think about Jesus; how you respond to Jesus; whether or not you acknowledge Jesus will determine where you spend eternity: 1 John 2:23: No one who denies the Son has the Father. Whoever confesses the Son has the Father also.

1 John 5:12: Whoever has the Son has life; whoever does not have the Son of God does not have life.

Jesus is God! Craig Blomberg: Jesus makes the astonishing claim that it is people's response to him that will make the difference as to how God treats them on judgment day. Only one who shares divinity with his Father in heaven can legitimately make such a claim.

c. We must acknowledge/confess Christ where it matters: Elizabeth Rundle Charles, referring to Martin Luther: If I profess with the loudest voice and clearest exposition every portion of the truth of God except precisely that little point which the world and the devil are at that moment attacking, I am not confessing Christ, however boldly I may be professing Christ. Where the battle rages, there the loyalty of the soldier is proved, and to be steady on all the battlefield besides, is mere flight and disgrace if he flinches at that point.

Where is the battle raging today in your life? Where is the battle raging today in our culture and world?

Daniel Doriani: In the novel *To Kill A Mockingbird*, the hero, Atticus Finch, is a lawyer assigned the task of defending a black man who is falsely accused of raping a white woman. In the 1930s, in a town soaked with racism and prejudice, Atticus intended to do his job well, even if it made his family most unpopular. He told his children, "I couldn't go to church and worship God if I didn't try to help that man."

d. We must keep acknowledging Christ all our days: V. 33: but whoever denies me before men, I also will deny before my Father who is in heaven.

- **Hebrews 6:4-6:** For it is impossible to restore again to repentance those who have once been enlightened, who have tasted the heavenly gift, and have shared in the Holy Spirit, ⁵ and have tasted the goodness of the word of God and the powers of the age to come, ⁶ if they then fall away, since they are crucifying once again the Son of God to their own harm and holding him up to contempt.

- **Hebrews 6:9:** Though we speak in this way, yet in your case, beloved, we feel sure of better things - things that belong to salvation.

The Mercy-Heart of Christ: Matthew 26:69-75: Now Peter was sitting outside in the courtyard. And a servant girl came up to him and said, "You also were with Jesus the Galilean." ⁷⁰ But he denied it before them all, saying, "I do not know what you mean." ⁷¹ And when he went out to the entrance, another servant girl saw him, and she said to the bystanders, "This man was with Jesus of Nazareth." ⁷² And again he denied it with an oath: "I do not know the man." ⁷³ After a little while the bystanders came up and said to Peter, "Certainly you too are one of them, for your accent betrays you." ⁷⁴ Then he began to invoke a curse on himself and to swear, "I do not know the man." And immediately the rooster crowed. ⁷⁵ And Peter remembered the saying of Jesus, "Before the rooster crows, you will deny me three times." And he went out and wept bitterly.

Christ The Greatest Master Taught
Both Light And Heat He Always Brought
Yet They'd Malign With Lies Onslaught
And Call Him Devil – Wicked Thought
His Lost Sheep He Loves And Sought
For Them He Died And Rose And Bought
A People For His Own Who Ought
To Never Fear For He Has Wrought

Salvation, Now All Fears Are Nought
So Trust Him Now Don't Be Distraught
Acknowledge Him, No Witness Halt
Our Father Rules The Birds, Exalt
His Name Who Counts Our Hairs And Fought
To Satisfy All Pleasures Sought
With He Himself Our God Who Taught!