

## Matt ch 10 vs16-26

Let's turn in our bibles this morning to Matt ch 10 vs. 16. We've been studying the commission of Jesus to His 12 apostles. Where it was He sent them on their 1<sup>st</sup> mission, why He restricted their parameters, and what it was that they were to do while they were gone. And Jesus told them not to go to the gentiles or to a Samaritan city on this particular mission, but rather they were to go to the "lost sheep of Israel." They were to minister to their own homes and own towns and own people before they went to other places, remember Paul said in Rom 1:16- that the gospel of Christ, "*is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Greek.*" And we looked at a couple of different implications or various reasons that Jesus would've sent His apostles to the Jews 1<sup>st</sup>, no doubt so as to have an effective witness to the nation instead of being discredited by the Jews by sharing the message of salvation to the gentiles of which the Jews thought was only for them. And so as they went out to the Jews they were to preach the same message as their teacher had been, that the kingdom of heaven is at hand, and they were to affirm the authority of their message by healing the sick, and cleansing the lepers, raising the dead, and casting out demons.

Again just as Jesus had been doing, they were to do. And we took special note of the fact that they weren't to charge for the proclamation that accompanied the healings. They received the gift freely, so they were to bless others with it freely. They weren't to use their God given *gifts* for their own personal gain, or prophet. They're called gifts of the Holy Spirit for a reason, that being because they're free. If you charge someone for a gift, that's kind of an oxymoron, how can it be considered a gift if you have to pay for it? Paul told Timothy to withdraw from those men who considered godliness as a means of gain. And here Jesus tells them freely you've received this authority and ability, now freely give it.

They were to take nothing with them on their journey because God was guiding them so God was going to provide for them. and He was teaching them that as long as they were being faithful in following Gods' direction; God was going to meet their needs, and we went over the principal of where God guides, God provides. and He said in Vs 14-15 (read)

In other words to reject the message of the Gospel of Jesus Christ is no small offense in the sight of God. And He emphasizes that by using the illustration of Sodom and Gomorrah, Cities that God destroyed, because of their refusal to repent. And yet Jesus says here that even though fire and brimstone rained down out of Heaven and destroyed those cities, that on judgment day it's going to be more tolerable for them, than for those who reject the gospel of Jesus Christ. And coming into the knowledge of the fact that Jesus took upon Himself our sin and shed His blood for the remission of our sin and then rejecting that truth is no small offense in the sight of God.

So a solemn warning against hardening your heart against the message of Jesus Christ and when you leave here this morning you won't be able to say "God I didn't know." So I encourage you not to walk out those doors without making sure you're right with God, don't harden your heart against the message of Jesus Christ

Now Jesus continues on and gives them a little bit broader scope of what's to take place in the bigger picture, as they will continue to go forth with the message of the Gospel.

Vs 16

Now again I point out this little 6 lettered word here that Matt uses; behold, and remember that I told you that Matt uses the word behold like a pointer. He's saying that something significant is being said here or done here so don't miss it. Jesus says look, I'm sending you out as sheep in the midst of wolves, and that little word "I" there is emphatic, in other words there's stress on that word in the Greek showing that Jesus is emphasizing Himself as the "fountain" of the Gospel ministry, that it originates and stems from Him. That He Himself is the one who sends forth the message and that unless someone is sent from Him, they were never sent in the 1<sup>st</sup> place. And I might add to that, that unless Jesus put a call on my life and equipped me accordingly and personally sent me out; I wouldn't want to go any way.

I don't want to go anywhere or do anything but that God hasn't ordained me, and gone before me, because I don't want to find myself anywhere but right smack in the middle of God's will for my life or else you can get in trouble quick. Why because Satan is the ruler of this world, and so this world is not "Christian friendly," believe me the majority of this world would just as soon you fall off the face of the earth. Things would be much easier for them if it weren't for you fundamental Christians, they could sin and not have anyone hold them accountable to it, but as it is you expose their positions, you don't lie about your lunches and take longer breaks on company time, you don't laugh at their dirty jokes. And believe me that's just the surface it just gets worse for them from there.

So a lot of people have a hostile edge towards you, but they still need Jesus, they're just deceived. You can't really blame them for that, they're victims, having been taken captive by the enemy to do his will. They think that when you meet Jesus and your life radically changes, that you've been brain washed, but they have it backwards; you've been set free they're the one's who are deceived. And even though you're hated by them, they still need to be delivered, so what does Jesus say. (Read 1<sup>st</sup> ½ again).

He's painting an obvious metaphor here and it's one of extreme danger. You think of wolves as being those who travel in packs and gang up on their prey and tear it to shreds. Vs sheep who have virtually no defense mechanisms and aren't too bright to boot. And what I find interesting is that even though Jesus is aware of the danger, He still sends them. That brings up an interesting question, does God send people into harms way? Can it ever be God's will for us to suffer? Well, lets consider what Jesus says later on in this very text, in vs24 He said, *"A disciple is not above his teacher, nor a servant above his master."*

Let me ask you this, do you think that Jesus was ever, even for one second out of the Fathers perfect will for His life? I don't, now let me ask you this, did the Father ever send Jesus into harms way? You bet He did, it's called being beaten beyond the recognition of a man and being scourged 39 times with cat of 9 tails, having your beard ripped out, a crown of thorns beat down on your head and then being nailed to a cross.

That's what your master went through, are you above Him. 1 Peter 3:15-17 says, *"But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts, and always be ready to give a defense to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear; 16having a good conscience, that when they defame you as evildoers, those who revile your good conduct in Christ may be ashamed. 17For it is better, if it is the will of God, to suffer for doing good than for doing evil."* That tells me that there can be times when suffering in our lives is the will of God. Many times God will use suffering to teach us obedience.

Heb 5:8 tells us in regards to Jesus *"though He was a Son, yet He learned obedience by the things which He suffered."* And I'm not claiming to have all the answers when it comes to suffering but the point I'm trying to make is that sometimes things happen to us that don't seem just, but that doesn't necessarily mean that we're out of Gods' will for our lives as some would propagate. As a matter of fact Peter also said *"Therefore let those who suffer according to the will of God commit their souls to Him in doing good, as to a faithful Creator."* So there are times when things happen that God is actually trying to use them for a reason, so don't think that every time something happens to you that God isn't aware of and in control. As a Christian there isn't anything that happens to you but that God doesn't allow it, and He is able to take what Satan means for evil and turn it to His glory. Jesus says here (repeat whole vs.) What does this mean to be "wise as serpents and gentile (or innocent) as doves"?

The story is told (true story by the way) of a college professor making fun of the knowledge of Christ by pointing out to the class that serpents really weren't that wise and so for Christ to say be wise as serpents was really a stupid thing to say and it just showed that He really had no real knowledge of biology.

One of the students piped up and said "how long do you think you would survive with out any arms or legs, and you had to take care of yourself out in the desert?" (Point taken)

The basic emphasis of what's being said here is that they're to be wise in avoiding danger but harmless in not forcibly opposing the enemy. One commentator put it like this. "The wisdom of the serpent would save them from unnecessary exposure to danger; the harmlessness of the dove, from sinful expedients to escape it."

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So yes, they were to be gentle and harmless to all but not stupid and naïve either, they were to use wisdom in their dealings. Because there are those out there that would love to see nothing better than the ministry and the work that God is doing on your life destroyed and thwarted. But it's ultimately a vain effort because Jesus said in the 16<sup>th</sup> ch of Matt's Gospel that He would build His church and not even the gates of hell would prevail against it. So definitely no puny man is going to thwart the purposes of God. But there will be those out there who will do everything they can to stumble you and to get in your way so as too keep you from living the life that God would have you to live. So He says

Vs 17

So here Jesus leaves the metaphors and prophecies and says very plainly, look these people who reject your message are going to be doing some bad things to you and it's going to be rough. You'll be beaten and scourged just to name a couple of things. Paul said in 2 Tim 3:12 "*Yes, and all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution.*"

Vs18

Again this particular insight wasn't in regards to the commission that Jesus is sending them on now. Because they weren't going to stand before kings and governors just yet as a witness to them or to the gentiles because remember they weren't going to the gentiles yet. But Jesus is preparing them for what's ultimately to face them. But He's assuring them in advance that it's going to happen but it's for a reason. He's telling them that the religious system and the Gov. will come against them, but it's for a purpose, and that's this; opposition brings opportunity.

In other words they would be brought to these officials that would think they were dealing with ordinary lawbreakers, but in actuality Jesus is telling them that they would actually be there for the sake of the leaders, as representatives of Himself so that they might be a witness to them and share the gospel with them. And we see that fulfilled in the book of acts in Acts 5:26; 12:1-4; 23:33; 26:1,28,30.(From Barnes' Notes, Electronic Database. Copyright (c) 1997 by BibleSoft)

And we want to draw attention to the fact that they are there for His sake, they will be persecuted because of His sake. If you're ever persecuted make sure it's for His sake not because you're being rude or obnoxious or arrogant or weird, or things of that nature. If you get persecuted at work because your talking about Jesus instead of doing your job, that's nothing to rejoice over, why? Because you're not being persecuted for His sake, you're being persecuted because you're not doing your job, which you were hired to do.

If you stand on the corner of 7<sup>th</sup> and Rangeline and yell at people with a megaphone telling them to repent or burn in hell, and so all day people are yelling out obscenities and telling you you're #1 by the way they wave at you, don't think you were being persecuted all day for Jesus. You were being persecuted because you were down right obnoxious. So be sure to note in your mind that your persecution should be for His sake, not because you were doing something that was totally out of line.

Vs 19-20

Now again I want to emphasize the context here, this is not a license to not prepare for a bible study and hope that the Spirit is going to just somehow come radically upon you and dazzle and enlighten the congregation. Though there are those who would propagate that. But Jesus isn't speaking about the general conduct of His followers here, and that it's no big deal if we don't take the time to study diligently so as to rightly divide the word of truth.

He's speaking specifically with in the context of the problems facing those who placed on potentially hostile trials for His names sake and assuring them that not only will God provide for their physical well being wherever He guides them, but if He's guiding them and something should go south in their own estimation He'll also provide the wisdom necessary to make a proper defense to His glory. Remember the bible also says that we're not to test the Lord, so be studied up, and as Peter put it, "*always be ready to give a defense to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear;*" But if something should catch you off guard, the Spirit is going to be there to give you wisdom.

How many times have you been sharing Jesus Christ and someone might ask you something that maybe you haven't previously thought of before, but as you're speaking to them all these scriptures just flood your heart and mind and you can tell (this isn't me) and you feel like you're in 3<sup>rd</sup> person just listening to the Spirit make utterance through your vocal cords. And you're thinking man this is a trip, go get em Lord. That's what He's talking about here, not that we should just get together on Sundays and just randomly select a text based upon where my bible falls open, that's just stupidity. So lets always remember the context.

Vs21

When you receive Jesus Christ and other people in your family or your life don't, sooner or later there's going to come a time when there will be a division, or a breaking point because you will have certain convictions that your family and friends don't that you can't compromise. And sometimes that division can be very painful emotionally; family divisions probably hurt the worst. And many of you know exactly what I'm talking about, you have family members that don't like you being here, and they think you're crazy for trying to study the things of God. Now here in the western world, we don't really see the death penalty in effect due to your trust in Jesus, (yet), but it does still happen today. There are countries today that it is against the law to be Christian and you can be put to death if the authorities find out.

As a matter of fact, (and this will blow your mind) more people have been martyred, or killed in the 20<sup>th</sup> century because they are Christians, than in the 1<sup>st</sup> 19 centuries of the church *combined*. People are still losing their lives today simply because they love Jesus. Why? Because as John told us "*men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. For everyone practicing evil hates the light and does not come to the light, lest his deeds should be exposed.*"

And since you are the light of the world exposing their wickedness as I said earlier they rather you didn't exist. Now Jesus goes on with more encouraging words.

Vs.22

Again let's notice the reason for the animosity; it's for His names sake, not for any other reason like obnoxiousness. And in reality its not really you they hate, it's the Lord in you, Jesus said "if you were of the world they would love you as their own" in other words when you were the life of the party you were Mr. Cool. But now that you're a Christian they'd rather if you didn't come around.

So really if they hate you because they can see Jesus in you then rejoice, because that must mean that you're allowing God to shape and mold your life, so in a certain way it's a compliment when worldly people hate you. 1 Peter 4:14 says, *"If you are reproached for the name of Christ, blessed are you, for the Spirit of glory and of God rests upon you. On their part He is blasphemed, but on your part He is glorified"*

If all the worldly people think you're still the life of the party and you're claiming to be a Christian then you'd do well to question where exactly you're at with Jesus. But He says in regards to persecution (read)

In other words true discipleship calls for perseverance through thick and thin not only while it's convenient. No body ever said true Christianity was easy, as a matter of fact I would dare to say it's probably one of the most trying and difficult pathways to choose, that's why Jesus said count the cost. Because He's not the easy way, He's the only way; Jesus said, *"I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life and no man comes to the father but by Me"* But I would be lying to you if I didn't tell you it's not always easy, what's easy is to follow the crowd. What's easy is to go with the flow. But it's difficult to make a stand for righteousness, it's hard to not compromise here and there to save face because you so often catch flack and get ridiculed. But if you and I stay consistently committed to Jesus Christ till the end, we'll find ourselves forever in the presence of the Lord. (Repeat he who endures to the end....)

Vs 23

In other words there's nothing-honorable about-facing preventable persecution to become a martyr. If you can avoid it use wisdom, if people don't accept the message and things get hostile, just leave, don't hang around where you're not wanted. There are plenty of people out there who are hungry for Jesus Christ find them instead of wasting your breath on people who aren't interested. Saving people isn't your job; that's Gods job, all you can be responsible for is sharing the message, you're not responsible for their response. If they refuse to receive it, just move on. (Finish Vs.)

Now people have made a big theological debate over this statement. What does it mean (repeat)? What coming is He referring to? Some try and make it mean that Jesus Christ will return, as in the 2<sup>nd</sup> coming of Christ; personally I think that's stretching it a bit out of context. Others think He's in reference to the resurrection, when He comes in triumph over sin and death prior to His commission to them to make disciples of *all* nations rather than just Israel.

Still others believe He's in reference to the coming of the power of the H.S. on the day of Pentecost, and that they won't make it through Israel prior to the coming of the H.S. Those of a practical mind think that He's simply saying, hey if a city doesn't receive you don't belabor it just move on because I'm going to be coming behind you and following up and you're not going to go thru Israel in it's entirety on this particular mission before I catch up to you so just go and preach the message and I'll catch up to you. Which ever your particular stand is I have no problem with it's not a salvational issue.

Vs 24

We sort of hit this already.

Vs 25

God help us to be like our teacher and master Jesus, you better believe it would be enough to be like Him and we'll never be above Him.

But He's actually seeking to encourage them in the fact that when they are persecuted, verbally or otherwise, not to be discouraged because if they said Jesus got his power from Satan (which they already have once in Matt 9:34 and we'll see it again) than how much more His followers will people ridicule. Which that personally encourages me since we've been called a cult amongst other things that I'll refrain from saying. If they ridiculed Jesus, how much more will they ridicule us, but as we're talking about earlier if it's for His names sake, we must be doing something right. Jesus said "*Blessed are you when they revile and persecute you, and say all kinds of evil against you falsely for My sake. Rejoice and be exceedingly glad, for great is your reward in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you.*"

Vs 26

In other words it's all going to come out in the wash. People may plot against you now and be able to make you look bad or whatever but one day it'll all unfold and when we're standing on the other side we'll see who it is who were the real disciples and who were the religious fanatics who were always busy opposing what Jesus Christ was really doing.

You may be presently the one who's always being dogged or slammed, but stay faithful to Jesus Christ endure to the end; because this life is but a vapor and it's all temporal. But one day the Lord will vindicate His own and the ramifications then will be eternal. Never lose sight of the eternal stay true to Jesus Christ Forget the things which are behind you and press on that you might lay hold of that for which He laid hold of you, and know that your labor in Him is not in vain. And one day you'll hear those words that we all long to hear "well done thy good and faithful servant" and He will say "*Come, you blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.*"