

# Matthew 10

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Date: 28 May 2023

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[ 0 : 00 ] Matthew 10. Matthew 10.

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Matthew 10. wise as serpents and innocent as doves. Beware of men, for they will deliver you over to courts and flog you in their synagogues, and you will be dragged before governors and kings for my sake, to bear witness before them and the Gentiles. When they deliver you over, do not be anxious how you are to speak or what you are to say, for what you are to say will be given to you in that hour, for it is not you who speak, but the spirit of your father speaking through you. Brother will deliver brother over to death, and the father his child, and children will rise against parents and have them put to death, and you will be hated by all for my namesake, but the one who endures to the end will be saved. When they persecute you in one town, flee to the next, for truly I say to you, you will not have gone through all the towns of Israel before the Son of Man comes.

A disciple is not above his teacher, nor a servant above his master. It is enough for the disciple to be like his teacher, and the servant like his master. If they have called the master out of the house of Beelzebel, how much more will they malign those of his household? So have no fear of them, for nothing is covered that will not be revealed, or hidden that will not be known. What I tell you in the dark, say in the light, and what you hear whispered, proclaim on the housetops. 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. Are not two sparrows sold for a penny? And 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. So everyone who acknowledges me before men, I also will acknowledge before my Father who is in heaven. But whoever denies me before men, I will also deny before my

Father who is in heaven. Do not think that I have come to bring peace to the earth. I have not come to bring peace, but a sword. For I have come to set a man against his father, and a daughter against her mother, and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law. And a person's enemies will be those of his own household. Whoever loves his father or mother more than me is not worthy of me. And whoever loves son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me. And whoever does not take his cross and follow me is not worthy of me. Whoever finds his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life for my sake will find it. Whoever receives you receives me, and whoever receives me receives him who sent me. The one who receives a prophet because he is a prophet will receive a prophet's reward. And the one who receives a righteous person because he is a righteous person will receive a righteous person's reward.

[ 5 : 01 ] And whoever gives one of these little ones even a cup of cold water because he is a disciple, truly I say to you, he will by no means lose his reward. This is the word of the Lord.

You may be seated. Well, as you're settling in, I want to give my special welcome to those of you who might be visiting.

So glad that you're here today. You've entered into our congregation as the summer commences, and as we are continuing to make our way through Matthew's gospel. I'd like to pray just before I preach from this chapter in his text. Our Heavenly Father, having spent three weeks here as a congregation considering our mission, that of building up a people for yourself, that of proclaiming the name of Jesus to everyone, that of displaying the gospel everywhere, we now turn our attention to what is needed as we commence that work.

And so we give ourselves to a right understanding of this word, that we would be fully equipped to be useful to you in this day. As such, give me simplicity of speech, clarity of mind, and the power of the Holy Spirit, that the words from my mouth might fly like arrows from above, penetrating the wills of this congregation in readiness for our mission.

We pray all this in Jesus' name. Amen. Amen. In times of war, a commanding officer will address his troops just prior to sending them into battle.

[ 7 : 09 ] And when he does, he's out to do a few things. He wants to remind them of their mission. He'll often steal them for the adversity they'll face, and he will encourage them with the reward should victory prevail.

In Matthew chapter 10, Jesus does this very thing. It was a lengthy reading, but the organization of it is simple and clear.

In the opening moments, verses 1 through 15, he reminds them of their mission. But that just sets the table for the emphasis of the text as it unfolds what they will need to know considering what they're going to encounter along the way.

I don't know if you picked up the three commands after the words to send them out on mission.

Verse 16, Behold, I'm sending you out, but 17, Beware of men.

Or, when you get down to verse 26, have no fear of them. Finally, the third thing they'll need to know as they encounter the mission to undertake, verse 34, Do not think that I've come to bring peace.

[ 8 : 32 ] Jesus simply then reminds the church of their mission, but he steals them for the adversity they'll face. Interestingly, and we'll get there, he encourages them along the way.

I intend to do the very same thing from this sermon then. From this sermon, I am out to equip us for what we will encounter along the way.

I just want to remind you of our mission. Church is not child's play. But I want to remind you of the mission in terms of setting the table for the adversity that you will face along the way, all the while encouraging you to leave forth from those doors better equipped to serve our Lord Jesus Christ.

So then, what was their mission and what is its relationship to ours? Simply, I'll be gleaning from the first 15 verses. What was their mission?

Their mission first was one of rescue. They were on a rescue mission. The early going of our chapter reads like a special ops mission, specifically to the house of Israel alone.

[ 9 : 50 ] They were to gather the lost sheep of Israel. Indeed, the number of 12 on the mission indicating that these representatives of God's rescue mission to the world began first with promises to Israel, and so to Israel she shall go.

God's invasive rule had arrived in the person of Christ to overthrow the rebellious age of the spirit of this world.

These 12 were the first of thousands that would follow them who were to free people that were held captive behind enemy lines.

The clarity of their mission reminds me of a speech that Colonel Chamberlain gave before he sent his soldiers from Maine onto the battlefield of Gettysburg in the movie of that same name.

This is what he said. This is a different kind of army. If you look back through history, you'll see men fighting for pay for women, for some other kind of loot.

[ 10 : 58 ] They fight for land, power, because the king leads them or just because they like killing. But we are here for something new. This has not happened much in the history of the world.

We are an army out to set other men free. That's the mission Jesus sends these 12 on.

Interestingly, though, to free people from the captivity and bondage of sin and to rightly relate them with their God and creator.

The mission was made clear. It was one of rescue. Not only that, it was one of proclamation. It centers on speaking about the kingdom of heaven.

You can see that right there in verse 7. He says, and proclaim as you go, saying, the kingdom of heaven is at hand. And the priority of proclaiming, announcing that a rule from heaven had arrived in the person of Christ is emphasized throughout the chapter.

You can see it even over in verse 14. If anyone will not receive you or listen to your words. Or verse 19, when they deliver you, do not be anxious as to what you are to speak.

[ 12 : 23 ] The Father will give you words. Or over in verse 27, what I tell you or whisper in the dark you are to proclaim on the housetops. This priority of proclamation, this heraldic moment, this entrance into the towns of Israel and lifting up one's voice in the town square and saying, repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.

The rule of God in the coming of his son is now upon you. Wow, what a special ops mission this must have been.

He tells them, you're not in this to take spoils. You're not about the accumulation of money. He tells them, you're not even allowed to check a bag on this trip.

Everything's got to be crammed into a carry-on. And if you've traveled lately, you're probably noticing what I'm noticing. The amount of stuff you are carrying on to airplanes today is astounding. Check a bag, some of you. Might be a little room in the overhead. Go ahead. But, he says, no two tunics, no extra sandals, get on the road and go.

[13:50] In making clear their mission in that opening moment of the text, Jesus goes so far as to explain how they're to know when they remain in a place and when they're to move on from a place.

Did you notice the amount of emphasis the text gave to that? I found it striking this week. Verses 11 through 15, this coupling of the word worthy and receptivity.

Find out the one who is worthy and if the house is worthy. Or, verse 14, if they will not receive you or listen to you. These words are important to the mission because they're actually doubling back in the text on the back side where he'll say in verse 31, whoever is not worthy of me, three times over. Or, verse 40, whoever receives you receives me. These words, these rails as it were, tell you when to keep moving and when to stay.

I was thinking this week, what does it mean to be worthy? This particular wordplay, would you just give me just a couple of minutes to explain this?

[15:06] Certainly, it can't mean finding somebody worthy of the gospel. Nobody's worthy of the gospel. We all lived our lives in rebellion to God. What would make one person more worthy than another in the eyes of God?

Having broken any part of the law, one breaks them all. Certainly, whatever worthy is, it doesn't mean, oh, that one is a special one. That one has a spiritually advantageous position.

That one, God would know, didn't really want to be rebellious in the first place. No, it doesn't mean deserving of the gospel. And it must mean more than finding someone of a gentle disposition.

This is what I've normally thought it to mean. Just look for the kind-hearted soul. No, the word that's used here carries the idea of having decided something, of not only going public with something, but being willing to express oneself openly and plainly about a matter.

The worthy one who has considered, thought through, decided, and acted upon a matter. It doesn't have to do with your disposition.

[16:20] It has to do with one who's made a decision concerning something. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Earlier in Matthew's gospel, John the Baptist used the same word.

I found it fascinating in Matthew 3, 8 in relationship to his preaching ministry on the kingdom of heaven. You might remember it. To the Pharisees, Jesus, or John the Baptist had said, at their baptism, he chides them saying, you brood of vipers, you need to bring forth fruit in keeping with repentance.

Literally, you need to bring forth fruit that is worthy of the repentance. See, the worthy one was the one who had considered the message, taken the message to heart, and had a life that was beginning to change in light of the message.

And this, John the Baptist knew the Pharisees were not up for. In fact, he says, the axe is already laid at the root and you will be thrown into fire. Jesus here now uses these very words.

Go proclaiming, and as you proclaim, find those who are worthy. And who are worthy? They are those who will hear your message, take it to heart, receive it, and actually see their life begin to change as a result of it.

[17:35] That's the one you stay with. That's the one you nurture. That's the one you disciple. And if they're not worthy, if they're not receptive, if the house won't welcome your words on Jesus, then he says, shake the dust off your feet, and it'll be worse for that town than Sodom and Gomorrah, which was again consumed in fire.

The mission is clear. Rescue. Through word. Asking God to have people receptive.

And when not, move on. Oh, that's a setup, though, isn't it? For the longer portion of the chapter, those three commands I've already highlighted.

It's one thing to be clear on the mission, but what is their mission in relationship to ours? Let me just say this. Our mission is actually more expanded than theirs.

You got a greater mission as a church than the twelve had as his disciples, his apostles. They had to go to the house of Israel, but by Matthew 28, they go to the nations, and now the nations gather here, and you're to go to the whole ends of the earth.

[ 18 : 50 ] You're free to tell everybody about Jesus. There's nobody you meet that shouldn't hear his names on your lips. And there's nobody that should know that your life is already being conformed into the likeness of his self.

This is a beautiful ministry, this mission that we have. We're not going to be a mainstream church. I want to be a missional church. A mainstream church is just pulled along by the currents of the culture.

I've got no time for that. Neither should you. I don't want to be a maintenance church. Just the power to reach those who already have a knowledge of what's going on.

As though we're maintaining something here. this corner is a launching pad under the world. I don't want to be a marginalized church.

I don't want to simply be known for all the things we stand against. I don't want to be simply even a missions church that would put people off into other places. No, I want us to be a missional church.

[ 19 : 55 ] I want to be on mission. Dumped in behind enemy lines like the twelve to proclaim the word, to look for its receptivity and to grow those who receive it.

That's what we ought to be doing. But with that in place let me steel you for the adverse winds that we will face.

First, verse 17, beware of men. Fascinating phrase. I've seen the beware signs.

Normally it's beware of a dog. Yes. Of course, I think you ought to beware of every dog, but evidently there are some dogs that are more in need of being aware of than others.

Beware of whatever it is the sign is posted. Jesus, before he sends them out of the church gathering, before he puts them on their way, as they walk out the doors, go into all the world, make disciples of all the nations.

[ 21 : 04 ] By the way, as you go out, he posts a beware of men sign at the edge of the church yard. What is this need of the church to first beware of men?

Well, there it is, verse 16. I'm sending you out as sheep in the midst of wolves. It's easy to forget, isn't it, that the church is God's outpost.

It's already stationed behind enemy lines. We're likened to sheep going out into the grasses in which the wolves are already embedded.

beware of men. Beware of what kind of men? Well, verse 17, evidently religious men.

It uses the word synagogues. But more than religious men, evidently worldly men, political men. It mentions governors and kings in verse 18.

[ 22 : 18 ] Most stunning of all, he moves to relatives in verses 21 and 22. This is the nature of your opposition, Christ Church Chicago.

Your opposition will be religious, it will come from the world, it will come from among your relatives, it will come from the synagogue, it will come from the state, it will come from the siblings.

I've been thinking about this week, especially this idea of the religious and the political. The church today, in our country, spends an ungodly amount of energy courting religious and political leaders.

Here, they're dragged into courts, but we court them. We invite them into our pulpits, religious teachers and preachers who don't hold the message we believe, we desire the political leadership to be here, we'll give them a Bible to open, we'll allow them to share a word with our people.

The lunacy of the evangelical church in the present hour astounds me. We even go so far as to pledge our support to them.

[ 23 : 40 ] The naivete of the evangelical church, according to the words of Matthew 10, is astounding and tragic. We are in some measure off the rails. While Jesus is posting a beware sign on a stick at the edge of the church yard, which is to be the last thing we see going out, we're busy pulling the beware sign down and putting a welcome mat out for whatever it is you want to bring in here.

It's amazing to me, all the intruders. Jesus commands you to beware. That's what you need to know.

Beware. Wouldn't that be something? See the church dragged in to the courts of power to say a word for the gospel rather than dragging the world into the pulpits of the church to have a compromise mission.

That's not all. He says you're also going to need courage. Do you see it there in verse 26? So have no fear of them.

That's the command. That's the controlling image. Beware of them but have no fear of them. Three times he's going to say do not fear.

[ 25 : 21 ] Do not fear. Do not fear. Do not fear them. Do not fear what they can do. And do not fear that somehow they'll withhold from you anything you need to accomplish your mission.

fear is what keeps us from proclaiming. Fear is what keeps us from speaking. Fear is what keeps you from looking your neighbor in the eye and saying can I have just a couple of minutes to tell you about Jesus?

Can I speak to you about the rebellion of our age, the disobedience of our soul, the waywardness of our lives? can I tell you about the gentleness of my Savior, the forgiveness of sins that's available, the repentance that's needed?

Have no fear. Even Paul was afraid when in Corinth to keep speaking the gospel because he was afraid of what people would do to him, what they would think of him, what they might withhold from him.

and he actually gets a vision and Jesus says to him, do not fear for I have he has what?

[ 26 : 40 ] Many people in this city. There's a song, old one, not sung very often anymore, that talks about the courage needed to continue speaking.

Am I a soldier of the cross, a follower of the Lamb, and shall I fear to own his cause or blush to speak his name? Must I be carried to the skies on flowery beds of ease while others fought to win the prize and sailed through bloody seas?

Are there no foes for me to face? Must I not stem the flood? Is this vile world a friend to grace to help me on to God? Sure, I must fight if I would reign.

Increase my courage, Lord. I'll bear the toil, endure the pain supported by thy word. That's what he's saying to them here. Don't fear.

Go out and begin telling others of Jesus. And then the encouragement is there in two ways.

[ 27 : 50 ] Are you not two sparrows sold for a penny and yet will not one of them fall to the ground apart from your father? Even the hairs of your head are numbered. Fear not. Therefore, you are more valued than the sparrows.

Having clarity on the mission, having steeled them for the adversity, he encourages them with the true understanding of God in heaven. By the way, he's worthy of your fear.

He can actually destroy your soul. But the one who can destroy your soul is as tender as a father with a sparrow? How wonderful is the encouragement in this? And then he goes on to say, if that's not enough to get you telling others about Jesus, everyone who acknowledges me before men, I'll acknowledge before my father.

But whoever denies me, I'll deny them before my father. Interesting. Interesting. How is it that we deny him? How did Peter do it? Simply by an unwillingness to say, yes, I'm a Christian.

I'm a follower of Christ. And Jesus says, I'll acknowledge you before the father. Carry out the mission.

[ 29 : 04 ] He cares for you. Then he moves on. These two words, beware of the men. Have no fear.

And then verse 34, do not think that I have come to bring peace to the earth. What a fascinating line. What is it about Jesus or what is it about ourselves that Jesus would need to know this is something you're going to need as you go on mission for me.

Do not think. It's a command there. It's literally almost don't assume. Well, what is it that we're to assume? Put it this way. Don't assume that global unity was ever his goal.

Oh, now think about that in regard to the contemporary nature of the church. How quickly we translate a mission to make you right with God into a proclamation that we're all just going to be one big happy family and that's the goal of the church.

Jesus says don't assume that I'm coming to make this world one big happy family. Not so. In fact, he says just the opposite. I've not come to bring peace but a sword.

[ 30 : 16 ] I've come to set a man against his father, a daughter against her mother, a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law, and a person's enemies will be those of his own household.

This is stunning because the church today, generally speaking, is more concerned with one big happy family than we are a proclamation of the message that will divide those who are going to follow God and those who are going to live under the rule of their own choice.

And these are the words. Jesus says, I'm sending you on a mission. You're going to go. And he would probably say, take the welcome mat off the front, put the beware sign up. You're going to need all the stealthiness of a serpent who learned how to crawl on its belly while being harmless as a dove. Don't fear what's going on out there as you proclaim my name because I think more of you than anything else.

And when you actually stand before people I'll give you the words to say. And if they take your body it doesn't matter I'll look at the father and say I'm acknowledging him and he'll acknowledge you because you acknowledge me and you enter into your heavenly rest.

[ 31 : 26 ] And by the way don't assume that the mission of Christ Church Chicago is to make this world one big happy family. Now we're going to be a lightning rod.

Jim Elliot said Father make me a crisis man. Bring those in contact. Let me not be a mile post on a single road.

Make me a fork that men must turn one way or another on facing Christ in me. Jesus evidently knows the propensity of the church to concern itself with social relational well-being and ease rather than I'm following Jesus.

Jesus and that means I'm not following this other way. And look what happens. Well then you demonstrate yourself to be worthy or unworthy.

You demonstrate yourself verse 40 to be those who receive or who don't receive. And he says you're not going to be without your reward. reward. So he's given you the reward.

[ 32 : 43 ] But here's the thing that you want to remember as we commence on our mission. Our mission unlike the twelve is greater, more expansive, universal.

Our mission though, like the twelve, will be opposed. And I can tell you where the opposition is going to come from. It's going to come from the state, it's going to come from the synagogue, the social settings of your own family.

Not only that, you're going to need courage. We're going throw off fear and speak his name. And not only that, we can no longer assume that global unity is the Christian's goal.

We cannot trade the verticality of our mission with the horizontal dimension of life together. We cannot downgrade ourselves to being reunited with a maker and downgrade that to simply being united with all of our neighbors.

According to Jesus, don't assume that my decision, my mission is simply to bring unity in the world. It's not. There are two worlds in play, two kingdoms, the kingdom of heaven and the kingdoms of this earth.

[ 33 : 56 ] And they are not yet both the kingdoms of our Lord and of our Christ. And we are going to be and are already an outpost behind enemy lines that go forth marching into a world with the great news of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

That we would lift him high. That we would lift him up. All knowing yes I'll be opposed but he told me ahead of time. Yes I'll need courage but he laid that out before I entered the field.

Yes citywide father. My goal is to receive the reward of life forever more.

Are you ready for that kind of mission? Are you are you steeled for that kind of adversity? Are you not encouraged by that kind of comfort? All of it's there. It's not child's play any longer.

The day's done. A home has been built for the rule of our Lord Jesus Christ my savior the forgiver of my sins. The one who can heal your deepest needs. The one that the world needs and the one that the world will resist.

[ 35 : 01 ] But even so we will go. Our heavenly father we now sit under this chapter having heard our commanding officer not not my words anyone here with the ability to can read can read them as the words of Jesus.

Thank you Jesus for letting us know what we can expect. Thank you for readying us for the day ahead. Thank you for encouraging us with the promises of your presence.

Indeed you will be with us forever more. help us Lord to march to the beat of another drummer. Help us to sing in step with the gospel of faith. In Jesus name we pray. Amen.