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St. Paul's Lutheran Church  
2100 16<sup>th</sup> Street SW  
Austin, MN 55912-1749  
Pastor Ted Barthels  
Sermon preached on  
July 9, 2017  
5<sup>th</sup> Sunday after Pentecost

Scripture Lessons: Jeremiah 20:7-13; Romans 5:12-15

Hymns: 239; 413; 769; 401 (798:1-3)

Grace be unto you and peace from God our Father and our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Amen.

Sermon Text: Matthew 10:24-33

“A disciple is not above *his* teacher, nor a servant above his master.

<sup>25</sup> It is enough for a disciple that he be like his teacher, and a servant like his master. If they have called the master of the house Beelzebub, how much more *will they call* those of his household!

<sup>26</sup> Therefore do not fear them. For there is nothing covered that will not be revealed, and hidden that will not be known.

<sup>27</sup> “Whatever I tell you in the dark, speak in the light; and what you hear in the ear, preach on the housetops. <sup>28</sup> And do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. But rather fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell. <sup>29</sup> Are not two sparrows sold for a copper coin? And not one of them falls to the ground apart from your Father's will. <sup>30</sup> But the very hairs of your head are all numbered. <sup>31</sup> Do not fear therefore; you are of more value than many sparrows.

<sup>32</sup> “Therefore whoever confesses Me before men, him I will also confess before My Father who is in heaven. <sup>33</sup> But whoever denies Me before men, him I will also deny before My Father who is in heaven. (NKJV)

This is the Word of God.

Sanctify us, oh Lord, through Your truth. Your Word is truth. Amen.

In Christ Jesus, God our Savior, dear fellow Redeemed:

INTRO: Can you recognize a win / win situation?

In the spiritual realm are you a winner or a loser? I hope that each and every one of you knows without a shadow of a doubt that you are a winner. I hope that each and every one of you knows that the source of that victory is not found in you, or anything that you have done, but that the victory over sin, death and the devil, the victory over the world and our sinful flesh comes to us from our Savior God.

We are saved by grace alone! This grace was manifested in God sending His own Son into the flesh that He might take our sin in His own body, take it to the cross and there redeem us to God. This grace is manifested in the working of the Holy Spirit who has washed us clean through the washing of water with the Word, and called us to faith through the gospel, and still preserves us in true faith. This grace is ultimately manifested when a child of God ends his or her pilgrimage on this earth, and is received into the glories of heaven in that place prepared and reserved for you by Christ our Lord.

This is the victory we have and exactly why we are winners in things spiritual. Now the Lord, who has filled our hearts with the joy of this gospel, has commissioned us to share this wondrous gospel with others, others who remain in the shadows of sin, in the darkness of unbelief, who have no hope in the world. Only by hearing this gospel can they be brought from death to life, from losing everything for all eternity to knowing the joy of victory that is ours in Christ Jesus.

Sharing the gospel is a win / win situation! It so wonderful! It is so positive! It is our God-given purpose for living! Why then do we have resistance within ourselves, a powerful resistance to sharing the gospel freely with others? Why do we feel like there is so much to lose if we open our mouths when the Lord gives us opportunity to speak? Is it because we know others don't think like we do spiritually? Is it because we know that others have been mocked and ridiculed for confessing their faith in Jesus? Is it because we have even been embarrassed, or thought another Christian was being inappropriate in manner or timing in their profession of faith? Do

we fear how others will respond? Do we fear what it might cost us in our social lives or even our professional lives?

So our Lord Jesus Himself gives us a lesson in --

**THEME:** Confessing Christ Fearlessly.

Jesus encourages us to --

**I. Have No Fear for the World Is Very Limited  
in What It Can Do to You!**

Being a follower of Jesus just what should you expect? A walk in the park? Jesus never promised that this life would be easy. Indeed Jesus also taught: ***“In the world you will have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world”*** (John 16:33). In our text Jesus spells it out for us quite clearly:

**Matthew 10:24-26** *“A disciple is not above his teacher, nor a servant above his master. <sup>25</sup> It is enough for a disciple that he be like his teacher, and a servant like his master. If they have called the master of the house Beelzebub, how much more will they call those of his household! <sup>26</sup> Therefore do not fear them. For there is nothing covered that will not be revealed, and hidden that will not be known.”*

Yes, Jesus’ enemies were very persistent in name calling, and derision, and criticism. They sought to find fault and try to make Jesus look bad at every occasion. That didn’t deter Jesus from His ministry of preaching the gospel, and fulfilling all righteousness, of being our Savior, and so also our Lord. Not only shouldn’t we expect any less to come our way from the world, but we should be honored when it does! That is a hard one. It is nice and it is easy to feel honored when people are saying nice things about you. No one enjoys hearing people mock them, or accuse them of being ignorant, or bigots, or hateful when one is speaking the truth in love! So it is hard to comprehend and understand that we should feel **honored** when insults and abuse are being hurled at us. But it is just that! It is an honor to be treated like our Master, like our Savior was treated. And we should expect nothing less.

It takes a special measure of the Holy Spirit to get to that place in our faith and life. By the outpouring of the Holy Spirit the disciples did. How that came about is reported for us in Acts chapter 4. The apostles prayed:

**Acts 4:29-31** *“Now, Lord, look on their threats, and grant to Your servants that with all boldness they may speak Your word, <sup>30</sup> by stretching out Your hand to heal, and that signs and wonders may be done through the name of Your holy Servant Jesus.”*

<sup>31</sup> *And when they had prayed, the place where they were assembled together was shaken; and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and they spoke the word of God with boldness.”*

What did that get the Apostles? We read in the very next chapter of Acts:

**Acts 5:40-42** *“When they (that is the Sanhedrin) had called for the apostles and beaten them (traditionally 39 blows with a wooden rod), they commanded that they should not speak in the name of Jesus, and let them go. <sup>41</sup> So they departed from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for His name. <sup>42</sup> And daily in the temple, and in every house, they did not cease teaching and preaching Jesus as the Christ.”*

What did Jesus teach them in our text?

Matthew 10:27-28 *“Whatever I tell you in the dark, speak in the light; and what you hear in the ear, preach on the housetops. <sup>28</sup> And do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. But rather fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.*

Jesus encouraged the disciples with these words. They were to take the lessons He had given them the past three years and broadcast them to the world. Yes, there would be resistance and there would be unpleasant repercussions, but the disciples were not to fear. NO Fear! Jesus told them not even *to begin* to fear because the world and the devil are very limited in what they can do to you.

Our reason says, that beating the apostles took doesn't sound very limited! That sounds bad, really bad! Our flesh says, “I don't want that to happen to me!” Jesus says, “It's not that bad. The most they

can do is end your earthly life.” My flesh says, “What, not that bad!” They cannot destroy your soul and body in hell. Only God can do that, and Jesus has saved you from that. Yes, that is exactly what Jesus did. He saved you, your soul and body, from being destroyed in hell. So even if they kill your body, you **win!** You aren’t losing everything. You win! You gain heaven.

Now you understand why the disciples prayed for boldness, and they received the outpouring of the Spirit, and the boldness to witness faithfully the Lord Jesus Christ and salvation in His name. And of the eleven they all suffered for Jesus’ sake, and 10 of the 11, and the Apostle Paul as well, suffered martyrdom for the gospel of Christ. Only John lived to an old age, but he was exiled to the island of Patmos for the gospel’s sake.

So remember, you need not fear because they are limited in what they can do. The world **can’t** take everything from us. The world **can’t** take that which really matters, our eternal lives.

Secondly;

## **II. Have No Fear for the Lord Is Looking Out for You!**

Jesus’ words in our text should give us more than a little reassurance for facing the tribulations and persecutions that come with life in this world.

**Matthew 10:29-30** *“Are not two sparrows sold for a copper coin? And not one of them falls to the ground apart from your Father’s will. <sup>30</sup> But the very hairs of your head are all numbered. <sup>31</sup> Do not fear therefore; you are of more value than many sparrows.”*

These words of our Lord should impress us positively. The Lord is paying attention to what is going on in your life, in your individual life, right down to the hairs on your head. He knows what’s happening with you far better than you do. If our heavenly Father is watching out for sparrows which were bought and sold for pennies among the Jews, and one of them doesn’t fall to the ground when it is against God’s will, well, what does that tell you? Jesus doesn’t let it stand there. He makes His point with great understatement, saying that you are of more value than many sparrows. You were not purchased for pennies. However you were

bought at a price. You were bought with the holy precious blood of Christ. That is what the Lord invested in you; that is what gives you value, His investment of the life blood of His only begotten Son! You are of more value than many sparrows, and not one of them falls to the ground apart from our heavenly Father's will. And His will for YOU is good. His will for you is your eternal salvation, and that will of God is for you, for each and every one who is called according to His purpose.

Have NO fear in confessing Christ because our heavenly Father is looking out for you, and nothing, not even death, can separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus. (Romans 8:28, 38-39).

Jesus' final assurance has to do with life's ultimate outcome.

### **III. Have No Fear, Jesus Will Witness of You as You Witness of Him.**

Jesus has asked you to tell others the truth about Him, the whole truth and nothing but the truth as we have been taught it in Holy Scripture. Jesus has asked you to talk about Him, to praise Him and give Him glory before the world. That isn't so hard. He grants us ample opportunities. It can be as simple as which Christmas card, or birthday card, or get well card, or sympathy card you choose to send a friend. It can be as simple as faithful attendance at Sunday worship, especially when people notice that you don't go to the closest Lutheran Church, or the largest Lutheran Church, but the rather the church that teaches the truth of God's Word, the truth about Jesus in all its teaching. Let it be noted that you will **not** compromise the truth of God's Word, not for convenience, not for business, not for activities for children, or enhanced social programs.

It may be difficult. It may be as difficult as telling a friend or loved one that what they are doing in life is sinful. It may indeed lead to angry words, harsh words, hurt feelings, even lost business, or a lost job. I've known Christians who had yellow paint thrown on their homes, or their homes egged. I've family and friends who lost their jobs, and their homes for the sake of the truth. We have Christian brothers and sisters on the other side of the world who have been stoned, one even had his hand cut off because he was faithful in witnessing Jesus in a hostile society. Why would people

be so persistent in speaking the truth? Because of what Jesus has done for them in securing their salvation. Because of what Jesus continues to do for us in making intercession for us before the throne of God.

We are assured that our testimony is not going unnoticed by our Lord Jesus. Jesus assures us that even as we are faithful in witnessing the truth about Him to this world, so He also shall be faithful in acknowledging us and witnessing to His Father in heaven that we are His disciples. He will speak well of us as His children who are justified through faith in His name.

Have no fear in confessing Christ. It is all going to work out so that we also shall be received by our Father in heaven into the mansions which Christ Himself has prepared for those who love Him.

**AMEN.**

And the peace of God which passes all understanding shall keep your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus. Amen.