

4/19/26

Sermon Title: The Word Given to the Sent Disciples: Do Not Be Afraid

Preacher: Pastor Kim Soonbae

Scripture Passage: Matthew 10:16-33

¹⁶ “I am sending you out like sheep among wolves. Therefore be as shrewd as snakes and as innocent as doves.

¹⁷ Be on your guard; you will be handed over to the local councils and be flogged in the synagogues.

¹⁸ On my account you will be brought before governors and kings as witnesses to them and to the Gentiles.

¹⁹ But when they arrest you, do not worry about what to say or how to say it. At that time you will be given what to say,

²⁰ for it will not be you speaking, but the Spirit of your Father speaking through you.

²¹ “Brother will betray brother to death, and a father his child; children will rebel against their parents and have them put to death.

²² You will be hated by everyone because of me, but the one who stands firm to the end will be saved.

²³ When you are persecuted in one place, flee to another. Truly I tell you, you will not finish going through the towns of Israel before the Son of Man comes.

²⁴ “The student is not above the teacher, nor a servant above his master.

²⁵ It is enough for students to be like their teachers, and servants like their masters. If the head of the house has been called Beelzebul, how much more the members of his household!

²⁶ “So do not be afraid of them, for there is nothing concealed that will not be disclosed, or hidden that will not be made known.

²⁷ What I tell you in the dark, speak in the daylight; what is whispered in your ear, proclaim from the roofs.

²⁸ Do not be afraid of those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. Rather, be afraid of the One who can destroy both soul and body in hell.

²⁹ Are not two sparrows sold for a penny? Yet not one of them will fall to the ground outside your Father's care.

³⁰ And even the very hairs of your head are all numbered.

³¹ So don't be afraid; you are worth more than many sparrows.

³² "Whoever acknowledges me before others, I will also acknowledge before my Father in heaven.

³³ But whoever disowns me before others, I will disown before my Father in heaven.

Jesus warns His disciples, as He sends them out, that their mission will not be easy.

He tells them that they will face suffering and persecution.

The path of a disciple is a path of hardship.

It is a very dangerous and difficult road.

There are wolves that threaten and obstacles that stand in the way.

Yet it is a path that every faithful disciple must walk.

Jesus does not hide the suffering that the disciples will encounter.

He plainly tells them that it will be like sending sheep among wolves.

Although He grants them the authority to carry out their mission, the road before them is by no means an easy one.

¹⁶ "I am sending you out like sheep among wolves. Therefore, be as shrewd as snakes and as innocent as doves.

Jesus knew that because of the gospel they would proclaim, the disciples would face all kinds of persecution and rejection, even to the point where their lives would be in danger.

He understood that Satan, who holds power in this world, would not leave alone those disciples who threaten his kingdom, but would persecute them.

Nevertheless, in the end, the disciples—the watchmen of the gospel—will be victorious, because the One who sends them is Jesus Christ Himself.

Jesus exhorts the disciples, who would face such dangers, to be “wise as serpents and innocent as doves.”

This means being wise toward the world and pure toward God.

Jesus also foretells the persecution that will come from both Jews and Gentiles.

¹⁷ Be on your guard; you will be handed over to the local councils and be flogged in the synagogues.

¹⁸ On my account you will be brought before governors and kings as witnesses to them and to the Gentiles.

“Beware of men”—here, “men” refers to unbelievers or persecutors.

First, the persecution from the Jews:

Jesus says, “They will hand you over to the councils and flog you in their synagogues.”

The “councils” refer to the local assemblies responsible for maintaining order and public discipline at the time.

Jesus foresaw that as the disciples preached the gospel, they would be punished—specifically flogged—by these local authorities on the charge of disturbing public order.

The fact that the punishment mentioned is flogging indicates that the persecution they would face would not merely be personal hostility or mob violence from their own people, but formal punishment carried out through judicial procedures.

Flogging was a common form of punishment in those days.

The official instrument used was a rod with leather straps attached, but in some cases, pieces of metal were embedded in the straps to intensify the pain.

According to the Law, the rod had three leather thongs, and each strike was counted as three lashes, resulting in a total of 39 lashes given in 13 strokes.

(2 Cor 11:24) Five times I received at the hands of the Jews the forty lashes less one.

Next is the persecution from the Gentiles:

“You will be brought before governors and kings.”

These governors and kings were rulers under the Roman Empire.

Since capital punishment could only be carried out in Roman courts, the disciples would be brought before such Gentile authorities.

Indeed, Peter was brought before Emperor Nero, the Apostle John before Emperor Domitian, and other apostles were likewise brought before various rulers.

The martyrdom of the disciples would become the greatest and most powerful testimony to the greatness of the gospel and the inexhaustible life of its truth. Therefore, Jesus says, “This will be a testimony to them and to the Gentiles.”

Jesus also tells His disciples not to worry about how to defend themselves when they stand trial before Jews and Gentiles.

He assures them that God will teach them what to say through the Holy Spirit.

This is a comforting promise that when they face suffering and crisis, God will move their hearts and enable them to speak the most fitting words at the right time.

¹⁹ But when they arrest you, do not worry about what to say or how to say it. At that time, you will be given what to say,

²⁰ for it will not be you speaking, but the Spirit of your Father speaking through you.

Since most of the disciples were uneducated fishermen, they would likely feel intimidated and afraid when standing before courts or powerful authorities such as kings and governors, worrying about what they should say.

Knowing their situation, Jesus comforts them and tells them not to be anxious, promising that the Holy Spirit will be with them and protect them.

Furthermore, He says that they will even face persecution from their own families.

²¹ “Brother will betray brother to death, and a father his child; children will rebel against their parents and have them put to death.

²² You will be hated by everyone because of me, but the one who stands firm to the end will be saved.

In fact, the one the world truly hates is not the disciples, but Jesus.

Just as the world hated Christ, persecuted Him, and crucified Him, so those who follow Him also suffer persecution and hardship for His sake.

Historically, this took place under Roman tyrants such as Nero. Disciples and believers who refused to yield to the pressure and temptation of even their own families, and who remained steadfast in their faith, were burned alive or thrown to the lions.

Yet the one who endures to the end in the midst of persecution will be saved.

This is why, even though we are hated and persecuted because of the name of Jesus, we must not give up but carry out our mission to the very end.

Jesus extends the disciples’ experience of being driven from place to place in Israel to represent the broader reality of Christians being persecuted throughout the world.

²³ When you are persecuted in one place, flee to another. Truly I tell you, you will not finish going through the towns of Israel before the Son of Man comes.

Jesus’ first disciples would not find a place of refuge in Palestine and would eventually have to leave.

The disciples of the first century, and the church that followed, would not be able to complete the mission to Israel before Christ returns; nevertheless, that mission must continue.

Jesus explains the reasons and grounds for why the disciples must inevitably face persecution, and He also teaches them how to respond to it.

Using the relationship between a disciple and a teacher, and between a servant and a master, Jesus says that a disciple is not above his teacher, nor a servant above his master; it is enough for them to be like their teacher and master.

For the twelve disciples, Jesus is both Teacher and Master.

They are His followers who share in His destiny and are workers for the kingdom of heaven that He is establishing.

What Jesus expects of His disciples is that they become like Him and carry out the work of the kingdom of heaven.

Becoming like Jesus—this is the essence of discipleship taught in this book.

It is in this context that Jesus also gave His disciples His authority.

²⁴ “The student is not above the teacher, nor a servant above his master.

²⁵ It is enough for students to be like their teachers, and servants like their masters. If the head of the house has been called Beelzebul, how much more the members of his household!

Jesus specifically refers to the master of the house as “Beelzebul.”

This expression had already been used by the Pharisees in their opposition to Jesus; when He cast out demons, they accused Him of doing so by the power of Beelzebul, the prince of demons.

If the Lord, who is both Teacher and Master, was so slandered and persecuted by the world, it is only natural that the disciples who follow Him will also suffer.

If the “master of the house,” Jesus, was persecuted in this way, how much more those who belong to His household.

Having foretold that the disciples would face suffering and persecution, Jesus comforts them by speaking of God’s sovereign care over them.

He then exhorts them not to be afraid, but to proclaim boldly and fully to the whole world the truth they have received from Him.

Believers must not fear any persecution, but courageously declare God's truth to the world.

The gospel is accompanied by the power of God, and God Himself will protect them.

²⁶ “So do not be afraid of them, for there is nothing concealed that will not be disclosed, or hidden that will not be made known.

²⁷ What I tell you in the dark, speak in the daylight; what is whispered in your ear, proclaim from the roofs.

²⁸ Do not be afraid of those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. Rather, be afraid of the One who can destroy both soul and body in hell.

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“Nothing is concealed that will not be revealed, or hidden that will not be made known” means that even if the disciples are not fairly judged in this world and instead suffer persecution, if they do not shrink back but boldly proclaim the gospel, God—who knows all things—will vindicate them and bring the truth to light.

In this passage, Jesus tells them three times (verses 26, 28, and 31) not to be afraid, and He explains why:

first, because God will reveal everything;

second, because God is the One who judges both body and soul;

and third, because God sovereignly cares for them.

Human beings should fear only God, who holds authority over their eternal destiny.

All people will stand before the heavenly court on the last day, and Jesus declares that He Himself will be the final Judge at that time.

³² “Whoever acknowledges me before others, I will also acknowledge before my Father in heaven.

³³ But whoever disowns me before others, I will disown before my Father in heaven.

Beloved members of the Church of Godly Dreams,
The path of becoming a disciple of Jesus Christ and carrying out the work of God is a path of suffering.

It is a way marked by hardship, persecution, rejection, and fear.

Yet it is by no means a futile path; it is the very path that the Lord Himself has first walked.

The reason the world hates us is not because we are special, but because we follow Jesus Christ.

Therefore, we do not need to be discouraged or afraid.

God, who knows our lives and our calling, sees all things, and in His time He will reveal the truth and vindicate us.

Therefore, in every situation, hold firmly to the Lord’s promises and live boldly, proclaiming the gospel in the world.

Do not fear those who can kill the body but cannot kill the soul; rather, fear only God, who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.

The Lord will protect us, and the Holy Spirit will work through our lips and our lives.

Although the way may be difficult, lonely, and at times fearful, those who persevere in faith to the end will receive the salvation promised by God.

What is now a path of suffering will ultimately become a path of glory and victory.

May we endure to the end and faithfully fulfill the mission entrusted to us.

In the name of Jesus Christ, I bless you to live such a life.