

Matthew 20-05-17b

Let's resume our study now in Matthew chapter 10. We're looking at this specific mission with a specific message, specific audience, specific messengers. It's only the 12.

It's for a limited duration. And so as we look at the application for ourselves, we recognize that we are a different group. We have a different audience.

We have a different message. And we have a different duration. So all four of those things are different.

And yet, the application for us is the same in the sense that we should be a living reflection of that message. Now, the question is, well, that's easy to say, but I'm now worried about how I can be a living example of the message of the truth of Scripture, New Testament life. I'm struggling with that.

I'm concerned about my witness, my testimony. If it's my life and my life has got some ragged edges here and there, maybe I'm not qualified. Maybe I should just sit this one out and wait for a future opportunity.

Not so. Take a look again at verse 19. Remember, I said, if I was going to label this message, I would call it Be Wise and Beware.

That's in verse 16 and verse 17. But look at verse 18. You will be brought.

He didn't say, go thou forth to the throne room and request permission to see the kings and the overseers and the rulers and governors. What did he say? You will be brought. This is not an opt out message.

You will be brought and you will be a testimony to them and to the Gentiles. So there is no opt out clause. There's no, oh, but that's the 12.

I'm number 13 or 14. So I can stay home and wait and see how the 12 do. You will be brought is a principle.

We are all ambassadors for Christ in this sense. We are all living examples of the message. So rather than finding a way around it, we should focus on how to accomplish it and do it well and faithfully.

And that's in the next verse when they deliver you up, do not worry. Do not worry. Most of us are not going to be put on the spot in this way.

It's not going to be whales coming from the dungeon below the castle and the possibility of us being taken down there and chained up and left for interminable periods of time in a dark cell. So we can relax and do not worry. None of these 12 guys said, Lord, you know, this was great when we were riding around in boats and talking to crowds and

that, but going forth with no equipment and no supplies, I just really would rather not, you know, can you find somebody else to go with my, my partner here? Do not worry.

Don't worry about how or what you should speak. It will be given to you in that hour. What you should speak, what we need for this mission is given to us.

Notice in this entire set of instructions, everything they need is given to them, including the things that they might normally provide for themselves, what they will wear, what they will eat, where they will stay is provided. Those are indirect provisions. God is going to use the worthy in various towns and villages as intermediaries of support and supply.

Make sense? Go to a town, find who's worthy, stay there. They will meet your immediate needs. So the sympathetic and responsive people of God will be a part of this.

What is given, it will be given through them. The remainder, what you should speak will be given to you in that hour for it is not you who speak, but the spirit of your father who speaks. Notice it doesn't say through you.

It says in you speaks in you for us to accomplish this mission in our time for our target with our message. It is the spirit. It's the same spirit who speaks in us.

So if we want to do well in our commission, our great commission is not to go and tell. Our great commission is to live and be wise, be cautious, and be filled with the spirit. Do we know how to do this? Is it difficult? Does it take an investment? Does it take effort? Filling of the spirit is a relatively straightforward condition to cultivate, isn't it? Keep a clean house in our hearts, be looking for and living in a way that is conducive to the presence of God in our lives.

It's a pretty simple thing. Fret not yourself because of evil men. It's basically trust and obey.

It's not difficult. It's not hard. It doesn't require great effort.

It requires choice and it requires establishing a priority and sticking to it. My spiritual life is important. If the spirit is going to speak in me, the spirit of the Father is going to dwell in me, fill me, and speak in me so that my life is the message, I've got to make that a priority.

I've got to think about that as I plan my day, as I orchestrate my efforts, as I decide where and how to spend my time, which is the sand going through the hourglass. If we're going to redeem the time, the days are intrinsically evil. To redeem the time and make it good takes conscious attention.

It's not so much effort as attention. It's just choosing. God supplies the power.

God supplies the provision. God supplies His Holy Spirit. God supplies the truth of His

word.

It is all of grace. It is all of God. But we have to go put our cup under the spigot of that grace, and that does take choice, and it does take conscious direction of our time and attention.

Worry is not helpful in this regard. Undue concern about circumstances that are beyond our control is not helpful in this regard. We often look at things that are in the realm of the unknown.

I don't know how God is going to meet this need. I don't know what my life is going to look like. I read an interesting article this past week on our aversion to change and how counterproductive it can be, because even though what we're currently experiencing may not be that great, it's familiar.

And our uncertainty and our sort of fear of the unknown is so strong as a human attribute that we will stick with a not so great situation in the present because we don't know if it might not get worse. There could be a great possibility that it gets better, but we don't want the risk. It's better the devil we know than the devil we don't know, and so we are unwilling to move forward.

This is talking about just secular psychology. We tend to be entrenched and habitual. We won't try a new store.

You go in a classroom, you remember when you were a student, go into your classroom and sit in the seat. The next day you go to that same class, you want to go sit in the same seat. You don't know about those other chairs.

You know about that one you sat in. It may not be a great chair, but I know what that was like. I don't know what it's going to be if I have to sit up in the front.

Will I get called on? You better choose your chair carefully the first day because you're going to tend to want to sit there the whole rest of the semester. It's just the way humans are built. However, we're not just human.

We are human and we partake of the divine. We have God's Holy Spirit. What is faith? Evidence of things not seen gives us the ability to step out into what may be unknown because there are things that we do know.

I don't know how the circumstance is going to turn out, but I know whom I have believed. I'm persuaded that he's able to handle whatever it is and secure it against that day. Is the day of the Lord's return near or far? Is the day of my death near or far? Is the day of some disability? I'm hale and hearty today.

You trip in an instant and suddenly you've got shattered bones or twisted joints or they

take you for a routine scan and you've got something growing inside you you wish you didn't. We don't always know what the morrow holds or how we're going to navigate it, but what do we know? Because we are believers in the Lord Jesus Christ, we know that we have God's Spirit. We know that we have God's full attention.

The parallel passages here and as you continue, you can see we'll cover this because it's parallel as well. Skip down to verse 27. Whatever I tell you in the dark, speak in the light.

Telling in the dark, this is in a way what we learn in Bible class. We're relatively small as a group. It's a limited presentation and we're indoors.

He says, what you learn, what I tell you in the dark, speak in the light. What you hear in the ear, preach on the housetops. Do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul.

Rather fear him who is able to destroy both soul and body in Hades. Are not two sparrows sold for a copper coin and not one of them falls to the ground apart from your father's will. It's wonderful to live up here in the woods and there's just a super abundance of birds.

You can hear them even when you can't see them. And according to the Lord Jesus, whose word I do not doubt, every single bird all over the world is known to God. And there's not a one of them that falls to the ground without the father knowing about it.

Verse 30, the very hairs of your head are all numbered. This is a level of detail of our particular circumstance down to the number of hairs on our heads. If God knows our exact situation to that level of detail, we should not fear.

Verse 31, do not fear. Therefore you are of more value than many sparrows. I was amusing myself as an English major because you could read this sentence two different ways.

It's like if I said, uh, well, you're smarter than many men. That means there's, there's some men that you're not smarter than you're smarter than many. Well, you're, you're, you're of more value than many sparrows, but maybe you're not of more value than all the sparrows.

Some of the sparrows might be worth more, but that's of course not what he means. You are more value than many sparrows. God is tracking the sparrows.

He is certainly paying attention to us. Now we have a lot of unknowns as we think about, uh, the times in which we live, how bad is it going to get? How bad could it get? Uh, what would be the circumstances? Uh, if the rapture were to take place and I've got unfinished business or I've got a loose ends and, there are many things that we can't know the answers to and we don't need to know the answers. I say again, you do not need to know

how some of these circumstances are going to play out.

We do not need to know if the Lord Jesus is coming back today in a couple of weeks, in a couple of years. There's a theory that says that, uh, the Jewish numbering of years since the creation, uh, is going to determine when the Lord comes back. But when it hits 6,000 right now, it's 5,700 and something.

And in reality, uh, because there's an error of 143 years, uh, going back to the days of the captivity, um, uh, between the time of David and the time of the captivity, they, they got off and that it's actually 140 something years nearer than the Jews think, which puts the year 6,000, uh, about, I think 43 years from now, uh, sometime in the middle of this coming century, who knows? I don't know. Nobody but the father knows. The angels don't know.

The Lord Jesus Christ himself doesn't know. And I ask myself, how come the son of man does not know the day or the hour? It seems like he's one of sort of the central figures in that. Why does he not know? He doesn't need to know.

That information is on a need to know basis. Any questions we have that we do not know the answers to don't need to know because what do we know? God has it. God is aware.

He has intimate detailed knowledge of every single circumstance in our life, large and small. Does it really matter how many hairs are on your head? You run a comb through it and it changes, but God knows Sparrow falls. And you know what? There's an interesting, uh, parallel here in Luke chapter 12, verse six to verse 29 here in Matthew says, are not two Sparrows sold for a copper coin? When you go to Luke chapter 12, verse six, he says, are not five Sparrows sold for two copper coins? It's quantity discount.

You get two for a coin. You get five for two coins. And Dr. Grizzle preached a whole sermon on that fifth Sparrow.

You know, how much is the fifth Sparrow worth? It's sort of being thrown in for free, but God tracks the Sparrows. God tracks the hairs on our heads. Do you not think that whatever circumstances pertain in our lives now, in the future, at our death, at the rapture, God's got it.

And he's got it far better than anything we could imagine. Any arrangement we could make any, uh, provision by grabbing ourselves an extra pair of sandals or another staff or trying to tuck some copper or silver or gold into our money belt. Jesus said, forget all of that.

You represent the message that God's grace is totally sufficient for the people in his kingdom. He will recompense anybody who has poverty of spirit. Anybody who is hungering and for righteousness.

Go back to your Matthew chapter five. God knows every single individual and has every need covered, every blessing arranged, every reward noted and in place. God is perfect.

There's no lack. There's no gap. He didn't forget.

So do not fear. Therefore, verse 31, you are of more value than many Sparrows. If you want to make this week's refrigerator magnet, that's my suggestion.

Just put the last half of that verse, dangle it off your rear view mirror, stick it on the fridge. I, Sam, am worth more than a flock of birds. There's my self-esteem.

When God looks at a flock of Sparrows and looks at me, he says, yeah, we'll go with Sam. He's worth more than, you know, if I had to take one or the other, bad as he is, he's better than a flock of birds. You know, it's not a very high bar to clear.

Therefore, verse 32, whoever confesses me before men, him, I will also confess before my father who is in heaven. Notice this, as I said last time, has risen up and beyond from just this momentary mission to talk about all communication missions related to the Lord Jesus Christ. Whether it is these men on this mission, whether it is the apostle Paul going to the Gentiles, whether it is us living our lives, confessing me before men.

And people say, well, this is a verbal, this is the message. If you live your life as unto the Lord before men, God is going to see us get introduced by the Lord Jesus Christ. Whoever denies me before men, if our life does not reflect his glory, if we are not visible as members of the body of Christ, as those who live the message, live faith, live in obedience, stand up for those things that are essential, be flexible about those things that are non-essential, trust God for the things we don't know about.

If we are too querulous and too faithless to really trust God, not going to be introduced to the father and be in the rear with the gear. Now, if you look, if your Bible is like mine, your New King James, and mine's got, I found an error in my Bible again this morning. This particular edition, great though it is, has mistakes.

It's just a reminder that the message has to transcend the text. My English Bible has got goofs in it. You wouldn't believe it.

Anyway, if yours is like mine in your New King James, maybe you've got section headings and it gives you parallel passages. I want you to notice something. If you go back to verse five in my Bible above verse five, it says sending out the 12, then it gives the parallel in Mark chapter six, verses seven through 13 and Luke chapter nine, verses one through six.

If you don't have that, you can, you can write it in. Most of your annotated Bibles are going to say the sending out of the 12 verses five through 15 is paralleled in Mark chapter six and in Luke chapter nine. Both of those have about six verses, Mark six,

seven through 13, Luke nine, one through six, and focus, especially on Luke, sending out of the 12, Luke nine, one through six.

Assuredly verse 15, more tolerable land of Sodom and Gomorrah in the day of judgment than for that city. Then in verse 16, and I, we saw last week that this is where I suggest the plane is speeding down the runway and starts to lift off and gets into future things and starts talking about the tribulation period. If your Bible is like mine and you look at the parallel passages up above verse 16, introducing this next section, 16 through 26, it doesn't say Luke nine anymore.

It says Luke 21, Luke 21. Now Luke 21 is the, is the true parallel to Matthew chapter 24. Lord, what will the signs of the end be? When will all these things take place? Remember Matthew 24, roars, rumors of wars, earthquakes, the end is not yet, birth pangs, a nation rising against nation, all that.

24, well, Luke 21 is the parallel to that. And beginning in verse 16, I send you out of sheep among wolves. Be wise as serpents, harmless as doves.

Beware of men. They will deliver you up to councils and scourge you in their synagogues. You will be brought before governors and Kings for my sake as a testimony to them and to the Gentiles.

That's, that's our passage here given in connection with the sending out of the 12. Keep your finger here and turn over to Luke chapter 21. Now there's a reason we're doing this.

It's more than just interesting. Luke chapter 21, beginning at verse 12, can start up in verse 7. Teacher, when will these things be? He's just said that the temple is going to be knocked down and one stone won't be standing on another in Luke 21. You remember that? Look how beautiful this, this, uh, temple is.

And he says, these things you see, the days are coming when one stone will not be left upon another that shall not be thrown down. That's Luke 21, six. Then in verse seven, they said, teacher, when will these things be? What will the signs be when these things are about to take place? Take heed that you are not deceived.

Many will come in my name saying, I am he. The time is drawn near. Do not go after them.

When you hear of wars and commotions, do not be terrified. These things must come to pass first, but the end will not come immediately. Nation will rise against nation, kingdom against kingdom, earthquakes, various places, famines, pestilences, fearful sites, great signs from heaven.

But before all these things, they will lay their hands on you and persecute you, delivering you up to synagogues and prisons. You will be brought before Kings and rulers for my

namesake, but it will turn out for you as an occasion for testimony. Settle it in your hearts not to meditate beforehand on what you will answer.

I will give you a mouth and wisdom, which all your adversaries will not be able to contradict or resist. You will be betrayed even by parents and brothers, relatives, and friends. Some will put you to death.

You will be hated by all for my namesake, but not a hair of your head shall be lost. Sound familiar? By your patience, possess your souls. This idea that wisdom will be given, which all your adversaries will not be able to contradict or resist.

Have you ever been in a discussion with somebody who's atheist, agnostic, departing the faith, or whatever, and it seems like no matter what point you try to make or how you answer their objections and arguments, they've always got to come back. There's a reply. They'll shift the ground and say, well, yeah, but what about this? And well, if that's not a contradiction, this over here certainly is.

And how could God, you know, smashing baby's heads and all these terrible things in the Old Testament, how can you believe in it? And it's never convincing. The words, the arguments, the points you make, people don't just suddenly say, well, you know, I think you've convinced me. I believe that's right.

It never happens. How does change of mind, how does conversion, how does metanoia, noose is the mind, noia, meta is to change like metamorphosis. And the call, this message is change your mind for the kingdom is in hand.

Our message as we live the message in our day is change your mind. There is a God in heaven whose son is the Lord Jesus Christ. And there is none other name under heaven given among men whereby we can be saved, whereby we can have eternal life, where why we can be delivered from ourselves and our sins, the penalty of them, the corruption of them, the inevitable end of them.

There's only one way of deliverance. That's our message. But sometimes trying to preach that message or argue that message or cajole and persuade is an endless war of words.

And there winds up being ill will. There winds up being separation. There winds up being no meeting of the minds whatsoever.

Look at this verse in Luke verse 15. This is the parallel to Matthew chapter 10, verse 19. I will give you a mouth and wisdom, which all your adversaries will not be able to contradict or resist in the preaching ministry, which is the earthly ministry for the earthly people to their earthly audience, both in the sending out of the 12 and gliding into for Jesus.

If you leave out the church age, this tribulation 70th week of Daniel period is just a few years away. And so his instructions to the 12 glide directly forward into the instruction for the 144,000, the 12,000 from the 12 tribes. He sends out the 12 here.

There's going to be 144,000 servants of God who are to follow these instructions in the tribulation period. So we look at Israel and we observe, interpret, and apply in the spiritual realm. It isn't words that are going to be given to us that will be convicting and impossible to contradict or resist.

It is the power to live the message. We are a spiritual people. We are a spiritual presence.

Paul talks about this in the, in what holds back the antichrist. Now, you know what it is that holds back until it's taken out of the way it's us and the spirit within us. So we need a life of wisdom, be wise and be guileless, be wise and be honest, be transparent, live honestly, a life of faith and obedience.

And that life, all your adversaries will not be able to contradict or resist. I cannot tell you how many testimonies I have seen. In fact, I was looking up the martyrdom of the apostles and there, there is an early church tradition.

We only have biblical allusions to three apostles and their death. And we really only have one that is given in scripture and that's James. He's the first disciple to be martyred.

But there's an early church tradition that says the Roman soldier that led James to his execution, uh, was so impressed by James, complete calmness of mind and equanimity and fearlessness in the face of this execution and confidence that the soldier himself knelt beside James and said, I too am a Christian. If you're executing him, execute me. And whether that's legendary or true, uh, there are innumerable actual factual accounts of people who have been persuaded not by words, but by looking at what scripture says, be ready always to give an answer to anyone who asks you a reason for the hope that they see in you.

You have a hope, you have a confidence, you have a dependence upon God and the knowledge that what we don't know, he does know that is persuasive. You cannot contradict or resist anybody who's susceptible. Anybody who is capable of changing their minds and coming to Christ isn't going to be won by our many words and the brilliance of our arguments.

How many great plans of salvation we've read and regurgitated it's living our message, being true to the Lord Jesus Christ in our lives and letting the spirit within us do the talking. So rather than focus on witnessing, mentoring, modeling, all we have to do is focus on our own lives, be a good and faithful servant, cultivate the presence and power of the Holy Spirit, reflect on and meditate on the truth of God's word, go back over the

things that we have learned and then ask ourselves the question, am I living in the light of this truth? Am I really trusting? Am I really leaving aside worry? Am I casting my cares upon him because I know he cares for me? Have you ever thought about that great memory verse, casting all your cares upon him for he cares for you. I learned that when I was like four, but think about it.

How easy is it? Have you ever been trying to go to sleep at night and something's running around in your head like a squirrel and you just can't go to sleep and you say, I just, I can't do anything about that. I'm not going to worry about that right now. I'm just, I need to go to sleep.

I'm going to be in a terrible shape tomorrow. If I can't get some rest, I'm going to be cranky and it'd be irritable. I'm going to be tired.

It's just going to be a really, I just got to get to sleep. But you know that. And then here's that squirrel running around in your head again.

How easy is it? It's one thing to tell somebody, well, cast your cares on him. You can cast your care and it's like a boomerang. It's like one of those paddle ball things.

You know, you, the ball just comes right back on the, on the elastic. What's the second half of that verse say? Casting all your care upon him. What's the mechanism? How can you actually let go of it? You focus not on the care that you're trying to get rid of, but on his care for us.

Whatever your care is, God cares more about you. You're worth more than many sparrows. Maybe not all sparrows, but you're worth more than many sparrows.

And we can cast our cares on him because he cares for us. If that is a real truth to us, you can, in fact, set aside worry. You can set aside fear.

You can not be affected by uncertainty. There is uncertainty. There is concern, but it doesn't trip us.

It doesn't deflect us. It doesn't knock us down when it comes up. We say, well, you know, God cares for me.

He knows what I need before I ask him. I can bring that to the throne of grace, find grace to help in time of need. I can come directly into the throne through the new and living way that Jesus Christ created for me.

And all I have to do is mention it once. Jesus said, you don't have to make many repetitious prayers when I pray about important things. And this is just me.

Now, if you, you, everybody's different. You think about parents and children, everything is unique. Don't necessarily do what I do.

I am just telling you that for myself, when there's something really important, that's really laying on my heart. I go to God and I pray for it one time. And I tell the Lord, I have to trust you for this.

It's out of my power. It's beyond my control. Give me the wisdom to, to play my part and do what I'm supposed to do.

But the rest of this, I have to lay at your feet. And I don't ever bring it up again until I give thanks for the resolution. Because to me, God doesn't need a reminder from Sam.

And I want him to know that I trust him completely. I give it to him, fire and forget. It's like artillery.

Once you yank that lanyard and the round goes down, you better have set your your deflection and your elevation correctly and compensated for all the factors. Because once you pull the lanyard, it's gone. Well, I do artillery prayers.

I fire and I forget. It's, God's got it. And he doesn't need me pestering him.

And I know there's the unfortunate widow. Well, I'm not a widow and I'm not unfortunate. I'm fully capable of lodging that concern where it belongs.

That's just me. But the Lord Jesus reminds the disciples in the time of the delivery of their message in their time to their designated audience, God cares for you. God knows your exact situation.

You go out and don't worry about providing for yourself. God will ensure that there are people in place to meet your physical needs and the spirit is in place to meet your spiritual needs. What more do you want? If you have a need, it will be met in the hour that you have it.

Trust God, live your message. Let's close here in a word of prayer. Father, thank you for this wonderful example from the Lord Jesus and the disciples.

We thank you for the privilege we have of living in this age and having been given the wonderful opportunities to represent the Lord Jesus in the midst of our generation. And we pray that we can shine his lights, that God, the Holy Spirit will speak in us and that others will see Christ in us and ask us a reason for our hope, our confidence, our steadiness under pressure, and that we can accumulate that inheritance, be a part of those blessings that redound to the praise of the Lord Jesus Christ, both now and in the ages to come. We pray these things in Jesus name.

Amen.