

6/22/08

Matthew 10:5a, 21-33

5 These twelve Jesus sent out with the following instructions: . . .

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 All men will hate you because of me, but he who stands firm to the end will be saved. 23 When you are persecuted in one place, flee to another. I tell you the truth, you will not finish going through the cities of Israel before the Son of Man comes.

24 "A student is not above his teacher, nor a servant above his master. 25 It is enough for the student to be like his teacher, and the servant like his master. If the head of the house has been called Beelzebub, how much more the members of his household! 26 "So do not be afraid of them. 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 apart from the will of your Father. 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 men, I will also acknowledge him before my Father in heaven. 33 But whoever disowns me before men, I will disown him before my Father in heaven.

INTRO - In recent years we have had 15-20 young men and women from our congregation enter the military to serve their country. Soldiers, Sailors, Marines, not just recruited and sent straight to work. They first go through training. Basic training, technical training, other military training is given because the jobs and tasks our service people face are difficult and dangerous, especially if going into battle,

I. In our lesson the disciples have spent time with Jesus, listening to His teaching. How He is sending them out to practice what He has taught them and prepared them for, sharing the Gospel with others. But, as He instructs them, He tells them that their job will be difficult and dangerous

A. Specifically, Jesus says, **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 All men will hate you because of me, but he who stands firm to the end will be saved. 23 When you are persecuted in one place, flee to another. I tell you the truth, you will not finish going through the cities of Israel before the Son of Man comes.**

B. Today Jesus not only sends us out, but we are recognizing our high school graduates. It is good to recognize that what Jesus says to His disciples is true for us, and perhaps becoming more so for Christians.

1. Living as a Christian is difficult in America.

A. Our affluence works against the Christian faith. Our priorities are thrown out of whack and other things can become more important than God, or become so to speak, 'god' to us.

B. Because of a desire to accept every one, and every teaching, our American and Western culture denies there is godly truth, or absolute truth. If we listen to our culture, what do we build our life on? Thankfully God says he, and His Word are true, even if the world denies it.

C. Our affluence leads to temptations or sinful use of our bodies. Overeating, abuse of alcohol and drugs, ungodly use of sex is not only accepted but encouraged to sell product.

2. Living as a Christian can be dangerous

A. This is especially so around the world where the Christian religion is facing totalitarian governments, and militant Islam. More Christians are being killed for their faith today than in early church times.

B. But, you can be rejected and betrayed by others for standing up for your faith, and God's values.

3. It is difficult to live as a Christian today.

II. A couple of years ago in Florida I pulled up in my car to a stop sign, and stopped. I looked left and right, but while I was looking those directions, I was hit from behind.

Living our faith a Christian may be difficult and dangerous, but Jesus says, **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.**

A. Jesus is saying, don't be afraid of those whom might persecute or deny you. Realize

who really to fear, the one who controls your eternity.

B. God doesn't want us to primarily fear him. He is our Savior.

1. But, he is also our judge.
2. When we treat God like some friendly pushover, we deny reality, and put ourselves in danger of ignoring the one who is God and our judge. There is such a thing as hell, and judgement.
3. Jesus gives us a reality check of a difficult and dangerous life.

III. Yesterday I played in a golf with some Lutheran friends. On one hole two people hit the ball near the green, but off near and in the sand trap. Both people said, "If" I had only hit it a little more right, it would have been near the hole. "If" is a "big - little word," a little word with a lot of meaning.

A. In this reading the "big - little words" are "yet." and "so"

1. Listen to the yet. **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 apart from the will of your Father.**
2. Listen to the "so." **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.**

B. In other words, we could fear God, but He is loving, watching over, protecting us. He sent his son to die and rise to save us!

1. The Reality is: life is dangerous, especially as a Christian.
2. The Reality is: God is our judge, if fear anything in this dangerous world, fear Him.
3. The Reality also is: the God you could fear is really watching out for you in ways you don't even understand. He is helping you in difficult times, protecting you, forgiving you, guiding you.

C. As we leave today, as High School students begin their adult lives, Jesus is giving us principals to live by as His children.

1. Get a reality check on your life and get your priorities in order. Is God the center of your life, or just part of it?
2. Go live as a Christian, confessing him telling others of him, with your life and words. Do this remembering "Yet" and "so". Keep Him first, but serve him in thankfulness and love, in the midst of the difficult and dangerous life of a Christian.

CONCLUSION - We started by discussing those who have entered the military. Soldiers are taught in training that when they go into battle, they are a team, they are not by themselves, they have backup. The backup is not only those with them, but others in airplanes, in armor, in ships. The back up can be delayed, it can even fail, but the plan is that they have back up.

We are called to difficult and dangerous lives as Christians, YET, when we go to live a Christian life, we have back up. Our back up is not only in this life, it is eternal. God never fails. SO . . . Go, and be His children.

