

"FREEDOM FROM FEAR"  
MATTHEW 10:5a, 21-33  
FOURTH S. A. PENTECOST  
MESSIAH, BOERNE  
JUNE 25, 2023

IN THE NAME OF THE FATHER AND OF THE SON AND OF THE HOLY  
SPIRIT. AMEN.

READ TEXT: MT 10:5a, 21-33

DEAR FRIENDS IN CHRIST:

IN LAST WEEK'S GOSPEL LESSON WE HEARD HOW JESUS SENT  
HIS TWELVE APOSTLES INTO A HOSTILE WORLD TO PROCLAIM THE  
GOOD NEWS OF THE KINGDOM OF GOD. TODAY'S GOSPEL LESSON  
CONTINUES JESUS' INSTRUCTION TO HIS DISCIPLES. CHRIST  
ENCOURAGES THEM TO BE BOLD IN THEIR PROCLAMATION OF GOD'S  
KINGDOM OF GRACE IN CHRIST, EVEN THOUGH THEY WILL SURELY  
ENCOUNTER OPPOSITION—EVEN VIOLENT OPPOSITION. YET THEY ARE  
NOT TO BE AFRAID. THEY ARE ON *GOD'S* MISSION, AND HE CARES  
FOR THEM. THE DISCIPLES ARE TO REMEMBER THAT *ALL* THINGS  
ARE IN HIS LOVING HANDS SO THAT THEY ARE *FREE FROM FEAR*.

WELL, WHAT JESUS SAID TO HIS APOSTLES THEN, HE ALSO  
SAYS TO HIS DISCIPLES TODAY. WE ARE TO SHARE BOLDLY THE  
GOOD NEWS OF GOD'S GRACE THROUGH JESUS CHRIST WITH OTHERS.  
IN DOING SO, HOWEVER, WE ARE GOING TO HAVE PROBLEMS IN THE  
WORLD. BY TELLING OTHERS ABOUT JESUS AS OUR PERSONAL  
SAVIOR AND THE SAVIOR OF THE WORLD, WE WILL BE ASSOCIATED  
WITH JESUS, LABELED AS HIS FOLLOWERS, AND PERSECUTED.

NEVERTHELESS, JESUS ENCOURAGES US TO BE BOLD IN OUR PROCLAMATION OF HIM AS OUR LORD AND SAVIOR. HE PROMISES THAT WHOEVER ACKNOWLEDGES HIM BEFORE OTHER PEOPLE, HE WILL ALSO ACKNOWLEDGE BEFORE HIS FATHER IN HEAVEN. THEREFORE, TRUSTING IN JESUS' PROMISE, WE HAVE *FREEDOM FROM FEAR*.

IN HIS FIRST INAUGURAL ADDRESS, PRESIDENT FRANKLIN DELANO ROOSEVELT DECLARED: "THE ONLY THING WE HAVE TO FEAR IS FEAR ITSELF." NOWHERE IS THIS TRUER THAN IN THE LIFE OF A CHRISTIAN. FEAR CAN BE DISABLING. FEAR CAN EVEN BE PARALYZING. BUT IF FEAR KEEPS A CHRISTIAN FROM WITNESSING TO OTHERS ABOUT OUR LORD AND SAVIOR JESUS CHRIST, FEAR COULD EVENTUALLY BE DAMNING! WHY? BECAUSE BEARING WITNESS TO CHRIST AS TRUE GOD AND THE SAVIOR OF THE WORLD IS ONE OF THE PRIMARY ACTIVITIES IN A CHRISTIAN'S FAITH AND LIFE.

NOW, IF WE ARE TO HAVE FREEDOM FROM FEAR, WE MUST, FIRST OF ALL, KNOW THE ENEMY AND RECOGNIZE AND ACCEPT THE FACT THAT THERE WILL BE CONSEQUENCES FOR BEARING WITNESS TO CHRIST. PRAYER IS IMPORTANT, BUT WE CANNOT DEPEND ON SUCH AN "AIR WAR" ALONE TO WIN THE BATTLE FOR THE SOULS OF PEOPLE FOR WHOM CHRIST DIED. WE MUST ALSO SEND IN THE "GROUND TROOPS"—AND THE SOONER THE BETTER. AS ST. PAUL SAYS:

HOW, THEN, CAN THEY CALL ON THE ONE THEY HAVE NOT BELIEVED IN? AND HOW CAN THEY BELIEVE IN THE ONE OF WHOM THEY HAVE NOT HEARD? AND HOW CAN THEY HEAR

WITHOUT SOMEONE PREACHING TO THEM? AND HOW CAN THEY PREACH UNLESS THEY ARE SENT? AS IT IS WRITTEN: "HOW BEAUTIFUL ARE THE FEET OF THOSE WHO BRING GOOD NEWS!" (ROM. 10:14-15)

PASTORS, TEACHERS, MISSIONARIES, AND CONSECRATED LAY PEOPLE LIKE YOURSELVES MUST BE SENT IN ORDER TO PROCLAIM THE GOOD NEWS OF JESUS CHRIST. YET JESUS REMINDS US: "A STUDENT IS NOT ABOVE HIS TEACHER, NOR A SLAVE ABOVE HIS MASTER" (V. 24). AS CHRISTIANS WE ACKNOWLEDGE JESUS AS OUR TEACHER, LORD, AND MASTER. HE PURCHASED US WITH HIS OWN PRECIOUS BLOOD. NOW WE ARE HIS, AND AS HIS DISCIPLES AND SERVANTS, WE CAN EXPECT TO BE TREATED NO BETTER THAN HE WAS, THAT IS, TO BE CALLED NAMES, ABUSED, TORTURED, AND PERHAPS EVEN EXECUTED.

NOW, FEAR IS BASED LARGELY ON THE UNKNOWN. ROOSEVELT CALLED IT "NAMELESS, UNREASONING, UNJUSTIFIED TERROR." HOWEVER, NOW THAT WE KNOW WHAT WE CAN AND SHOULD EXPECT FROM FOLLOWING CHRIST, HOW SHALL WE ACT? WELL, JESUS WANTS US TO REMAIN BOLD WITNESSES TO HIM, IN SPITE OF THE POSSIBLE TROUBLES WE WILL FACE. HOWEVER, LEST WE ARE TEMPTED TO SHRINK BACK FROM OUR LORD AND DENY HIM, HE ISSUES THIS STERN WARNING TO ALL WHO CALL THEMSELVES CHRISTIANS: "WHOEVER DISOWNS ME BEFORE MEN, I WILL DISOWN HIM [OR HER] BEFORE MY FATHER IN HEAVEN" (V. 33). NOW

THAT'S REALLY SCARY—TO BE DISOWNED AND REJECTED BY CHRIST ON JUDGEMENT DAY!

THE SPORTS WEAR COMPANY NIKE SOLD MILLIONS OF DOLLARS OF MERCHANDISE WITH THE SIMPLE SLOGAN: "JUST DO IT." AS CHRISTIANS—DISCIPLES OF CHRIST—WE, TOO, MUST SAY WITH REGARD TO TELLING OTHERS ABOUT JESUS, "JUST DO IT." JUST GO AHEAD AND COURAGEOUSLY BEAR WITNESS TO CHRIST. AS SOMEONE HAS SAID, "COURAGE IS FEAR THAT HAS SAID ITS PRAYERS." WITH GREAT BOLDNESS, TELL EVERYONE WHAT HE HAS DONE: HOW HE SUFFERED AND DIED ON THE CROSS FOR THE FORGIVENESS OF OUR SINS, AND HOW HE ROSE FROM THE DEAD ON THE THIRD DAY TO GIVE US LIFE AND SALVATION IN HIS NAME.

HERE ARE THREE REASONS FROM OUR TEXT WHY WE CAN AND SHOULD TELL OTHERS ABOUT CHRIST WITHOUT FEAR. THE FIRST IS BECAUSE THE GOSPEL CANNOT BE SUPPRESSED. JESUS SAYS, "THERE IS NOTHING CONCEALED THAT WILL NOT BE DISCLOSED, OR HIDDEN THAT WILL NOT BE MADE KNOWN" (V. 26). YOU SEE, EVERYTHING WILL BE COMPLETELY EXPOSED ON THE LAST DAY, BOTH THE ENEMIES OF CHRIST AND THEIR SECRETS AND THE DISCIPLES OF CHRIST AND THEIR GOSPEL MESSAGE. THE HOSTILE EFFORTS OF UNGODLY MEN WILL NOT BE ABLE TO PREVENT THE PROCLAMATION OF THE GOOD NEWS. ALL WILL BE MADE KNOWN IN THE END. JESUS WANTS US TO UNDERSTAND THIS DEEPLY AND THEN SPEAK OUT THE GOOD NEWS FEARLESSLY, HOLDING NOTHING BACK.

THE SECOND REASON FOR PROCLAIMING CHRIST BOLDLY TO OTHERS IS BECAUSE HUMAN BEINGS CAN ONLY KILL THE BODY. AS HUMAN BEINGS WE FEAR BEING KILLED BECAUSE WE ASSOCIATE DEATH WITH PHYSICAL PAIN AND THE LOSS OF LIFE. THIS IS ONLY NATURAL. BUT JESUS TELLS US *NOT* TO BE AFRAID OF PEOPLE OR SATAN. THEIR POWER IS *LIMITED* BY GOD. "RATHER, BE AFRAID OF THE ONE WHO CAN DESTROY BOTH SOUL AND BODY IN HELL," THAT IS, GOD THE ALMIGHTY. GOD IS THE ONE WE ARE TO FEAR ABOVE ALL OTHERS, AND WE ARE TO SERVE HIM *ALONE*.

WHICH LEADS US TO THE THIRD REASON WE CAN AND SHOULD SHARE THE GOOD NEWS WITH OTHERS: BECAUSE GOD HAS SPECIAL CARE AND CONCERN FOR JESUS' DISCIPLES. JESUS USES THE EXAMPLES OF SPARROWS AND HAIRS ON OUR HEADS TO DEMONSTRATE THE ENORMITY OF GOD'S LOVE FOR US. SPARROWS WERE WORTH ONLY A COUPLE PENNIES IN JERUSALEM'S MARKET, YET GOD CARES ABOUT THEM. HOW MUCH MORE VALUABLE ARE WE, THEN, FOR WHOM CHRIST JESUS GAVE HIS LIFE! AND IF GOD NUMBERS THE SMALLEST HAIR ON OUR HEAD, HOW MUCH *MORE* WILL HE TAKE CARE OF US, HIS REDEEMED CHILDREN, AS HE TAKES CARE OF HIS CREATION.

OF COURSE, GOD'S LOVE FOR HIS CREATION WAS MOST POWERFULLY DEMONSTRATED WHEN HE SENT HIS ONLY SON, JESUS, INTO THE WORLD TO REDEEM IT. CHRIST LOUDLY AND FEARLESSLY PROCLAIMED THE KINGDOM OF GOD, DESPITE RECEIVING TAUNTS AND

INSULTS FROM HIS ENEMIES. HE WORKED AND SPOKE AS LONG AS THERE WAS DAYLIGHT. THEN HE COURAGEOUSLY WALKED TO CALVARY, WHERE HIS BODY WAS NAILED TO THE CROSS—ALONG WITH ALL OUR SINS. HE DIED AND TOOK THOSE SINS AWAY, AND GOD, THE ONE WHO JUDGES JUSTLY, RAISED HIM TO LIFE AGAIN, SHOWING TO *ALL THE WORLD* THAT OUR SINS ARE FORGIVEN AND NEW LIFE AWAITS *ALL* WHO TRUST IN JESUS. CHRIST NOW HAS THE KEYS OF DEATH AND HELL, AND HE HAS OPENED THE WAY INTO HEAVEN FOR YOU AND ME AND EVERYONE WHO TRUSTS IN HIM.

THEREFORE, LET US TRUST IN GOD'S PROMISE TO THOSE WHO CONFESS, "JESUS IS LORD." HE SAYS, "WHOEVER ACKNOWLEDGES ME BEFORE MEN, I WILL ACKNOWLEDGE BEFORE MY FATHER IN HEAVEN" (V. 32). BY OUR CONFESSION OF FAITH, WE ACKNOWLEDGE THAT JESUS CHRIST, OUR GRACIOUS LORD AND MASTER, HAS PREPARED ETERNAL SALVATION FOR US. ON THE LAST DAY HE WILL ALSO ACKNOWLEDGE US, HIS DISCIPLES AND SERVANTS, BEFORE THE ENTIRE COURT OF HEAVEN, LEADING US RIGHT UP TO THE FATHER'S GLORIOUS THRONE. WE HAVE LEARNED FROM HIM AND SERVE HIM WHO IS "THE WAY, THE TRUTH, AND THE LIFE." WHEN WE ACKNOWLEDGE HIM TO OTHERS, WE ALSO PRAY THAT *THEY* WILL LEARN OF HIM, TRUST IN HIM, CONFESS HIM, AND BE ACKNOWLEDGED BY HIM IN HEAVEN.

DEAR FRIENDS IN CHRIST, THE LAST LINE OF THE DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE (WHICH IS A WRITTEN FORM OF

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT) READS: "AND FOR THE SUPPORT OF THIS  
DECLARATION, WITH FIRM RELIANCE ON THE PROTECTION OF DIVINE  
PROVIDENCE, WE MUTUALLY PLEDGE TO EACH OTHER OUR LIVES, OUR  
FORTUNES, AND OUR SACRED HONOR." HOW MUCH MORE RELIABLE IS  
THE PROTECTION OF OUR LOVING GOD, WHO HAS POWER OVER BODY  
AND SOUL, LIFE AND DEATH, AS DEMONSTRATED BY THE  
RESURRECTION OF OUR LORD JESUS! TRUSTING HIM, WE CAN  
CONFIDENTLY ACKNOWLEDGE THAT JESUS CHRIST IS LORD BEFORE  
*ALL PEOPLE—FREE FROM FEAR. AMEN.*