

Matthew 10:16-31

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[0 : 00] I was out and going to the gospel of Matthew, Matthew chapter 10. I appreciate brothers and sisters in Christ bringing a little soul into the church.

And as I think my wife told the choir during choir practice, this could be in trouble because my husband has purple on today. And then my son caught me and said, Dad, you better let them fellowship and stretch out for a while because we're in trouble.

They brought soul in with music. You're wearing purple. We got a brother with a gold shirt on. We could be in for five hours of preaching here. So I don't know that that would necessarily be the case. But I tell you, I was just looking up. I need Brother Fred Luter to walk in here and preach a message. Some of you are not very familiar with Brother Fred Luter, a pastor of a Baptist church down in the Lower Ninth Ward, Louisiana.

And a man, the brother can preach. And he does a great job at it. Past president of the Southern Baptist Convention. But really, good job choir. Good job musicians.

[0 : 57] And I appreciate that. And I appreciate your work. And I appreciate your dedication to continuing to move the church forward in its worship and its adoration of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

So Matthew chapter 10 is where we will be at this morning. Matthew chapter 10, starting in verse 16 and going to verse 31. Matthew chapter 10, verse 16 through 31. If you are physically able and desire to do so, would you stand with me as we stand together and we read the word of God, found in Matthew chapter 10, starting in verse 16 and going down to verse 31.

We'll read it and then we'll pray together. Christ here speaking to his disciples. If you remember last week as we were just making our way through the gospel of Matthew, Christ is getting ready to send out the first part of chapter 10.

He is commissioning the 12. And now we have here another transition after 15 into verse 16. We'll get to that in just a moment. This focus on missions.

Christ says, Behold, I send you out as sheep in the midst of wolves. So be shrewd as serpents and innocent as doves. But beware of men, for they will hand you over to the courts and scourge you in their synagogues. And you will even be brought before governors and kings for my sake as a testimony to them and to the Gentiles.

[2 : 13] But when they hand you over, do not worry about how or what you are to say, for it will be given you in that hour what you are to say. For it is not you who speak, but it is the spirit of your father who speaks in you.

Brother will betray brother to death and father his child and children will rise up against parents and cause them to be put to death. You will be hated by all because of my name, but it is the one who has endured to the end who will be saved.

But whenever they persecute you in one city, flee to the next. For truly I say to you, you will not finish going through the cities of Israel until the Son of Man comes. A disciple is not above his teacher nor a slave above his master.

It is enough for the disciple to become like his teacher and the slave like his master. If they had called the head of the house Beelzebul, how much more will they malign the members of his household? Therefore do not fear them, for there is nothing concealed that will not be revealed or hidden that will not be known.

What I tell you in the darkness speak in the light and what you hear whispered in your ear proclaim upon the housetops. Do not fear those who kill the body but are unable to kill the soul, but rather fear him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.

[3 : 19] Are not two sparrows sold for a cent? And yet not one of them will fall to the ground apart from your father. But the very hairs of your head are all numbered. So do not fear.

You are more valuable than many sparrows. Let's pray. Lord, we thank you so much for this day. God, we thank you for this great opportunity you've given us to come to worship together, to fellowship together, to grow together.

Lord, we thank you for the privilege it is of reading your word corporately and individually. We pray now, Lord, as we have read it and heard it. Lord, about the power and presence of your spirit, you would speak to us.

Lord, may it not be the words, the thoughts, or the opinions of man that penetrate our hearts, but may it be the very word of God. May you speak to your people. And may your people stand ready to hear from you.

And God, may what we hear from you radically transform our lives for your glory and honor and yours alone, and we ask it all in Jesus' name. Amen. You may be seated. There is between verse 15 and verse 16 of Matthew chapter 10, which seems to be a transition in the mission's focus.

[4 : 34] Bible scholars are kind of not necessarily at odds, but really abound with interpretations of the text. Most agree that verses 1 through 15 of Matthew chapter 10 have direct application to Jesus' commissioning of the 12 apostles.

How he sent them out immediately from him, and he sent them out to bear witness of the presence of the kingdom of heaven, for the kingdom of heaven is here or near. And they were to go and to not only proclaim it, but to also demonstrate it through various signs and miracles, testimonial signs and testimonial miracles, many of the things which we find happening in the book of Acts.

That each time the gospel penetrates a new region, or each time it moves into a new area, it is therefore testified to through what people both see and hear.

Because the reality is, friend, the gospel is seen just as much as it is heard. And our lives have been called to live it out and to proclaim it out as often as we get the opportunity.

So most Bible scholars believe verses 1 through 15 deal with the original commission. And in the first mission trip, if you will, of when Jesus sent the 12 apostles, he had a multitude of disciples.

[5 : 47] He had an even greater number of followers. We know that he fed 5,000 men, probably close to 10,000 men and women and children. He had a large number of followers that were hearing him preach and teach and do these signs.

And he had a number of those followers which were disciples. Disciples are people who stayed with him. They were kind of apart from the crowd. The disciples were the people who came in. And they wanted to learn.

They sat at his feet. And they would have listened to the Sermon on the Mount. They would have listened to the great teachings. They would have listened to not just what he was saying in public, but also how he was living in private.

And there were a number of disciples. But there were only 12 apostles. And we know that he chose those 12 after spending a night in prayer. And the Father called him, moved him, and he called those to himself whom he had chosen.

And he called them his apostles. And apostle means to be sent out. And there's 12 apostles. And it's amazing. One of the 12 which he chose was Judas Iscariot, who he knew would betray him. But yet we see in verses 1 through 15 of chapter 10, the original mission trip, if you will, the 12 being sent out.

[6 : 56] And somewhere around verse 16, things seem to change. Things seem to take a really different course. Because if you remember the first 15 verses, he tells them not to go outside of the cities of Jerusalem, right?

To go to the lost sheep of Israel only. Not to go into the Samaritan or the Gentile regions. And not to go anywhere outside of the lost cities or the lost sheep of Israel.

To stay within the confines of Jewish territory. But yet, when we get to verse 16, things seem to expand. Because he talks about being a witness to kings and rulers and Gentiles.

And also there being persecution and suffering. And all these things that didn't happen when the 12 were sent out. Or later on when the 70 were sent out. So, a lot of Bible scholars say that this is a missional focus on another time.

Many think that verses 16 through 31 deal with the missional focus of the end time. The time that is found in the book of Revelation.

[8 : 01] Because much of what is discussed here seems to have a similar reference in the 144,000 witnesses found in the book of Revelation.

And also the fact that fathers and sons and family members are handing one another over. And people are being persecuted. And it also seems to have application in Matthew 24. Matthew 24 is an end time prophecy. That Christ gives of what will happen in the end days. The latter days. Which we call the book of Revelations. And then most scholars will say somewhere following verse 31.

Going into, well, somewhere around verses 30, 31. And going to the end of the chapter. They deal with missional focus of the church age. So, there's this jumping around of here's the apostolic mission.

Here's the latter day missions. And then here are the church age missions. And while I think we can break this chapter up. And I know we're getting a little scholarly. And people say, well, what difference does this matter?

[9:01] Or why does this matter? Because I expect that you're going to do so much more than read the Bible. You're also going to study the Bible. And you're going to come upon these truths. And therefore, we want to be able to answer them, right? If I give you too much meat to chew on, at least you get to chew on it for a little bit longer.

I'd rather give you something to chew on rather than something that just runs straight through you. So, we see here that there are all these differing interpretations. Now, the danger in interpreting verses 16 through 31 as end time missions.

Let's just go ahead and say this. Well, that has nothing to do with us. That has nothing to do with any one of us sitting in this room. If that is the direct application.

Because, according to the book of Revelations, and I think also 1 and 2 Thessalonians, and even the book of Daniel, and even we can get into the prophecies of the book of Ezekiel. And we can go through any number of them.

We don't have time to really go through the whole thread of prophetic scripture there. Even, I think, when we get into the books of 1 Corinthians and other writings of Paul. Well, I think my interpretation and the agreement, not necessarily of all, but the church isn't going to be here during that tribulation time.

[10:16] Now, some think that it may be, and I can fellowship with that. That's okay. But if this is a tribulation period witness, then the church today has already experienced the rapture.

And therefore, we could say, well, that has nothing to do with me. According to 2 Thessalonians, those who have heard the news of Jesus Christ and yet rejected it after the coming of the tribulation, they will be given over to a debased mind so as to believe the lie and therefore no longer be able to be saved.

So, not to assume, I don't want to be mean here. Billy Graham once said, the greatest mission field that ever existed is set in the pews of the churches on Sunday mornings. So, we don't want to be mean, but we also don't want to be naive.

Not to assume that all of us are believers and not to make the point that all of us are non-believers, but everyone present, either the church is raptured or they're given over to a debased mind because they have already chosen to reject Christ and therefore this mission would have no direct application to us.

Because either you will not be able to be saved or you have already been saved and been called to glory. And I don't know about you, but this is one truth that I do know.

[11:34] No mission work will ever take place in heaven. No mission work will ever take place in heaven. No mission work will ever take place in heaven. No mission work will ever take place in heaven. Because everyone there already knows. I am in one of those great occupations that, when I'm called to glory, will no longer be needed.

I mean, am I going to stand up and preach in heaven about Jesus Christ? You can just go to the throne and see Him yourself, right? Am I going to tell other people about the need for the Savior? I don't think so. I mean, Paul is going to be there. Peter is going to be there. I mean, they're all going to be there, right? I mean, and there's really nothing that I will have to do other than to stand in His glory and to sing and to shout as loud as I possibly can and to proclaim His greatness and worthiness to myself and to Him, not to anyone else.

But here's the danger in interpreting this as latter-day missions is that there is no direct application. But while that may be true in a point that this has a true fulfillment in latter days, I think we also see just as much as we can see when Christ sends out the 12.

Stay with me. I'm getting there. When He sends out the 12, we weren't there. But the way He sent them out has application to us as to how we do missions, right? Because we want to follow that example.

[12:55] And even now as He stops and He begins to separate from what they are going to experience immediately to what they will begin to experience as days go on and as time passes and as time goes further and further throughout history and what missional living will look like, He shows us the true calling of missional living.

There's your title. If you had to have a title for this morning, it is the calling of missional living. What that calling has or the impact it has upon our lives.

Because each of these attributes, and there are four of them in this passage, these four attributes of the missionary or those living on mission for the kingdom, being ambassadors for the king, proclaiming his worthiness and his availability to all who will hear.

They all have these similar attributes. And this is not attributes reserved for a time in the future, but rather they are attributes that we are called to have today.

Just as much as the Beatitudes are the attitudes that every disciple of Jesus Christ ought to possess, the attributes we see of missional living found in this passage are attributes that every one of us ought to possess.

[14:12] Because we have already looked at the reality that in Matthew 28, what is often referred to as the Great Commission, that is not an option for the believer.

We don't have to ask ourselves, I wonder if I have been called to mission. The reality is, is God has called us to be on missions. And the only question we have to ask is, well, how am I going to do that mission?

How am I going to use my giftedness and my abilities and how God wired me and made me and all the things that are unique about me? How am I going to use those to be on mission for the king?

Because, see, the king chose you individually, and he put you together in a body called a corporate body of the church, and he has called you as you are to use you for his glory and his purposes.

And the beautiful thing that we see about the kingdom is that the king doesn't try to make us uniform. He just tries to make us united. He doesn't want us all to look alike and behave alike and to be alike, and we don't need to be a bunch of Billy Joes running around here because that would just be annoying.

[15:25] We can go ahead and say that. I'll say it even though you're thinking it, right? And it would not be fun at all. We don't need a bunch of Billy Joes. But the sad reality is, is we don't need a bunch of you either. That sounds harsh, but it's also true because you know you better than anyone, and I know me better than anyone.

What we need is all of us together because as we are stones being built up one to another, then all of a sudden we become the perfect bride of Christ. But he called us as we are with all of our defects and all of our unique attributes and all of our quirks and the things that make us different.

He's called us to be on mission for him. But these attributes, these character traits are all going to be displayed in us, and we want to be living missionally.

The beautiful thing is, is that you can live missionally where you are. You don't have to go anywhere else. It's called being a follower of Christ.

And it's living your day every day for his glory, not just setting aside a day, but living every day for his glory. We set aside a day to come together to be renewed and to be reinvigorated and to be refreshed for every other day, right?

[16:39] Sunday is the refueling of what happens Monday through Saturday. Sunday is the refueling of what happens every other day of the week. I'll just go ahead and put this out here.

You know why I love when we see such a display of musical talent in the church? It's because every other day of the week, that's what I listen to on the radio.

And if I had to be honest, so do most of us. And what Sunday is, is to be a refreshing and a renewal of what goes on Monday through Saturday.

And it is to redeem what happens Monday through Saturday. And it is to call it back to its original purpose. And to call it back to its original glory.

Remember Wednesday night, we looked at life centers, life flows from worship, life doesn't point to worship. Right? All of life flows from worship. So as we live missionally, what attributes will we have?

[17:50] Number one, we must be aware. We must be aware. I think one of the greatest disservices we do in Christianity is when we paint a picture too great that it will never be attained.

I've often told people, and I've told you, and I've told individuals that I've witnessed to or counseled, and I've told couples that we do pre-marriage counseling in, I try to be what we call in the Calvert House, real talk.

Right? Real talk. Regardless of what society says, sometimes you lose. Sometimes things don't go right.

Sometimes things mess up. Even though the world may give you a trophy, sometimes in your own eyes you may have lost the battle. And we try to be real and authentic with that.

And we try to be real about building our character through our ups and our downs. And I think we do a great disservice when we tell someone, if you just give your heart to Jesus Christ, your life will be so much better.

[18:55] After I gave my heart to Jesus Christ, my wife was four months pregnant, I lost a job. After losing that job, the economic downturn happened so bad that I lost the job that I got to replace the job.

I went from working 11 hours a day to 11 hours a week, and the people I was working with said, you'd draw more money with an unemployment check than what we could give you. And we're sorry that your wife's nine months pregnant, but we can't help you with that.

This was about a year after I came to Christ. So I went and found another job, and things went well, and the ups and downs, and I would just be honest with you. I've read enough historical testimonies to know, you give your life to Jesus Christ, it may not always be better.

But it's going to be worth it. Because when I lost that job, I saw believers step up and pay for the insurance that my wife needed. When I lost that job, checks started coming in the mail.

I mean, like, the cable company sent us a check. Who does that? We don't even know how that happens. I didn't ask any questions. I took it, and we went and bought groceries with it, right? When I lost that job, things started happening that I can't explain.

[20:05] But it's okay. Because the very first thing that happened when I lost that job, and I don't say this by way of boasting, I say this by way of growing, the very first thing I did was say, thank you, Lord, I know you got something better.

And I realized that things aren't always good and easy, but there's joy even though there may not be happiness. There's a difference.

Happiness is dependent upon circumstances. Joy is dependent upon a person. I have joy in Christ, but sometimes, I mean, it's okay to admit this on Sundays. Sometimes I'm not real happy. When I was 34, my L5 disc in my back ruptured.

I wasn't real happy. When I do pre-marriage counseling, I tell couples, you need to make investments in your mate's love bank because there'll come a time that you start making withdrawals, and you don't ever want to withdraw your accounts.

I get this from this counselor who, many years ago, it's this old book called The Love Bank, and you need to make deposits, you need to make deposits, you need to make deposits. And I always tell them, go ask my wife if I didn't make so many withdrawals in an 11-week period when I was a miserable human being.

[21:16] Ask her if my bank account wasn't getting very low. Because sometimes, even though you may love the individual, they may not feel like loving you back. Because sometimes we're not very lovable.

Because sometimes, it's not all good. And we need to be aware of that. Look at what he says. Behold, I send you out as sheep in the midst of wolves.

Boy, that sounds great, right? One thing I've learned about sheep is they have no way of defending themselves, and they have no way of caring for themselves, and they're very susceptible to attack of wolves, and all these other things.

But he says, I send you out as sheep in the midst of wolves, so be as shrewd as serpents and innocent as doves. You're going to have to be wise. You're going to have to be innocent. You're going to have to understand these things.

And then he goes on, but beware of men. Now, wait a minute. He is sending them to men, but he tells them to beware of men. Because you can't do missions without men, right?

[22 : 19] I mean, you can go tell a tree about Jesus all you want to, but he already knows about it because it's already proclaiming his glory because all of creation cries out to who he is. You can tell your dogs and your cats and your horses and your cows and all your other animals, but they already know because all of creation groans until the day of the redemption of man.

So the only one that's needing redemption and a reminder is man. So the one we're being sent to is man, and I am getting a little excited. I'm sorry. The one we're being sent to is man, but the one we're being told to be aware of is man.

So be aware of the very one I'm sending you to, but I'm still sending you to him. And he tells them to be aware of this because they will hand you over to the courts and scourge you in their synagogues.

I love when we read scripture. We can read scourge so easily without thinking anything about it, but to be scourged is to be humiliated. It is to be stripped. It is to be beaten with rods to the point, literally to the brink of death.

The Jewish people believed that 40 stripes would kill you, so they would go 39 in case they miscounted. Get you to the point of death. That's who you're going to.

[23 : 33] The first attribute that Jesus tells us about missional living is we must be aware of the opposition that waits for us. The reality is this.

There are people waiting to hear the gospel. But just as much as there are people waiting to hear the gospel, there are more people not wanting to hear anything about the gospel.

And they're going to make sure you know it. Be aware of the reality of opposition.

There is something that I like to say to individuals I work with, if I ever have to work on a site with someone, and I usually say it in my frustration and anger, and I know none of you other men ever get that way.

Just because something's hard doesn't mean it's impossible. It just means sometimes you just got to pull your boots up and try a little bit harder. Just because it's hard is not an excuse to stop.

[24 : 46] And the very first thing Christ tells us about missional living is he reminds us that there is a great opposition, and often the opposition is the very people we are sent to.

But just because it's hard doesn't mean we stop. Just because it's hard doesn't mean it's impossible. We're called to be aware of the reality that not everybody's going to want to hear what we have to say.

Not everybody's going to want to see what we want to do. Not everybody's going to care how much we care. Some people are going to mock us and ridicule us and despise us and even hate us for that.

I remember the first time that I was called a preacher man, and it wasn't in a nice tone of voice. It's because I was testifying to a guy who happened to be my boss at that time as we were putting a roof on a building together doing a very shoddy job of roofing a house, by the way.

First house I ever roofed. I won't tell you where it's at because it's located in this community. I can just say that if you find a roof in this community and it is not straight at all, more than likely I did that one. And the whole time I was on that roof, I was testifying.

[25 : 51] He said, what are you, some kind of preacher man or something? At that time, I never would have dreamed of being called into the pastor. This is, by the way, in that time when I got laid off. He was the guy who gave me the job. And I was like, well, you know what?

That's not a bad title. I'll take that. And all throughout the days of work, people just making fun of you, mocking you, ridiculing you.

It's okay. Because the reality is, is you know they're going to be there. And we are called to live with an awareness of the opposition.

Because an awareness of the opposition ensures the reality that we won't be surprised when it shows up. We should only be surprised when it doesn't show up. If no one is opposing you and nothing is coming against you, I'm not saying you go out there and you try to make people mad. I'm just saying I've read the scripture, and if we're not being opposed in any way, it's probably because we're not doing what we've been called to do. That's just the reality.

[26 : 51] So we are called to be aware. Number two, we are called to be available. To be available. Because look at what he says, Beware of men, for they will hand you over to courts and scourge you in their synagogues.

That doesn't sound that great. But look at what verse 18 says. And you will even be brought before governors and kings. And look at these next few words. For my sake.

You're called to be available to be mistreated. You're called to be available. This is what he's doing here. He's calling them. And some people, you know, the direct application could be in latter days, the end times. But in much of the world today, if you were to tell them that, they're like, well, we're seeing this going on today.

These things are happening right now. These are present realities in a lot of places of the world. But look at what he says. You will be handed over for my sake.

It's not because of who you are, but it's for my sake. And then he goes on, as a testimony to them and to the Gentiles. What he says here is, as you go out among those who don't want anything to do with you, and as you go out among those who hate you, and you go out among those who oppose you, and you go out among those who get annoyed by you, and they're going to do various things to you, and eventually it's going to come to the point, he's telling his disciples here, they're going to begin handing you over, and they're going to hand you over for my sake, and they're doing it so that you can be a witness and a testimony for me.

[28 : 18] So here's the great question. How available are we? He says, I want you to live so missionally that you are available to go to the utmost to be a testimony for me.

Or do we say, Lord, I have from here to here on this day, and here to here on this day, and Lord, I will do it as long as you don't do this.

I've heard a lot of people say, I think Chip Ingram once said it. Chip Ingram, done through the Bible, preaches in California. I've heard him say it as well, and I think I even said, Lord, I'll do anything to you but preach.

Lord, I'll do, Chip Ingram once said, Lord, I'll do anything but pastor. God called him to be a pastor. We need to be careful with that, right?

We need to be careful where we say, I will do anything but, or Lord, you can have everything but, and we don't need, we are called to be available for his name's sake to be a testimony and a witness for him wherever he declares, however he sees fit to get us there.

[29 : 25] There was one place that all of my life I said I would never work and I worked there. I was just insistent that I would never do that job, but I did it.

That was the place I ended up when I got laid off, and I got laid off from the job I got laid off from, and then I couldn't, so all these places, that's where I ended up, and God put me there to humble me and to show me, to give me opportunity to testify.

I didn't enjoy it. It wasn't there. I'm not saying that I was being mistreated or anything there, but I had to be available there. Every day, every night, I went to work.

I'm not, I wasn't singing Swing Low, Sweet Chariot on my way to work. I had some other songs I was singing, but it wasn't that one, right? I was not real happy going to work, but I realized that God called me there, and I had to be there, had to be available there, so wherever He's put you, you are called to be available, and to live missionally is to be available at every season, every walk, every aspect, and every place for His namesake to be a testimony to whoever He has in front of you, and it is to do it with an intentionality.

It is to say, yes, Lord, I am here. I am available. We are called to be aware of the opposition, but listen, what opposition does, opposition always brings opportunity.

[30 : 51] So as we are to be aware of the opposition, we are to be available for the opportunity. So many of us let the opposition remove us from the opportunity, but opposition always creates the greatest opportunity.

Because without those who oppose them, they would never be able to stand before them to testify to who Christ is. Sometimes I ask myself when reading the book of Acts, I am sure you ask yourself this as well.

The way the book of Acts goes, Paul is on his mission there, he travels, and he is testifying and proclaiming, and he is starting churches and appointing elders and leaders and deacons, and he goes back to Jerusalem, and as he goes back to Jerusalem, somewhere around Acts 18, he is on his way back to Jerusalem, and he knows he is going bound to Jerusalem.

He says that, and it has testified about him over and over again that he will be bound while in Jerusalem. He goes, yes, I know, the Spirit has told me that, and people are crying, and Paul says, ah, quit crying for me. Right? But then when he gets in Jerusalem, something strange happens.

Now, Paul here, who has been ministering to the Gentiles, but there's always this conflict in Jerusalem. In Jerusalem, there are the Jewish believers who think that circumcision and the law still matters when Paul has been ministering to the Gentiles, and they kind of have this opposition with Paul that Paul has discounted the law, and Paul has cast aside circumcision.

[32 : 10] So the Jewish leaders, the apostles, in Jerusalem tell Paul, we've got some people keeping a vow. Why don't you go pay their expenses while they fulfill their vow, and therefore all the believers will know that you haven't discounted the law.

Now, to me, that seems like, Paul, just show everybody you're just like them. Right? It seems kind of backhanded, like not, just kind of giving in to the pressure. Now, that doesn't seem fitting for Paul's character as I know it and the rest of Scripture, but it's like, Paul, just go pay their expenses. So while Paul was doing that, some Jews accused him of bringing a Gentile into the court of the temple, which he did not do. He was in there with those men. You have to read it. Right? And that's why they arrested him and began beating him, and this set the series of events which led him all the way to Rome because he appealed to Caesar where he was eventually beheaded.

And so in my mind, I always go, if Paul had just looked at him and said, no, we're not legalistic. It is faith in Jesus Christ and Christ alone.

We don't have to fulfill the law. Then Paul would have never went through all that. But then I'm reminded of the fact that Christ told him he would stand before kings and rulers and leaders.

[33 : 30] And I get the reality that Paul testified to a number of rulers on his way to Rome. Paul wrote many of his letters while in prison in Rome.

Paul was a witness to the whole praetorium guard in Rome. That praetorium guard is important people because those people that hang out with Caesar, right? Paul was able to testify to all these places simply because he was available.

Even though it didn't make sense. He was available. To live missionally is not just to take the great trips and do all these things. It is to be available wherever you're at.

To be aware, be available. Number three, be associated. To be associated. Jesus says, it is for my name's sake that you're going to be handed over.

And then he comes down and he says to them that it is not you who speak but it is the spirit of your father who speaks in you.

[34 : 37] Now, just to clarify, this is not an excuse for pastors or teachers to say, well, I don't have to study. God will speak through me because we're also called to study to show ourselves approved.

But it is also to say I'm going to be surrendered. It's happened to me. Every pastor I know it's happened to them. Number of times I've sat, I used to sit on the front pew.

That got taken away from me. No, that's okay guys. Y'all can sit there. But I sat or stand somewhere in the church and the message that I have folded up in my Bible that's my outline, God changes that.

something that I never prepared, something that I had maybe read or something that's spoken to me and the spirit begins to change. So you change it and I have to go as he leads.

But still, the study was there. But what this is telling us is that we're so associated with the father, the father's going to speak through us. Some people say, well, I can't live missionally because I don't know what to say.

[35 : 37] Well, welcome to the club. Neither do I. I don't have the words to say. I don't have enough Bible knowledge. I don't know enough scripture. I don't know.

Neither do I. Because what is your definition of enough? Every individual I've ever talked to has got questions that I can't answer. Anyone who is thinking of coming to Christ has questions that are so much further away from what I know because listen, a relationship with Christ is not an academic game.

It's a heart game. But I know the Savior and that's enough. And he's never failed me nor will he ever fail me or fail you that when the opportunity comes you will know what to say because of your association with him.

Because he says, I tell you, you will not finish going through the cities of Jerusalem or the cities of Israel until the Son of Man comes. This is where most people believe that he is speaking of the last days. He could have also been speaking of the fall of Jerusalem in A.D. 70 because some believe that that was the appearance of the Son of Man in judgment upon the nation of Israel for their

rejection of him.

And we see that they did not finish going through the land of Israel until Jerusalem fell. But either way, he just says, I will be present with you. You will have a work that continues to go on and on and on. And then he tells them this thing in verse 24.

[36 : 59] A disciple is not above his teacher nor slave above his master. A disciple is not above his teacher nor slave above his master. I believe it was Warren Weersbe who once said, water never rises above its source.

We need to understand that. That as Christ was in this world, so too will we be. We should never seek to be anything other than he was in this life.

And we should never hope to be anything more than he was in this life. He says, it is enough that a disciple become like his teacher and a slave like his master.

If they have called the head of the house Beezobo, that is Beezobo, Lord of the Flies or Lords of the Dunghill, it was a mocking term that the Jewish people used. It really was kind of slang to say that Jesus was of Satan.

And Jesus says, if you call me this, how much more would they call you that? Because you will be treated like me. You are associated with me.

[38 : 04] Missional living is to live a life of association. It was the disciples at Antioch that were first called Christians. Over and over in Jewish history, they were referred to as the way because they walked in the way of Jesus.

Their life was a model of association of what Jesus' life looked like. They were of the way. They were Christ-like. I think too often we have removed ourselves from such public association and removed ourselves from such even private association, but Jesus says, you are to be like your master, not above your master.

Because here's the reality. Before we can ever stand with Him in His glory, we must first bow with Him in His humility. His glory will be ours.

He has promised to Him who overcomes, He will sit on the throne with me. And He sits on the throne of the Father, right? His glory will be ours. But before we ever get the opportunity to stand in His glory, we must first in this life bow in His humility.

For the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to give Himself a ransom for many. Believers have not existed, do not exist on this earth to be served, but to give themselves a ransom for many.

[39 : 36] I wonder who the many are that we give our lives for. I wonder who the multitude is that we, Forttrace Baptist Church, or me, Billy Joe Calvert, are sacrificially giving of myself for them rather than seeing what they can give to me.

We are to live lives as contributors and not consumers. Because there's a day coming where I will be rewarded with so much, I won't need to consume anything else.

We are to live our lives as the Master did, not as the world does. And we are to live a life of association with Him. Number four, and we will finish.

We are to be aware, we are to be available, we are to be associated, and we are to be assured. We are to be assured. Look at what it says here at the end of our passage.

Therefore, do not fear them. Do not fear, do not fear, do not fear. It's repeated over and over. For there is nothing concealed that will not be revealed or hidden that will not be known. What I tell you in the darkness, speak in the light.

[40 : 51] What you hear whispered in the ear, proclaim it upon the housetops. Even though you know they're going to oppose you, even though you know all these things are going to happen to you, even though you know all this great tragedy is coming, be assured that what I tell you in the darkness, you can proclaim in the light.

What I whisper in your ear, shout it on the rooftops. Take the message you hear privately and make it public. Go public with it. I believe it was Tony Evans who said, you might as well go public, everybody else is.

You need to take it and make it public, what you're being told in private. Your private devotions are not for your own benefit, your private devotions are for your public declarations. What you are learning privately is to be declared publicly because the world needs to know it.

I've always said that God doesn't teach us something just so we can puff our heads up. God teaches us something so that we can give it to someone else. We need to pour out what we've been taught so that we have room to receive more.

After I preach a message, I'll be honest with you, I feel empty and I'm glad I do because I give you everything I've got so that I can go back and say, okay, Lord, I need some more. That's how our lives ought to be and we ought to be assured of this reality.

[42 : 05] Do not fear those who kill the body but are unable to kill the soul. So what if the world hates you so much they kill you? That's all they can do.

Paul says, go ahead and kill me to be absent from the body is to be present with Christ. When they got ready to crucify Peter, Peter said, don't crucify me the same way you did Jesus crucify me upside down.

And they did. So what? Is this the best you can do? Do not fear those who can kill the body but are unable to kill the soul but rather fear him.

That him should be capitalized, that is, God. Fear him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell. Friend, listen to me. A proper fear of God will remove all other fears because the greatest tool that Satan uses to hinder missional living is fear.

But a proper fear of God removes all other fears. Are not two sparrows sold for a cent. And a syrian is the wording here in the Greek and it was like the smallest of the small coins.

[43 : 18] It was a sixteenth of a daily wage. A sixteenth of a denarius. A denarius is a daily wage so a sparrow is worth one thirty-second of what you make in a day.

But if you go take this with this parallel passage in the book of Luke you'll see that two sparrows are sold for a cent but five sparrows are sold for two cents so if you buy four you get one free. That one sparrow is not worth anything.

It's not worth anything. But look at what it says. Be assured of this. And yet not one of them will fall to the ground apart from your father. So that is not worth anything it doesn't fall to the ground apart from your father knowing about it.

but the very hairs of your head are all numbered. I can't remember who I read in this but I like the way they said it. The scripture doesn't say the hairs of your head are counted.

Not that God has a count. It says the hairs of your head are numbered. So when one falls out God goes well there goes number one thousand one hundred and twenty-four. He knows each hair individually.

[44 : 32] That's a big difference than just having the number of count that's on your head. Right? He knows each individual strand of hair on your head and that shouldn't be surprising because he calls the stars by name. Every star in the sky he calls them by name and tells them to be there.

Surely he can keep up with the individually numbered hairs on my head. And if he is such a father then do not fear for you are more valuable than the sparrows.

when we live missionally we can be assured of this reality we are more valuable than those other things which demand his attention.

So surely he is able to care for us too. Let's pray. Lord we thank you so much for this day. we thank you for your word that we know at the same time your word can both be comforting and challenging.

So we pray that you would take the challenge of scripture and you would call us to live lives of devotion. Lord may it begin with me break my heart oh God move my life to be more for you and your kingdom.

[45 : 53] Lord we ask it all in Christ's name. Amen. Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen.