

Matthew 10:16-33

Instructions and Warnings to the First Christian Preachers

Introduction

- This passage isn't a 100% match for our experience as citizens of the United States of America. Let us give thanks and continue pray for God's common grace to continue upon our country.
- This passage is very much true to various degrees in many countries around the world. We are to pray for our brothers and sisters to stand firm in the faith, bearing witness to Christ even in the midst of their suffering; bringing honor to His name, and bringing in more souls for the harvest.
- It is possible that we in our country are moving toward the persecution described in this passage. Christ says that the world hates us.

1. Those who would do good to souls must be moderate in their expectations (vv 16-23)

- a. Verse 16. Wolves versus sheep.
- b. Verse 17-18. All the lost are enemies of God and therefore enemies of us.
- c. Vv 21-22. Christ says that our nearest kin may be among the wolves, delivering us over to death. And we will be hated by all for His name's sake. 1Jn 3.13.
- d. V 23. Christ commands us to flee persecution. 1Cor 10.13.
- e. Henry, "In case of imminent peril, the disciples of Christ may and must secure themselves by flight, when God, in his providence, opens to them a door of escape. He that flies may fight again. It is no inglorious thing for Christ's soldiers to quit their ground, provided they do not quit their colors: they may go out of the way of danger, though they must not go out of the way of duty. No sinful, unlawful means may be used to make the escape; for then it is not a door of God's opening."
- f. Application: if we do not moderate our expectations and count the cost, we are in great danger of turning back from the plow. Lk 9.62.

2. Those who would do good have need to pray for wisdom, good sense, and a sound mind (v 16)

- a. There are two extremes we need to avoid in our Christian walk, and it takes great wisdom to walk the narrow road between them. Jm 1.5.
- b. One extreme is avoiding persecution by "keeping our religion entirely to ourselves.... To give way to it is pleasant to flesh and blood, no doubt, and saves us much trouble: but those who give way to it often throw away great opportunities of usefulness."
- c. The other extreme is "to court persecution, and thrust our religion upon everyone we meet, without regard to place, time, or circumstances.... There will be offence enough connected with our religion, do what we will; but let us not increase it without cause."
- d. Henry, "It is the wisdom of the serpent to secure his head, that it may not be broken, to stop his ear to the voice of the charmer (Ps 58), and to take shelter in the clefts of the rocks; and herein we may be wise as serpents. We must be wise, not to pull trouble upon our own heads; wise to keep silence in an evil time, and not to give offence, if we can help it." Rom 12.18.
- e. Henry, "Be mild, and meek, and dispassionate; not only do nobody any hurt, but bear nobody any ill will; be without gall, as doves are; this must always go along with [the wisdom of the serpent]. We are sent forth among wolves, therefore we must be as wise as serpents, but we are sent forth as sheep, therefore we must be harmless as doves. We must be wise, not to wrong ourselves--but rather [do] so than wrong any one else; must use the harmlessness of the dove to bear twenty injuries, rather than the subtlety of the serpent to offer or to return one. It must be

the continual care of all Christ's disciples, to be innocent and inoffensive in word and deed, especially in consideration of the enemies they are in the midst of." 1Pet 2.21-24.

- f. Application: pray for wisdom as we pursue faithfulness. Col 1:9-11

Verses 24-33 are a list of encouragements to gospel workers to cheer them when they feel cast down.

3. Those who try to do good to souls must not expect to fare better than their great Master (24-25)

- a. John 15.18-20; 1Pet 4.12, 13.
- b. Ryle, "If we let the world alone, it will probably let us alone; but if we try to do it spiritual good, it will hate us as it did our Master."

4. Those who try to do good must look forward with patience to the day of judgment (26)

- a. Ryle interprets this verse to refer to the vindication of God's people. "Let us work on steadily and quietly: men may not understand us, and may vehemently oppose us; but the day of judgment draws nigh: we shall be righted at last." 1Cor 4.5.
- b. 1Cor 15.57, 58.

5. Those who try to do good must fear God more than man (28)

- a. Dan 3.13-18; Dan 6.4-10.
- b. Ryle, "We must submit to anything rather than displease God and wound our consciences.... The fear of man does indeed bring a snare, but we must make it give way to the expulsive power of a stronger principle, even the fear of God."
- c. Colonel Gardiner, "I fear God, and therefore there is none else that I need fear."
- d. Henry, "Be the times never so difficult, enemies never so outrageous, and events never so threatening, yet we will not fear, though the earth gives way (Ps 46.2), while we have so good a God, so good a cause, and so good a hope through grace."

6. Those who try to do good must keep before their minds the providential care of God over them (29-31)

- a. Henry on Leviticus 14. When a leper was cleansed, two birds were taken and one was killed and the other was let go. To the participants, it seemed an arbitrary choice, which bird was chosen to be killed, but, he says, "God's providence designed and determined which. Now this God, who has such an eye to the sparrows, because they are his creatures, much more will have an eye to you, who are his children."
- b. John 19.11. We really can greet every affliction with these words, "Thou couldst have no power at all against me, except it were given thee from above." Ps 103.13.

7. Those who try to do good should continually remember the day when they will meet their Lord to receive their final portion (32-33)

- a. Henry says, "However this may expose us to reproach and trouble now, we shall be abundantly recompensed for that, in the resurrection of the just, when it will be our unspeakable honor and happiness to hear Christ say (and what more could we want?), "Him will I confess, though a poor worthless worm of the earth; this is one of mine, one of my friends and favorites, who loved me and was beloved by me; the purchase of my blood, the workmanship of my Spirit; I will confess him before my Father, when it will do him the most service; I will speak a good word for him, when he appears before my father to receive his doom; I will present him and will represent him, to my Father." Those who honor Christ he will thus honor (1Sam 2.30). Mt 25.21.