

MATTHEW

Chapter 10

Jesus Sends Out the Twelve

And he called to him his twelve disciples and gave them authority over unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to heal every disease and every affliction. 2 The names of the twelve apostles are these: first, Simon, who is called Peter, and Andrew his brother; James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother; 3 Philip and Bartholomew; Thomas and Matthew the tax collector; James the son of Alphaeus, and Thaddaeus; 4 Simon the Zealot, and Judas Iscariot, who betrayed him.

10:1 *called* – Face to face meeting.

Authority...unclean spirits...heal – Jesus granted His disciples the kind of power that He had abundantly demonstrated (7:29; 9:6, 8; Mk 1:21–28). The spiritual authority Jesus grants them anticipates their role and calling as leaders in the Early Church. (TLSB)

Immediately in the second part (10:1–4) of this narrative introduction to the Missionary Discourse (10:5–42), the prayer that the disciples are to offer to the Father is answered by Jesus himself. From among the unnamed larger circle of his “disciples” (9:37), Jesus now chooses a smaller number of “apostles”—“twelve” (10:2)—in order to send them out for a ministry with divine authority manifest in word and deed. However, Matthew makes it crystal clear that in the most fundamental sense, the mission work of the Twelve will only be an extension of Jesus’ own ministry. They will minister in Israel with authority, but it will be the authority that Jesus has given them (10:1). Their authority will extend over unclean spirits that plague the people and over sickness and every manner of disease; Jesus has demonstrated his own authority over those very foes in chapters 8 and 9, and the apostles’ works will be manifestations of his own work. When the Twelve preach, their message will be the same one they heard from Jesus, who taught with unparalleled, divine authority (7:29): “The reign of heaven stands near” (proclaimed by Jesus in 4:17 and to be proclaimed by the apostles according to 10:7). At the end of this Gospel, Jesus will ground the church’s mission on the bedrock of his own authority: “All authority in heaven and earth was given to me; therefore, go and make disciples ...” (28:18–19). It is the same here in chapter 10. Jesus’ ministry with authority is extended through the Twelve whom he chooses and sends with his own authority. (CC)

Judged by human standards, these were ordinary men. Their greatness and ability is found in and through Jesus Christ, who entrusts them with his mission and equips them to carry it out. He answers even before we call but that does not excuse us from praying.

10:2-4 Apostles are listed in pairs; Jesus sent them out “two by two” (Mk 6:7). (TLSB)

10:2 *apostles* – Only time Mt uses this term. (TLSB)

(Mark’s Gospel the word occurs only here and in 3:14 (in some manuscripts). The apostles were Jesus’ authorized agents or representatives (see note on Heb 3:1). In the NT the word is sometimes used quite generally (see Jn 13:16, where the Greek *apostolos* is translated “messenger”). In the technical sense it is used (1) of the Twelve, (3:14)—in which sense it is also

applied to Paul (Rom 1:1)—and (2) of a larger group including Barnabas (Ac 14:14), James the Lord’s brother (Gal 1:19), and possibly Andronicus and Junias (Ro 16:7) (CSB)

The twelve “apostles,” as Matthew specifically labels them in 10:2, play a unique role in the history of salvation. The reign of God in Jesus has broken into history, fulfilling the promises to Israel in the OT and saving all who in faith follow Jesus as his disciples. God is doing a new thing in Jesus; this wine cannot be contained in old wineskins (9:17). As Jesus shepherds God’s people and gathers the lost sheep of Israel back to himself, he is reconstituting the true Israel. At the center of the people of God will be twelve new “patriarchs,” the nucleus of the true Israel. So unique are the apostles that Matthew gives their names—even “Judas Iscariot,” the name of the one who would betray his Lord (10:4). (CC)

Simon ... Andrew – Former fishermen and brothers. Most prominent among the Twelve. (TLSB)

Andrew – Not mentioned again in Mt. (TLSB)

James ... John – Iso former fishermen. Peter, James, and John formed Jesus’ inner circle (17:1; 26:37). (TLSB)

10:3 *Philip* – Greek-speaking disciple from Bethsaida (Jn 1:43–44; 12:20–21) who found Nathanael (Jn 1:45). (TLSB)

Bartholomew – Perhaps Nathanael (Jn 1:45–51). (TLSB)

Thomas – Prominent in Jn (Jn 11:16; 14:5; 20:26–29). (TLSB)

Matthew – Former tax collector. (TLSB)

James the son of Alphaeus. Referred to as “James the younger” (Mk 15:40) to distinguish him from John’s brother. (TLSB)

Thaddaeus. Probably the person Luke called “Judas, son of James” (Lk 6:16; Ac 1:13). (TLSB)

10:4 *the Zealot* – Either a description of Simon’s religious zeal or a reference to his membership in the party of the Zealots, a Jewish revolutionary group violently opposed to Roman rule over Palestine. (CSB)

Aram *qane’an*, “zealous one”; name given to Jewish nationalist groups opposed to Roman rule. (TLSB)

10:1–4 Jesus selects representatives to extend His gracious kingdom. They are named individually and given divine authority, demonstrating Jesus’ personal care for each disciple. The compassionate authority of forgiveness is given to each of Christ’s followers. We are sent with the message of God’s love to a world of sinners. Through the waters of Baptism, God called us by name and made us His dear children. • Thank You, Jesus, for making me one of Your followers. Help me to carry out Your mission as Your representative. Amen. (TLSB)

Jesus sends out the twelve Apostles

5 These twelve Jesus sent out, instructing them, “Go nowhere among the Gentiles and enter no town of the Samaritans, 6 but go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. 7 And proclaim as you go, saying, ‘The kingdom of heaven is at hand.’ 8 Heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse lepers, cast out demons. You received without paying; give without pay. 9 Acquire no gold or silver or copper for your belts, 10 no bag for your journey, or two tunics or sandals or a staff, for the laborer deserves his food. 11 And whatever town or village you enter, find out who is worthy in it and stay there until you depart. 12 As you enter the house, greet it. 13 And if the house is worthy, let your peace come upon it, but if it is not worthy, let your peace return to you. 14 And if anyone will not receive you or listen to your words, shake off the dust from your feet when you leave that house or town. 15 Truly, I say to you, it will be more bearable on the day of judgment for the land of Sodom and Gomorrah than for that town.”

10:5-15 These verses begin Jesus’ Missionary Discourse. In a real way, these verses can be comprehended by filling in the blanks, so to speak, of the basic main clause of 10:5: “Jesus sent *these twelve*.” The “blanks” include the following: (1) to whom? (10:5–6); (2) to do what? (10:7–8); (3) to be received how? (10:9–13); and (4) to what final effect? (10:14–15). (CC)

10:5 *these twelve* – τούτους τοὺς δώδεκα ἀπέστειλεν ὁ Ἰησοῦς—The uniqueness of the apostles is underscored by the demonstrative pronoun τούτους and by the fronting of the direct object phrase “these twelve.” In some important senses, this sending and Jesus’ Missionary Discourse (10:5–42), which explains the sending, apply uniquely to the original apostles. (CC)

Jesus sent out – Prayer is good but is not a substitute for action. Those who pray should be prepared in case the Lord, to whom they present their requests, selects them to be his active agents in answering the prayer.

Jesus’ second discourse (vv. 5-42) concerns the upcoming mission of His disciples. This training would prepare them to serve the Church in the future, (TLSB)

Go nowhere near – The good news about the kingdom was to be proclaimed first to Jews only. After his death and resurrection, Jesus commanded the message to be taken to all nations (28:19; cf. 21:43). (CSB)

The disciples were to concentrate their immediate efforts on Jewish people living in Galilee. Only later would Jesus give them the command to go to all nations (v 18; 28:19). (TLSB)

Samaritans – A mixed-blood race resulting from the intermarriage of Israelites left behind when the people of the northern kingdom were exiled and Gentiles brought into the land by the Assyrians (2Ki 17:24). Bitter hostility existed between Jews and Samaritans in Jesus’ day (see Jn 4:9). (CSB)

10:6 *lost house of Israel* – Jesus had observed the spiritual misery of the house of Israel during His own tour through Galilee. He recognized how necessary it was for laborers to proclaim “the gospel of the kingdom” (9:35–38). (TLSB)

sheep. Jesus would train the apostles as shepherds, from which the office/title of “pastor” would come (cf Jn 21:15–16; Eph 4:11; 1Pt 2:25; 5:1). (TLSB)

The twelve apostles, as noted above, are historically and spiritually unique; they are the nucleus of the “true Israel” that Jesus, God’s Son, is calling to faith and salvation and service. Jesus has

come to fulfill Israel's Scriptures and to bring to fruition the promises that God made in them. The salvation that Jesus accomplishes will surely suffice for all people everywhere. However, in the first place (cf. Rom 1:16), he has come as God's true Son for God's "son," the lost sheep of Israel. (CC)

It follows, then, that when Jesus sends out the Twelve as the new "patriarchs" of Israel to extend his own work of preaching and driving back the power and effects of Satan, he sends them not to Samaritans or Gentiles, but to Israel's lost sheep. Yet the Lord in his own ministry in Israel encountered and saved some Gentiles. So too there surely would have been individual Gentiles in need whom the apostles encountered and to whom they would have afforded the saving word of the Gospel and power for healing or restoration. God, however, is doing in Jesus—and Jesus is doing in his twelve apostles—a unique work in the history of salvation. The Twelve, then, are following the footsteps of the Son of God, and at this point in that history, they are sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. (CC)

10:7 The disciples' message would be identical to that of Jesus and John the Baptist (Mk 1:14–15). (TLSB)

the kingdom of heaven is at hand – It was clearly the preaching of repentance, sin and grace. Hggiken means "it has drawn near and therefore is now here." This is not eschatological. Jesus was the embodiment for the Kingdom of Heaven. In others words, the twelve were to preach Christ.

The message of John the Baptizer was "Repent! For the reign of heaven stands near!" (3:2). Jesus' own preaching was identical: "Repent! For the reign of heaven stands near!" (4:17). Now Jesus instructs his disciples to preach this same message: "The reign of heaven stands near!" (10:7). (Even though "Repent!" is absent from 10:7, we should assume that it was part of the apostles' message here, just as it will be later (e.g., see Acts 2:38; 3:19; 8:22), since the apostles were to extend the preaching of the Lord himself, who called the people to "Repent!" (Mt 4:17). Thus the content of the apostles' preaching would match Jesus' own message, which Matthew twice summarizes with the phrase "the Good News of the reign" (τὸ εὐαγγέλιον τῆς βασιλείας, 4:23; 9:35). In Jesus, the King is coming to reign graciously, and consequently there is both Good News of forgiveness and peace to believe, and there are miracles of divine power as Satan's demons and all sickness are driven back in anticipation of the final Day of complete victory, when all the dead shall be raised, all believers in Christ—their bodies glorified—shall enter the new creation, and Satan and unbelievers shall be banished to hell forever (see Matthew 25; Revelation 20–22). (CC)

10:8 *heal...raise...cleanse...cast out* – Cf v 1. Jesus lists four ways the disciples are to use their authority. These miracles were signs of the nearness of God's kingdom. (TLSB)

Jesus sends out the Twelve with his message on their lips and his miracles at their disposal. With a sequence of emphatic present stem imperatives (10:7–8), Jesus empowers the Twelve to preach what he preached and to do what he had been doing in Israel: "*preach ... heal ... raise ... cleanse ... cast out*"! Although Matthew does not record the Twelve's actual ministry, we learn from other NT texts that the Twelve did, in fact, do what Jesus empowered them to do. The power and commission given to the Twelve testifies to their historical uniqueness. One searches the rest of the NT in vain for promises that such signs as raising the dead to their former manner of life always will accompany the preaching of the Good News in Jesus. (Hagner, "Gospel, Kingdom, and Resurrection," 101. The dead people who were raised in the OT era (1 Ki 17:17–24; 2 Ki 4:18–37; 13:21) and those raised by Jesus himself or by one of the apostles were not raised to full

and eternal resurrection life; they were returned to the mortal existence that they enjoyed before and so died again long ago. The Lord himself, however, has risen to immortal and eternal resurrection life as the “first to rise from the dead” (Acts 26:23), and on the Last Day he shall raise all believers to everlasting life with glorified bodies like his own. See more fully the commentary on 28:1–10.) Just as John the Baptizer played a unique role in salvation history as the voice crying in the wilderness and as the Elijah prophesied of old, so also the Twelve play a unique role in God’s plan to forgive and restore and heal a broken people and a broken world. (CC)

received ... give without pay – The healing power was not for personal financial gain. (TLSB)

10:9 *acquire* – Jesus’ words in 10:9–13 are among the most distinct, indeed, the “oddest” of all his instructions in the first part of the Missionary Discourse. He commands the Twelve not to make plans for their own physical survival, as if he said, “Do not acquire the basic necessities of life as you go on your way.” (For the sense of μή κτήσησθε as “do not acquire (while traveling),” see the textual note on 10:9. Jesus is not, for example, commanding the disciples to start out barefoot when he says “nor sandals.” Rather, as they journey and carry out their mission tasks, they are not to “fend for themselves.” They will have another source from which to draw their sustenance, namely, the houses that are “worthy” (10:11) and receive them.) The Lord hastens to add the reason why the Twelve will not have to worry about the basic needs of life: “The worker is worthy of his food” (10:10). As the Twelve enter towns and villages and preach the Good News, they will discover that individuals and families will welcome them, eagerly believing their message about the reign of God in Jesus. These are the houses that show themselves “worthy,” and these same homes will provide for the physical needs of the Twelve (10:11). Upon these homes and individuals, the effective blessing of “peace” comes and remains, for the apostles will be speaking Christ’s own powerful word of blessing, and Christ’s word accomplishes what it says. In bestowing God’s peace in Christ upon all who believe the message about his gracious rule, the Twelve will be manifesting Jesus’ earlier words to his disciples: “The peacemakers are blessed” (5:9). (CC)

The disciples were to travel light, carrying no excess baggage or provisions. (TLSB)

10:10 *laborer deserves his food* – Jesus approved the commonsense rule that those who benefit from the labors of another are obliged to provide something in return. (TLSB)

10:11 *worthy* – A person receptive to the Gospel and willing to provide food. Luke terms this person a “son of peace” (Lk 10:6). (TLSB)

10:12 *enter* – Luke provides the wording of such a greeting: “Peace be to this house!” (Lk 10:5). (TLSB)

10:13 *your peace* – The peace the disciples gave was the peace found in Christ. (TLSB)

peace return to you – There will also be homes and individuals that prove themselves unworthy, that is, who reject the Twelve and their words. The Twelve will find no hospitality, no provision for their physical needs there. The gift of peace with God cannot remain upon such places and persons; the apostles’ peace, rejected by the unbelievers, will return to the Twelve (10:13). This ominous note of rejection will be one of the major themes in the second subunit (10:16–23) of the first part (10:5–23) of the Missionary Discourse (10:5–42). How people respond to those sent by Jesus will determine their eschatological fate. For the moment, Jesus

passes on to speak directly about the everlasting judgment awaiting those who turn away the Twelve and their message about God's reign in Jesus. (CC)

The disciples were unable to know for certain which persons were worthy. If they had extended the peace of Christ to an unworthy person, the blessing would be ineffective. Later in this sermon, Jesus described people who are "not worthy of Me" (vv 37–38). He also spoke of guests invited to a banquet as being not worthy (22:8). (TLSB)

10:14 *shake off the dust from your feet* – A symbolic act practiced by the Pharisees when they left an "unclean" Gentile area. Here it represented an act of solemn warning to those who rejected God's message. (CSB)

Israel consists, by and large, of "lost sheep" (10:6). The creation reeks of death and brokenness; it is alienated from the only Creator-God (Genesis 3). Jesus sends the Twelve as missionaries to announce and actually bestow the reversal of death and brokenness: they are to "raise the dead" (10:8) and pronounce "peace" (10:13). But those who reject that peace will themselves be rejected; in such places, the Twelve are to shake off the dust from their feet! By that gesture the apostles dramatize that they have no fellowship with the inhabitants. (There is a possible Jewish parallel to that gesture. Weaver, *Missionary Discourse*, 88 and 196, n. 92, notes the material in Str-B 1:571 that describes the "ritual which the Jewish people perform in order to rid themselves of Gentile 'contamination' as they re-enter Jewish territory.") (CC)

10:15 *truly I say to you* – Jesus' solemn "amen" statement at the end of this unit (10:5–15) declares the fate of those who show themselves to be unworthy by rejecting the Twelve and their message: "Truly I say to you, it will be more bearable for the land of Sodom and Gomorrah on the Day of Judgment than for that city." (CC)

day of judgment – Catastrophic judgment meted out on Sodom and Gomorrah (Gn 19:24) was nothing compared to the eternal end-times punishment for those who refuse Christ's Gospel. (TLSB)

Sodom and Gomorrah – When Yahweh sent two angelic emissaries to Sodom, the townspeople did not welcome them, but instead attempted homosexual rape, and subsequently Yahweh rained down fire and sulfur upon Sodom and Gomorrah (Genesis 19). Already in the OT those two cities became archetypes and proverbial bywords for the eschatological judgment Yahweh will execute against the ungodly, including apostate Israel. The NT too regards the destruction of those two cities by "a judgment of eternal fire" as a portent of the judgment awaiting all unbelievers (Jude 7; see also 2 Pet 2:6; Rev 11:8). Jesus declares that the punishment meted out to those who rejected the two angelic emissaries sent to Sodom is milder than the wrath to be poured out on Judgment Day upon those who reject the Twelve and their ministry (Mt 10:15). (CC)

10:5–15 Jesus sends out 12 apostles and warns them that not everyone will receive them hospitably or listen to their message. We who witness to Christ have the same experience. The Gospel is foolishness to many, "but to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, [it is] Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God" (1Co 1:24). • Lord Jesus, strengthen my determination to serve as Your ambassador of peace, even when I encounter opposition. Amen. (TLSB)

16 "Behold, I am sending you out as sheep in the midst of wolves, so be wise as serpents and innocent as doves. 17 Beware of men, for they will deliver you over to courts and flog you in their synagogues, 18 and you will be dragged before governors and kings for my

sake, to bear witness before them and the Gentiles. 19 When they deliver you over, do not be anxious how you are to speak or what you are to say, for what you are to say will be given to you in that hour. 20 For it is not you who speak, but the Spirit of your Father speaking through you. 21 Brother will deliver brother over to death, and the father his child, and children will rise against parents and have them put to death, 22 and you will be hated by all for my name's sake. But the one who endures to the end will be saved. 23 When they persecute you in one town, flee to the next, for truly, I say to you, you will not have gone through all the towns of Israel before the Son of Man comes. 24 "A disciple is not above his teacher, nor a servant above his master. 25 It is enough for the disciple to be like his teacher, and the servant like his master. If they have called the master of the house Beelzebul, how much more will they malign those of his household.

10:16-23 This is the second part (10:16–23) of the first major section (10:5–23) of the Missionary Discourse. Jesus continues to teach the twelve apostles about their unique missionary activity in the first century AD in Palestine, a mission that is restricted to the lost sheep of the house of Israel (10:5–6). In the first part of this section (10:5–15), the primary emphasis fell upon what the Twelve would actively do and, secondarily, on how others would respond to it. This second unit, however, brings to the fore a darker theme, namely, that the Twelve should expect opposition and persecution—even to the point of torture and physical death—because of their missionary activity. Jesus' words also reveal that the Twelve's mission to the lost sheep of Israel must be carried out with an acute sense of urgency, for the time is short: judgment will come upon the unbelieving nation before they are able to reach all the cities of Israel to which Jesus is sending them (10:23). (CC)

10:16 *I am sending you* – Mt 10:16 is the pivot on which the discourse turns to its second half. I suggest that it also can provide a structuring device by which we can organize the entire unit of 10:16–23. Matthew has already narrated, "Jesus sent [ἀπέστειλεν] these twelve" (10:5); now Jesus repeats the key term and adds two emphatic markers: "Look [ἰδοῦ], I [ἐγώ] am sending [ἀποστέλλω] you" (10:16). This emphatic repetition joins with a striking reversal of metaphor to show that a new unit is beginning. Whereas before Jesus declared that the Twelve were being sent to "lost sheep" (10:6), now he pronounces that the Twelve *are themselves vulnerable and defenseless* "sheep in the midst of wolves" (10:16). Those "wolves" are opponents who will persecute them. Thus a new movement in the discourse has begun. (CC)

wolve – Jesus sent His disciples into a dangerous environment. (TLSB)

snakes...doves – Jesus then employs a double image in his exhortation to the Twelve: "Therefore, be shrewd as serpents and innocent as doves" (10:16b). As the textual note on this verse indicates, it is somewhat difficult to be certain about the precise force of this imagery. If, however, Jesus' words exhort the Twelve to combine a wise and sober *realism* with a naive and trusting *willingness*, then perhaps we may suggest that the rest of the section is mapped out in accord with this double charge and mapped out in two sets of paired material (10:17–18 and 10:19–20 as one set, and 10:21–22a and 10:22b–23 as the second set). I am suggesting that after the warning exhortation in 10:16b, Jesus' words in 10:17–18 enable the Twelve to be as realistically shrewd as serpents, whereas his counsel in 10:19–20 will empower them to be innocently trusting as doves. Then the pattern repeats, with 10:21–22a calling forth the apostles' shrewd understanding of their mission, and 10:22b–23 in turn promising an end to their work, a promise that will enable them to trust the word of their Lord and not be disheartened by their difficult outward circumstances. (CC)

10:17 *Beware of men* – The disciples would face hostile people and betrayers. (TLSB)

to courts – The lower courts, connected with local synagogues, that tried less serious cases and flogged those found guilty. (CSB)

In light of this opposition and persecution that will come to the Twelve (10:17–18, 21–22a), they must keep their heads up and their eyes open and realize that enemies might come at them from any quarter. Jesus’ words ring true: “Be shrewd as serpents” (10:16). (CC)

flog you in their synagogues – Whipping was a Jewish form of punishment, one that Paul experienced five times (2Co 11:24). (TLSB)

10:18 The training would prepare the apostles for the future mission to all the world. (TLSB)

10:19 *what you to say will be given to you* – They will face opposition and torture and even death, but the preachers are not to worry about their eloquence or their ability to proclaim. The words in that time will come as a gift from the Spirit of the Father. That same Spirit who came down upon the Christ himself at his Baptism (3:13–17) and who empowers his eschatological ministry (12:28) will come down upon all who are baptized in the triune name (28:19), and the Spirit will speak in and through the Twelve (10:20). Jesus does not promise deliverance from danger or suffering; he does promise the Twelve that they will be able to proclaim the things that are needed at the time. (CC)

The disciples would not be left speechless. No preplanned defense was necessary because divine assistance would be provided. (TLSB)

10:20 *Spirit of your Father speaking through you* – God’s Son speaks of a time after Pentecost, when His disciples will be filled with the Holy Spirit, who will testify through them (cf Ac 1:8; 2:32). (TLSB)

10:21 *brother will deliver brother over to death* – Christ’s ambassadors would be in danger even in the family circle. Parents would have more to fear than disobedience and disrespect from their children. Children would have more to fear from their parents than discipline and punishment. Unbelief is not tolerant toward Christian faith; it is violently opposed to it. Unbelievers would in some cases go so far as to betray and accuse members of their own families and have them put to death. This happened literally during persecutions of Christians from apostolic times to the very recent past and may still be happening in some places. Under communist regimes, where atheism is official and all practice of religion is forbidden, many a Christian has been condemned to death for confessing and practicing his or her faith. This sort of atrocity will continue until the end of time. (PBC)

Jesus knew that His disciples might be tempted to give up their mission and their faith when even family members turned against them because of their loyalty to Him. Jesus encouraged the disciples to stand firm, always keeping in mind the highest goal, salvation. (TLSB)

10:22 *endures to the end* – The end seems far away, and the Lord may tarry before He come, but He shall certainly come, and His reward is in His hand. Every servant of the Lord shall therefore with good cheer run the course of his calling; and with his objective before him. (Ylvisaker)

ὁ δὲ ὑπομείνας εἰς τέλος οὗτος σωθήσεται—This sentence occurs twice in Matthew, here and in 24:13. According to BDAG, s.v. τέλος, 2 b γ, the phrase εἰς τέλος is adverbial and means “in the end, finally.” The phrase with that meaning is quite common in the LXX; a few of the many

references are Gen 46:4; Num 17:28 (ET 17:13); Deut 31:24, 30; Pss 9:7 (ET 9:6); 9:32 (MT/ET 10:11); 12:2 (MT 13:2; ET 13:1); 15:11 (MT/ET 16:11). The translation avoids the more literal “to the end” so that it does not sound like a reference to the parousia, for neither here nor in 24:13 does it refer to the second coming of Christ. (CC)

10:23 *flee to the next* – The saying seems to teach that the gospel will continue to be preached to the Jews until Christ’s second coming. – He informs us thereby that we must not rush headlong to our destruction without necessity. The crown of martyrdom may become a crown of glory only when it is placed on our head by the Lord, not when we put it on of our own accord. (Ylvisaker)

φεύγετε εἰς τὴν ἑτέραν—The imperative is present tense and thus somewhat emphatic, so it is italicized in the translation. A note of urgency is sounded here in the Lord’s words. This urgency is a key part of the interpretation of the verse. The adjective ἕτερος in classical Greek usually meant “the other” of two, but its use here provides a good example of how in the NT it often no longer carries the classical nuance of duality (see BDF, § 306.2), since Jesus is speaking of far more than two cities. (CC)

If persecution became too severe in one town, Jesus told His disciples to move to the next one. At times, Jesus Himself withdrew to escape danger (4:12). (TLSB)

Jesus tells us to flee to a safer location when we are threatened. He told the 12 that as they would flee from place to place to escape persecution, they would “not finish going through the cities of Israel before the Son of Man comes.” There would always be more places for the disciples to go as Christ’s witnesses. (PBC)

Sometimes persecution is necessary to get human beings to move out and witness. In Acts 1:8 Jesus tells His followers that they are to start in Jerusalem and move out from there ultimately into the whole world. But, in chapter 8 they are still comfortably in Jerusalem. The persecution mentioned in 8:1 finally gets them going.

You will not have gone – Nor will the difficulties in this mission to Israel continue indefinitely. These apostolic missionaries must always remember that the time for their outreach to Israel is shortened, and so they must hasten on in their work and not be reluctant to flee persecution in order to reach the next town (10:23a). “For truly,” Jesus declares, “you will certainly not complete the cities of Israel until the Son of Man comes” (10:23b). Now we arrive at one of the great interpretive challenges in the Gospel of Matthew. The problem is one of referent. To what event is Jesus referring when he says, “Until the Son of Man comes” (ἕως ἂν ἔλθῃ ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου)? (CC)

We can gain initial guidance by focusing upon the clause that immediately precedes: “Truly I say to you, *you will certainly not complete the cities of Israel.*” Given the missional context and the very specific limitations found in 10:5–6 and sprinkled throughout the first half of this discourse, the natural reading of Jesus’ words is “You will not be able to finish your preaching and miracle-ministry in the region of Palestine.” The note of urgency comes from the first half of 10:23: “Whenever they persecute you in this city, flee to the next.” The time is short; the Twelve must not tarry, and they surely must not seek martyrdom. What matters is carrying out their mission in as many of the towns of Israel as possible. (CC)

before the Son of Man comes – Likely refers to Jesus’ coming in judgment on Jerusalem, which was captured and destroyed by the Romans in AD 70. (24:2) (TLSB)

10:24 *disciple is not above his teacher* – Those who learn or serve strive to become more like their teacher or master, and should expect to be treated similarly. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 3, Part 3)

Teachers and disciples, servants and masters suffer the same. (TLSB)

As Jesus sends out the Twelve, He instructs them to do the work of the Kingdom only under His guiding. Perhaps He is warning them to control their egos. They will proclaim the Good News without thinking too highly of themselves. The glory must always go to God. The lesson teaches submission to Christ. The Twelve must not be afraid to imitate Jesus' own example of servanthood. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 12, Part 3)

10:25 *it is enough for the disciple to be like his teacher* – They should not expect to be better off than their Lord and Master, the Head of the Christian household. The enemies of Christ had gone so far as to apply the epithet Beelzebub, lord of idolatry, prince of devils, to Christ. It would be presumption for his followers to expect less. This was the most vicious of slander. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 3, Part 3)

Disciples and slaves are not “independent individuals.” A disciple is essentially defined by the relationship he has with his teacher, a slave by the connection with his master. So it is with Christians. Jesus alone is, by right and nature, God's Son. By virtue of his call to follow and believe in him, all of Jesus' disciples have received the gift of calling upon the Father of Jesus as “Our Father who is in heaven” (6:9; see also “your Father” in, e.g., 5:16, 45, 48; 6:1, 4, 6, 8). Jesus, in his unique person and his saving deeds, is true Israel, the entire people of God reduced to one. Because Jesus has called them to faith and discipleship, all believers of all generations have become part of God's people, the true Israel, which is centered in Jesus and reconstituted around the twelve apostles. (CC)

Jesus is also in mission—no, he *is* the Father's mission to the world. In that divine compassionate outreach to a humanity in relentless rebellion against his Father, Jesus calls many to faith and restores their relationship to the Father. The Christ, however, also encounters misunderstanding, opposition, and hatred. Though filled with the Spirit of God as he casts out demons, he is charged by his enemies with demonic alliances: “In connection with the ruler of the demons he is casting out the demons” (9:34). Ironically, that very opposition to Jesus' mission will issue forth in the climactic events that accomplish what his enemies deny he has come to do: his death and resurrection will pay the ransom for all sin, save all believers, and ultimately renew all creation. (CC)

It is enough for a disciple to be like his teacher. The Teacher is God's mission to save Israel and the world; his disciples will also and always participate in that mission. With the proverbial declaration of 10:24, Jesus broadens the application of his teaching in the second half (10:24–42) of the Missionary Discourse (10:5–42). His words in the second half will still apply fully to the Twelve in their unique place and calling. But the Master's words also apply to all missionaries that he will send throughout the centuries—pastors, teachers, and others—and in some ways, to every believer who finds himself in a situation where he can speak the Good News of the reign of God in Jesus. For the whole church is a church in mission; Jesus' disciples are the earth's salt and the world's light, a city set on a hill (5:13–16). Gathered around Jesus, who came to save his people from their sins (1:21), the church in all of its parts and all of its members' vocations will ever be in mission to save the lost. In that outreach, they will face difficulty and persecution. (CC)

In the twenty-first-century North American setting, many renounce the exclusive claims of the Christ and his Gospel. Many consider Jesus to be one savior among many and Christianity to be one of many religions offering truth that leads to eternal life. Many will not have the true God to be their only King and Savior. They will vilify and reject those “intolerant,” “narrow-minded” disciples of Jesus who claim that there is salvation to be found in no one else. But it is enough for these disciples to be like their Master.

(CC)

Beelzebub – The prince of demons (12:24); the Greek form of the Hebrew name Baal-Zebub (“lord of flies”; see 2Ki 1:2), a parody on and mockery of the actual epithet, Baal-Zebul (“Exalted Baal” or “Prince Baal.” The name came to be used of Satan. (CSB)

Jesus, the true Master of God’s house, was labeled demonic. Jesus’ disciples will be equally maligned. (TLSB)

Βεελζεβούλ—In the Ugaritic texts, the ancient Canaanites called the fertility god Baal (whose name means “lord”) *zbl b’l ’art’*, “prince, lord of earth.” The first two of those words (in reverse order), “Baal/lord” and “prince,” make “Beelzeboul,” which became a name for the devil in Jewish intertestamental literature and the NT. Jesus’ explanation in 12:24, “Beelzeboul, rulers of the demons,” makes it clear that it is another name for Satan. The variant reading Beelzebub is a mocking malphemism that means “Baal/lord of flies.” (CC)

Baal was the most active deity in the old pagan Canaanite pantheon, the male god of fertility and storms, who also was the arch-enemy of Israel’s God. In Jewish thought this name of Baal came to represent the “prince of demons” (Mt 12:24; Lk 11:15). Hebrew writers occasionally substituted bosheth, “shame,” for the name of Baal; Ish Bosheth in 2 Sam 2:8 is Esh-Baal in 1 Chron 8:33. If Christ was called the most shameful of names – Satan – His disciples and servants should expect the same. Persecutors will so confuse God with Satan that “anyone who kills you will think he is offering a service to God” (Jn 16:2), as did Jesus’ opponents. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 3, Part 3)

Verses 5-6 in this chapter reminds us that the disciples are not sent out among Gentiles or Samaritans, but to the lost sheep of Israel. The very fact that contradiction takes the form of blasphemy, the fact that men will call satanic what they refuse to recognize as divine, is, to faith, already evidence that God is present and at work when the Kingdom and the Christ are proclaimed. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 12, Part 3)

10:16–25 Jesus warns His disciples to expect persecution as they carry out their mission of being His witnesses. This opposition to the Gospel is evidence of sin’s grip on the human heart. When we experience abuse because of our loyalty to Jesus, we have His assurance that the Holy Spirit will help us to speak the right words. He will use our Gospel testimony to soften the hard hearts of unbelievers. • Holy Spirit, help me to stand firm to the end and faithfully witness to Christ in word and deed. Amen. (TLSB)

26 “So have no fear of them, for nothing is covered that will not be revealed, or hidden that will not be known. 27 What I tell you in the dark, say in the light, and what you hear whispered, proclaim on the housetops. 28 And do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. Rather fear him who can destroy both soul and body in hell. 29 Are not two sparrows sold for a penny? And not one of them will fall to the ground apart from your Father. 30 But even the hairs of your head are all numbered. 31 Fear not, therefore; you are of more value than many sparrows. 32 So everyone who acknowledges me before men, I

also will acknowledge before my Father who is in heaven, 33 but whoever denies me before men, I also will deny before my Father who is in heaven.

10:26-42 Jesus continues his Missionary Discourse (10:5–42), whose second half (10:24–42) applies not only to the twelve apostles, but also more broadly throughout the ages. Jesus’ words in 10:26–31 are bound together by his gracious invitation: “Do not fear” (10:26, 28, 31). In light of the challenges and hardships to be faced by Christ’s missionaries—both the Twelve and others after them—his triple encouragement is a necessary antidote for the normal human reaction. Yet it should be emphasized that Jesus does not banish his missionaries’ fear by promising that he will keep them from suffering; to the contrary, those who are most faithful to him likely will suffer most. However, what the Messiah does in 10:26–31 is to invite his sent ones, both ancient and modern, to see the opposition that they might face in light of larger and eternal realities. (CC)

10:26 *no fear* – Since it was Jesus who sent His disciples into the world, they could depend on His protection. (TLSB)

nothing is covered – This refers both to the enemies of Christ and all their secrets and to the disciples and the blessed gospel secret. Everything shall come to light, so do not have the least fear either that you shall fail or that they shall succeed. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 3, Part 3)

οὐδὲν γὰρ ἔστιν κεκαλυμμένον ὃ οὐκ ἀποκαλυφθήσεται καὶ κρυπτόν ὃ οὐ γνωσθήσεται—The present indicative of “to be,” ἔστιν, plus the perfect passive participle κεκαλυμμένον is, technically, a periphrastic construction, “has been concealed.” However, the parallelism in this verse between the perfect passive participle κεκαλυμμένον and the simple adjective κρυπτόν shows that the participle is, in effect, an adjective functioning like a predicate nominative, “is concealed.” In this context, “or” is a fitting translation for καὶ since the second part of the saying, which follows καὶ, is not adding further material so much as offering an additional, equivalent statement. (CC)

be revealed – The day of truth will be told. God will vindicate His servants and mete out eternal punishment to the persecutors. Everything will come to light on that glorious final day. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 3, Part 3)

As the disciples carry out their mission, the need to be convinced that ultimately the truth of the Gospel will emerge. (TLSB)

Isaiah 42:2, He will not shout or cry out or raise His voice in the streets.” Note for this verse... He (Jesus the Suffering Servant) is so sure of Himself and of the cause He represents that He can well expect His message to carry itself successfully through every test. How often Jesus shunned publicity, even though His aim was to carry His gospel to all men. (Leupold)

Jesus continues his Missionary Discourse (10:5–42), whose second half (10:24–42) applies not only to the twelve apostles, but also more broadly throughout the ages. Jesus’ words in 10:26–31 are bound together by his gracious invitation: “Do not fear” (10:26, 28, 31). In light of the challenges and hardships to be faced by Christ’s missionaries—both the Twelve and others after them—his triple encouragement is a necessary antidote for the normal human reaction. Yet it should be emphasized that Jesus does not banish his missionaries’ fear by promising that he will keep them from suffering; to the contrary, those who are most faithful to him likely will suffer

most. However, what the Messiah does in 10:26–31 is to invite his sent ones, both ancient and modern, to see the opposition that they might face in light of larger and eternal realities. (CC)

19:27 *tell you in the dark* – May refer to the instruction within the disciple group. (Ylvisaker)

proclauim on the housetops – This is the public proclamation of the Gospel. Jews had flat roofs surrounded by a cornice (parapet). From this point of vantage, a person could conveniently address the multitude below. (Ylvisaker)

Jesus often told His disciples to keep quiet about who He was (12:16; 16:20; 17:9). However, the time was coming when He wanted them to proclaim the Gospel openly and boldly. (TLSB)

roof. Flat roofs of ancient houses made them practical as work spaces, spare rooms, storage areas, or as drying floors for crops (Jgs 16:27; 1Sm 9:25) (TLSB)

The gospel cannot be suppressed. The disciples are to understand this thoroughly from the very start and thus to speaks out fearlessly, holding nothing back. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 12, Part 3)

In the first place, the disciples do not have to fear their opponents (“Do not *fear them*”) *because the day will come when every secret of God’s plans in Christ*—and all of men’s hidden sin and rebellion—will be made known to all (10:26). The great paradox and contradiction of the present time, even including the ministry of Jesus himself, are that although the reign of God stands near (4:17), only the eyes of faith can see it. Even Jesus’ own disciples (ancient and modern) may not always perceive the presence of that reign. This is especially true when Christ’s apostles or pastors or other missionaries go out and faithfully proclaim and teach and are rejected for their very testimony. If God is faithful and present in Jesus, his only Son, why are Jesus’ emissaries rejected and abused? This ought not be! Hidden things are at work, but on the Last Day, the truth will come out, and all the secret things will become known. (CC)

Since that is the case and Christ declares it, the disciples of Jesus, beginning with the Twelve, can be free to declare in the open what they have learned from Jesus in private. They will proclaim the counsels of God’s Law and God’s Gospel, the message of human sin and need along with God’s provision of forgiveness, life, and salvation in Jesus, with the promise of vindication and resurrection on the Last Day. Until that Day when all things are publicly revealed—namely, the consummation of the age, when Christ returns in glory—his church, beginning with the Twelve, will teach the whole counsel of God in Christ (28:20). (CC)

10:28 *do not fear those who kill the body* – Even in the face of persecution and death, the Christian need not be afraid. There is a wonderful irony to be considered as executioners unwittingly admit saint into the kingdom of God. Men can kill but they cannot destroy. For no human being can kill a soul or make it alive, conduct it to heaven or hell. Rather than fearing men who can hurt us in this life, we must fear God who offers us eternal life (Is. 8:13). Obviously, this will not be accomplished without difficulty: The soul is of a substance different from that of the body; and yet there is an intimate union and connection, for the soul loves the body very much. They part from each other reluctantly. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 12, Part 3)

μη φοβεῖσθε ἀπὸ τῶν ἀποκτεννόντων τὸ σῶμα, τὴν δὲ ψυχὴν μὴ δυναμένων ἀποκτεῖναι—The prohibition with the present stem imperative φοβεῖσθε here seems not to have the force that such present forms can sometimes have, namely, “stop fearing” (as in 14:27; 17:7; 28:5, 10). The

prohibition with the same verb two verses earlier is aorist stem (μὴ ... φοβηθῆτε, 10:26), and it makes little sense to translate that earlier form, “Do not start fearing.” The present stem forms may be more emphatic, so the translation italicizes them: “*Do not fear*” (μὴ φοβεῖσθε, 10:28, 31) and “*Fear*” (φοβεῖσθε, 10:28). (CC)

The contrast in the verse between the *present* participle ἀποκτενόντων and the aorist infinitive of the same verb, ἀποκτεῖναι, may be of some significance. In contrast to the phrase with the aorist infinitive (“but are *not able* to kill the soul”), the present participle could be emphatic (“those who *indeed* kill the body”), or it may be conative (“those who *try to* kill the body”). Opponents may try to kill the bodies of the missionaries sent by Jesus, and in some cases, they may indeed succeed, but that is the most they can do. They are powerless to kill the soul! (CC)

In the second place, Jesus invites his missionaries (and all believers) to remember that even the worst that their persecutors can do to them will not destroy their relationship with the Father: “Do not fear” (10:28). The enemies of Christ and his church can, indeed, go so far as to physically kill the missionaries. They cannot, however, go any farther: “Do not fear those who kill the body but are not able to kill the soul.” The disciples’ deepest reverence and loyalty must be directed toward God the Father: “But rather, fear the One who is able to destroy both soul and body in Gehenna.” Far better to be rejected and killed by enemies who themselves are mortal than to find that, because of your unbelief and apostasy, the Father has become your eternal enemy when you are raised on the Last Day and sentenced to eternal judgment in “the fiery Gehenna” (5:22)! (CC)

Jesus’ words about the “soul” and the “body” here in 10:28 afford an opportunity to reflect on biblical anthropology and to avoid two unfortunate extreme positions. Sometimes, for instance, scholars wrongly claim that the biblical doctrine of man has no room for distinct conceptions of “body” and soul” as the two constituent parts of human nature. One also hears objections to the Christian belief that at the point of physical death, the soul and body are separated from one another and that the soul has an ongoing (though little-understood!) conscious existence, either at rest with Christ or in torment separated from him—until the Last Day, when the bodies of all shall be raised and reunited with their souls; then as whole persons, believers shall enter everlasting life and unbelievers shall be consigned to hell (Mt 25:31–46; Rev 20:11–15). It is hard to imagine how Jesus’ words here about killing the soul but not the body and about God destroying both body and soul in Gehenna could be understood in any other way than as supporting that traditional Christian belief.⁷ Physical death does terrible damage to our human nature. Even so, persecutors can kill the body, but they cannot kill the soul.⁹ When any Christian believer dies, his soul experiences rest, free from sin and temptation and pain. For these reasons, death in Christ is “far better” than earthly life (Phil 1:23; cf. Lk 16:25; Rev 2:10; 14:13; 20:6). When a person dies, body and soul are separated; then on the Last Day, all the dead will be raised, their bodies and souls rejoined. God shall grant each believer a place in the new creation and sentence each unbeliever to damnation. Thus God, not Satan, is “the One who is able to destroy both soul and body in Gehenna” (Mt 10:28). God is the one to be feared! (CC)

Another unfortunate extreme, however, may be much more common among pious Christians in our day. That is the view that sees the “soul” as the essential component of human nature, with the body viewed almost as a superfluous addition that is not necessary in order to be fully human or to enjoy the fullness of God’s salvation. This unbiblical view likely arises from a number of ancient sources, including Greek philosophy and Gnosticism, and contemporary influences from Eastern religious thought. Often it creeps into hymns and prayers without objections from anyone. One hears, for instance, prayers that describe a Christian who has now died as someone who “has entered his eternal rest.” While that phrase perhaps could be understood in a biblical fashion, it is inherently misleading. “Eternal” in what sense? The Christian is dead. To be sure,

his soul is with Christ; yet he is physically dead, torn apart, less than what God created and redeemed him to be. That condition will only last as long as Christ tarries in his coming. When the Lord returns, that state of rest for the Christian's soul will be over, and death will be overturned, swallowed up by life (Is 25:7–8; 1 Corinthians 15)! Notice, indeed, that Jesus does not merely say, "But rather, fear the One who is able to destroy the (disembodied) *soul* in Gehenna." No; his perspective is fully eschatological, and our anthropology should consistently reflect that as well. (CC)

Him – God. What mortals can do to a believer is nothing compared to what God can do. He alone is capable of punishing a person, body and soul, in hell. Not fear of humans but fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom (Pr 9:10). (TLSB)

hell – (The Greek word is *ge(h)enna*, which derives its name from a deep ravine south of Jerusalem, the "Valley of (the Sons of) Hinnom" (Hebrew *ge' hinnom*). During the reigns of the wicked Ahaz and Manasseh, human sacrifices to the Ammonite god Molech were offered there. Josiah desecrated the valley because of the pagan worship there (2Ki 23:10; see Jer 7:31–32; 19:6). It became a sort of perpetually burning city dump and later a figure for the place of final punishment.). (CSB)

The disciples' deepest reverence and loyalty must be directed toward God the Father: "But rather, fear the One who is able to destroy both soul and body in Gehenna." Far better to be rejected and killed by enemies who themselves are mortal than to find that, because of your unbelief and apostasy, the Father has become your eternal enemy when you are raised on the Last Day and sentenced to eternal judgment in "the fiery Gehenna" (5:22)! (CC)

10:29 *penny*† - God even cares for little birds, sold cheaply for food. Three words used for Roman coins are *denarius* (Mt 18:28), *assarion* (Mt 10:29) and *kodrantes* (Mt 5:26), very loosely related to each other as are a 50-cent piece, nickel and penny. The coins here are *assaria*, so the transaction would be something like five birds for two nickels. (CSB)

The very poor purchased sparrows for food, paying c $\frac{1}{16}$ of a day's wage. This illustrates how little meat was eaten by the common people. (TLSB)

Jesus directs our attention to some common, ordinary birds to assure us of God's providential care. To this day sparrow are not highly valued compared to many other birds. At the time of the apostles, sparrows were sometimes used for food. Some tell us that sparrows were considered a delicacy, but the very low price for which they were sold seems rather to indicate that they would serve as food for poor people when they couldn't afford anything better. A normal wage for a laborer was a denarius per day. A penny was $\frac{1}{16}$ of a denarius.) Yet the God who created sparrows watches over them and not one of them falls to the ground unless He permits it. (PBC)

apart from your Father – No sparrow, seemingly so worthless, will fall from its nest or experience harm in flight without God's knowledge and will. "He foresees and foreknows everything that is or will be" (FC SD XI 4). (TLSB)

Jesus' third invitation not to be afraid in the face of persecution comes at the end of his winsome argument from the lesser to the greater in Mt 10:29–31. Two sparrows could be purchased for one-sixteenth of a denarius. Since a denarius was normally regarded as a day's wage, the price of "an assarion" (10:29) would, for us, be equivalent to our pay for about half an hour. Yet such is the Father's concern for even these unimportant creatures that none of them falls to the earth

without his knowledge. And if that were not enough, the Father's knowledge of Jesus' missionaries encompasses the number of hairs on their heads! (CC)

Does this mean that evil will not befall Jesus' disciples? No. Rather, it means that when difficulties or persecutions or even martyrdom comes, the disciples are still under the Father's loving care, and it means that he is with them even when they are suffering and dying. Probably the greatest fear of a Christian who is suffering for the sake of Christ is that God has abandoned him. The doubting human tendency is to think that God allows suffering and even death because he has forsaken us (cf. the disciples in 8:25). Jesus' words are as strong as they are gently understated: "Therefore, do not fear; you are worth more than many sparrows" (10:31). (CC)

10:30 *even the hairs of head are all numbered*— Absolutely nothing escapes God's notice or is beyond His power. We are safe in His hands. (PBC)

What no person would want to do, our Father has done: counted each hair on our heads. He knows us down to the minutest detail. (TLSB)

more value than many sparrows – God's love and concern is so broad that even minor details are significant. If God will keep track of sparrows and hair counts, He will watch over every aspect of our lives. The disciple is to know that the life which he has laid into the Father's hand shall be kept safely there. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 12, Part 3)

10:31 *fear not* – Jesus commands the disciples to their mission. James tells us to be "doers of the word." Perhaps we can borrow the Nike motto: "Just do it!" (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 12, Part 3)

For the third time, Jesus tells His disciples not to be afraid (vv. 26, 28). The disciples had vastly greater value than a small bird. They had nothing to fear, because God blesses and rules over all creatures. (TLSB)

The Father has not and will not overlook his suffering ones. Their testimony to Christ brings glory to God the Father (cf. 5:16), who will strengthen them through the power of the Holy Spirit and preserve them unto life everlasting. (CC)

10:32 *everyone who acknowledges me* – Jesus promised His disciples that if they fearlessly confessed Him on earth, He would stand up for them before His heavenly Father at the last judgment and accept them into eternal life. (TLSB)

Acknowledging Christ may be seen in a street corner evangelist or a believer confessing the Nicene Creed. The confession from the mouth of a believer must reflect the hope that is in his heart. Jesus' admonition is still true today: "Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only he who does the will of my Father who is in heaven" (Mt. 7:21). . (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 12, Part 3)

Speaking of confessing Christ and his Good News, Paul says, "For with the heart it is believed for righteousness, and with the mouth it is confessed for salvation" (Rom 10:10). Confession is the evidence of what is in the heart. When a person has faith in Christ, he cannot help but speak of his Savior, and the church will continue to speak until Christ's final day of victory. The confession Jesus describes is essentially Christological: "Everyone who confesses *me* before men" (10:32). The message that Christ is the true and only Son of God, Israel's Messiah and the Light for the Gentiles, the Ransom for all world's sinners (20:28)—that is what missionaries, and indeed all

Christians, are to believe and to say about Jesus. This is the message encapsulated in the ecumenical creeds (Apostles', Nicene, Athanasian) that the church confesses weekly and that individual Christians and families can confess daily. Jesus then promises that on the Last Day, he also will make a confession to his Father (cf. 25:21, 23, 34). Christ will confess the person who confessed him before others. He will say, "This one is mine." (CC)

Romans 10:9, "For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you confess and are saved."

10:33 *I also will deny* – Those who, from fear or doubt, deny Jesus will be denied by Jesus on Judgment Day. To deny Jesus is to reject the One who brings us to the Father (Jn 14:6; Eph 2:18). (TLSB)

Our greatest fear should be that of Christ disowning us. The cross has canceled all of our sins. We have fallen, but Christ has redeemed us. After Peter disowned Jesus, his loving Lord restored him. . (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 12, Part 3)

The terrible opposite is also true. To deny Jesus and the truth of who he is in the presence of others betrays either a complete lack of faith or a fear of men (and not of God; see 10:28) that erodes faith. Unless checked with repentance and renewed faith, this fear of what others may say and do can ultimately destroy saving faith. Jesus warns, "Whoever denies me before men, I also will deny him before my Father who is in heaven" (10:33; cf. 25:12, 26–30, 41). (CC)

In Matthew the verb used here, ἀρνέομαι, "deny," occurs elsewhere only in Peter's denial of Jesus (26:70, 72). In the description of Peter's first denial, the verb is followed by the same preposition (ἔμπροσθεν) as here in 10:33. The similarity between Jesus' saying here, "Whoever denies me before men," and Matthew's statement that Peter "denied" Jesus "before them all" (26:70) shows two things: first, the seriousness of Peter's public denial, which amounted to apostasy; but second, the bounty of Jesus' forgiving love, that he even pardoned Peter's eschatologically damnable sin! Peter, you see, will be among the Eleven who meet Jesus after his resurrection and are given the Great Commission (28:16–20; cf. Jn 21:1–19). (CC)

10:26–33 Enemies of the Gospel can persecute believers only within limits set by our heavenly Father. Because He is in charge of our lives, we need not be afraid of those who oppose us because we confess Christ. At the last judgment, our Lord will recognize faithful service and acknowledge us as His followers. We are confident of His love not because of what we have done but because He died and rose to redeem us from sin, death, and the power of the devil. • Heavenly Father, through Word and Sacrament, assure me of Your loving care and drive fear from my heart. Amen. (TLSB)

34 "Do not think that I have come to bring peace to the earth. I have not come to bring peace, but a sword. 35 For I have come to set a man against his father, and a daughter against her mother, and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law. 36 And a person's enemies will be those of his own household. 37 Whoever loves father or mother more than me is not worthy of me, and whoever loves son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me. 38 And whoever does not take his cross and follow me is not worthy of me. 39 Whoever finds his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life for my sake will find it.

10:34 At first glance this saying sounds like a contradiction of Isa 9:6 ("Prince of Peace"), Lk 2:14 ("on earth peace to men") and Jn 14:27 ("Peace I leave with you"). It is true that Christ came to bring peace—peace between the believer and God, and peace among men. Yet the inevitable

result of Christ's coming is conflict—between Christ and the antichrist, between light and darkness, between Christ's children and the devil's children. This conflict can occur even between members of the same family (vv. 35–36). (CSB)

“Do not think that I have come to bring peace (*eirēnēn*) to the earth (*gēn*).” Peace here is reminiscent of the Hebrew *shalom*, so that we think of more than simply not being at war. Christ came to abolish the false peace of attempting to live in harmony with a sinful and broken world. Only when that false peace is shattered can we see peace between man and God. For the truth to be made plain, the lie must be laid bare. So Christ brings a sword. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 24, Part 3)

not come to bring peace but a sword – Likely surprised the disciples, because earlier Jesus had told them to “let your peace come” on the houses they entered (v 13). Jesus wanted them to realize that His coming was like a sword that split families in two: some were for Him, some were against Him. This same division will be evident in the last judgment. (TLSB)

To be sure, Christ did bring “peace on earth” (Lk 2:14), and he sent his twelve apostles to bestow his “peace” on the houses and individuals who received them and their words (Mt 10:13). It is likely, then, that Jesus’ statement should be understood as a form of dialectical negation. The first part of the statement is an exaggerated negative statement: “Do not think that I came *only* so as to bring peace upon the earth.” However, given the condition of the sinful human heart and the unchanging nature of Christ’s message, which calls for repentance and faith (4:17; 10:7), the inevitable result of Christ’s coming will be conflict and strife: “I came *not only* so as to bring peace, but *even more*, a sword” (CC)

10:35-37 Exposing those lies inevitably causes conflict. Nowhere does this come closer than when those fights begin at home. Though it causes conflict, we need to understand it is not love nor is it the Gospel simply to “live and let live.” Love for Christ and for one another compels us to speak the truth in love, even knowing that sometimes that can cause division. Honest division is better than false peace. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 24, Part 3)

10:35 *man against father* – The family is the most intimate group of people known to man. God wants families to be at peace. But spiritual differences, owing to the sinfulness of human nature, cause the sharpest and deepest conflicts so that those who ought to be closest are set against each other the most.

This conflict will at times be bitter; even the closest natural relationships might be severed. In the patriarchal culture of the first century AD, a believing son or daughter who refused an unbelieving father’s anti-Christian direction could come under severe censure, punishment, and shame. At various times and places in the Roman Empire, to be a Christian and refuse to offer obeisance to Caesar and the pagan gods was considered a seditious capital crime; many Christians literally bore a “cross” (10:38) or perished by fire or wild beasts or gladiators. Disciples of Jesus in less-hostile regions may not face bodily harm, but may still lose cherished relationships with loved ones because of their confession of faith. Those losses may feel insurmountably great and will be a “cross” to bear. (CC)

10:36 *enemies will be those of his own household* – Cf v 21. Jesus distanced Himself from His own family, some of whom did not believe in Him (12:46–50; Mk 3:21; Jn 7:5). (TLSB)

In these divided families, the believer will sooner or later face this challenge from unbelieving loved ones: “Choose me and my ways rather than your Jesus and his ways.” This is merely an

application of the broader principle that Jesus has just taught concerning confessing him before men (10:32–33). To be sure, Christians will be more loving, more patient, more accepting of non-Christian family members than they otherwise would be, since the love they receive from Christ enables the Christians to display Christ-like love, whether or not it is required. At times God will use such a loving witness as part of his way of bringing unbelievers to faith; they may be won “without a word” (see 1 Pet 3:1–2). Other times, however, the non-believing spouse or parents or children will demand allegiance and conformity in ways to which the Christian simply must not agree. Then, the disciple must love Jesus more than father or mother or son or daughter. (CC)

10:37 loves ... more than Me – More important than loving parents and other family members is loyalty to Christ. (TLSB)

not worthy of Me – Cf vv 11, 13. To value family more than Jesus means that one is not fit to be a disciple. St. Bernard of Clairvaux: “Although it is impious to despise a mother, yet to despise her for Christ’s sake is most pious” (SLSB, p 212). (TLSB)

10:38 take his cross – The first mention of the cross in Matthew’s Gospel. The cross was an instrument of death and here symbolizes the necessity of total commitment—even unto death—on the part of Jesus’ disciples. (CSB)

The cross represented death; it was common for Romans to crucify criminals. Jesus expected His followers to be willing to die, if necessary, rather than to give up their commitment to Him. (TLSB)

While it is tempting to make this verse the focal point and proclaim a sermon with a heavy Law emphasis, this should be resisted. Being a Christian means already having died in Baptism and rising to new life in Christ. Sermons that focus on the need of the individual Christian to take up their cross will inevitably make an obligation of what is, in God’s design, good news. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 24, Part 3)

10:39 finds his life will lose it...for my sake will find it – Contrasts earthly and eternal life. Clinging to earthly life forfeits eternal life, but losing one’s life for Christ’s sake gains real life. (TLSB)

Because the issue is the identity of Jesus and faith in him, however, the disciple knows there is no middle ground. Strangely, if a Christian were to long for the old way of life and cave in to family pressures to reject Christ and his work, he would thereby lose the only real life there is: eternal life with God through Jesus (10:39). Paradoxically, when a Christian accepts the sword, carries the cross, and suffers the loss of his former relationships and status—perhaps even giving up his bodily life (10:28)—because he clings in faith to Jesus, that believer will discover that he has found real life forever. (CC)

We are not our own. We have been bought with a price (1 Cor 6:19b–20a). The one who seeks to preserve those things that are distinctively his, to enlarge his own kingdom, will, in the end, lose it all. The one who is willing to be poured out (cf. Phil 2:17) for the sake of others will find a depth of purpose and meaning to life that evades those focused solely on the concerns of this life. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 24, Part 3)

10:34–39 The radical nature of following Jesus may result in conflict and divisions within families. Jesus wants His disciples to strive for eternal life, even if this means sacrificing earthly benefits. In all honesty, we must confess that we often fail to put Jesus first in our lives, that we

do not take up His cross and follow Him. What we fail to do, Jesus did for us. He took up His cross and paid the penalty for the sins of the world. In Him, we have peace. • Thank You, Jesus, for bearing my cross on Calvary and making me Your highest priority. Amen. (TLSB)

40 “Whoever receives you receives me, and whoever receives me receives him who sent me. 41 The one who receives a prophet because he is a prophet will receive a prophet's reward, and the one who receives a righteous person because he is a righteous person will receive a righteous person's reward. 42 And whoever gives one of these little ones even a cup of cold water because he is a disciple, truly, I say to you, he will by no means lose his reward.”

10:40 *receives me receives the one who sent me* – The disciples were authorized messengers of Jesus. To receive them was the same as receiving Christ and the Father who sent Him (cf v 14). (TLSB)

As Jesus’ missionary proclaimers, beginning with the Twelve, go out with the message of the Good News, they are not going out alone. The Son of God will accompany them, to such an extent that when people receive the proclaimers and believe their message about the Christ, they are receiving Christ himself (10:40). This means, indeed, that the Father, because he is the one who sent Jesus into the world, will also be present and received when Christian proclaimers encounter eager and believing responses. This message of Christ’s identification with his disciples in mission is found elsewhere in this Gospel, in the NT, and in early Christian literature. The final words of Matthew’s narrative offer a promise that is directly parallel to Jesus’ words here at the end of the Missionary Discourse: “Look, I am with you for all the days, until the consummation of the age” (28:20). This last word of Christ in Matthew’s Gospel is not a general promise of Christ’s presence; it is attached to the command to make disciples by baptizing and teaching (28:19–20). Mt 28:20 promises that when the church, beginning with the Twelve, makes disciples, Jesus is with his messengers, there in the mission as it takes place through baptizing in the name of the Trinity and teaching all the words of Jesus. (CC)

10:41 *prophet* – ohn was the last prophet of the old covenant. (CSB)

Not only the apostles but also others served as Gospel witnesses. (TLSB)

As Jesus’ missionary proclaimers, beginning with the Twelve, go out with the message of the Good News, they are not going out alone. The Son of God will accompany them, to such an extent that when people receive the proclaimers and believe their message about the Christ, they are receiving Christ himself (10:40). This means, indeed, that the Father, because he is the one who sent Jesus into the world, will also be present and received when Christian proclaimers encounter eager and believing responses. This message of Christ’s identification with his disciples in mission is found elsewhere in this Gospel, in the NT, and in early Christian literature. The final words of Matthew’s narrative offer a promise that is directly parallel to Jesus’ words here at the end of the Missionary Discourse: “Look, I am with you for all the days, until the consummation of the age” (28:20). This last word of Christ in Matthew’s Gospel is not a general promise of Christ’s presence; it is attached to the command to make disciples by baptizing and teaching (28:19–20). Mt 28:20 promises that when the church, beginning with the Twelve, makes disciples, Jesus is with his messengers, there in the mission as it takes place through baptizing in the name of the Trinity and teaching all the words of Jesus. (CC)

will receive a prophet's reward – The very reward which will be given the righteous man will be given the one who welcomes him. For example see Joshua 2:1 and Hebrews 11:31. Rahab the harlot welcomed righteous men and will receive her reward.

10:42 *little ones* – Jesus was likely gesturing to young children, but may have been referring also to those who believe in Jesus with a simple, childlike faith (cf 18:1–14). (TLSB)

cup of cold water ... reward – Someone who performs even a small act of love will be rewarded. (TLSB)

ποτήριον ψυχροῦ μόνον εἰς ὄνομα μαθητοῦ—The neuter singular of the adjective μόνος, “only,” functions adverbially here (BDAG, 2 b), limiting “gives” to “*only/merely* a cup of cold water” as a trifling, insignificant gift that nevertheless shall receive its eschatological reward. Matthew frequently uses μόνος as an adjective, but there are other times where the neuter form μόνον functions as an adverb (e.g., 5:47; 9:21; 14:36; 21:19, 21). (CC)

Such disciples of Jesus believe that their lives possess eternal significance. They go out with the prayer that others will receive them for what they truly are: ordained men, or laymen and women, who bear the prophetic Word now fulfilled in Jesus the Christ; righteous ones who freely give of the righteousness they have received in Jesus. Those who welcome them because they believe their words (Mt 10:13–14) will not lose their reward on the great Day. That reward of resurrection to eternal life is the same: those who believe the preaching and receive Baptism in the triune name receive the same reward as the faithful missionary preachers and baptizers. Even a simple act of hospitality (“a cup of cold water,” 10:42) shown to the vulnerable and persecuted missionaries, the “little ones” who bring the eschatological Good News of Jesus, is a sign that the salvation they have offered has been received in faith. (CC)

No calling is more blessed than to be a herald of the Good News. Let all who are called to this work be encouraged by the words of their Master. And may those same words encourage all believers to support their pastor-heralds in ways great and small. (CC)

10:40–42 Jesus says much about the difficulties that the disciples will encounter as they carry out their mission. But He concludes His sermon by promising a reward to those who support the Gospel message and fellow disciples. Yet no reward can match the blessings of grace given to those who repent of their sins and believe in Jesus as their Savior (Eph 2:8–10). He gives peace with God, patience in time of tribulation, confidence to pray, and finally eternal life. • Loving Savior, I deserve no reward for my words and actions. Yet You promise rich blessings to those who receive the Gospel. Thank You. Amen. (TLSB)