

Matthew 10:5a, 21-33 NIV

Don't Back Down!

Sunday, June 22 at 9:00 † Monday, June 23 at 7 PM

Second Sunday after Pentecost / First Sunday after Trinity – 2013

Introduction: Dear friends in Christ: Today, *in Matthew chapter 10*, our text begins with these words: ^{5a} **These twelve Jesus sent out with the following instructions...** *But wait!* Before we even come to those instructions, let's think about this: Do the instructions apply only to the 12 apostles OR to all followers of Jesus? **I believe** the *primary* application is to the 12, but the *secondary* application is to every believer!

Think about the ripples made by a rock dropped in water; the rock causes the first ripple, then the *first causes the second*, the *second causes the third*, etc. So we who believe today are simply a distant ripple *through whom God wants to work to make another ripple* – thus to draw others to Jesus and God's gift of eternal life!



Let's take a look at Jesus' instructions:

1. **Persecution Is Coming:** ²¹ **“Brother will betray brother to death, and a father his child; children will rebel against their parents and have them put to death.”** // Wow! Would people within one family actually betray each other unto death? Yes! Jesus said these words – *just after today's sermon text:* ³⁴ **“Do not suppose that I have come to bring peace to the earth. I did not come**

to bring peace, but a sword. ³⁵ For I have come to turn a man against his father, a daughter against her mother, a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law-- a man's enemies will be the members of his own household.” (Mat 10:34-35 NIV)

2. **Encouragement to Not Give Up:** ²² **“All men will hate you because of me, but he who stands firm to the end will be saved.”** // So Jesus could have said: “I have bad news and good news: Yes, people will hate you, BUT he who stands firm to the end will be saved.” So hang in there, keep fighting the good fight, and **don't back down!**
3. **Advice When Persecuted:** ²³ **“When you are persecuted in one place, flee to another. I tell you the truth, you will not finish going through the cities of Israel before the Son of Man comes.”** // Dr. Kretzmann wrote: **“Where flight during persecution is possible without a denial of truth...it should be chosen.”** (NT 1:58) Foxes Book of Martyrs records some who wrongly fled, *but they eventually returned and willingly faced a horrible death* (See Rev. 12:11)!
4. **Explanation About Our Relationship:** ²⁴ **A student is not above his teacher, nor a servant above his master.** ²⁵ **It is enough for the student to be like his teacher, and the servant like his master. If the head of the house has been called Beelzebub, how much more the members of his household!** // So was Jesus called “Beelzebub,” *thus Satan?* Matthew 12 has this account: ²² **“Then they brought [Jesus] a demon-possessed man who was blind and mute, and Jesus healed him, so that he could both talk and see.** ²³ **All**

the people were astonished and said, 'Could this be the Son of David?' ²⁴ But when the Pharisees heard this, they said, 'It is only by Beelzebub, the prince of demons, that this fellow drives out demons.'" (NIV) Martin Luther wrote: "When a person accepts the Word of God, the Gospel, let him think nothing else than that he in that hour comes into peril with reference to all his goods, his house, ... his wife, children, father, and mother, also his own life." (Ibid) Nevertheless, **let us NOT back down** from living for and speaking about Jesus – *our Savior!*

5. **Do Not Be Afraid – God Knows:** ²⁶ "So do not be afraid of them. There is nothing concealed that will not be disclosed, or hidden that will not be made known. ²⁷ What I tell you in the dark,



what is whispered in your ear, proclaim from the roofs." // Jesus calls us to live with

NO FEAR of people who hate us and want to hurt us. So HOW do we show a lack of fear? **BY** proclaiming God's Word of truth to others. Dr. Kretzmann urges us to "take the risks of [our] high calling" (Ibid) As we do so, we pray that people will benefit! So let us keep speaking the truth in love and **NOT back down!**



6. **Do Not Be Afraid – of People:** ²⁸ "Do not be afraid of those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. Rather, be afraid of the One who can destroy both soul and body in hell. // Yes, people can inflict horrible pain upon our bodies *but all such pain is temporary.*

Only God "can destroy both soul and body in hell." Furthermore, "fear of human enemies implies lack of faith in [God], which may in turn lead to denial and thus to damnation." (Ibid)

7. **Do Not Be Afraid – God Cares:** ²⁹ Are not two sparrows sold for a penny? Yet not one of them will fall to the ground apart from the will of your Father. ³⁰ And even the very hairs of your head are all numbered. ³¹ So don't be afraid; you are worth more than many sparrows." // Also, think about the sparrows: They are so insignificant and yet *God knows about each one.* Since God cares **so much** more for us, *He will let no harm come to us apart from His will!* Therefore, let us fear only Him and do whatever He says – regardless of the temporal consequences! **Let us NOT back down!**



Conclusion: Jesus has told us what is best – **confess Him**; He has also told us the outcome – **persecution AND salvation!** Now He summarizes His instructions with these words: ³² "Whoever acknowledges me before men [thus publicly], I will also acknowledge him before my Father in heaven. ³³ But whoever disowns me before men, I will disown him before my Father in heaven." // So let us NOT be ashamed of our Jesus – **the One who lived, suffered, and died for us!** Instead, let us gladly confess Him → with our actions and → with our words! Let us do so, **and NOT back down!**

And all God's people said: **Amen!**

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