

Title: Not Peace but a Sword

Text: Matthew 10: 34-42

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Place: SGBC, New Jersey

“I don’t understand why they are treating me like this!” “What would make them speak such awful things against my brother, my sister in Christ?” “Why can’t they understand and see and believe on Christ?”

Believer, have you ever found yourself making these kinds of statements? Many of you here are suffering from loved ones who do not believe our gospel and from being rejected for your stance for the gospel.

I want to show why believers should not be surprised when we our gospel is rejected, when we are slandered, reproached, or persecuted in this life for the name of Christ Jesus. The Lord Jesus Christ said,

Matthew 10: 34: Think not that I am come to send peace on earth: I came not to send peace, but a sword.

In the context, the Master is sending his disciples forth to preach the gospel. He is telling them the reception they should expect as they stand for the name of Christ.

Every believer is a servant of our Lord Jesus Christ. Every true believer stands with Christ and is not afraid to speak the truth of the gospel. So our Savior describes here the reception we can expect in our day.

Proposition: These words of our Redeemer are to warn and instruct, as well as to encourage and comfort us. He says,

Matthew 10: 34: Think not that I am come to send peace on earth: I came not to send peace, but a sword.

Many think that Christ came to give the believer temporal peace and prosperity on earth. Christ said, “THINK NOT that I am come to send peace on earth: I came not to send peace, but a sword.”

Divisions: 1) The peace our Savior did come to give; 2) The sufferings believers should expect; 3) What our Savior tells us to do in the face of suffering

I. OUR SAVIOR DID COME TO GIVE PEACE.

Notice, Christ makes a distinction about the peace he speaks of in our text. He says in verse 34, “Think not that I am come to send peace ON EARTH:” On earth he did not come to send peace, but a sword. But the Savior does give peace.

Peace with God

Christ came to give his people peace with God.

Romans 5: 1: Therefore being justified, by faith, we have PEACE WITH GOD with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ: By WHOM ALSO we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.

God the Father gave a people to Christ. When as yet we were ungodly, Christ died for his people.

Romans 5: 6: For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. 7 For scarcely for a righteous man will one die: yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die. 8 But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. 9: Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him. 10: For if, when

we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life.

Colossians 1: 20 And, having made PEACE through the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things unto himself; by him, I say, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven. 21 And you, that were sometime alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath he reconciled 22 In the body of his flesh through death, to present you holy and unblameable and unreprieveable in his sight:

- Christ took our place and took our sin
- Took our stripes, took our death
- Took away the curse, took away the commandment that was against us
- Christ made peace with God, reconciling us to God—through the blood of his cross

Peace in our Heart and Conscience

Christ came to give his people peace in our hearts and our consciences, but “the way of peace had we not known:” (Rom 3: 17) So Christ came to where we are...

Ephesians 2:17: And came and preached PEACE to you which were afar off, and to them that were nigh.

The Holy Spirit gave us a new heart, sprinkled our conscience with the blood of Christ, and showed us our sin and showed us Christ who put away our sin. He filled us with the fruit of the Spirit, “love, joy, PEACE, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith,...” (Gal 5: 22)

Philippians 4:7: And the PEACE of God, which passeth all understanding, filled our hearts and our minds through Christ Jesus

And “the PEACE of God began to rule in our hearts,” (Col 3: 15)

“The God of hope filled us with all joy and PEACE in believing, and we began to abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Ghost.” (Rom 15: 13)

Romans 5: 1: Therefore being justified, by faith, we have PEACE WITH GOD with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ:

So we confessed Christ in believer’s baptism and united with our brethren in his church.

Peace with our Brethren

Christ came to give his people peace with one another. By his grace, we began to see what great things God had done for us in sending the gospel to us so in our heart, we began to say of those who preached the gospel to us,

“How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of PEACE, and bring glad tidings of good things!” (Rom 10: 15)

We began to love our brethren. We found ourselves,

Ephesians 4:3 Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of PEACE.

Together with our brethren we began “following righteousness, faith, charity, PEACE, with them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart.” Our Savior said,

John 16:33 These things I have spoken unto you, that IN ME ye might have PEACE. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world.

So every believer here knows this is the peace our Savior came to give and has given us.

II. SECONDLY, IN OUR TEXT, THE SAVIOR TELLS BELIEVERS WHAT WE SHALL SUFFER

The Son of God knew beforehand what he must suffer. Likewise, beforehand, Christ tells his disciples what we shall suffer. So by Christ graciously telling us before what his true children suffer, not only will our troubles not be a surprise; our sufferings are a confirmation that we indeed have true faith and are true children of God.

Sheep among Wolves

Matthew 10: 16: Behold, I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves:

Christ tells believers what we are and what those around us are. The believer—all of us together—are a flock of sheep surrounded on all sides by a pack of unregenerate wolves. The nature of unregenerate sinners is to devour sheep—sinners are worse than wolves, men prey upon their own kind. The new nature, created of God within the believer, is the opposite of the wolf's nature. Believers do not persecute unbelievers—sheep don't attack wolves. We have no desire to harm unregenerate men; we want them to believe on Christ and be saved. But unregenerate men desire to destroy us and our gospel, and God if they could. So wolves and sheep do not get along.

Application: Brethren, we are sheep, but Christ is our Shepherd! Our Shepherd sent us forth in the midst of wolves therefore, our Shepherd shall protect us.

John 10: 14 I am the good shepherd, and know my sheep, and am known of mine. 15 As the Father knoweth me, even so know I the Father: and I lay down my life for the sheep. 16 And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be one fold, and one shepherd. 27: My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me: 28 And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand. 29 My Father, which gave them me, is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand.

Religious and Civil Leaders

Matthew 10: 17 But beware of men: for they will deliver you up to the councils, and they will scourge you in their synagogues; 18 And ye shall be brought before governors and kings for my sake, for a testimony against them and the Gentiles.

Our Savior tells us to expect rejection from leaders in **Councils and synagogues**—the religious leaders: Sanhedrim, chief priest and the elders, were men with a form of godliness. They claimed to believe God; claimed to worship Christ. But self-righteous, free-will, works religion desired Christ to be crucified! The same kinds of men scourged the apostle Paul five times.

2 Corinthians 11:24: Of the Jews five times received I forty stripes save one.

Civil leaders—kings and rulers

Why? **For my sake.**

Application: In our day, brethren, we can expect to be rejected and persecuted by false preachers and free-will works religion. They may not scourge us physically, but they will with the tongue. Satan's best servants pretend to be fighting against him.

John 16:2: They shall put you out of the synagogues: yea, the time cometh, that whosoever killeth you will think that he doeth God service.

Isaiah 66:5: Hear the word of the LORD, ye that tremble at his word; Your brethren that hated you, that cast you out for my name's sake, said, Let the LORD be glorified: but he shall appear to your joy, and they shall be ashamed.

Dearest Loved Ones

Matthew 10: 21: And the brother shall deliver up the brother to death, and the father the child: and the children shall rise up against their parents, and cause them to be put to death... 35 For I am come to set a man at variance against his father, and the daughter against her mother, and the daughter in law against her mother in law. 36 And a man's foes shall be they of his own household.

Our Savior says we must expect rejection even from our dearest loved ones. Love which by nature is the strongest—brother to brother, parents to children, children to parents—is still not as strong as enmity against God. Do you see how strongly sin reigns over the sinner!

Hated of All Men

Matthew 10: 22: And ye shall be hated of all men for my name's sake:

Our Shepherd tells us we must expect to be hated of ALL men. **Ye SHALL be**—this is not a maybe. **Hated of ALL men**—there may be varying degrees: some may appear kind outwardly; but every unregenerate sinner hates the believer; if not in their hand and tongue—in their heart. **For my name's sake.** Now, if we give others cause to hate us, that is not what the Savior is speaking about. **For MY NAME'S SAKE** means for telling them the truth and making a stand for the truth. If you declare:

- **Total Depravity**—All men are ruined sinners. Christ said to unregenerate men, Joh 7:7: The world cannot hate you; but me it hateth, because I testify of it, that the works thereof are evil.
- **Unconditional election**—God saves by sovereign electing grace by which he chose his people in Christ before the foundation of the world. First message Christ preached, they tried to throw him off a hill.
- **Limited Atonement**—Christ made atonement for a particular number of sinners given him of the Father, and those are the only ones for whom he died. He accomplished their redemption, justice is satisfied, so each one shall be called out because God is just.
- **Irresistible grace**—man cannot make himself be born again: not by his will, not by his decision, not by religious acts. Christ declared, sinners must be born again of the Spirit of God. And no man is able to resist this work of Christ—“thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power.” When Christ showed his power to bind the strong man and cast out devils, they said, “He has a devil, he does it by Satan.”
- **Perseverance of the saints**—God our Savior shall preserve each one he calls to faith in him because he is our sovereign Shepherd. Therefore each and every one shall continue steadfast in faith until the end.

Application: Brethren, the reason we suffer is because the gospel sword draws a line in the earth. It forces men to take sides. Christ does not allow a man to remain neutral when he hears the gospel. He forces him: to bow OR stiffen his neck in rebellion; to confess love for OR enmity against; to believe OR to reject Christ. Therefore, whether men are in religion, in civil government, or members of the same family—the gospel divides all men—some on the side of Christ with his sheep OTHERS on the side with Satan and his wolves.

Be certain we get this: this division is not the fault of Christ or his gospel or his sheep. It is the fault of those who will not believe. All natural men are enmity against God. You who are now quickened know, we too, were once “enemies in our mind by wicked works,” (Col 1: 21)

Romans 8: 6 For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and PEACE. 7 Because the carnal mind IS ENMITY against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. 8 So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God. 9 But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his.

Another reason is, the faith of those that believe condemns those who believe not. Therefore, the unbeliever is enmity against the believer.

John 15:24 If I had not done among them the works which none other man did, they had not had sin: but now have they both seen and hated both me and my Father.

Also, the gospel, like a sword, cuts the unbeliever to the heart. Steven preached the gospel, before his enemies, scriptures says,

Acts 7:54: When they heard these things, they were CUT TO THE HEART, and they gnashed on him with their teeth.

Application: Now brethren, Christ has told us truthfully the very worst that can happen to us in his service; and he would have us to be truthful with ourselves, to count the cost. This is what it will cost to serve him. All that will live godly in Christ Jesus, must suffer persecution; “we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God.” But believer, look at how awful these sufferings are. Now listen to the scripture—**Rom 8: 18 For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.**

III. THIRDLY, CHRIST TELLS US WHAT TO DO IN THE FACE OF SUFFERING

Be Wise as Serpents

Matthew 10: 16: be ye therefore wise as serpents, and harmless as doves.

Snakes usually see trouble before trouble sees them, they avoid it. Believer, be watchful, recognize when trouble is approaching, don't seek a fight, avoid it. Do not avoid them by cowardice, compromise, or intimidation. But do not court persecution by being obnoxious, arrogant, or even out of order and place.

At all times snakes are near a place of safety. They flee into it the moment they see trouble. Christ is our Refuge. Have your heart set on Christ all the time; when trouble appears, flee to Christ.

Scripture speaks of “the deaf adder that stoppeth her ear; Which will not hearken to the voice of charmers, charming never so wisely.” (Ps 58: 4-5) Believer, be extra careful what you hear. There are few men faithful to preach the gospel.

Be Harmless as Doves

Believer, be mild and meek, harmless and simple **as a dove**—rather than passionate and proud; Be without gall: not only do no hurt, but bear no ill will. Seek to be helpers—not harmful.

1 Corinthian 14:20: Brethren, be not children in understanding: howbeit in malice be ye children, but in understanding be men.

1 Thessalonians 5:22: Abstain from all appearance of evil.

Do Not Expect to be Above our Master

Matthew 10: 24 The disciple is not above *his* master, nor the servant above his lord. 25 It is enough for the disciple that he be as his master, and the servant as his lord. If they have called the master of the house Beelzebub, how much more *shall they call them of his household?*

Our Savior says, do not expect to be treated better than our Savior. If we follow our Master, we will, to some degree suffer these things he suffered. He was slandered and rejected by those among whom he ministered. All of these groups of men that he says will reject us, rejected him: religious leaders and civil leaders, his own house—he came unto his own and they received him not; those in his own family did not believe him; Judas betrayed him; his disciples forsook him, all men hated him and still do by nature! Men “called him Beelzebub,” a devil, a glutton, a winebibber, and a sinner. Few believed his message.

It is enough for the disciple that he be as his master, and the servant as his lord. Did you know, this believer, listen to Paul:

Philippian 1: 29: For unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for his sake;

Romans 8:17: And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together.

2 Timothy 2:12 If we suffer, we shall also reign with him: if we deny him, he also will deny us:

Fear Not, Vengeance is Mine

Matthew 10: 26: Fear them not therefore: for there is nothing covered, that shall not be revealed; and hid, that shall not be known.

Our Savior says, “Don’t fear men, vengeance is mine.”

Speak What Christ Has Taught You

Matthew 10: 27: What I tell you in darkness, that speak ye in light: and what ye hear in the ear, that preach ye upon the housetops.

He says speak the truth loud and clear to everyone. The goal of our persecutors brethren, more than anything else, is to silence the gospel. A false preacher will slander you because he fears other sinners hearing the gospel that is bringing you so much joy. It is amazing how Christ can get the good news to one who is sitting under false preaching, draw them out and no one or nothing can stop him! It is one of the ways he makes us to rejoice that the work is of God and not of us. So the Savior commands all who speak of him: speak everything you have heard from Christ. Hold nothing back!

Do Not Fear Men, Fear God

Matthew 10: 28 And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell. 29 Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing? and one of them shall not fall on the ground without your Father. 30 But the very hairs of your head are all numbered. 31 Fear ye not therefore, ye are of more value than many sparrows.

The same sovereign Father who guards the little sparrow, “one of them shall not fall on the ground without your Father.” He guards you who have been called by his grace. This is the same Father who loved you from everlasting. He gave his only begotten Son for you. He says, “The very hairs of your head are all numbered. Fear ye not therefore, ye are of more value than many sparrows.”

Confess Christ Before Men

Matthew 10: 32 Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven. **33** But whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father which is in heaven....

When the Lord Jesus was serving his Father to redeem his people, he said,

Isa 50:7 For the Lord GOD will help me; therefore shall I not be confounded: therefore have I set my face like a flint, and I know that I shall not be ashamed.

He bore the shame of the cross. Christ bore the curse of the cross. But he was not ashamed for trusting his Father. There he sits at the right hand of the Father right now!

Now, if I believe he did that for me, I won't be ashamed to confess him before men?

Romans 10: 11 For the scripture saith, Whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed.

It may cost us the reproach of men to confess Christ in this world. But it will cost us the reproach of Christ in eternity for refusing to confess him.

- Confess him in baptism
- Confess him in witnessing
- Confess him in identification with him

Do Not Be Drawn Away by the Love of Loved Ones

Matthew 10: 37 He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me: and he that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me. **38** And he that taketh not his cross, and followeth after me, is not worthy of me. **39** He that findeth his life shall lose it: and he that loseth his life for my sake shall find it.

The cross of Christ is painful, but we must take it up and follow him—As we must not be deterred from Christ by the hatred of our relations which he spoke of (Mt 10:21,35-36), so we must not be drawn from him, by their love.

Matthew 10: 22:...he that endureth to the end shall be saved.

Hebrews 3:14 For we are made partakers of Christ, if we hold the beginning of our confidence stedfast unto the end;

James 1:12 Blessed is the man that endureth temptation: for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him.

Amen!