

## Pentecost V: Matthew 10:24-33: Be True to Christ, Your Teacher and Lord

1. We have included vss. 24-25 in this pericope because the remainder of the text cannot be understood without them. Vss. 16-23 show how the disciples would find themselves as "sheep among wolves", defenseless midst betrayal and persecution, and yet not defenseless for the Triune God will be their defense. Vss. 24-33 employ different metaphors, but continue the treatment which disciples can expect simply because they own Christ as Teacher and Lord. But, even if it means death at the hands of men, they will prove to be "more than conquerors through Him Who loved them" (Rom. 8:37) because He will protect them and, in the final judgment, will confess them in the presence of His heavenly Father.
2. With reference to the text for Pentecost IV these Notes said: "The commentaries point out that Matthew, unlike Mark and Luke, records Jesus' instructions (vss. 6-42) which cover not only the tour to the Jews in Galilee but also the instructions for their ministry to both Jews and Gentiles which begins at Mt. 28:19." That becomes clear in today's pericope because the disciples were not subjected to persecution, betrayal, name-calling, and even death until after Pentecost. Jesus' enemies had called Jesus a devil (Mt. 12:24) but not His disciples. Jesus came into severe conflict with the Jewish authorities (John chapters five, six, seven, eight, ten, eleven) and unbelievers, but it did not involve the disciples directly. But Jesus warned His disciples (Jn. 15:18-25; 16:1-2) in the night when He was betrayed that their lot would be different after Pentecost. And it happened. Throughout the Book of Acts we have the fearless testimony of the Apostles. Tradition says that all, except the Apostle John, died a violent death. Furthermore, what happened to the Apostles can be expected by (and happens to) Christians in each generation from the Apostolic Age to Judgment Day.
3. Mt. 10:24-33 divides itself into three parts: a) Vss. 24-25: What happened to Christ will come, in greater measure, to His disciples; b) Vss. 26-31: The true fear of the believer as opposed to the fleshly fear of the denier; c) Vss. 32-33: An "either-or" which does not allow a third possibility.
4. Vs. 24: Note prominent correlatives "not is"--"nor is". This vs. has parallel statements. Both are axiomatic, readily understood everywhere in the world: a) A disciple, pupil, learner believes, teaches and confesses what his teacher believes, teaches and confesses. b) A slave, servant is owned by his lord or master. He has no will of his own but that of his master. c) Neither disciple nor slave is above his teacher or master. If he ceases to believe, teach or confess as does his teacher or if he substitutes his own will for that of his master, he ceases to be disciple and slave. He goes against the axiom which is readily understood by all.
5. Vs. 25: The first sentence in this vs. extends the axiom stated in vs. 24. ἀρκετόν τῷ μαθητῇ is elucidated by the ἵνα clause which stands in apposition to the three words. Is γένηται translated "to be" or "to become"? The translations are divided on this. It is surely "to be". ὡς does not denote equality. That should be obvious. It denotes similarity as to a certain characteristic, which is exemplified in the second sentence of the vs. NEB gets at the true meaning: "The pupil should be content to share his teacher's lot, the servant to share his master's." Kretzmann remarks: "They should not expect to be better off than their Lord and Master, the Head of the Christian household." The second sentence of this vs. is an example of what we call the fact or particular condition. In form and thought it is just like Jn. 15:20. Cf. Lk. 6:40 and Jn. 13:16. In Mt. 10:25b we have another metaphor, the man in charge of the house and the people who live in the house as a family. Jesus, of course, means Himself and His disciples. Jesus' enemies did call Him Beelzeboul, the devil. Cf. Mt. 10:34; 12:24.27. πῶς ἄλλο is from the lesser to the greater. TEV reads: "the members of the family will be called by even worse names." Kretzmann says: "The enemies 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." Lenski: "The Jews called Jesus a devil's name because he drove out devils; and Jesus says that they will treat his disciples in the same way with less hesitation."

6. Vs. 26: Forms of the verb φοβέομαι occur four times in vss. 26-31. This section is paralleled at Lk. 12:2-9. Vss. 26-31 can be subdivided into three sections: a) Vss. 26-27; b) Vs. 28; c) Vss. 29-31. οὐν is inferential, pointing back to vss. 24-25: "You are not above Christ when it comes to suffering. But He conquered them. Therefore etc." μὴ φοβηθῆτε means "don't begin fearing them." The antecedent of αὐτοῦς, of course, is the persecutors. γάρ in the next clause is explanatory and points forward. Note the parallelism. Everything hidden and covered will be revealed and known. The LB applies it only to the persecutors: "For the time is coming when the truth will be revealed; their secret plots will become public information." Ylvisaker applies it only to the Christian message which they will preach: "And even granting that their word meets opposition from within and from without, the truth which they confess shall be victorious over all the earth. The Gospel shall become known throughout the world. Therefore they shall not permit themselves to be frightened by the strength of the opposition, but further the cause of the Kingdom with courage and assurance. The saying in vs. 26 is significant when applied to the promulgation of the Gospel in vs. 27." Bengel seems to be of this opinion. Kretzmann and Lenski take it of both the counsels of Christ's enemies and the preaching of the Gospel. The former says: "God will, on the Day of Judgment, set everything in the proper light and render to every man his dues." And Lenski: "The statement is general and here 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." These Notes prefer the interpretation of Kretzmann and Lenski. It amounts to a Christian axiom. Underlying vs. 26 is the thought that the Word of the Lord endures and conquers. God's Word will prosper and attain its goal. Read all of Is. 55.
7. Vs. 27: Again we have parallel thoughts. "What I say-speak" "What you hear-preach." Added to that we have the parallels "in the darkness-in the light" and "in the ear-on the housetops." Ylvisaker interprets: "within the disciple group-public promulgation" and "a symbol of familiarity-public promulgation." Lenski equates: "What is told in the darkness is the same as what is covered; and what is whispered into the ear is, of course, secret. . . . In due time they would be called on to make them public. Nor will the hostile efforts of men be able to prevent their publication. The gospel cannot be suppressed." Jesus is telling them to speak and proclaim in clear, unmistakable language, openly, courageously.
8. Vs. 28: καὶ means "furthermore". μὴ φοβεῖσθε ἀπὸ "quit being afraid of etc." Whenever Scripture tells believers not to be afraid, it gives the reason why they should not fear and is always practically saying: "Let Jesus do the worrying and fearing," if we may speak thus. Cf. I Pet. 5:7; Is. 43:1-5; Ps. 46:1-2; Mt. 6:33-34. On φοβεῖσθε ἀπὸ and φοβεῖσθε in this vs., Bengel rightly says: "I FEAR HIM is a stronger phrase than I AM AFRAID OF HIM." τῶν ἀποκτεννόντων, the article with the present participle denotes a class of people, those who hate Christ and His Gospel and will go so far as to kill τὸ σῶμα, but only "the body". They can do no more than that. δὲ, plainly "but". Note that τὴν ψυχὴν is placed prominently forward. Note the chiasmic arrangement of words in 28a. Soul and body are the two essential parts of man. ἀποκτείνω is a complementary or exegetical infinitive. Note that the participle from ἀποκτείνω is present tense, denoting a constant attitude, but the infinitive ἀποκτείνειν is effective aorist, something like "not at all able to kill the soul." No human being, not even the devil, can harm my soul, so long as I cling to and confess Jesus and His Word. What a comfort! φοβεῖσθε δὲ μᾶλλον "but instead (of fearing mere men) rather be constantly etc." τὸν δυνάμενον must mean God Himself, not the devil. ἀπολέσαι means "to destroy" in the sense of "punish forever". Another effective aorist infinitive. καὶ-καὶ "both-and". Note that ψυχὴν is placed

first here. If a Christian loses his soul, he loses all. Mk. 8:35.36. ἐν γέννη" in hell". That explains itself. Bengel remarks: "He who publicly preaches hidden truth, him the world afflicts; he who fears everything except Him. I Pet. 3:14.15." The person who fears God, does so by faith. He fears God in the sense that he refuses to commit sin and go contrary to the will of God. He speaks as did Joseph, Gen. 39:9. All sin is sin against GOD. He speaks as did Paul at I Cor. 9:27. He will not let his flesh get the upper hand. Gal. 5:16.17. Stephen, the martyr (Acts 7), is the best example, other than Christ Himself, of a person who feared God rather than to be afraid of people. Bengel aptly remarks: "It is not easy to preach the truth; and to none are severer precepts given than to the ministers of the Word, as is evident from the epistles to Timothy and Titus. . . . Many witnesses to the Truth have been first excited, and afterwards led on, by the most fearful terrors from God."

9. Vs. 29: We noted above that vss. 26-31 center on the word "fear". a) Vss. 26-27: Don't fear mere people because your message, spoken openly, will succeed; b) Vs. 28: Be fearless. Men can only kill your body but can't destroy your soul; c) Vss. 29-31: If God providentially cares for the seemingly worthless in the animal kingdom and cares for your body infinitely more than you can, why should you fear? Here we have two arguments from the lesser to the greater, one in vs. 29, the second in 30, and the two combined in vs. 31. οὐχὶ introduces a question which expects the answer "of course". The answer "of course" means: "They are nearly worthless. In fact, we didn't know they were worth that much." ἄσσορθου is gen. of price. It amounts to a penny in our day. Note that πωλεῖται is pres. pass., a constant truth. καὶ means "and yet". "One of them" heightens the argument. Only 1/2 penny's worth, five mills. "To fall to the earth" means, of course, "to die". "Without your Father" means "apart from your Father's will" (NKJV). LB has "without your Father knowing it" which is weak. It's a lot more than omniscience in this context. Bengel remarks: "Irenaeus, Tertullian, Novatian, Cyprian, Hilary, Augustine, and Cassiodorus read this passage ἀνευ τοῦ θελήματος τοῦ πατρὸς ὑμῶν." Bengel was convinced that thus the original Greek read, but that later scribes removed τοῦ θελήματος. Bengel may have been in error about the original reading, but the context calls for God's providential will and care. Note that Jesus says "your" Father, not "their" Father. He is not the Savior of sparrows and yet cares infinitely for them. The single point is: "How great Thou art!" We so easily doubt the greatness of God and His loving providence which reaches even the cheapest life in nature.
10. Vs. 30: Vs. 29 ended with ὑμῶν, gen. of relationship. Vs. 30 begins with ὑμῶν, gen. of possession. δὲ καὶ means "and even". τῆς κεφαλῆς is adjectival. "All are numbered", by God, of course. This is a present periphrastic, denoting the present state, as translated by all translations except TEV and JB which make it "have been counted". God is not pictured as a "hair-counter" but as a God Who cares infinitely and providentially for the crown of creation, man. It has been estimated that the average human being has about 150,000 hairs on his head. If He cares that much, what dare or can I ever fear?
11. Vs. 31: οὖν in inferential "therefore", "in view of God's infinite care for the cheapest in nature and for the smallest detail in the crown of creation, man". μὴ φοβεῖσθε "quit fearing", which implies that we do. The conclusion is obvious, but lest we miss it He adds: "Than many sparrows you are of more value, YOU." The gen. is a gen. of comparison. ὑμεῖς is emphatic. Note the contrast between "one" and "many", with reference to sparrows in vss. 29 and 31. His providential will covers just one sparrow. How much more the many? But you are worth more even than the many. Quit being afraid!
12. Vs. 32: οὖν is again inferential "therefore". It draws an inference which covers vss. 24-31. πᾶς ὅστις "everyone whoever" no matter who. The basic meaning of ὁμολογέω is "to say the same thing". Using this same verb, Rom. 10:9 says: "If you confess the Lord Jesus with your mouth and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved." And then in vs. 10: "For with

the heart man believes, resulting in righteousness, and with the mouth he confesses, resulting in salvation." The confession of a Christian is not a meritorious deed but rather a confession of what has already saved him. ἐν ἑμοῖ in Mt. 10:32 denotes the intimate relationship between Christian confessor and Lord. By faith the confessor says the same thing as Christ did as to His person, Word and work for all men. ἔμπροσθεν τῶν ἀνθρώπων "before the people" obviously means openly, frankly, fearlessly. κἀγὼ means "I also". ἐν αὐτῷ denotes the close relationship again. His confession will correspond to that of the confessor, openly, frankly, fearlessly "before My Father, the One in heaven." Note that He says "My Father", not "your Father". Jesus is the Advocate of the confessor among men. This is primarily eschatological, the final Judgment, but is going on now already. If we refuse to confess Him now, it follows that He is not confessing us before the Heavenly Father. If this last sentence bothers your conscience, read I Jn. 2:1, your only help.

13. Vs. 33: δέ means "and contrarywise". The opposite holds true also. Note the correspondence between vss. 32 and 33. But note the differences also: This time με and αὐτόν, not ἐν ἑμοῖ and ἐν αὐτῷ. The former are impersonal, the latter very personal. "To deny" Christ is to do to Him what Peter did to Him. There can be no starker law, the second use of the law, than this verse. Bengel calls it the ius talionis, the law of retribution. Rev. 3:5 is very comforting for the confessing believer. It corresponds to vs. 32. Mt. 7:23 is a frightening passage. It corresponds to vs. 33. Repentance covers all of Christian living. God, be merciful to me, the sinner!