

The Gospel According to Matthew pt 33

Lessons from the Master

In the last verse of chapter 9 our Lord urged His disciples to pray that the Lord God would send forth laborers into His field to gather in His harvest.

Here in chapter 10 the Lord Jesus demonstrates that He is “**the Lord of the harvest**” by sending forth His laborers into His field to reap His harvest.

Brother Don Fortner wrote; *“Matthew 10 is a chapter of Holy Scripture that ought always be read with peculiar solemnity. In these forty-two verses we have the first ordination sermon ever preached. Those being ordained and set apart for the work of the gospel ministry are the twelve apostles. The ordination preacher is the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God. The solemn charge here given by Christ to the first gospel preachers of the New Testament era is the charge he gives to all who are sent of God to preach the gospel”*.

In last weeks study our focus in the first 15 instructional verses, was “**the message**”, (v7), then we closed with a look at, “**freely ye have received, freely give**” (v8).

God’s servants in this world are sheep in the midst of wolves, As sheep, we look to our all-wise shepherd, for needed wisdom, we look to Him for grace, and strength, that only the Lord our Shepherd can give us to do His will. In these verses of Scripture The Lord Jesus Christ gives His servants words of instruction to sustain and comfort us, as we endeavor to serve the interest of His kingdom and the souls of men in this world.

Consider with me if you will 10 points in these last verses of Matthew chapter 10!

1st. We must be modest in our expectations. (read verse 16-23)

If we serve God, if our object is the glory of God, we must not make, success our goal. **“Beware of men.”** We are **“as sheep in the midst of wolves.”** If you set your heart to serve God, you must make up your mind to be hated, abused, misunderstood, slandered, and persecuted by men. Even your nearest relations will oppose you if they do not know God. Whether you preach, or teach, or visit, or pass out tracts, or write, or give witness to others, whatever you do, for Christ, you must expect nothing from the world but opposition.

Many who once seemed full of zeal have turned back because they had extravagant expectations. Many a preacher has been taken in Satan’s snare of “success” and has compromised the gospel to get it! Our only ambition ought to be the glory of God. Our only duty is the will of God. Our only guide is the Word of God. The only success we should desire is the approval of God. We must endure the hatred and opposition of men throughout the days of our lives; **“but he that endureth to the end shall be saved.”** (v22)

2nd. **If we would serve God in this world, we must be “wise as serpents and harmless as doves.”** (v16).

Simply put, we must pray for God to give us wisdom, good sense, a sound mind, and sincerity of heart. The word “harmless” means “simple.” We are to be simple, honest, sincere as God’s servants. Yet, we must have wisdom and good sense. We must never avoid persecution by compromise, or intimidation. The Lord allows His servants to flee from one city to another. But He does not tell us to hold our tongues.

JC Rile wrote; *“we must never foolishly court persecution by being obnoxious, arrogant, or even out of order and place. There is a proper time and place for witnessing and bearing testimony to the gospel; but there are times when it is out of place to do so as well”.*

When someone is paying you to work for example, it is evil, not spiritual, to rob him of the labor for which you are being paid. discussing religious matters with your co-workers is to be done on your own time.

To state the matter simply, our God does not require us to throw out common sense when we are engaged to do His will.

The offence of the cross we must bear. But we are not to be offensive. Let us **“strive to walk circumspectly, not as fools but as wise”** (Eph 5:15).

3rd. We must never expect to be treated better or to receive better in this world than our Savior did. Read (v17-25)

If we leave men alone, they will probably leave us alone; but dare we? Folks **“All that the Father giveth me shall come to me”** does not give the saints of God reason to sit on our hands and wait on God. We must, as our Savior did, expose man’s sin, proclaim God’s righteousness in and by Christ Jesus The Lord, and call sinners to repentance and faith in Christ.

If we follow our Master, we will, in the ordinary course of events, experience what He experienced. When He declared His Sovereignty, He was slandered and rejected by those among whom He ministered. Men **“called him Beelzebub,”** a devil, a glutton, a winebibber, and a sinner. Few believed His message. Let us not be surprised if we experience the same.

C. H. Spurgeon wrote; *“If the Master of the family is likened to Beelzebub, the fly-god of the Philistines, and named after the prince of demons, by what names will they call us? Doubtless malice will quicken wit, and sarcasm will invent words which pierce as daggers, and cut like knives....God was slandered in Paradise, and Christ on Calvary, how can we hope to escape? Instead of wishing to avoid bearing the cross, let us be content to endure dishonor for our King s sake.”*

4th. We must be content to wait for him whom we serve to vindicate us in the day of judgment. Read (v26).

Vengeance belongs to the Lord. If we are His servants, He will both vindicate and avenge our names and our work in the last day. Either here or there God will vindicate His servants.

And He will do it by judgment; **“Commit thy way unto the LORD; trust also in him; and he shall bring it to pass.**

And he shall bring forth thy righteousness as the light, and thy judgment as the noonday. Rest in the LORD, and wait patiently for him: fret not thyself because of him who prospereth in his way, because of the man who bringeth wicked devices to pass. Cease from anger, and forsake wrath: fret not thyself in any wise to do evil. For evildoers shall be cut off: but those that wait upon the LORD, they shall inherit the earth". (Psa 37:5-9) ;

(1Co 4:1-5) Let a man so account of us, as of the ministers of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of God. Moreover it is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful. But with me it is a very small thing that I should be judged of you, or of man's judgment: yea, I judge not mine own self. For I know nothing by myself; yet am I not hereby justified: but he that judgeth me is the Lord. Therefore judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come, who both will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the hearts: and then shall every man have praise of God.

Wicked men, under cover of religion and devotion, may cover their hatred for a time, but it will be revealed at God's appointed time and in God's appointed way to their everlasting shame.

5th. If we would serve God we must fear God rather than man.
Read (Mat 10:26-28).

Like Daniel and his friends, we must be willing to surrender anything and everything, even life itself, rather than compromise the glory of God, or violate the truth of God, or go against the Word of God. The wrath of man may be hard to bear, but it is infinitely easier to bear than the wrath of God. Let us ever be faithful to our God.

Our Master here tells us to blow the trumpet of the everlasting gospel, to loudly and publicly proclaim to all the truths and mysteries of God's free grace, which He has made known to us. In quiet meditation, prayer, and study let every servant of Christ seek and receive God's message.

Let none speak until spoken to of God through His Word; but once God speaks we are to proclaim His message everywhere.

Brother Don Wrote; *“Receive the message like a whisper in your ear. Then sound it forth from “the housetops.” Like the town-criers of old, get to the highest point possible and sound out the Word of the Lord”*.

Spurgeon put it this way, *“Keep the study and the closet out of sight, and there in secret meet with Jesus, and then set the pulpit of testimony in as conspicuous a place as you can find.”*

Folks, We are responsible to preach the gospel of Christ as fully and as widely as possible by every means at our disposal in the generation in which we live. Lord help us to do just that.

6th. We must trust the providential care of God. Read (v29-31)

The path of duty may lead us into danger. Our lives may seem to be in peril if we go forward. But we must ever realize that everything is in God’s hand. Whatever fearful thing we meet, as we serve our God, we may say to it, as our Lord did to Pilate; **“Thou couldst have no power at all against me, except it were given thee from above”** (Joh 19:11).

If our heavenly Father observes the death of a sparrow, Should we not also to be confident that He will take care of us, even in the most minute concerns of our lives. His care for use extends even to the numbering of the hairs on our heads. Every circumstance of our lives is controlled by the arrangement of our heavenly Father’s eternal love and grace toward us. Let us never look upon anything as a matter of chance. That which we experience day by day is but the fulfilling of our God’s eternal purpose of grace for our everlasting good, is that not what a scripture we quote often say’s? **“And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose”**. (Rom 8:28). Or **“He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?”** (Rom 8:32)

7th. **If we would serve God in this world, we must constantly live in the anticipation of judgment and eternity.** Read (v32-33)

It may bring sneers of men to confess Christ in this world. But to deny Him, is a cost much worse. Without question, these words extend to the whole of our lives. We must never blush to confess Christ and His gospel before the world that hates Him. But the confession of Christ before men begins in baptism, does it not?

Believers confess Christ before men in believer's baptism. In baptism we confess our union with Christ and our confidence in Him as our representative before God; **"For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ"** (Gal 3:27).

Being buried with Christ symbolically in the waters of baptism, we acknowledge our sin and its just punishment, and we testify of our faith in Christ's substitutionary death for the satisfaction of justice, by which our sins have been put away; **"Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death?"** (Rom 6:3).

Rising up from the watery grave, we confess our faith in the resurrection of Christ, our representative resurrection in Christ, our spiritual resurrection by Christ, and our bodily resurrection in the likeness of Christ; **"Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life"** (Rom 6:4); And; **"Buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead"** (Col 2:12).

Being raised up from spiritual death by the grace of God in regeneration, through the merits of Christ's obedience, we confess to God and all the world that we will henceforth **"walk in the newness of life"**, for the glory of our God. Our confession of faith is a confession of Christ.

What an honor it is to confess Him before men! What a reward it shall be to be confessed by Him before His Father's throne in the last day!

Baptism has nothing whatsoever to do with the accomplishment of our salvation, Yet it is a matter of obedience to our God and Savior. Many ask, "*Can a person be saved without baptism?*" The answer is obvious. Of course! All of God's people are saved without baptism. Salvation is by grace alone as we read in Eph 2:8-9. But refusal to be baptized is rebellion against the plain command of God. In the New Testament all who were received as brethren and regarded as believers were those who had been baptized. Can you sight one person regarded as a believer in the New Testament who refused baptism. Here, our Lord warns us that those who refuse to confess Him before men, He will refuse to confess before His Father's throne in heaven. What a solemn warning! To be disowned by the Son of God before His Father who is in heaven is to perish forever in hell!

8th. If we would serve our God and the souls of men, we must understand the gospel of Christ is the cause of constant irreconcilable divisions among men. Read (v34-36)

Wherever Christ comes there is a "*division because of him.*" The gospel of Christ divides men and often divides families. Unity, peace, and harmony are great blessings. We ought to earnestly seek them, pray for them, and sacrifice anything to obtain them – sacrifice anything except the truth of God that is! Peace that is purchased at the expense of truth is no peace at all!

9th. If you and I would serve Christ, if we would do the will of God, we must take up our cross and follow him every day.

Read (v37-39)

Faith in and obedience to Christ is nothing less than the surrender of my life to His rule as my Lord, my Savior, and my King.

Christ will not have me without having all of me; **“So likewise, whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple.”** (Luk 14:33). If we would have Christ, we must surrender all to him.

Spurgeon wrote, *“No man has truly given himself to Christ unless he has said, ‘My Lord, I give thee this day my body, my soul, my powers, my talents, my goods, my house, my children, and all that I have. Henceforth, I hold them at thy will, as a steward under thee. Thine they are. As for me, I have nothing. I surrendered all to thee!’”*

The Lord Jesus Christ is the Pearl of great price. If we would have him, we must sell all to get him; **“Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto a merchant man, seeking goodly pearls: Who, when he had found one pearl of great price, went and sold all that he had, and bought it.”** (Mat 13:45-46).

Christianity, true Christianity, true saving faith involves a total surrender to Christ the Lord. Either you will be a servant under the dominion of King Jesus, voluntarily giving up all to His claims, or you will receive your just reward, eternal damnation! You may not have to give up anything in actuality. But surrender to Christ must be just as real and complete in your heart as if you had actually given up everything, even down to life itself. Our Lord Jesus Christ requires total and unreserved surrender to Himself. Turn us Oh Lord and we shall be turned. Christ will be Lord of all, or He will not be Lord at all.

Lastly, **If we would be the servants of God in this world, we must never expect our reward in this world, but in the world to come.**
Read (v40-42)

What a blessed word this is! God’s people are so thoroughly and completely one with Christ that to receive one of His is to receive Him. There is a special word of encouragement here to those who are sent by Christ to preach His gospel. Gospel preachers are God’s ambassadors to men. To receive Christ’s messengers is to receive the Lord Jesus himself, and to receive the Lord Jesus is to receive God himself.

That which is done to God's servants in this world, good or evil, is treated by our Lord as being done to Himself. And that which is done to Christ's redeemed ones, good or evil, is considered by our Redeemer as being done to Him as well; **"And before him shall be gathered all nations: and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats: And he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left. Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: For I was an hungred, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in: Naked, and ye clothed me: I was sick, and ye visited me: I was in prison, and ye came unto me. Then shall the righteous answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungred, and fed thee? or thirsty, and gave thee drink? When saw we thee a stranger, and took thee in? or naked, and clothed thee? Or when saw we thee sick, or in prison, and came unto thee? And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me. Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels: For I was an hungred, and ye gave me no meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me no drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me not in: naked, and ye clothed me not: sick, and in prison, and ye visited me not. Then shall they also answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungred, or athirst, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not minister unto thee? Then shall he answer them, saying, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye did it not to one of the least of these, ye did it not to me. And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal."** (Mat 25:32-46).

The eyes of our God and Savior are always upon those who serve Him. We may be unnoticed by others; but we are not insignificant in the eyes of our God. He observes those who oppose and oppress us. And He takes notice of those who help. He took notice of Diotrefes, who opposed John. And He took notice of Lydia, who assisted Paul. All these things are written down in the great book of His remembrance and will be brought to light at the last day.

The chief butler forgot Joseph when He was restored to his place. But the Lord Jesus never forgets any of his people and counts the least, most insignificant service done for His honor and in His name as the greatest (Mar 14:3-9) **And being in Bethany in the house of Simon the leper, as he sat at meat, there came a woman having an alabaster box of ointment of spikenard very precious; and she brake the box, and poured it on his head. And there were some that had indignation within themselves, and said, Why was this waste of the ointment made? For it might have been sold for more than three hundred pence, and have been given to the poor. And they murmured against her. And Jesus said, Let her alone; why trouble ye her? she hath wrought a good work on me. For ye have the poor with you always, and whensoever ye will ye may do them good: but me ye have not always. She hath done what she could: she is come aforehand to anoint my body to the burying. Verily I say unto you, Wheresoever this gospel shall be preached throughout the whole world, this also that she hath done shall be spoken of for a memorial of her.**

It matters not whether we preach the gospel to great multitudes, or open our homes to His children, or give a cup of cold water in His name, all are the same in His sight. We are responsible only to do that which He gives us opportunity and ability to do. But we do have a responsibility. And all that is done for Him is accepted and honored by Him. In 1st Sa 2:30 the Lord gives us an example of one of His own who turns a deaf ear to the Lord's warnings; **"Wherefore the LORD God of Israel saith, I said indeed that thy house, and the house of thy father, should walk before me for ever: but now the LORD saith, Be it far from me; for them that honour me I will honour, and they that despise me shall be lightly esteemed."** (the House of Levi)

Are we helpers or hinderers in the cause of Christ? Do we assist God's servants, or do we impede their labors? Do we aid His little ones, or do we stand in their way? These are serious questions that ought to be considered by each of us. God give us grace, as often as we have opportunity, to give **"a cup of cold water,"** or **"receive a prophet,"** or **"receive a righteous man,"** in the name of Christ, laboring together in the Lord's vineyard to gather in His harvest.