



“DUTY! HONOR! COUNTRY!”

MATTHEW Chapter 10:16-42

- Someone once said, “If our greatest need had been information, God would have sent us an educator. If our greatest need had been money, God would have sent us an economist. If our greatest need had been pleasure, God would have sent us an entertainer. But our greatest need was forgiveness, so God sent us a Savior!”

- In this passage the disciples are briefed on their rescue mission deployment; they are going into dangerous, and vicious territory. These verses give a glimpse into the future of Christ’s disciples; first, they are persecuted by Christ rejecting religious Jews; secondly, in the near future the disciples will be persecuted by the gentiles and their rulers; thirdly, in the midst of this double-edged sword of persecution, they will have to battle against domestic and/or family persecution; ultimately in the “*last days*” the whole world will be against Christ and His followers.

~ LET’S FOLLOW THREE COMMANDS IN THIS PASSAGE OF SCRIPTURE:

> (v16-23) COMMAND #1 – DUTY!!!

(Our Christian duty is to testify that Jesus is the Christ, the Savior!)

(v16) Jesus said that He is sending us out as “*sheep in the midst of wolves.*” As one embattled Christian once said, “The enemy is in front of me! The enemy is behind me! The enemy is on either side of me! I am surrounded! Now my enemy cannot get away!” **Sheep are defenseless, only the Shepherd can protect them.**

- In Hebrews 13:20-21 - *Now may the God of peace who brought up our Lord Jesus from the dead, that great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, make you complete in every good work to do His will, working in you what is well pleasing in His sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory forever and ever. Amen.*

- We must watch out for ravenous wolves trying to destroy us, and we must be discerning of wolves inside the church trying to deceive and divide us.

- Jesus said in Matthew 7:15-16 - *Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravenous wolves.*

- Paul said in Acts 20:29 - *For I know this, that after my departure savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock.*

- Christians are to be “*wise as serpents and harmless as doves*” – Snakes have no legs, no arms, yet they cunningly camouflage themselves in their environment as they wisely hunt their prey. We are not on a search and destroy mission, but rather a search and rescue mission for lost and captive souls.

- Paul understood this well when he wrote in 1 Corinthians 9:19-23, *For though I am free from all men, I have made myself a servant to all, that I might win the more; and to the Jews I became as a Jew, that I might win Jews; to those who are under the law, as under the law, that I might win those who are under the law; to those who are without law, as without law (not being without law toward God, but under law toward Christ), that I might win those who are without law; to the weak I became as weak, that I might win the weak. I have become all things to all men, that I might by all means save some.*

- We are encouraged in Scripture in Ephesians 5:15-16 - *Be very careful, then, how you live — not as unwise but as wise, making the most of every opportunity, because the days are evil.*

- Prov 11:30 - *The fruit of the righteous is a tree of life, and he who wins souls is wise.*

(v17) Jesus warns of the initial persecution coming from the Jewish religious leaders, in Acts 5:27-42 - *And when they had brought them, they set them before the council. And the high priest asked them, saying, "Did we not strictly command you not to teach in this name? And look, you have filled Jerusalem with your doctrine, and intend to bring this Man's blood on us!"*

But Peter and the other apostles answered and said: "We ought to obey God rather than men. The God of our fathers raised up Jesus whom you murdered by hanging on a tree. Him God has exalted to His right hand to be Prince and Savior, to give repentance to Israel and forgiveness of sins. And we are His witnesses to these things, and so also is the Holy Spirit whom God has given to those who obey Him."

When they heard this, they were furious and plotted to kill them. Then one in the council stood up, a Pharisee named Gamaliel, a teacher of the law held in respect by all the people, and commanded them to put the apostles outside for a little while. And he said to them: "Men of Israel, take heed to yourselves what you intend to do regarding these men. For some time ago Theudas rose up, claiming to be somebody. A number of men, about four hundred, joined him. He was slain, and all who obeyed him were scattered and came to nothing. After this man, Judas of Galilee rose up in the days of the census, and drew away many people after him. He also perished, and all who obeyed him were dispersed. And now I say to you, keep away from these men and let them alone; for if this plan or this work is of men, it will come to nothing; but if it is of God, you cannot overthrow it — lest you even be found to fight against God."

And they agreed with him, and when they had called for the apostles and beaten them, they commanded that they should not speak in the name of Jesus, and let them go. So they departed from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for His name. And daily in the temple, and in every house, they did not cease teaching and preaching Jesus as the Christ.

- In the annals of Christendom, we discover a false church that arises and persecutes true “born again” Christians (i.e. - *the inquisitions*).

(v18) Jesus says that we’ll have opportunity to speak before governors and kings. Notice why you’re brought before them, “*for My sake*” and observe our purpose “*as a testimony*.”

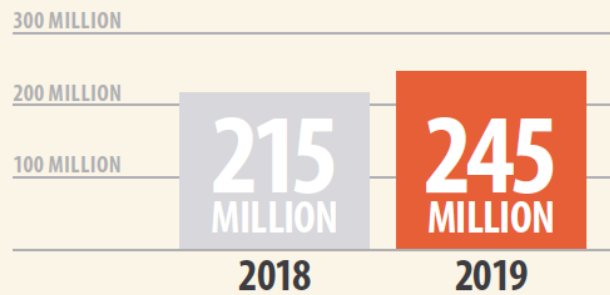
(v19-20) The Holy Spirit will speak through us! - Jesus shares in John 15:26-16:4 - *"But when the Helper comes, whom I shall send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth who proceeds from the Father, He will testify of Me. And you also will bear witness, because you have been with Me from the beginning. "These things I have spoken to you, that you should not be made to stumble. They will put you out of the synagogues; yes, the time is coming that whoever kills you will think that he offers God service. And these things they will do to you because they have not known the Father nor Me. But these things I have told you, that when the time comes, you may remember that I told you of them.*

> Christian persecution - From AD 33 to 1900, it has been documented that there have been 14 million martyrs, but today is a different story, observe this chart provided by OPEN DOORS WORLDWIDE MINISTRIES:

PERSECUTION BY THE NUMBERS

≈14%

The rise in the number of Christians in the top 50 countries on the World Watch List who experience high levels of persecution.



1 in 9 Christians experience high levels of persecution worldwide.



During the World Watch List 2019 reporting period, in the top 50 countries:

4,136

Christians were killed for faith-related reasons. On average, that's 11 Christians killed every day for their faith.



2,625

Christians were detained without trial, arrested, sentenced and imprisoned.

1,266

churches or Christian buildings were attacked.



ONE  = 100

(v21) Families will be at odds because of Christ! Even to the point of physical persecution and death. *Barnes the Bible expositor* writes – “The ties which bind brothers and sisters, and parents and children together, are so strong that it could scarcely be believed that division of sentiment on religious subjects would cause them to forget these tender relations.

Yet history assures us that this has been often done. If this be so, then how inexpressibly awful must be the malignity of the human heart by nature against religion! Nothing else but this dreadful opposition to God and his gospel ever has induced or ever can induce people to violate the most tender relations, and consign the best friends to torture, racks, and flames.

It adds to the horrors of this, that those who were put to death in persecution were tormented in the most awful modes that human ingenuity could devise. They were crucified; were thrown into boiling oil; were burned at the stake; were roasted slowly over coals; were compelled to drink melted lead; were torn in pieces by beasts of prey; were covered with pitch and set on fire.

Yet, dreadful as this prediction was, it was fulfilled; and, incredible as it seems, parents and children, husbands, and wives, were found wicked enough to deliver up each other to these cruel modes of death on account of attachment to the gospel.

Such is the opposition of the heart of man to the gospel! That hostility which will overcome the strong ties of natural affection, and which will be satisfied with nothing else to show its power, can be no slight opposition to the gospel of God.”

(v22) And you will be hated by all for My name's sake, but he who endures to the end will be saved – Endurance does not produce or protect salvation, which is totally the work of God’s grace. But endurance is evidence of salvation, proof that a person is truly redeemed and a child of God.

- Paul understood the battles and the persecutions to the end, as he unveils his wounds for Christ - 2 Corinthians 11:23-28 - *Are they ministers of Christ? — I speak as a fool — I am more: in labors more abundant, in stripes above measure, in prisons more frequently, in deaths often. From the Jews five times I received forty stripes minus one. Three times I was beaten with rods; once I was stoned; three times I was shipwrecked; a night and a day I have been in the deep; in journeys often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils of my own countrymen, in perils of the Gentiles, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren; in weariness and toil, in sleeplessness often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness — besides the other things, what comes upon me daily: my deep concern for all the churches.*

- Paul inspires us with these final words - 2 Timothy 4:6-8 - *For I am already being poured out as a drink offering, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Finally, there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give to me on that Day, and not to me only but also to all who have loved His appearing.*

(v23) Matt 10:23 - You shall not have gone over, [ou mee teleseete] - 'You shall in nowise have completed' - The cities of Israel will be completed at the return of Christ. Israel was dispersed amongst the world by the Romans in 70AD and has returned to the land in 1948. The gospel is being preached there and will be fully proclaimed by the 144,000 Jews (Rev. Ch. 7) in the “Great Tribulation.”

> (v24-31) Command #2 – HONOR!!!

(Honor your Savior by being a lifelong disciple!)

(v24-25) Let's be a DISCIPLE of JESUS CHRIST OUR SAVIOR! - A student, learner, or pupil. In all cases it implies that the person not only accepts the views of the teacher, but the student is also in practice an adherent. In the Acts, after the death and ascension of Jesus, disciples are those who confess Him as the Messiah, they are known as Christians, followers of Christ (Acts 6:1-2,7; 9:36; 11:26).

- A disciple of Christ is one who studies the Word, believes His doctrines, proclaims the Gospel, produces the fruit of the Holy Spirit, obeys His commands to love God and one another, and in fellowship serving the body of Christ (Acts 2:40-47).

> Let's be SERVANTS of JESUS CHRIST OUR SAVIOR! (4 keys)

- Key #1 - Jesus is our example, in SERVICE & SACRIFICE- Mark 10:45 - For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many.

- Key #2 - We now serve the LIVING GOD! - Hebrews 9:14-15 - how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God, cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?

- Key #3 - We serve through LOVE - Galatians 5:13 - For you, brethren, have been called to liberty; only do not use liberty as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another. (Is that your marriage and family?)

- Key #4 - We serve JESUS and He will REWARD us! - Colossians 3:23-24 - And whatever you do, do it heartily, as to the Lord and not to men, knowing that from the Lord you will receive the reward of the inheritance; for you serve the Lord Christ. (Beelzebub means "Lord of the dung" or "flies" and is also referred as "ruler of the demons" (Matt. 12:24).)

(v26-27) "Do not fear" – Jesus brings courage to His disciples. The world may wallop you; friends may defame you; family may excommunicate you; enemies may persecute you, but Jesus says, "DO NOT FEAR, I AM WITH YOU!"

- One author writes about courage, "Come to the edge. We can't. We're afraid. Come to the edge. We can't. We will fall! Come to the edge. And they came. And he pushed them. And the eagles flew." There is nothing covered that will not be revealed.

- The disciples were encouraged by the assurance that God would protect them and that their truth and innocence should yet be vindicated.

(v28-31) "Fear God—Trust God" – Don't fear man who can only kill the body; fear God who is the final judge. Mankind needs to "fear God" and turn from their sins to salvation in Jesus Christ! (Luke 16:19-31(Hades); Revelation 20:11-15 (Lake of Fire (Hell));

- Revelation 21:7-8 - He who overcomes shall inherit all things, and I will be his God and he shall be My son. But the cowardly, unbelieving, abominable, murderers, sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars shall have their part in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death." The only way to overcome is to believe!

- Jesus said in John 3:16-17 - For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. Once you believe you have to confess Christ to others!

- Paul writes in Romans 10:9-13 - that if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. For the Scripture says, "Whoever believes on Him will not be put to shame." For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek, for the same Lord over all is rich to all who call upon Him. For "whoever calls on the name of the LORD shall be saved."

> (v32-37) **COUNTRY!!!**

(God and country, but greatest is “Kingdom of Heaven” / the “Kingdom of God!”)

> **O’GOD WE PRAY FOR OUR COUNTRY, THE U.S.A!**

- Historical precedent: At the birth of our nation in 1787, after weeks of trying to write the Constitution of the United States, the representatives had become flustered. Then 81-year-old **Benjamin Franklin** stood to his feet and proclaimed, “I have lived, Sirs, a long time, and the longer I live, the more convincing proofs I see of this truth: ‘that God governs in the affairs of man.’ And if a sparrow cannot fall to the ground without His notice, is it probable that an empire can rise without His aid? We have been assured, Sirs, in the Sacred Writings that except the Lord build the house, they labor in vain that build it. I firmly believe this. I also believe that, without His concurring aid, we shall succeed in this political building no better than the builders of Babel; we shall be divided by our little partial local interests, our projects will be confounded; and we ourselves shall become a reproach and a byword down to future ages. And what is worse, mankind may hereafter, from this unfortunate instance, despair of establishing government by human wisdom and leave it to chance, war, or conquest . . .”

(v32-33) **To confess Christ or to deny Christ that is the question!** A person’s willingness to confess Christ before men determines Christ’s willingness to claim that person before His Father. Paul proclaimed, “*For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes*”

- John declares, “*Whoever confesses that Jesus is the Son of God, God abides in him and he in God*” (1 John 4:15). Peter denied Christ three times because of fear; he later repented, and Christ made him a courageous Christian!

- **In these last days the church of Philadelphia (that’s us) will be put to the test of confession or denial, Jesus said in Revelation 3:8, 10-11 - “I know your works. See, I have set before you an open door, and no one can shut it; for you have a little strength, have kept My word, and have not denied My name . . . Because you have kept My command to persevere, I also will keep you from the hour of trial which shall come upon the whole world, to test those who dwell on the earth.”**

(v34-37) **As Christians we follow the Prince of Peace (Is. 9:6); we have peace with God (Rom. 5:1 - Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ,); we are called to be peacemakers (Mt. 5:9); but the world will hate us and make war against us, because of Christ in us!**

- Jesus said, John 15:18-22 - “*If the world hates you, you know that it hated Me before it hated you. If you were of the world, the world would love its own. Yet because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you. Remember the word that I said to you, ‘A servant is not greater than his master.’ If they persecuted Me, they will also persecute you. If they kept My word, they will keep yours also. But all these things they will do to you for My name’s sake, because they do not know Him who sent Me.*”

(v38-39) **Let’s carry the CROSS OF JESUS CHRIST OUR SAVIOR!**

The journey of the cross is a road of denial to worldly and ungodly sins, and a crucifixion of destructive fleshly desires. Paul understood the cross when he wrote in Galatians 6:14-15 - **But God forbid that I should boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world.**

Philippians 3:18-21 - *For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ: whose end is destruction, whose god is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame — who set their mind on earthly things. For our citizenship is in heaven, from which we also eagerly wait for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, who will transform our lowly body that it may be conformed to His glorious body, according to the working by which He is able even to subdue all things to Himself.*

(v40-42) Rewards! Just as the hairs on your head are individually numbered so is every good deed recorded and rewarded in heaven! (1 Cor. 3:12-15; 2 Cor. 5:10; Matt. 25:14-30)

PRAISE THE LORD!