



Sermon, Sunday June 25, 2023

“What does it mean to live as a Christian?”

SCRIPTURE: Matthew 10:24-39 ²⁴ “A disciple is not above the teacher nor a slave above the master; ²⁵ it is enough for the disciple to be like the teacher and the slave like the master. If they have called the master of the house Beelzebul, how much more will they malign those of his household! ²⁶ So have no fear of them, for nothing is covered up that will not be uncovered and nothing secret that will not become known. ²⁷ What I say to you in the dark, tell in the light, and what you hear whispered, proclaim from the housetops. ²⁸ Do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul; rather, fear the one who can destroy both soul and body in hell. ²⁹ Are not two sparrows sold for a penny? Yet not one of them will fall to the ground apart from your Father. ³⁰ And even the hairs of your head are all counted. ³¹ So do not be afraid; you are of more value than many sparrows. ³² Everyone, therefore, who acknowledges me before others, I also will acknowledge before my Father in heaven, ³³ but whoever denies me before others, I also will deny before my Father in heaven. ³⁴ “Do not think that I have come to bring peace to the earth; I have not come to bring peace but a sword. ³⁵ For I have come to set a man against his father, and a daughter against her mother, and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law, ³⁶ and one’s foes will be members of one’s own household. ³⁷ Whoever loves father or mother more than me is not worthy of me, and whoever loves son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me, ³⁸ and whoever does not take up the cross and follow me is not worthy of me. ³⁹ Those who find their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake will find it.

Introduction: The Lord speaks of ‘fear’ and ‘against’

Today is the fourth Sunday after Pentecost. I pray for the presence and fullness of the Holy Spirit to overflow into your life. In today's text, there is content that is uncomfortable for us to read and understand. Today's text is divided into two paragraphs. The first paragraph is verses 24-33. **Verse 28 says, “Do not fear those who kill the body but are unable to kill the soul; rather fear him who can destroy both soul and body in hell.”** And the second paragraph is verses 34-39. **Verse 35 says, “Jesus came to set a man against his father, and a daughter against her mother, and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law.”** Both paragraphs feel uncomfortable and not easy to understand. However, we must be able to realize what it means to live as Christians through today's text. In the text, the Lord uses the words “**fear**” and “**against**” to tell us that the Christian life is different from the standard of the world. Also, we must be able to respond with ‘Amen’ to the teachings of the Lord.

Body: Christians whose joy in life and reason for existence are different from those of the world

First, the most important word in verses 24-33 is “**fear**”. In the Gospels, Jesus often told his disciples, “**Do not be afraid.**” The Lord knew that He would have to endure the death of the cross, and He knew about the hardships His disciples would have to face after His resurrection and ascension. That is why Jesus said in verses 24-25 of today's text says, “**A disciple is not above the teacher, nor a slave above the master; it is enough for the disciple to be like the teacher, and the slave like the master. If they have called the master of the house Beelzebul, how much more will they malign those of his household.**”

During the time of Jesus' public life, people called Jesus 'Beelzebub' (the prince of demons, literally the lord of flies) and called His disciples 'Beelzebub's henchmen' to criticize Jesus.

Being a disciple of Jesus at the time, or following Him, was to take the criticism and threats of people. It also meant becoming a community of one destiny with the Lord.



And these accusations and threats carry over into the lives of early Christians. The early Christians were killed, suffered, and gave up their Christian faith due to the persecution of the Roman Empire. That's why Jesus is telling His disciples in today's text not to be afraid.

By the way, even today, when the Christian persecution of the Roman Empire has disappeared, the existential problem of our lives called **'fear'** remains as it is. That's why Jesus says in verse 28 of today's text, **"Do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul; rather fear him who can destroy both soul and body in hell."** This is what the Lord is saying primarily to the disciples and secondly to us. **Then, who are the people in our lives who kill the body but cannot kill the soul?**

They are the powers of the world. At the time of Jesus, they were the powerful in Rome, and in the world, we live in, they are the ones with money and power. But Jesus says that even the most powerful of the world cannot kill the soul. Therefore, what we, as disciples of Jesus and Christians, should fear is not the evil powers of the world, but God who can destroy our bodies and souls in hell.

However, some people are not interested in these words of the Lord, do not agree, and even despise them. The reason why people react this way to the word of the Lord is because they are immersed in the logic of the world dominated by money and power. So we live a life that pursues money and power because we believe that money and power guarantee our happiness in life. Therefore if such people do not have money and power, they become fearful. **So, how can we be at least a little free from these fears?**

It is to fill our souls with the fullness of the Holy Spirit. **Then, what does it mean to fill our souls with the fullness of the Holy Spirit?**

The Lord says in verse 29 of today's text, **"Are not two sparrows sold for a penny? Yet not one of them will fall to the ground apart from your Father."** This verse says that even a sparrow, an insignificant being in the world, does not fall to the ground without the permission of the Lord. This means that the Lord has sovereignty over everything. So, think about which one is more important: being recognized by powerful people or being recognized by the Lord who rules over everything in the world.

If we sincerely acknowledge and live with the fact that the one who rules everything in the world is the Lord, we can experience that the Lord is working even in the small and insignificant things in our lives. A person who lives with this attitude is not afraid of the power of the world. **By the way, is this kind of life possible for us Christians?**

If we can find the joy of our life and the reason for our existence in Jesus, we can live this life. **Then, how can we find the joy of our lives and the reason for our existence in Jesus?** In verse 37 of today's text, Jesus says; **"Whoever loves father or mother more than me is not worthy of me; and whoever loves son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me."** This passage is easy for us to misunderstand and hard to understand. The people Jesus mentioned in this verse are the most foundational and the greatest strength of our lives. Did Jesus say this because he did not know the importance of family in our lives? Absolutely not.

However, there are things we should not overlook in our way of life and attitude. It means that when we have someone or a target to rely on, we cannot form a deep relationship with God.

Furthermore, Jesus says in verse 34 that he did not come to bring peace to the world, but a sword. We know very well how much Jesus loved peace in the world and wanted to achieve it. However, the words of Jesus described in today's text are far from that kind of Jesus.

To understand these words, we must think about what the Christian life is. If the kingdom of God has come near in our lives, the Christian way of life must be different from the standard and way of life in the world. Perhaps the easiest part of understanding the difference is how obsessed we are with being recognized by the world, or how free we are. Christians who have hope in the kingdom of God live faithfully in the present, but they are not those who stay in the present or cling to it. **That's why Jesus says in verse 39, "Those who find their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake will find it."** This verse says that the Lord is the only way for us to have life and be saved. Do you truly live by this kind of faith? If you are still not sure that the Lord is the savior of your life, think more seriously about this problem and seek the grace of the Holy Spirit.



Dear brothers and sisters in Christ! How could Jesus obey the words of God the Father and bear the cross of suffering? It is because Jesus believed that the kingdom of God was near and was not afraid of any power in the world. Please remember. Those who believe in Jesus Christ have life, so they are not afraid of those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. Christians are those who have overcome the world through the love and power of Jesus Christ.

Conclusion: The Beginning and Foundation of Christian Happiness

Now let's summarize today's message. The Lord asks us for a time of deep fellowship with the Lord, stepping back from our busy lives and from the standards of success in the world. The Lord asks us to look at what we are afraid of in our lives and what we are relying on to relieve those fears. Also, it tells us to discover the reason for joy and existence in the Lord. And those who find it can experience the Lord working even in the small and insignificant things of our lives. Please do not forget that the beginning and basis of happiness in the Christian life is not whether we have money, honor, or power, but whether the Lord rules and is with us.

