



“A Disciple’s Response to Persecution”
Matthew 10:16–25
The Commission of the King

Introduction:

Matthew 10:16–25 – “Behold, I send you out as sheep in the midst of wolves; so be shrewd as serpents and innocent as doves. But beware of men, for they will hand you over to the courts and scourge you in their synagogues; and you will even be brought before governors and kings for My sake, as a testimony to them and to the Gentiles. But when they hand you over, do not worry about how or what you are to say; for it will be given you in that hour what you are to say. For it is not you who speak, but it is the Spirit of your Father who speaks in you. Brother will betray brother to death, and a father his child; and children will rise up against parents and cause them to be put to death. You will be hated by all because of My name, but it is the one who has endured to the end who will be saved. But whenever they persecute you in one city, flee to the next; for truly I say to you, you will not finish going through the cities of Israel until the Son of Man comes. A disciple is not above his teacher, nor a slave above his master. It is enough for the disciple that he become like his teacher, and the slave like his master. If they have called the head of the house Beelzebul, how much more will they malign the members of his household!”

Remember the One Doing the Sending (v.16a)

“Behold, I send you out as sheep in the midst of wolves...” (v.16a)

Jesus is the one doing the sending and He is honest about the difficulty of the journey right from the start.

Christ satisfying the demands of righteousness and justice by taking God’s wrath for the sinner is often not a message the world wants to hear.

Remember the Call to be Shrewd and Innocent (vv.16b–18)

“...so be shrewd as serpents and innocent as doves.” (v.16b)

Genesis 3:1 – “Now the serpent was more crafty than any beast of the field which the Lord God had made.”

The stark contrast here is to be both sharp and peaceful.

“But beware of men, for they will hand you over to the courts and scourge you in their synagogues; and you will even be brought before governors and kings for My sake, as a testimony to them and to the Gentiles.”
(vv.17–18)

The ABCs of Missionary Persecution: **A**rrested = “handed over”, **B**eaten = “scourged”
Confronted = “brought before”

Remember the Assistance of the Holy Spirit (vv.19–20)

“But when they hand you over, do not worry about how or what you are to say; for it will be given you in that hour what you are to say. For it is not you who speak, but it is the Spirit of your Father who speaks in you.” (vv.19–20)

2 Timothy 4:16–17 – “At my first defense no one supported me, but all deserted me; may it not be counted against them. But the Lord stood with me and strengthened me, so that through me the proclamation might be fully accomplished, and that all the Gentiles might hear...”

Paul learned what we should also remember and that is to rely on the one who calls and sends us.

“There are times even today when believers who are faced with crises for the sake of the gospel are given the words they need to say in those circumstances.”—R.C. Sproul

Remember the Persecution Can Lead to Salvation (vv.21–23)

Persecution in the form of Betrayal: “Brother will betray brother to death, and a father his child; and children will rise up against parents and cause them to be put to death.” (v.21)

Persecution in the form of Hate: “You will be hated by all because of My name, but it is the one who has endured to the end who will be saved.” (v.22)

Salvation Found by Way of Persecution: “But whenever they persecute you in one city, flee to the next; for truly I say to you, you will not finish going through the cities of Israel until the Son of Man comes.” (v.23)

“It is no inglorious thing for Christ’s soldiers to quit their ground, provided they do not quit their colors.”
—Unknown

Remember the Humiliation Leads to Exaltation (vv.24–25)

“A disciple is not above his teacher, nor a slave above his master.” (v.24)

Romans 8:16–17 – “The Spirit Himself testifies with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, heirs also, heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him so that we may also be glorified with Him.”

“It is enough for the disciple that he become like his teacher, and the slave like his master. If they have called the head of the house Beelzebul, how much more will they malign the members of his household!” (v.25)

Conclusion

Romans 8:18 – “For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that is to be revealed to us.”

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. Do you agree that it’s easier to deal with difficulty when you know you’re going to experience it? Do you have any examples of this happening in your life?
2. Do you find it easier to be more shrewd or more innocent? What would it look like to get better at the one that doesn’t come naturally to you this week?
3. Have you ever experienced severed family ties or even strained relationships with loved ones because of the gospel?
4. How do you find hope in preparation to endure persecution?