

Sunday School Lesson for February 15, 2026
Matthew 10

Welcome to Sunday School on the go from the First Baptist Church in Tallahassee. I'm Jim Glass, one of the teachers in the Pairs and Spares Class, and, on this third Sunday of February, we're moving chapter-by-chapter through the gospel according to Matthew, with Pastor Trey preaching from the odd-numbered chapters and our Bible Fellowship lessons drawn from the even-numbered chapters. Following Trey's message about the continuing miracles of our Lord, including the raising of Jairus' daughter from the dead and the persistent challenges of the Pharisees, our lesson today comes from chapter ten and the second discourse that Matthew includes in his record of the life and ministry of the Lord Jesus as He prepares to send out His disciples on their first preaching and healing tour.

These instructions are actually introduced in the closing words of chapter nine, beginning in verse 35 where Matthew writes, "And Jesus went throughout all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues and proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom and healing every disease and every affliction. When he saw the crowds, he had compassion for them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd."

In response, the Lord laid out His plan in the first verse of chapter ten: "And he called to him his twelve disciples and gave them authority over unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to heal every disease and every affliction."

He selected twelve--twelve being a prominent number among the Jews as we find, for example, twelve tribes of Israel, twelve spies sent out by Moses, and twelve stones in Aaron's breast plate. Once study guide notes, "Across Scripture the number twelve marks governmental perfection, covenanted community, and eschatological fulfillment. Whether naming tribes, apostles,

gates, foundations, or baskets of bread, it signals that God's redemptive purposes are whole, ordered, and certain."

To this group of twelve, He "gave them authority over unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to heal every disease and every affliction." Already they had seen Him cast out demons--most recently the demon-possessed man who could not speak--Matthew, chapter nine, verse 32. They had seen Him restore sight to blind eyes. A woman who merely touched the hem of His garment was healed of a twelve-year affliction as He was on His way to raise Jairus' daughter from the dead. And now **they** were being given that very same power--not to begin a ministry of physical healing--but, like the Lord Jesus--as a confirmation of their preaching that the Kingdom of Heaven was at hand.

Beginning in the second verse, Matthew names the disciples for us. We've been introduced to Matthew, Peter, Andrew, James, and John in previous lessons. Philip was from Bethsaida, and John recalls the Lord calling him in verse 43 of the first chapter of John. Phillip was the one who told the Lord in the upper room--John, chapter fourteen, verse eight--, "Lord, show us the Father, and that will be enough for us." This Philip is not Philip the evangelist whom we read about in the Book of Acts, however.

Bartholomew's name appears in the lists of the disciples, but we don't read about him otherwise. Some scholars believe him to be the Nathanael of the first chapter of John to whom Philip said they had found the Messiah--Jesus of Nazareth--to which Nathanael replied, "Can anything good come out of Nazareth?" The early church historian, Eusebius, writes that he took the gospel to India, and some traditions say he was martyred in Armenia for converting the king's brother.

Next in the list is Thomas, also called Didymus or "the twin." In John, chapter fourteen, it was Thomas who asked the Lord in the upper room, "Lord, we do not know where You are going, so how can we know the way?" which prompted Him to respond, "I am the way and the truth and the life."

And it was Thomas who demanded evidence when the other disciples told him that the Lord had risen from the dead--John, chapter twenty. When Jesus appeared before him to produce that evidence, he was the first to confess the risen Christ as God when he said, “My Lord and my God.” Church tradition tells us that Thomas took the gospel to Parthia, Mesopotamia, and India where he was martyred.

The name of James, the son of Alphaeus, also called “James the Younger” in Mark’s gospel, appears only in the lists of the disciples and among those who were present at Jesus’ crucifixion.

We hear from Thaddaeus, called by Luke, “Judas son of James” in Luke, chapter six and the first chapter of Acts, only once, and that was in the upper room when he asked, “Lord, why are You going to reveal Yourself to us and not to the world?”--John, chapter fourteen, verse 22. Church tradition tells of him serving in Syria and Mesopotamia, particularly Edessa or what is Şanlıurfa, Turkey today.

Then there’s Simon the Cananaean, also called by Luke, “Simon the Zealot.” The zealots were a group of resistance fighters who sought to free Israel from the Roman occupation by force. Little is known of this particular Simon of Cana. Some traditions say he conducted missionary work in Persia or Syria. In The Chosen series, his character is very creatively developed; however, the New Testament provides us nothing more than his name.

Last in the list is “Judas Iscariot, who betrayed him.” He was from the city of Kerioth which lay about thirty miles south of Jerusalem. Judas was chosen to serve as the treasurer, but John tells us he took some of the funds for his own use. It was, of course, Judas who betrayed the Lord with a kiss in the Garden of Gethsemane, identifying Him for those who had come to arrest Him. Feeling remorse for what he had done, Judas hanged himself.

Each of the twelve, except for Judas, was from Galilee. They were not schooled in theology, and they do not appear to have been men of great

wealth. Matthew may have been the most well-off, having been a tax collector. Still, they were an unlikely bunch, evidence that, as Paul told the Corinthians in his first letter to them, “God chose what is foolish in the world to shame the wise; God chose what is weak in the world to shame the strong.”

In the words that follow, we find the Lord’s instructions concerning how they should go about proclaiming the gospel in verses five through fifteen followed by particular warnings about how they would be received and how they should respond. In His instructions, the Lord describes the scope of their work in verses five and six, the content of their message in verse seven, the signs that would accompany their message in verse eight, and the means they should employ as they preach and teach and heal in verses nine through fifteen.

“These twelve Jesus sent out”—verse five—“instructing them, ‘Go nowhere among the Gentiles and enter no town of the Samaritans, but go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.’” The time for taking the news of the Kingdom of God throughout the world had not yet come. It was necessary, according to scripture and the plan of God, that the gospel be proclaimed first among the Jews. In addition, the disciples themselves weren’t prepared to interact with non-Jews, and this leap away from the current culture would have caused premature opposition to the spread of the Lord’s message. The time to take the gospel to the Gentiles—basically anyone who wasn’t a Jew—and the Samaritans—those who could trace their lineage back to Abraham but who had married Gentiles and set up an alternative system of Jewish worship, causing them to be at odds with those Jews who considered themselves to be the true descendants of Abraham—the time to take the gospel to the Gentiles and the Samaritans would come, but this was not the moment. For now, the disciples were only to take the message of the coming of the Kingdom of God to the Jews.

And what was that message?—verse seven: “Proclaim as you go, saying, ‘The kingdom of heaven is at hand.’” This was the same message of John the

Baptist: the prophesied and long-awaited coming of the Kingdom that each and every devout Jew had longed to see was arriving, and they should prepare themselves for and welcome it.

As the disciples proclaimed this message, the reality of the Kingdom would be proved by miraculous works--verse eight--: "Heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse lepers, cast out demons." They had witnessed all of these miracles by the hand of the Lord Jesus, but, as of yet, we haven't heard that the disciples had done so.

Cleansing lepers has its own category here, most like because of the unstoppable, regressive progression of the disease, the social stigma related to it, and the ritual uncleanness associated with it. When the disciples returned from this first preaching tour, Luke tells us that they returned with joy, saying, "Lord, even the demons are subject to us in your name!" suggesting that they were indeed able to heal and cleanse of leprosy, and perhaps even raise the dead, but the first instance we read of a disciple raising the dead is the story of Peter and Dorcas in Acts, chapter nine.

As marvelous as these powers were, however, the disciples were not to use these powers for personal gain. The Lord warned them in verse nine: "You received without paying; give without pay."

So, how would they be supported?--verse ten: "Acquire no gold nor silver nor copper for your belts, no bag for your journey, nor two tunics nor sandals nor a staff, // for the laborer deserves his food. And whatever town or village you enter, find out who is worthy in it and stay there until you depart." All they would need was the clothes on their backs. While Matthew records the Lord saying not to take sandals or a staff, Mark, on the other hand, in chapter six, verse eight, tells us the Lord "charged them to take nothing for their journey except a staff--no bread, no bag, no money in their belts--but to wear sandals and not put on two tunics."

In Matthew's account the Lord doesn't forbid the wearing of sandals, but only forbids them taking a second pair, a second staff, and a second tunic. Jesus wanted to make sure that they took nothing more than what they actually needed so they looked and acted nothing like traveling salesmen or tourists. In every way, they were to live out the great command they had heard in the Sermon on the Mount: "Seek first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things will be added to you."

It would not be through miraculous provision that their needs would be met, but through the hospitality of those who would receive them, for "the laborer deserves his food." This may have been a familiar proverb among the people of that day or a commonly accepted practice. Those who would serve the Lord faithfully by proclaiming the coming Kingdom would be received gladly for the message they brought and the evidence of it demonstrated in their own lives, and this would be how their needs would be met.

Practically speaking--verse eleven--: "whatever town or village you enter, find out who is worthy in it and stay there until you depart. As you enter the house, greet it. And if the house is worthy, let your peace come upon it, but if it is not worthy, let your peace return to you." When they first entered a new town, they were to learn who would be the most likely family to provide hospitality to them.

This was probably accomplished by going to the town square or synagogue and asking what family opens its home to guests. Once they located that home, they were to greet the family with the customary "Shalom" and see how they were received. If they were received well, they were to stay there and not go from house to house as if seeking better accommodations or treatment, thus avoiding partiality, favoritism, and the appearance of self-promotion.

If they were not well-received, they were to move on to another home, and their wishes of peace upon the first home would return to them. The peace

and prayers for good wished upon that home will not come upon them and will be void and without effect with respect to that family.

If they weren't received anywhere at all in the city--verse fourteen: "And if anyone will not receive you or listen to your words, shake off the dust from your feet when you leave that house or town. Truly, I say to you, it will be more bearable on the day of judgment for the land of Sodom and Gomorrah than for that town."

One of the defining characteristics of relations between Jews and Gentiles was that the Jews believed that even the dust that touched the Gentiles was contaminated and should be shaken off. To shake off the dust from the feet, therefore, was a significant act of rebuke, showing that the disciples regarded the residents of the city who refused them as contaminated, impure, and unclean. We see in Acts, chapter thirteen, verse 51, that Paul and Barnabus did exactly that in Antioch of Pisidia and Paul did the same again at the synagogue in Corinth--Acts, chapter eighteen, verse six.

Since they would encounter opposition, the Lord warns them about this likelihood in the remainder of the chapter. Even though they would be surrounded by those who would wish to stop the proclamation of the message they're delivering, they must conduct themselves with calmness--verse 19--, with endurance--verse 22--, and with wisdom--verse 23, reminding them that fellowship with Him in suffering is essential to fellowship with Him in glory--verses 24 through 33, and ending with a reminder that His Kingdom's work will cost them separation from those they hold dear in this life, but the eternal reward is worth the cost--verses 34 through 42.

As He prepares to send out the twelve, he warns them of the general character of their mission in verse sixteen: "Behold, I am sending you out as sheep in the midst of wolves, so be wise as serpents and innocent as doves." This part of His message begins with the word, "Behold," a clear signal that something very important is about to be shared. The very next word is "I." In

Greek, it's usually part of the verb unless the speaker is drawing attention to himself, which is exactly the case here. This is far more significant than we could imagine. Alexander MacLaren puts it like this: "The keynote is struck in [verse sixteen where] the 'Behold,' which introduces something important and strange, and calls for close attention [is followed by] the majestic 'I send you,' which moves to obedience whatever the issues, and pledges Him to defend the poor men who are going on His errands and the pathetic picture of the little flock huddled together, while the gleaming teeth of the wolves gnash all round them. ... If the Shepherd sends His sheep into the midst of wolves, surely He will come to their help, and surely any peril is more courageously faced when they can say to themselves, 'He put us here.'" The Lord Jesus is the One Who is sending them, and they can be certain of His protection.

The Lord's aware that their connection with Him will not only be a source of great power through healing, casting out demons, and raising the dead, but their relationship with Him would also be a source of great trouble. They would not be going out on a mission to recruit revolutionaries bent on overthrowing the Roman occupation, but they would share the message of the Kingdom of Heaven in meekness and humility, harmless and inoffensive in their conduct and conversations, while their oppressors He compares to wolves--fierce and ferocious, cruel and ravenous, seeking to silence those who bring a message of repentance, salvation, and humility.

But they're not to match force with force. They are to be as wise as serpents and harmless as doves. Jewish tradition of that day claimed that God considered the Jews "harmless as doves," but in their dealings with other nations of the world, they were to be "subtle as serpents." The subtlety of a serpent--a common emblem of wisdom and cunning--is seen in the way it's quickly alerted to danger and escapes from it. They're not to provoke danger or invite opposition; instead, they are to maintain their innocence. One commentator writes, "Doves are, and always have been, a striking emblem of

innocence. Most people would foolishly destroy a serpent, ... yet few are so hard-hearted as to kill a dove.”

Then, in verses seventeen through 23, the Lord provides guidance for those times when they **fall** into the hands of wolves: “Beware of men, for they will deliver you over to courts and flog you in their synagogues, and you will be dragged before governors and kings for my sake, to bear witness before them and the Gentiles. When they deliver you over, do not be anxious how you are to speak or what you are to say, for what you are to say will be given to you in that hour. For it is not you who speak, but the Spirit of your Father speaking through you. Brother will deliver brother over to death, and the father his child, and children will rise against parents and have them put to death, and you will be hated by all for my name's sake. But the one who endures to the end will be saved. When they persecute you in one town, flee to the next, for truly, I say to you, you will not have gone through all the towns of Israel before the Son of Man comes.”

As they go out as sheep among wolves, being as wise as serpents and innocent as doves, they will be persecuted for their message about the Kingdom of Heaven, both by their own people as well as before Gentile rulers. MacLaren writes, “This was “a grim prospect to set before a handful of Galilean peasants, but [three] little words turn its terror into joy; it is ‘for My sake,’ and that is enough.” Although some of this might have taken place during the disciples’ first preaching and healing tour, we learn from church history that Peter was brought before Emperor Nero and John before Emperor Domitian. The fulfillment of the Lord’s words here are clear evidence that He knew what the future held. No one would have believed that two fishermen from Galilee would appear before the great Emperors of the Roman Empire, but they would be given the great privilege of sharing the gospel with the most powerful people in the world of that day.

When this happens, the Lord says in verse nineteen, “do not be anxious how you are to speak or what you are to say, for what you are to say will be

given to you in that hour. For it is not you who speak, but the Spirit of your Father speaking through you.” As powerful and privileged as these religious leaders, governors, and kings would be and as poor and uneducated as the disciples may have been, it would have been extremely intimidating for the disciples to stand before any of them, but the Spirit of God would give them the words to speak.

They didn’t need to worry about how to learn rhetoric or develop a lengthy dissertation about the Kingdom of God. God Himself would give them the words to speak, just as He did for Peter and John--two fishermen, recognized as “uneducated, common men”--Acts, chapter four, verse thirteen; and for Stephen--Acts, chapter seven. In fact, some of the greatest, most inspired testimonies of the power of the gospel have been speeches made by Christians on trial for their faith.

And notice that Jesus says, “the Spirit of **your** Father.” In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus had said--chapter five, verse nine: “Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God;” and verse sixteen: “In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven.” They and every believer have God as their Father, and, as our Father, He cares for us as only our Heavenly Father can.

The Lord’s solemn foretelling of persecution continues on and becomes even more foreboding, as He warns them of loved ones--even brothers and fathers--who would become enemies to the point of having the disciples put to death. In fact, they would be hated by all for the sake of His Name. But those who would come to know Him as the Savior Who bore the punishment for their sin and delivered them from eternal death, gladly surrendering themselves to Him as Lord, would know as Paul did--Second Timothy, chapter two, verse eleven: “The saying is trustworthy, for: If we have died with him, we will also live with him; if we endure, we will also reign with him.”

The thought of the universal hatred the Lord warned His disciples about and that we're seeing so much of in our own day is eased by the Lord reminding them--and us--that their and our suffering is for the sake of His Name. MacLaren writes, "To the Christian, death is the usher who introduces [us] into the presence-chamber of the King, and he that [loses] his life 'for My name's sake,' finds it glorified in, and into, life eternal."

Peter, who would himself suffer martyrdom, wrote in his first letter, chapter four, verse twelve: "Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery trial when it comes upon you to test you, as though something strange were happening to you. But rejoice insofar as you share Christ's sufferings, that you may also rejoice and be glad when his glory is revealed. If you are insulted for the name of Christ, you are blessed, because the Spirit of glory and of God rests upon you." When Peter's readers would experience persecution, they were to know that they're in good company, and that the Lord would honor their loyalty and faithfulness at His appearing, and the same is true for us today.

When persecution comes, they are to act upon the serpent instinct that Jesus told them about back in verse sixteen: "When they persecute you in one town, flee to the next, for truly, I say to you, you will not have gone through all the towns of Israel before the Son of Man comes." When they could preserve their lives without denying the Lord, they were to do so. Even if they were to flee to every Jewish city in Judea and Galilee, they still would not have visited them all before the judgment on Israel that would come in the destruction of Jerusalem which seems to be what Jesus meant by "before the Son of Man comes."

As they face personal persecution and opposition to the gospel, the Lord has another word of encouragement for them in verses 24 through 28. First, He tells them in verse 24, "A disciple is not above his teacher, nor a servant above his master." If the teacher faces opposition, doesn't it follow that his students will as well? But the Lord knows this will happen, and He's made provision for that--verse 26: "So have no fear of them, for nothing is covered

that will not be revealed, or hidden that will not be known. What I tell you in the dark, say in the light, and what you hear whispered, proclaim on the housetops.”

Three times in verses 26, 28, and 31, we’ll hear the Lord say, “Do not fear.” Their temptation would **be** to be afraid, but the Lord knows that those who think their evil acts and words are done and said in secret are the ones who should really be afraid. As a result, the disciples should faithfully, courageously, boldly, and fearlessly proclaim the good news of the Kingdom of Heaven in order to disperse the darkness of spiritual ignorance and sin. And the same applies to us today.

The second reason for fearlessness is the limitation of the enemy’s power to hurt--verse 28: “And 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.” Those who persecute the followers of Christ have no power to injure the soul because they can’t touch it. Luke records the words of the Lord in this way in chapter twelve, verse four of his gospel: “I tell you, my friends, do not fear those who kill the body, and after that have nothing more that they can do.”

When compared with your eternal soul, the temporal body is relatively insignificant. Physical death is a very small matter when compared with eternal death. The person who fears God with an overwhelming sense of awe that’s driven by love need not be afraid of anything or anyone. On the other hand, the one who fears the persecutor and denies Christ instead of allowing his or her life to be a testimony of faithfulness to the Lord should fear the judgment of God--an eternity spent in hell undergoing torment and punishment--a destruction of the soul--that continues forever.

After all, if God is your Father and Jesus Christ is your Lord and Master, then what in the world would you ever have to be afraid of? Verse 29: “Are not two sparrows sold for a penny? And not one of them will fall to the ground apart from your Father. But even the hairs of your head are all

numbered. Fear not, therefore; you are of more value than many sparrows.” Sparrows were so common and so cheap that they were hardly worth selling. Even so, not a single one of them falls to the ground without the Father knowing it. It only falls with His permission and where and when He allows. That’s how much God is concerned with sparrows.

And He’s even concerned about the number of hairs on your head--each one experiences the watchful care of God. Talk about trivia! God knows, and He cares. So--verse 31--“Fear not, therefore; you are of more value than many sparrows.” The minuteness--the infinitesimal nature of His infinite care forbids them and us to fear. It’s clear from these two examples that they and you and I are worth more than even a whole flock of sparrows.

So, the Lord takes the example of the most insignificant creature and the most trivial numbering to encourage, motivate, inspire, and embolden His disciples to tell the world about the good news of the Kingdom of God, not worrying at all about their lives and what could or would happen to them, but fully entrusting themselves to the Lord and His sovereign care, come what may as they seek first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness.

The final encouragement to faithfulness comes in verse 32: “So everyone who acknowledges me before men, I also will acknowledge before my Father who is in heaven, but whoever denies me before men, I also will deny before my Father who is in heaven.”

It’s unfortunate that the English Standard Version translates the opening part of this verse as “So, everyone who acknowledges me before men ...,” rather than “Therefore, everyone who will acknowledge me before men” The “therefore” is significant, because it connects the image of God’s watchful, Fatherly care to the promise of verse 32. Because believers are protected with so much greater care than a sparrow, every one of them will be preserved to receive the honor of being confessed in Christ. No matter what persecution they might experience, the worst pain and suffering cannot steal their reward.

Nothing can come between Christ's servants and their crowns, because the tender mercy of the Father makes sure of it.

It's also unfortunate that so many Bible translations use the word "acknowledge" instead of "confess." The word is the same as the word we find in First John, chapter one verse nine where John writes, "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness," where the word "confess" means to agree with what God says about our sin. So in "confessing" Jesus "before men," the Lord is saying that we are saying the same thing about Him that He is saying about Himself. The Young's Literal Translation nails it when it reads, "Every one, therefore, who shall confess in me before men, I also will confess in him before my Father who is in the heavens."

Not only are we to say the same thing about Jesus that He says about Himself, we must do that from the standpoint of a relationship "in Him." It's this relationship that Paul speaks about in the second chapter of his letter to the followers of Christ in Colossae, verse six: "Therefore, as you received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in him, rooted and built up in him and established in the faith, just as you were taught, abounding in thanksgiving." It's not just about following His example; it's not just through Him that we learn about living a life that's pleasing to Him; but it's in Him--united with Him in an ever-growing, personal relationship. Only as we abide "in Him," as we find our life "in Him," so that our lives are immersed "in Him," and "in Him" "we live and move and have our being"--only in Him can we be made complete and our confession be pleasing and acceptable to God. Anything else just doesn't cut it. Anything less is to deny Him before the world with the result that the Lord says, "I also will also deny [him] before my Father who is in heaven."

This mission that He is sending His disciples on would not be easy, so He adds another warning in verse 34: "Do not think that I have come to bring peace to the earth. I have not come to bring peace, but a sword. 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. And a person's enemies will be those of his own household." The Old Testament prophet Micah had foretold something like this in chapter seven, verse six, and the Lord now reiterates what He said back in verse 21. Jesus clearly foresaw the inevitable opposition that would come as the world population in general and the Jewish people in particular are presented with the clear claims and demands of the gospel and, tragically, reject it and persecute those who proclaim it.

So complete must their dedication to Him be in the face of the opposition they would face / that the bonds of family must not interfere with their devotion to the Lord and His Kingdom's work--verse 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."

Greater than that, true disciples of Christ must not only surrender their hearts, but their entire being--verse 38: "And whoever does not take his cross and follow me is not worthy of me." An entire lesson could be focused on this verse alone, and you've probably heard at least one sermon on this passage. This message must have bewildered and troubled the disciples when they first heard it. They were aware of what crucifixion was about, but this is the first time Jesus has mentioned this method of execution so cruel and terrifying.

Yet it was the perfect illustration of the point He's been making throughout this message: a total, complete, all-inclusive surrender of yourself is required for all those who truly follow Christ;¹ and all the opposition, persecution, and afflictions that accompany that complete surrender of oneself should be cheerfully accepted as part of the cost of following Him, just as He Himself bore the pain for our sin on Calvary's cross. Anyone who fails to do this is not worthy of being counted among His followers.

Practically speaking--verse 39--: "Whoever finds his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life for my sake will find it." Those who seek to preserve their lives and the stuff this world offers by denying Christ or failing to find

eternal life in Him lose everything / that the eternal life in Christ has to offer, while those who give up the present advantages of this life to suffer reproach and persecution and lay down their lives cheerfully for the sake of Christ will receive an eternal inheritance, reserved for all who truly follow Christ.

As the disciples then and disciples now live this kind of life before a dead and dying world, their impact will have far-reaching and eternal effects--verse 40: "Whoever receives you receives me, and whoever receives me receives him who sent me. The one who receives a prophet because he is a prophet will receive a prophet's reward, and the one who receives a righteous person because he is a righteous person will receive a righteous person's reward."

The Lord's instructions to His disciples close with a final word of encouragement in verse 42: "And whoever gives one of these little ones even a cup of cold water because he is a disciple, truly, I say to you, he will by no means lose his reward." The Lord gradually descends from prophets to righteous men to those who have only recently experienced the truth of the gospel--even the least of saints--perhaps some of these twelve disciples, to say that those who bless them--even in the smallest way--, in spite of persecution and the challenges and hardships they would endure--or even because of it--would never lose their eternal reward. In this world, great services receive great reward; in the kingdom of God, the smallest acts of kindness to the humblest persons are granted a very great reward.

With this final word of encouragement, the Lord concludes His instructions to His disciples as they prepare to expand the message about the Kingdom of Heaven. Their task would not be easy, but the reward would be and will be that eternal inheritance that Peter speaks of in the opening verses of his first letter--that "inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you, who by God's power are being guarded through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time." These words would comfort, encourage, and embolden the twelve as they set out, and these words

are meant to encourage us as well as we take the gospel to the ends of the earth.

Thank you for being a part of our brief overview of the life and ministry of the Lord Jesus seen through Matthew's eyes as he leads us to understand Who Jesus is through His works and His words so that we might be the people of God He's calling us to be for such a time as this. Next week, following Pastor Trey's message from chapter eleven concerning the concern of John the Baptist and the Lord's answer, we'll turn to chapter twelve of Matthew's gospel to hear Jesus correct some current misunderstandings about the Sabbath and address some concerns brought to Him from the scribes and Pharisees who demanded a sign from Him to validate His authority.

As always, as it's still a good thing to do, keep calm, trust in the Lord, and wash your hands! God bless you!

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