

Rev. Dustin Daniels | River Bible Church
Matthew 10:24-31 | Fearing the Right Thing
Sunday October 22, 2023

WELCOME:

- Please turn your Bibles to Matthew 10.
- Bibles in the back—our gift to you.
- Sermon Notes in the foyer.

REVIEW:

For the past year and a half, we have been studying the Matthew's Gospel.

Over the last several months, we have watched Jesus preach the Gospel, heal the sick, and raise the dead in chapters 8 and 9.

Here, in chapter 10, Jesus provides instructions.

Some instructions are for the Apostles (descriptive), and some are for us as disciples (prescriptive).

The difference between a disciple and an apostle are supernatural signs and wonders.

Jesus gave these twelve men the same power and authority over sickness, death, and demons.

Those apostolic gifts died when the last apostle—John, died.

We also learned how these men were oh-so ordinary—yet they were used by an extraordinary God.

In chapter ten, we've learned that the whole reason Jesus has ordained the Twelve is to replicate Himself.

And now Jesus is sending the Twelve on a short-term mission trip.

He tells them—do this, not that.

Bring this—not that.

Preach this—and prove it by doing what I— myself— have done through miracles.

And then, last Sunday, we studied the Reality of Ministry with the persecution that comes with believing that Jesus is God.

Jesus continued with an interesting commencement speech.

He gave them lots of illustrations—sheep, wolves, doves.

He warned us of the wolves— 1. the religious leaders, 2. the government, and 3. even your own family.

(Have you noticed that Jesus isn't much of a motivational speaker?—But He is a truth-teller.)

Jesus ended His instructions by telling us as disciples that our work of sharing the Gospel won't be done until He returns.

Our work as the church is to fulfill the Great Commission.

We are not going to do that perfectly, but it is our duty and responsibility to strive to share Jesus day-by-day.

INTRODUCTION:

As we continue our study of Matthew chapter ten, I want you to notice how different Jesus' teaching is from what the mainstream church teaches today.

For example—for the past one hundred years or so, we've sunk into a time of easy belief-ism.

All you have to do is walk the isle, raise your hand, or pray the sinners prayer.

Is that true?

None of those methods of salvation are found in Scripture.

What is specifically stated is

- a confession of our wretched sin,
- a turning from our old self-centered lifestyle,
- a supernatural heartfelt belief that Jesus walked out of his own grave,
- and a continual dying to ourselves that produces good fruit and good relationships.

And it's the dying to ourselves that proves that we indeed have been saved by the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Once we have been saved, Scripture tells us that we are a new person—we have a new heart to love God and love people.

Once we have been saved, we also have new priorities.

The world no longer revolves around me, myself and I.

As Christians, we now sit at the feet of our Lord and Master—and we do that by learning and applying His Word to our lives.

That's why these instructions from the Lord are so important in Matt 10.

Learning God's Word is new for all of us—no matter how long we've been Christians.

This means it's not only difficult for us to wrap our brains around what God is saying at times, but it can also be unnerving at best and terrifying at worst.

Speaking about being terrified—Today's lesson is about fear.

In today's passage, Jesus tells His disciples not to be afraid three times, vv 26, 28, and 31.

Why should we not be afraid? Let's find out!

Please stand for the reading and honoring of God's Word.

SCRIPTURE:

+ **Matthew 10:24**—A disciple is not above his teacher, or a slave above his master.

+ **Matthew 10:25**—It is enough for a disciple to become like his teacher and a slave like his master. If they called the head of the house 'Beelzebul,' how much more the members of his household!

+ **Matthew 10:26**—“Therefore, don't be afraid of them, since there is nothing covered that won't be uncovered and nothing hidden that won't be made known.

+ **Matthew 10:27**—What I tell you in the dark, speak in the light. What you hear in a whisper, proclaim on the housetops.

+ **Matthew 10:28**—Don't fear those who kill the body but are not able to kill the soul; rather, fear him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.

+ **Matthew 10:29**—Aren't two sparrows sold for a penny? Yet not one of them falls to the ground without your Father's consent.

Matthew 10:30— *But even the hairs of your head have all been counted.*

Matthew 10:31— *So don't be afraid; you are worth more than many sparrows.*

These are the very words from the authoritative, inerrant, inspired, and infallible Word of Almighty God.

PRAY:

*I sought the Lord, and he answered me
and rescued me from all my fears. (Psalm 34:4)*

EXEGESIS:

Matthew 10:24—A disciple is not above his teacher, or a slave above his master.

What does Jesus mean by this statement?

It makes no sense.

By definition, a *disciple* (learner, pupil, student) is beneath his teacher in both knowledge and wisdom.

It's comical to think of elementary age school kids teaching the teacher.

Middle school and high school kids try—

And college kids don't even live in reality.

The authority rests with the teacher—not the pupil.

The same concept translates to a slave and master with the slave underneath his master in social standing.

In order to understand what Jesus is saying, we have to back up from last week.

Please remember that context is everything.

Matthew 10:22— *You will be hated by everyone because of my name. But the one who endures to the end will be saved.*

Matthew 10:23— *When they persecute you in one town, flee to another.*

Matthew 10:24— *A disciple is not above his teacher, or a slave above his master.*

Matthew 10:25— *It is enough for a disciple to become like his teacher and a slave like his master. If they called the head of the house 'Beelzebul,' how much more the members of his household!*

What's the context? Persecution.

It's not education, status or any other worldly standard.

Jesus was not saying that a student would surpass the accomplishments of his teacher.

That may or may not be true in the secular world—but it's not the context in this passage.

Matthew 10:25— *It is enough for a disciple to become like his teacher and a slave like his master.*

Notice here that this message is not only for His Apostles—Jesus says, Disciples.

Jesus makes a specific title change that refers to me and you regarding persecution.

And as we follow Jesus, there will be a fundamental animosity from the world towards us.

Why? Because the hatred started with Jesus—and if we are disciples of Jesus—that animosity and hatred is now extended to us.

John's Gospel is more specific.

John 15:18—If the world hates you, understand that it hated me before it hated you.

John 15:19— If you were of the world, the world would love you as its own. However, because you are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of it, the world hates you.

John 15:20— Remember the word I spoke to you: 'A servant is not greater than his master.' If they persecuted me, they will also persecute you. —context

John 15:21— But they will do all these things to you on account of my name, because they don't know the one who sent me.

Bottom line
In other words, we should not expect better treatment from these wolves than what Jesus received.

Next, Jesus presses His point with a vivid illustration.

Matthew 10:25(b)— If they called the head of the house (Jesus) 'Beelzebul,' how much more the members of his household!
—US AS disciples

Now who is Beetle Juice character?—Beelzebul?

Beelzebul (sometimes found as “Beelzebub” or “Baalzebub”)

The first mention we have of this character is in 2 Kings 1.

2 Kings 1:1 NLT—After King Ahab's death, the land of Moab rebelled against Israel.

2 Kings 1:2 NLT(a)— One day Israel's new king, Ahaziah, fell through the latticework of an upper room at his palace in Samaria and was seriously injured.

Pause: We don't know why he lost his balance and fell through a window.

1. Lost his balance.
2. Someone pushed him.
3. Drunk
4. Dancing with the Devil - 2 step

2 Kings 1:2 NLT(b)—So he (Ahaziah) sent messengers to the temple of Baal-zebub, the god of Ekron, to ask whether he would recover.

2 Kings 1:3 NLT— But the angel of the Lord told Elijah, "Go and confront the messengers of the king of Samaria and ask them, 'Is there no God in Israel? Why are you going to Baal-zebub, the god of Ekron, to ask whether the king will recover?'"

Baal means lord—that's like Allah to a Muslim.

Evidently, King Ahaziah was worshipping this false god named Baal-zebub.

We don't know what happened with its etymology or the spelling, but this false god turned into a reference for "the lord of the flies" and then again into "the lord of the dung" and then eventually turned into identification for Satan and his demons.

So that's the reference—people are calling Jesus a demon or the devil himself.

When was Jesus called 'Beelzebul'?

Mark 3:22—The scribes who had come down from Jerusalem said, “He is possessed by Beelzebul,” and, “He drives out demons by the ruler of the demons.”

John 8:48 NLT—The people retorted, “You Samaritan devil! Didn’t we say all along that you were possessed by a demon?”

After Jesus cast out demons at the end of Matthew chapter 9.

Matthew 9:34— But the Pharisees said, “He drives out demons by the ruler of the demons.”

So don’t miss this.

KEYPOINT 1:

People claim that Jesus is Satan.

So if people call The Son of God, Satan—which proves just how far off they are in their teaching and beliefs—

they will surely call you and me as His disciples the same thing.

The more we look, talk, and act like Jesus, the more attractive we will become to those God is calling to Himself.

But at the same time—the more repulsed the world will be.

Because the world wants nothing of Jesus—so they don’t want the Jesus in us.

As a side note, the religious leaders make this claim again in Matthew chapter 12.

Jesus finally addresses this rumor that He is the devil once and for all—and it is a game changer for the Jews.

Because the Jews continually call the Son of God Satan, Jesus withdraws his offer of eternal life from them—and starts to teach in parables.

Jesus does this on purpose.

Think about that—Jesus begins teaches in a way so that no one can understand what he's saying—except for the Apostles.

It is a remarkable change in Jesus' ministry.

+ **Matthew 10:26**— *"Therefore, don't be afraid of them,*

"Therefore"— because people will laugh, mock, and may even kill you—Jesus says don't be afraid.

+ **Fear**—to feel anxious about a situation or event. ^{PERSON,}

Jesus tells His Apostles not to be afraid over fifty times in the Gospels.

~~That specific command~~ ^{FEAR} is also found another 60 times in the OT.

Why would God tell us through His word not to be afraid so many times?

Answer: Because, by nature, we are.

Where did this human fear come from?

It came from Adam and The Fall.

Adam and Eve eat from the tree they were not supposed to eat from—

+ **Genesis 3:8**—*Then the man and his wife heard the sound of the Lord God walking in the garden at the time of the evening breeze, and they hid from the Lord God among the trees of the garden.*

Genesis 3:10— *So the Lord God called out to the man and said to him, "Where are you?"*

Genesis 3:11— *And he said, "I heard you in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked, so I hid."*

Adam's sin not only broke the fellowship that Adam had with God, but now fear is a natural part of our DNA.

SLIDE

There are four main types of fear in Scripture.

1. The fear of God
2. The fear of man/people
3. The fear of the unknown/future
4. The fear of death

So let's see what kind of fear Jesus is referring to—

Matthew 10:26— *"Therefore, don't be afraid of them,"*

So Jesus tells us—it's the fear of man.

Don't fear when you tell people that you're a Christian.

Open confession of Jesus Christ is a must for His disciples.

There's no such thing as a Secret Service Agent for Jesus.

The public confession of faith in Christ is evidence of true salvation.

Romans 10:9—*If you confess with your mouth, "Jesus is Lord," and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.*

Romans 10:10— One believes with the heart, resulting in righteousness, and one confesses with the mouth, resulting in salvation.

Open confession of Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior is also why we baptize publicly—specifically at the church for the congregation to see.

Baptism is a sign of what God has done in your life—it is a proclamation of your new life in Christ.

We don't baptize people in secret. And we certainly don't baptize ourselves.

Why? Because the confession of Christ as Lord and Savior is a celebration!

(If you haven't been baptized via immersion—please come see me after the service.)

Matthew 10:26— "Therefore, don't be afraid of them,

Notice here that ^{this} ~~not fearing~~ man is a command.

Why are we commanded not to be afraid of man?

Proverbs 29:25—*The fear of mankind is a snare, (bait, lure, trap) but the one who trusts in the Lord is protected.*

This fear of man—fearing what other people think, say, or do has paralyzed all of us at one time or another.

we all have a bad case of the normals w/ fear.

As Christians, we need to learn how to identify, confront, and overcome our fears.

In other words, we need to re-order our fears--

We need to question our fears and put them into perspective.

Isaiah 8:12 NLT—Don't call everything a conspiracy, like they do, and don't live in dread of what frightens them. *walk*

Isaiah 8:13 NLT— Make the Lord of Heaven's Armies holy in your life.
He is the one you should fear.
He is the one who should make you tremble.

Fearing man is nothing new—we even see some of our heroes cower because of the fear of man.

Abraham was afraid of the King of Sodom (Gen 15:1)

Lot was afraid of the King of the Philistines (Gen 26:7)

Jacob was afraid of Esau (Gen 32:7)

Joseph's brothers were afraid of Joseph (Gen 50:19)

The whole nation of Israel was afraid as they went to war to take the promised land (Joshua)

Gideon was afraid of his father's family (Judges 6:27).

Saul was afraid of David. (1 Sam. 18:12)

David was afraid of the King of Gath (1 Sam 21:12)

Remember Elijah calling down fire from heaven and then going all Jason Borne on 450 false prophets?

After that amazing example of Kung-Fu fighting and faith, what happens?

1 Kings 19:1—Ahab told Jezebel everything that Elijah had done and how he had killed all the prophets with the sword.

1 Kings 19:2— So Jezebel sent a messenger to Elijah, saying, “May the gods punish me and do so severely if I don’t make your life like the life of one of them by this time tomorrow!”

In other words, “I’m going to kill you!”

1 Kings 19:3— Then Elijah became afraid, and immediately ran for his life.

We also see the fear of man with the Apostles—

At one point, Peter is so scared that he lies three times that he even knows Jesus while Jesus is on trial. (Mark 14:66)

So all that to say this—

KEYPOINT 1.2

Fear is a normal human emotion in the proper context.

Fear will save your life under the right circumstances.

But fear will also paralyze you from doing the right at the right time—if you’re not discerning.

Matthew 10:26— “Therefore, don’t be afraid of them, since there is nothing covered that won’t be uncovered and nothing hidden that won’t be made known.

There is a story about a prankster who lived in a small town.

He sent identical letters to twenty prominent businessmen and leaders in the community.

The letters simply said: “All is known. Flee at once.”

All twenty of those men left town by the next day.

The point of the story is that we all have skeletons in our closet.

The kids in our opening video were afraid of skeletons - As adults so are we.

We all have things that we would rather not discuss with other people—or for people to find out.

So, We do our very best to cover up those dark moments.

But it is terrifying to think everything we've concealed will be made known.

Do you know that all of our unconfessed and unrepented sins will be laid bare before God and everyone else at the last judgment?

Ecclesiastes 12:14 NLT—God will judge us for everything we do, including every secret thing, whether good or bad.

Romans 2:16 NLT— ~~And this is the message I proclaim—that~~ the day is coming when God, through Christ Jesus, will judge everyone's secret life.

Now, Jesus is not so much talking about personal secrets in verses 26 and 27, but about all the plans, plots, and conspiracies against Christ and His people.

Matthew 10:27— What I tell you in the dark, speak in the light. What you hear in a whisper, proclaim on the housetops.

In the first century, there was a lot less noise.

No cars, trucks, horns, TV or radio.

Quiet in Am/PM.

So, if someone had an important announcement—they would go to the top of their house—built like a patio—and yell the message for everyone to hear.

KEYPOINT 3:

Our duty (responsibility/obligation) as Christians is not to please people but to proclaim God's message.

Matthew 10:28(a)— Don't fear those who kill the body but are not able to kill the soul;

The second fear that Jesus mentions is death.

We are not to fear death—easier said than done.

Why are we not to fear death?

Although it may be filled with momentary terror—death is only temporary.

Matthew 10:28(b)— rather, fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.

The third fear is that of God.

For the Christian, we are to most certainly fear Almighty God.

Yet, at the same time, our fear of His holiness and our sinfulness has a sense of reverence, respect, and worship.

A Christian's fear differs from the world's because we have a sense of awe.

Proverbs 1:7—The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge; fools despise wisdom and discipline.

Christians love wisdom and want discipline because we don't want to remain where we are.

Ecclesiastes 12:13 NLT— ~~Here now is my final conclusion:~~ Fear God and obey his commands, for this is everyone's duty.

We are to fear God because He is the Creator and has the power not only over death, which is temporary— but eternal life, which is forever.

God made human beings to live forever.

There are only two options: Heaven or Hell.

Matthew 10:28(b)— *rather, fear him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.*

There's a widespread belief today that there is no such thing as hell.

If there is no such thing as hell, why did Jesus talk about it so much?

He talked about it to give every person fair warning of what would happen if they refused His offer of grace.

Hebrews 10:31— *It is a terrifying thing to fall into the hands of the living God.*

Please know that hell is not the absence of God.

Hell is a very real place where unbelievers experience the wrath of God on their sins—forever.

Matthew 10:28(c)— *fear him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.*

Destroy does not mean annihilation.

Let me share what it doesn't mean first.

The *doctrine of Annihilationism* teaches that the souls of unbelievers will be snuffed out/extinguished—instead of being sent to an everlasting, conscious hell.

2 Thessalonians 1:7—*And God will provide rest for you who are being persecuted and also for us when the Lord Jesus appears from heaven. He will come with his mighty angels,*

2 Thessalonians 1:8—*in flaming fire, bringing judgment on those who don't know God and on those who refuse to obey the Good News of our Lord Jesus.*

2 Thessalonians 1:9—*They will be punished with eternal destruction, forever separated from the Lord and from his glorious power.*

Annihilationism is a false doctrine.

Matthew 10:28(c)— *fear him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.*

In other words...

KEYPOINT 4:

We are to fear the right thing.

The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, while the fear of men is a snare (Prov. 9:10; 1:7; 29:25).

The fear of death is daunting, but the fear of facing a Holy God without the covering of Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior is far worse.

Jesus goes on to ask a rhetorical question.

Matthew 10:29—*Aren't two sparrows sold for a penny? Yet not one of them falls (hops) to the ground without your Father's consent.*

Jesus closes this part of His sermon to the Apostles with some encouragement.

One penny would buy two sparrows in the first century.

Sparrows were so cheap, that Luke's Gospels mentions a buy two and get one free deal. (Luke 12:6)

People would eat the sparrows as an appetizer.

What's the point?

The point that Jesus is making is that most people think that a sparrow is so tiny and insignificant that it can be bought with a penny—one of the least valuable of all coins.

And yet Jesus is saying— This insignificant ^{tiny} little bird cannot even hop around without God's knowledge and permission.

We tend to think that God only cares about the big things in our lives—not true.

If God cares about a tiny bird hopping around, how much more does he care about His own children who have been bought and paid for by Jesus' blood?

God cares about the details in our lives.

KEYPOINT 5:

God is sovereign (control/care) about the most insignificant events in our lives.

To prove His point, Jesus provides another example.

Matthew 10:30— *But even the hairs of your head have all been counted.*

God's knowledge and care for His children is so detailed that he has numbered the hairs on our heads.

The CSB says *counted*—that's not the best translation.

Most other translations say 'numbered.'

There is a difference—

Counted points to someone counting—numbered points to the Creator who has knit you in your mother's womb.

The Creator numbers. He creates. He plans. He ordains. He calls ? SAVES

He places each hair where He wants it.

Why? Because in some way that we may never understand, the Creator cares for His children.

Each of these hairs has value to God since it is the hair of his children.

So God cares not only when a sparrow dies but when each strand of hair dies as well.

What's the point?

If God takes such great care of little things like numbering each hair on our head—how much more about your emotional, physical, and spiritual well-being?

Matthew 10:31—So don't be afraid; you are worth more than many sparrows.

Here, we have the last mention of fear. —Comment

This points to the fear of the unknown/future.

It could be fearing man or what man can do to you—like death.

Many times, when we're fearful, we're afraid of many things all at the same time.

Our emotions overwhelm us, and we become paralyzed—we can't move, we can't make a decision, we can't think or even say why we are afraid.

PREACH:

As Christians, we need to learn how to identify, confront, and overcome our fears.

It's normal to have fears—but living a life in fearfulness is not.

I mentioned the four main types of fear found in Scripture:

1. The fear of the Lord.
2. The fear of man/people.
3. The fear of death
4. The fear of the unknown/future.

Let me close by giving you a few thoughts on the fear of the future.

When we fear the future, our fear/anxiety stems from uncertainty.

We either hope something good will happen—or we fear that something bad will happen.

Unfortunately, this anxiety can lead to “catastrophic thinking”—where we convince ourselves that something awful will happen—when many times it doesn't.

A helpful tool in examining our fears is to identify them—to name them.
Write them down.

If we constantly ignore our fears, they will hinder our walk with Jesus.

Keep in mind that whatever the source of your fear, God is sovereign over it.

If you are a Christian, God loves you perfectly—and God's perfect love will drive out your fear (1 John 4:18).

That's why God's perfect love is captured in a book for us to read over and over again.

And we read God's Word from cover to cover—over and over—because we quickly forget God's promises.

God promises His presence—

Deuteronomy 31:8—*The Lord is the one who will go before you. He will be with you; he will not leave you or abandon you. Do not be afraid or discouraged.*"

God is the one who comforts you—

Psalms 23:4—*Even when I go through the darkest valley, I fear no danger, for you are with me; your rod and your staff—they comfort me.*

God is the one who delivers you—

Psalms 34:4—*I sought the Lord, and he answered me and rescued me from all my fears.*

God is the one who cares for you—

1 Peter 5:7 NLT—*Give all your worries and cares to God, for he cares about you.*

God is the one who strengthens you—

Isaiah 41:10 NLT—Don't be afraid, for I am with you.
Don't be discouraged, for I am your God.
I will strengthen you and help you.
I will hold you up with my victorious right hand.

God works all things for your good—

Romans 8:28—We know that all things work together for the good of those who love God, who are called according to his purpose.

God has created people with three inner needs.

1. Love
2. Significance
3. Security.

All three are found in Scripture—and if any of these needs are damaged, we may be fearful in that area.

Love—we must have people in our lives who are unconditionally committed to our best interests. —culture of grace

Significance—we must know that our lives have meaning and purpose.

Security—we must have a sense of belonging and be protected.

Lastly, Jesus is telling His apostles and us as his disciples— why not fear for one reason—

It's not to become a better person.

It's not to go out and chase personal dreams.

It is to fulfill the Great Commission.

If you are someone who loves Jesus but is too fearful to share Jesus—I'm going to teach a special Bible study on fear in the spring.

So, if that interests you, please make a mental note of that.

PRAYER

BENEDICTION

And let the peace that comes from Christ rule in your hearts. For as members of one body you are called to live in peace. (Col 3:15).

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