

Text— Matthew 10:24-31

Fellow redeemed sinners, redeemed by the blood of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ,

Prior to our Scripture selection, we learn that the Lord Jesus made it quite clear to His disciples that they were not to expect a life of ease in this world, for we read in Matthew 10:16-23, “Behold, I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves: be ye therefore wise as serpents, and harmless as doves. But beware of men: for they will deliver you up to the councils, and they will scourge you in their synagogues; And ye shall be brought before governors and kings for my sake, for a testimony against them and the Gentiles. But when they deliver you up, take no thought how or what ye shall speak: for it shall be given you in that same hour what ye shall speak. For it is not ye that speak, but the Spirit of your Father which speaketh in you. And the brother shall deliver up the brother to death, and the father the child: and the children shall rise up against their parents, and cause them to be put to death. And ye shall be hated of all men for my name's sake: but he that endureth to the end shall be saved. But when they persecute you in this city, flee ye into another: for verily I say unto you, Ye shall not have gone over the cities of Israel, till the Son of man be come.” Thus, Jesus’ disciples were to expect persecution for the faith they held in Christ, and for preaching His Word— Law and Gospel.

Now, it’s also true that Jesus’ followers today – all Christians – will likewise be persecuted in this present evil world, for 2 Timothy 3:12-13 plainly states, “Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution. But evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving, and being deceived.” Hence, Jesus never promises His followers a life of temporal ease and worldly wealth— although the false prophets known as prosperity-preachers do promise such things to their audiences. Nevertheless, the truth stands that followers of Christ will have tough times in this life, for in our Scripture selection Jesus clearly teaches:

“CHRISTIANS SHOULD EXPECT SUFFERING IN THIS WORLD”

With that as our theme may we, in view of our text and with the help of the Holy Ghost, see—

- 1) Why Christians should expect suffering in this world
- 2) How Christians are to deal with suffering in this world

-1-

Verses 24 & 25, ----- (Matthew 10:24-25)

Think about the fact that Jesus says: *The disciple is not above his master, nor the servant above his lord.* Fellow Christians, we are followers – disciples – of Christ, and we are servants of Christ, because He certainly is our Lord and Master, “For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily,” relates Colossians 2:9. Accordingly, we are in no way superior to or over our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. Therefore, we should certainly not expect better treatment in this wicked world than Jesus received, which is why our Lord also plainly states: *It is enough for the disciple that he be as his master, and the servant as his lord. If they have called the master of the house Beelzebub, how much more shall they call them of his household?*

Realize that as followers of Jesus our Lord and Master we are to strive to be AS He was when He visibly walked in this world: humble, truthful, loving, self sacrificing, followers of God’s will as revealed in His Holy Word, for 2 Timothy 3:16-17 declares, “All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, throughly furnished unto all good works.”

Yes, take it to heart that Ephesians 5:1-8 instructs, “Be ye therefore followers of God, as dear children; And walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweetsmelling savour. But

fornication, and all uncleanness, or covetousness, let it not be once named among you, as becometh saints; Neither filthiness, nor foolish talking, nor jesting, which are not convenient: but rather giving of thanks. For this ye know, that no whoremonger, nor unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, hath any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God. Let no man deceive you with vain words: for because of these things cometh the wrath of God upon the children of disobedience. Be not ye therefore partakers with them. For ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord: walk as children of light." Let us strive to show that we are truly disciples and servants of our Savior, Jesus Christ, by living a godly life, thereby testifying to others in word and in deed.

Looking again at the second verse of our text, notice the treatment we Christians are to expect in this world when we strive to live a godly life as did our Lord and Master, Jesus Christ. Jesus does not sugar-coat reality, for He plainly tells us: *If they have called the master of the house Beelzebub, how much more shall they call them of his household?*

Yeah, think about how Jesus was treated by egotistical, self-absorbed, self-righteous, pious appearing servants of Satan in this world: they dared to accuse the holy-one-of-God, Jesus Christ, of being a devil! For example, consider what happened when Jesus miraculously healed a mute man who was demon possessed, for we read in Matthew 9:32-34, "behold, they brought to him a dumb man possessed with a devil. And when the devil was cast out, the dumb spake: and the multitudes marvelled, saying, It was never so seen in Israel. But the Pharisees said, He casteth out devils through the prince of the devils." Can you imagine it? The Pharisees accused Christ of working in league with Satan, when Jesus had just cast out one of Satan's subordinate devils!

Another instance of Jesus' being mistreated is recorded in Matthew 12:22-28, where we read, "Then was brought unto him one possessed with a devil, blind, and dumb: and he healed him,

insomuch that the blind and dumb both spake and saw. And all the people were amazed, and said, Is not this the son of David? But when the Pharisees heard it, they said, This fellow doth not cast out devils, but by Beelzebub the prince of the devils. And Jesus knew their thoughts, and said unto them, Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation; and every city or house divided against itself shall not stand: And if Satan cast out Satan, he is divided against himself; how shall then his kingdom stand? And if I by Beelzebub cast out devils, by whom do your children cast them out? therefore they shall be your judges. But if I cast out devils by the Spirit of God, then the kingdom of God is come unto you." Thus, we see that Jesus miraculously cast out a devil which had robbed a man of his sight and his ability to speak; the man subsequently both spoke and saw, thanks to Jesus' almighty power healing him. But, the hate-filled Pharisees who were in fact servants of Satan, dared to once again accuse Jesus of working in league with Beelzebub, that is, Satan. The Pharisees' argument was illogical besides being unscriptural and blasphemous toward Jesus.

My friends, again and again during Jesus' visible sojourn on earth He, by His mighty words and deeds, proved He is the Son of God. And yet, Jesus, who lived a perfect life, was called Beelzebub by those sanctimonious appearing, devil serving snobs who hated Him and opposed Him against better knowledge. Accordingly, since the perfect Savior, our Lord Jesus Christ, was called Beelzebub by unbelievers, how much more should we imperfect people who believe on the Lord Jesus Christ expect to be called Beelzebub and the like.

Fellow Christians, we should fully expect to be called names by the unbelievers who serve Satan by their opposing what God says in His Word, the Holy Bible. For example, lately it's common for true Christians to be labeled unreasonable and haters of good when we stand against so-called gay rights, or when we oppose a woman's supposed right to have her unborn child murdered via abortion. And yet, Isaiah 5:20-21 warns all pride-filled unbelievers, "Woe unto them that call evil good,

and good evil; that put darkness for light, and light for darkness; that put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter! Woe unto them that are wise in their own eyes, and prudent in their own sight!" Let us regularly pray for widespread repentance in this wicked world which is growing worse with each passing day.

Fellow Christians, let us never forget that we should expect suffering in this world since the wicked world treated our Lord and Master Jesus Christ with mockery, contempt, hatred, and persecution.

-2-

As we ponder our text to its conclusion, let us see how Christians are to deal with suffering in this world.

Verse 26, ----- (Matthew 10:26)

It's no picnic when we Christians are treated with mockery, contempt, hatred, and persecution. We dwell in sinful weak flesh which is prone to get scared; but thankfully, our Lord Jesus says to us: *Fear them not therefore: for there is nothing covered, that shall not be revealed; and hid, that shall not be known.*

Oh, fellow Christians, we have no need to fear, for life in this world is but brief in comparison to eternity. Judgment Day is coming, for Holy Writ reports, "When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory: And before him shall be gathered all nations: and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats: And he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left. For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad. Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, And shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and

they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation." (Matthew 25:31-33; 2 Corinthians 5:10; John 5:28-29) Indeed, we Christians need not fear; the unbelievers are the people who need to fear, for all the evil they have done will be revealed when they stand before Judge Jesus Christ.

Verse 27, ----- (Matthew 10:27)

Note well that we Christians are to be bold witnesses for Jesus while we dwell in this world, for our Lord says: *What I tell you in darkness, that speak ye in light: and what ye hear in the ear, that preach ye upon the housetops.*

Think about what Jesus said in darkness of speech, as it were. It was Jesus' speaking in parables when He visibly sojourned on earth, for in Luke 8:10 we read that He said to His disciples, "Unto you it is given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of God: but to others in parables; that seeing they might not see, and hearing they might not understand." You see, many of the people had hardened themselves against God's Word and had blown their opportunity. But now, in these last days, the Lord would have His followers – us Christians – plainly proclaim the full truth of His Word so that no one can stand before the Lord on Judgment Day and say they never had a chance to come to know Him and His will. God grant that we keep proclaiming God's Word – Law and Gospel – until Jesus returns in glory to judge the quick and the dead.

Verse 28, ----- (Matthew 10:28)

There are times when Christians have to suffer temporal death for their beliefs. Many Christians were martyrs in the early period of the New Testament Church. Other's suffered and died in later periods of history for holding to God's true Word rather than obeying some false church leader, some antichrist. It still happens in various parts of the world that Christians lose their physical life because of their faith in Jesus. For example, fundamentalist Muslims love to kill Christians whom they label "infidels." It may yet

happen in our own country that Christians will soon have to suffer physical death for holding to the truth.

Nevertheless, we Christians are not to become frightened, for our Lord Jesus says: *fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.* Think about it. If we Christians are executed because of our faith, our body dies but our soul is immediately with the Lord in heavenly bliss, while our dead body awaits resurrection on the Last Day. Enemies of Jesus Christ and His Christians can only harm our body. On the other hand, the Lord God can and will destroy both the body and the soul of the impenitent unbelievers in hell, which Mark 9:44 describes as the place, "Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched." Accordingly, we need to continue to fear God! We need not fear wicked men!

Fellow Christians, let us take to heart the following words from Romans 8:35-39, "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? As it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter. Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us. For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord." Eternal life is ours according to body and soul, thanks to our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ! "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved. He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God." (John 3:16-18) All praise be to God who gives us

Christians the victory!

Verses 29-31, -----. (Matthew 10:29-31)

In the closing verses of our text, the Lord Jesus Christ stresses the fact that our loving heavenly Father is fully aware of us and everything about us at all times, for Jesus says: *Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing? and one of them shall not fall on the ground without your Father. But the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Fear ye not therefore, ye are of more value than many sparrows.*

A sparrow, a tiny little bird who is without a soul, is known to God the Father who is fully aware of when one of those little creatures falls to the ground. How much more are we human beings – who have both body and soul – known to God the Father, who is fully aware of the exact count of the very hairs on our head, and therefore is fully aware of everything else going on with us in our life. Thus, we certainly have no need to fear since we human beings who believe on God's only begotten Son are far more valuable to God the Father than are many sparrows.

My friends in Christ, we know that God the Father values us, for, "In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him. Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins. For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them." (1 John 4:9-10; Ephesians 2:8-10)

Fellow Christians, God graciously sent us a Savior and then gifted us with faith in that Savior. Hence, God surely loves us. Therefore, when we endure suffering because of our faith in Jesus we are to deal with that suffering without fear since we know that God loves us and will ultimately bring us

home to Himself in heaven. Let us therefore go forward expecting suffering in this world, not being afraid, but rather trusting in the Lord who we know loves us.

Let us daily and sincerely repent of our sins. Let us continue to cling to Christ Jesus in heart-deep faith as our personal Savior and Lord. And, let us go forward striving to be brave witnesses for Jesus in word and deed, despite what the wicked think of us and do to us. Amen.

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