

Mind of Christ - Lesson 112

June 25, 2021

Welcome again to another edition of “The Mind of Christ”. We’re happy that you have joined us here. We are well into our study. I think we’ve done over 65 or 70 of these recordings *and we’re just really getting started*. This was a very extensive study that I conducted over a 7-year period so it takes a while to get through all of this. What we’re trying to do is to explore all of the things that Jesus said and did so that we can understand the mind of Christ. We are in the middle of **Section 70** of A. T. Robertson’s book “A Harmony of the Gospels”. This is where Jesus sent His apostles out on what we call ‘the limited commission’.

We have done, I think, a couple of recordings so far ... at least one recording so far on this section (70). We’re going to pick up now and do some more. We won’t finish today. This is a rather long section. *I am using the New American Standard Bible for these lessons.*

I’d like to begin by going back to **Matthew 10:16 to 23**. That’s what I think we’ll cover today. Stay with me because there is a lot to cover here:

Matthew 10:16-23

¹⁶ “Behold, I send you out as sheep in the midst of wolves; so be shrewd as serpents and innocent as doves. ¹⁷ But beware of men, for they will hand you over to the courts and scourge you in their synagogues; ¹⁸ and you will even be brought before governors and kings for My sake, as a testimony to them and to the Gentiles. ¹⁹ 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. ²⁰ For it is not you who speak, but it is the Spirit of your Father who speaks in you.

²¹ “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. ²² 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.

²³ “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.”

That’s the section we’re going to cover today. We’re going to talk about *warnings and promises* that God makes. First, let’s talk about the warnings.

It says they are to be sent out as *sheep among the wolves*. Remember in **Matthew 9:36** He says His people are like sheep without a shepherd. Jesus is sending sheep who know the shepherd to tell those who have no shepherd that *He is their shepherd*. But to do so, they also have to go out among the wolves. These Jewish leaders are called by many names; the names of animals. For instance they’re called “snakes”, they’re called “dogs”, one ... Herod was called a “fox”, and now they’re called “wolves”.

The Apostles have already observed these wolves attack Jesus, the Shepherd who was protecting his sheep. You can see this in **John 10:7, 11** and **John 17:6-12**. The danger is real, and these wolves are capable of murder. *The mission is important enough to risk the wolves*. And Jesus was responsible enough to warn His disciples of the danger and prepare them.

Jesus' advice to His disciples is classic: "Be shrewd as serpents and innocent as doves. Jesus combines the characteristics of two animals; a serpent and a dove ... shrewdness with innocence. Paul gives us similar instruction in **Romans 16:19**. He said, "I want you to be wise in what is good, and innocent in what is evil." In **Philippians 2:15** He tells them, "to be blameless and innocent, children of God above reproach in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom you appear as lights in the world." Other places where this word "innocent" is used in the New Testament is **Matthew 12:5** and **7**, the Jewish leaders did not recognize innocence and they condemned it. "Or have you not read in the Law that on the Sabbath the priests in the temple break the Sabbath and are innocent?" In **Matthew 27:24**, Pilate tried to claim innocence of Jesus' blood. "When Pilate saw that he was accomplishing nothing, but rather that a riot was starting, he took water and washed his hands in front of the crowd, saying, "I am innocent of this Man's blood; see to that yourselves."

But see **Acts 4:27-8**, because there he is charged, along with others, in the death of Jesus. "For truly in this city there were gathered together against Your holy servant Jesus, whom You anointed, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, along with the Gentiles and the peoples of Israel to do whatever Your hand and Your purpose predestined to occur." In **Luke 23:47**, the Centurion declared that Jesus was innocent. "This man was in fact innocent." In **Acts 20:26** Paul said, "Therefore, I testify to you this day that I am innocent of the blood of all men." In **Hebrews 7:26**, Jesus, as High Priest, is "holy, innocent, separated from sinners and exalted above the heavens."

Jesus wants His people whom he sends out to *walk in integrity*, and not to be the ones to be blamed for the "messes". We are a part of the solution, not part of the problem. Jesus is often teaching His disciples to be wise or shrewd. The word for "shrewd" here is #5429 is phronimos (φρονιμος). It means to be thoughtful, sagacious, discreet, practical, or to have practical skill. It means to be sensible. In **Matthew 7:24**, the wise man is the one who hears the word and puts it into practice. "Therefore everyone who hears these words of Mine and acts on them, may be compared to a wise man who built his house on the rock." He is shrewd. In **Matthew 24:45**, the faithful and *sensible* or *shrewd* slave is the one who doesn't let the house get broken into and who gives them their food at the proper time. If we are found doing this when He returns, then we will be put in charge of more. The **opposite** is the slave who does not believe the Master is coming today and he spends his time abusing the other slaves or he spends things on his own pleasure. He is not shrewd.

In Matthew 25 Jesus speaks of the wise and the foolish virgins; those who were shrewd enough to prepare for a lengthy return of the bridegroom. In **Luke 16:8**, the servant is praised for acting shrewdly. "And his master praised the unrighteous manager because he had acted shrewdly..." And then he adds, "For the sons of this age are more shrewd in relationship to their own kind than the sons of light." Paul says in **1 Corinthians 10:15**, "I speak as to wise men; **you then**, judge what I say." Again, these are all places where the word "shrewd" or "wise" phronimos (φρονιμος) is found.

It seems that the world does not think "*we*" are very smart and can easily be taken advantage of. We are told from the beginning that the snake is more cunning than all other creatures. *A snake normally will patiently stalk their prey ... waiting, calculating, making judgment along the way...closer...stop...now...not now...another day, always seeking the advantage.*

In reading this, the question is how much time do we spend in strategizing? Do we give it much thought either ‘as a church’ or ‘individually’?

Doves, on the other hand, are fairly docile and unaware of danger, although since I have had my feeder, I have seen some aggressive doves while eating. They do not appear to be cunning as snakes are, but trusting and without hidden agendas.

How do we mix these qualities? How do we strike the proper balance? What would a proper mixture of shrewdness and innocence look like? This is what Jesus will describe below. He will point out the hidden dangers and the proper responses. He will *flesh out* this principle.

The list of what Jesus says will happen to *the disciples on this limited commission* include:

1. They will be delivered up to the courts
2. They will be scourged in the Synagogues
3. They will be brought before governors and kings
4. Brother will deliver up brother to death
5. Fathers will deliver up children to death
6. Children will rise up against their parents causing them to be put to death
7. The disciples will be hated by all
8. They will be persecuted

Surely this goes beyond the ‘limited commission’, but the groundwork for these is being laid on this mission. The “ill will” will be generated in part on this mission. If this is what they will experience, then ‘why’ is this mission so important? Souls are at stake. *There are worthy people out there who will listen and be saved*. This is a search and rescue mission!

Jesus begins with, “**Beware**” of men. This is #2400 “idou” (ιδου), to give attention to; bring to or near, turn the mind towards something or to be attentive. That is what it means to “beware” of something. It is found 24 times in the New Testament and I want to give you those Scriptures because *they’re really important to us understanding the mind of Christ*. These are the kinds of things we are to be aware of or be-ware of!

Matthew 6:1 says, *Beware of practicing your righteousness before men to be noticed by them; otherwise you have no reward with your Father who is in heaven.*

Matthew 7:15 says, “*Beware of the false prophets, who come to you in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly are ravenous wolves.*”

Matthew 16:6 says “*Watch out and beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees.*” That meant to beware of the *teaching* of the Pharisees.

Luke 17:3 says, “*Be on your guard! If your brother sins, rebuke him; and if he repents, forgive him.*” That’s something that we need to be aware of.

Luke 20:46 says, “*Beware of the scribes, who like to walk around in long robes, and love respectful greetings in the market places, and chief seats in the synagogues and places of honor at banquets.*”

Luke 21:34 says, “**But be on your guard**, so that your hearts will not be weighed down with dissipation and drunkenness and the worries of life.”

Acts 5:35 says, “Men of Israel, **take care** what you propose to do with these men.” We need to be aware of things that might be proposed.

Acts 8:6 says, “The crowds with one accord were **giving attention** to what was said by Philip...”

Acts 8:10-11 says regarding Simon the Sorcerer, “and they all, from smallest to greatest, were **giving attention** to him, saying, “This man is what is called the Great Power of God.”¹¹ And they were **giving him attention** because he had for a long time astonished them with his magic arts.” **Beware** of this man named Simon, the magician.

Acts 16:14 says, “A woman named Lydia, from the city of Thyatira, a seller of purple fabrics, a worshiper of God, **was listening**”; *Lydia paid attention, she was aware* if you will.

Acts 20:28 says, “**Be on guard** for yourselves and for all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood.” Here Paul is addressing the elders at Ephesus.

1 Timothy 1:4 says that there are certain things that we are *not to pay attention to or beware of* such as myths or endless genealogies...

1 Timothy 3:8 says, “Deacons likewise must be men of dignity, not double-tongued, or **addicted to much wine** or fond of sordid gain”. Beware of becoming addicted to wine.

1 Timothy 4:1 says, “But the Spirit explicitly says that in later times some will fall away from the faith, **paying attention to** deceitful spirits and teachings of demons...” Beware of those things.

1 Timothy 4:13 says, “Until I come, **give your attention to** the public reading, to exhortation and teaching...” We must be “aware” of the need for these things.

Hebrews 2:1 says, “For this reason we must **pay much closer attention to** what we have heard, so that we do not drift away from it.”

2 Peter 1:19 says, “And so we have the prophetic word made more sure, to which you **do well to pay attention** as to a lamp shining in a dark place...”

So, the idea of beware can be both positive and negative, but carries with it a heightened sense of awareness and attention. Jesus’ view of mankind was realistic; however I think we often do not make distinctions. All men are not to be feared or guarded against. There has to be trust in the world or we cannot work together. Jesus already warned in the Sermon on the Mount to settle matters quickly with your adversary as they are taking you to court lest you are made to pay dearly (**Matthew 5:25**). Paul even told the **Corinthians** in **1:6** to avoid human courts and let Believers judge matters. Courts and judges can control lives and order us in ways that take away our freedoms. Jesus preferred individuals working out things by mutual agreement instead of by having the will of the state imposed upon them.

The apostles would be handed into court in an attempt to stop them from preaching about Jesus and we see this in Acts. So, what were the disciples supposed to do? It seems in some cases ... just avoid a fight. And with those who might *take you to court*, move on and keep preaching.

This is a big subject. How does this affect things like *civil rights, prayer in schools, abortion, or free speech*? All of this is tied to the courts. Next he says they will scourge you in the Synagogues. Unlike the Roman scourge, the Jews endured the Jewish scourge but it had limits. There were 40 stripes save one. So they were allowed to give you 39 stripes and may not have been as brutal as the Roman scourging.

But to be whipped by Jewish religious leaders in public for proclaiming Jesus is an ominous prospect. Imagine of some other religious group could strap you to a post and beat you for preaching what “they” do not like. Actually, the Muslims under Sharia Law would love to do this and more.

In **2 Corinthians 11:24**, Paul says, five times I have **received from the Jews**, 39 lashes. Then, in verse 25 he says **three times I was beaten with rods and stoned**. So Paul knew what it was to endure these persecutions at the hands of the Jews. *Stephen’s stoning* was instigated out of the Synagogue in Acts 7. *Herod put James to death* in Acts 12, and Peter also was arrested and the intent was to kill him after the Passover. *Paul was brought before Felix and Festus, both governors; Herod the king; and of course, Nero who murdered him*. Everything Jesus said happened.

But notice this phrase, “**for my sake as a testimony to them**.” To who? To the persecutors and to the Gentiles! Jesus gives us the reason for the abuse and the purpose of the abuse. The reason is, in these words, “**for my sake**”. This phrase, or similar ones, are used often in Scripture. I’m going to give you a list of them:

Genesis 26:24 “I am the God of your father Abraham; do not fear, for I am with you. I will bless you, and multiply your descendants, for the sake of My servant Abraham.”

Numbers 11:29 “But Moses said to him, “Are you jealous for my sake? If only all of the Lord’s people were prophets, that the Lord would put His Spirit upon them!” To Joshua who was jealous for Moses’ sake.

2 Samuel 9:7 “Then David said to him, “Do not be afraid, for I will assuredly show kindness to you for the sake of your father Jonathan”. David showed kindness to Mephibosheth for the sake of Jonathan.

2 Samuel 18:5 “But the king commanded Joab, Abishai, and Ittai, saying, “Deal gently with the young man Absalom for my sake.” This was David talking; for David’s sake.

1 Kings 11:31 God said, “Yet I will not tear away all the kingdom, but I will give one tribe to your son for the sake of My servant David, and for the sake of Jerusalem, which I have chosen.” He did not tear the kingdom out of Solomon’s hand “for the sake of David”.

2 Kings 20:6 God said to Hezekiah, “And I will add fifteen years to your life, and I will save you and this city from the hand of the king of Assyria; and I will protect this city for My own sake and for My servant David’s sake.”

Psalm 23:3 “He restores my soul: he leads me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake.”

Psalm 25:7 David says, “Do not remember the sins of my youth or my wrongdoings; Remember me according to Your faithfulness, for Your goodness’ sake, Lord.” Sometimes we use this phrase, “For goodness’ sake”.

Psalm 25:11 David says, “For the sake of Your name, Lord, Forgive my wrongdoing, for it is great.”

Psalm 31:3 David says, “For You are my rock and my fortress; for the sake of Your name You will lead me and guide me.”

Psalm 69:7 David says, “For Your name’s sake I have endured disgrace; dishonor has covered my face”.

Isaiah 48:9 says, “For the sake of My name I delay My wrath, and for My praise I restrain it for you, in order not to cut you off.”

Isaiah 48:11 says, “For my own sake, I will act.”

Jeremiah 15:15 says, “You know, Lord; remember me, take notice of me, and take vengeance for me on my persecutors. Do not, in view of Your patience, take me away; Know that for Your sake I endure reproach.”

Ezekiel 20:9 says, “But I acted for the sake of My name, that it would not be defiled in the sight of the nations among whom they lived, in whose sight I made Myself known to them by bringing them out of the land of Egypt.” God will do certain things for the sake of not being profaned among the Gentiles.

Daniel 9:19 says, “Lord, hear! Lord, forgive! Lord, listen and take action! For Your own sake, my God, do not delay, because Your city and Your people are called by Your name.” This is from a prayer of Daniel to God to return the Israelites to their land in Judah or Israel.

This continues in the New Testament of the Bible for the places where we find “for His sake” or something comparable for His name’s sake.

Matthew 10:39 “He who has found his life will lose it, and he who has lost his life for My sake will find it”. We are to lose our lives for Jesus’ sake; for My sake, He says.

Matthew 16:25 says, “For whoever wishes to save his life will lose it; but whoever loses his life for My sake will find it.”

Matthew 19:29 says, “And everyone *who has left houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother or children or farms* for My name’s sake, will receive many times as much, and will inherit eternal life.” He’s talking about Jesus.

Mark 8:35 says, “For whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake and the gospel’s will save it.”

Mark 10:29 says, “Truly I say to you, there is no one who has left house or brothers or sisters or mother or father or children or farms, for My sake and for the gospel’s sake...”

Mark 13:9 says, “But be on your guard; for they will hand you over to the courts, and you will be flogged in the synagogues, and you will stand before governors and kings for My sake, as a testimony to them.”

Luke 9:24 says, “For whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake, this is the one who will save it.”

Luke 21:12 says, “But before all these things, they will lay their hands on you and persecute you, turning you over to the synagogues and prisons, bringing you before kings and governors on account of My name.” He’s talking about being handed over to the government of My name’s sake.

John 12:30 says, “Jesus responded and said, “This voice has not come for My sake, but for yours.” God spoke from heaven for the sake of the people hearing.

John 15:21 says, “But all these things they will do to you on account of My name, because *they do not know* the One who sent Me.”

Acts 9:16 says, “...for I will show him how much he must suffer for My name’s sake.” This was after Saul was delivered by Ananias.

Romans 9:3 says, “For I could wish that I myself were accursed, separated from Christ for the sake of my countrymen, my kinsmen according to the flesh.” Paul wished he could be cut off from Christ for the sake of his fellow brethren or kinsmen.

2 Corinthians 2:1 says, “But I determined this for my own sake, that I would not come to you in sorrow again.”

Colossians 1:24 says, “Now I rejoice in my sufferings for your sake, and in my flesh I do my share on behalf of His body, which is the church, in filling up what is lacking in Christ’s afflictions.”

Revelation 2:3 says, “...and you have perseverance and have endured on account of My name, and have not become weary.” They persevered for His name’s sake.

The reason I give you all of these references, this is an in-depth Bible study so this is not a child’s Bible study. All of these references are important for us to understand the different nuances of *the reasons why we do what we do*. For whose sake do we do we do this?

So, how do we analyze this? *This is about motives...* why we do what we do.

Now of all those Scriptures that I just read, here's a summary of them.

1. For My own sake ... so sometimes *I do something for my* sake.
2. I may do it for the sake of promises that have been made to others. Sometimes I will do something; I may not really want to do it *but I made a promise* so I'm going to do it for the sake of that promise.
3. Sometimes God does something just for His own sake, *maybe to preserve His name or His integrity*.
4. Then there's what God does for the sake of others. *Sometimes God will do certain things, not for His own sake but for the sake of others*.
5. Then there is what I do for Him or for His name's sake. *There are certain things I do simply because it serves God's purposes*.

Is it ever right to act in my-interest ... for my sake? **Yes**, if that action also serves God's interest. We also act out of loyalty and respect for others to prove that we honor these relationships; and the authority God has vested in others, like spiritual leaders. God also does this to show He honors His promises and commitments to individuals. God also upholds the honor of His name. *Note the idea of His name being profaned among the nations*. And when I lose my life and act purely out of my relationship with Jesus, or God, or the Gospel, or the body of Christ, I prove my commitment to something higher than myself. *Note that family, in this context, is put below the Kingdom of God*.

For "My" sake or for Jesus' sake is similar to our prayer ... in Jesus' name. It orients our lives regarding authority and motivation. *Why we do what we do, for whom we do what we do, makes all the difference*. It is the basis of our integrity. We are taught by Jesus that it is not just that we take a beating, but that we take a beating *for Him* because He takes a beating for us!

Peter learned this and taught it in **1 Peter 2:13**. "Submit yourselves for the Lord's sake to every human institution, whether to a king as the one in authority, ¹⁴ or to governors as sent by him for the punishment of evildoers and the praise of those who do right." In verse 15 he says, "*For such is the will of God, that by doing right you silence the ignorance of foolish people*." And then in verse 16 he says, "Act as free people, and do not use your freedom as a covering for evil, but use it as bond-servants of God." And in 19, "For this finds favor, if for the sake of conscience toward God a person **endures grief when suffering unjustly**. ²⁰ For what credit is there if, when you sin and are harshly treated, you endure it with patience? But if when you do what is right and suffer for it you patiently endure it, this finds favor with God." Now notice; *this finds favor with God* when you bear up under unjust suffering because you are doing it for the name of Christ.

Peter uses Jesus the *example* for this! His mistreatment was not caused by His misbehavior but for *our* sakes. We suffer for His sake, because He suffered for our sakes. This is the perfect picture of *sacrificial living*. In suffering and dying we do it with Him in mind, and for His glory and honor, and works success. Paul says in **Philippians 3:8** that he experienced the loss of all things in view of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. "For Jesus' sake" means to gain Christ even as all things are being lost. For Paul,

when he talks about the favor of God, it was the “high calling” of God (**Philippians 3:14**). “I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.” It was for His praise (verse 7). Paul counted his personal gain *loss* for the sake of Christ.

As Stephen was dying, he saw Jesus standing at the right hand of the Father. He **knew** why he was dying and Who he was dying for. The Christians of the first century and beyond knew “it was *for Jesus’ sake* they died. That is power!

Jesus also says that another purpose seen by the Apostles in being brought before Governors and Kings and that is *as a testimony to them and to the Gentiles*. The Governors and the Kings are Gentiles, or at least serve under the authority of the Gentiles. That is the Romans. Ananias was to tell Paul that ‘he was a chosen instrument of Jesus to “bear My name” before the Gentiles, the kings and the sons of Israel (**Acts 9:15**).

The idea of a “testimony” is #3142 “marturion” (μαρτυριον) from which we get the word *martyr*. It is “evidence given, it is “a record”, “a report”, a “testimony” or “a witness”. *This holds the receiver accountable*, without excuse. Even those who are not worthy need to hear the evidence so that when judgment comes they will know *why* it is coming. They were warned or made aware. They are made ‘guilty’ or ‘held accountable’ because they cannot claim they did not know.

So, how does an Apostle get an audience with a governor or a king? Well, they get it through being arrested on false charges! *God uses injustices to bring about justice!* In **Matthew 8:4** the leper was told to show himself to the priest and to take an offering “as a testimony”, as evidence of healing; but notice it was a testimony *to them*, to others, not to the leper! He knew he was cleansed. It has to do with those who need convincing proofs. Jesus’ enemies were looking for *false* evidence ... evidence against Him (**Matthew 26:59, Mark 14:55**) but they could not find any. It seems all the **evidence** they has *supported Jesus’ claims!* When true evidence is presented to those looking for false evidence, it makes the accuser look even more guilty.

In **Matthew 24:14** Jesus *the Gospel will be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all nations*. In **Mark 6:11** “Those who do not listen, the dust shall be shaken from your feet and *that* will be a **testimony against them**”. In **Mark 13:9**, “But be on your guard; for they will hand you over to the courts, and you will be flogged in the synagogues, and you will stand before governors and kings for My sake, as a testimony to them”. In **Luke 21:12-13**, “But before all these things, they will lay their hands on you and persecute you, turning you over to the synagogues and prisons, bringing you before kings and governors on account of My name. ¹³ It will lead to an opportunity for your testimony.” Jesus says it outright; that their arrest will lead to an opportunity of their testimony. The book of John uses the term “testimony” often as a major theme.

How is their arrest a testimony to them?

First, it is because one has to offer a defense as to the arrest. **Acts 26:22-23** is a good example of Paul’s defense before King Agrippa. In his summary, Paul says, “So having obtained help from God I stand today testifying to both small and great stating nothing but what the Prophets and Moses said was going to take place; ²⁷ that the Christ was to suffer,

and that by reason of His resurrection from the dead He would be the first to proclaim light both to the Jewish people and to the Gentiles.” Usually, what you get when you get ‘your day in court’, you get to tell ‘your story’.

Second, another answer to this question of ‘*how is their arrest a testimony*’ is that you are willing to suffer for Jesus, the story and the gospel. *Your life is a testimony*. This is why those who are killed *for their faith* are called “martyrs”. Their lives are a testimony to the **truth**. **Revelation 12:11** says that the brethren overcame the accuser, Satan, by three things:

1. The blood of the Lamb
2. The word of their testimony
3. By not loving their lives even to shrink from death.

This is a powerful combination. The early spread of Christianity was based on this. The more the enemy tried to defeat us, the more the Spirit overcomes; and when that commitment was seen, others wanted to give *their lives* to the cause of Christ. Commitment and confident testimony begets the same. Soldiers beget soldiers, faith begets faith. *These make a statement beginning with Jesus’ own death*; the shedding of His blood.

Paul in Jesus makes a point of saying the testimony is to the Jews and Gentiles. It must be that the heart of the Gospel is the unity of both “in Christ”. There is one *message* to both. There is one *sacrifice* for both. There is one *testimony* for both. There are not two messages or two means or two separate paths. This testimony unites and gives hope to **all** who are seeking a Savior.

Surely it is comforting in **Matthew 10:19-20** to know that they will be told what to say when they come before governors and kings. “¹⁹ 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. ²⁰ For it is not you who speak, but it is the Spirit of your Father who speaks in you.” I remember growing up that this was a Scripture that I told, “*did not apply to us today*”. This, I was told, was about inspiration and writing Scripture. I was on my own if I’d get hauled in in front of a king for His sake. I’d better have my own script because He wasn’t going to help me. *I’m not so sure, these days, that that is the right interpretation*.

The first part of this address addresses our human nature to become *anxious* as to what we will say. Remember the Apostles never attended “Toastmasters” or a “Dale Carnegie” course or had “Preaching 101”. They were *ignorant and unlearned* and Paul was the best prepared of the whole bunch.

Let’s look at this idea of them being anxious. The idea of anxious means the “dividing of the mind”, “to have care”, “to have anxious interests”, “to expend careful thought”, “to concern oneself”, “to have thoughts occupied with something”. The word here is #3309 “merimnao” (μεριμνω). In **Matthew 13:22** talks about the “worries” of this world that choke the Word of God. This is the word “anxious” here. In **2 Corinthians 11:28** Paul had daily “concerns” or “anxiety” for all the churches. In **Philippians 4:6** Paul tells us “Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God.”

In **Matthew 6:27** is talks about not being anxious for our life. In **1 Corinthians 7:32-34** it talks about a single person who can be free from the concerns of this world. In **Philippians 2:20**, Timothy showed concern for the welfare of the Philippian brethren.

There seems to be a difference between *worldly concerns* and *kingdom concerns*, neither to reach the level of anxiety which forgets where true riches are and true help comes from. Jesus did not want the Apostles to be worried or concerned or anxious about what to say to kings or governors and since this is a natural concern (see Moses who was concerned about what he was going to say to Pharaoh and how he was going to say it), many clam up when put in front of a person with power over their lives.

Jesus reminds us before Pilate, that Pilate has no power in himself but only what comes from above. In **Matthew 10:19**, Jesus is even *more* precise; “*it will be given in that hour*”. Imagine one of the Apostles knowing that in a few minutes they would stand before a very important man who could determine whether they would live or die, or be released or go back to a cell. And as they sit there, a thought comes to mind as it did to me as I waited to meet the president of Haiti over twenty years ago. I got ‘the idea’ to ask to pray with him. *What an experience!* Did the Spirit of my Father put this in my heart? Many have told me ‘I always know exactly what to say’ at funerals. Is it the Spirit of God? This process or experience of having the right thing to say *when we need it* is very important. His Spirit talks to our spirit and that is truly miraculous and amazing how to understand this. First, in some way, the Apostles at this point ‘have the Spirit’ of the Father, but later Jesus will breathe on them and tell them to “receive the Holy Spirit”. And also later (**Luke 24:49**) He will tell them to wait in Jerusalem to receive *power from on high* as the Holy Spirit comes on them; the baptism of the Spirit.

It has always been confusing to talk about *when* they received the Holy Spirit. Here they are given power and authority to cast out demons and to heal the sick and raise the dead all by the power of the Holy Spirit and to be given what to say. Beside, some being inspired to write Scripture later, what else would they receive? Did they already have the indwelling of the Spirit guaranteeing their inheritance, their deposit (**Ephesians 1:14**). It’s just not clear to me ... but does it matter? As Jesus said in John 3 the Spirit is like the wind and it blows. No one knows where it comes from or where it is goes. It seems the Holy Spirit was already, at this time, bringing to the minds of the Apostles what Jesus had been teaching them. *All truth would come later*, but what a comfort to know that God is speaking in their ears like a coach in the helmet of his quarterback.

It must have been a sad consequence of faith in Jesus to see families divided; not just in disagreement but literally turning one another in to be put to death. In more modern times it sounds something like out of radical Islam or Nazism or Communism, but these were Jewish family members giving up other family members to death. There were **brothers to deliver up brother to death; a father giving up his child, children giving up their parents and causing them to be put to death**. It saddens God the Father, I am sure, to see His children so in conflict with one another. Jesus is the Prince of Peace and died to bring all men together but it must be on His terms, not ours. He sets the criteria for unity. The foundation of unity is belief in Him as the Son of God, the Messiah, the fulfillment of God’s plan, and the only means of salvation. His gospel has the power to save *and no one will see the Father* who rejects the Son. On a practical level, there must have been numerous discussions, fights,

crying, anger, pleading, fleeing, disappointment, fear, hunger, homelessness and much despair created because someone decided *to follow Jesus*. Who knows what each apostle faced, even in his own family?

In **Matthew 10:22**, “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.” There is much stress in being an object of hate. Jesus taught us to love our enemies, not to hate them (**Matthew 5:43**). In **Matthew 24:9** Jesus tells them that they will be hated by all nations *because of My name*. **Luke 6:22** tells us that we are “blessed to be hated and ostracized, insulted, and scorned as evil *for the sake of the Son of man*.” In **Luke 6:27** He says to “*Do good to those who hate you*”. In **Luke 14:26**, *by contrast, to come to Jesus is to hate our families*. In **John 3:20** the one who does evil *hates the light* lest his deeds be exposed. But in **John 7:7** Jesus said that “the world cannot hate you”. Who? ... Jesus’ half-brothers. He says the world can’t hate *them* but it hates Him because His testimony is against the world and that its deeds are evil.

He who endures to the end will be saved is # 5278 “hupomeno” (υπομενω). It means to endure, to stay under, to remain, to undergo, to bear, to have fortitude, or persevere. It’s found in **Luke 2:43**, **Acts 17:14**, for some who remained behind when others are gone. Paul remained behind in Athens when Timothy and Silas had left. He “endured” there, he stayed there. **1 Corinthians 13:7** *love bears* all things or endures all things. **2 Timothy 2:10** Paul says the reason he endures all things is *for the sake of the chosen* so that they will obtain salvation which is ‘in Christ’ and with eternal glory. **Hebrews 10:32** says, “In earlier days, they had endured a great conflict. In **Hebrews 12:2-3** it says that Jesus endured the cross, He endured hostility by sinners as an example to us. In **Hebrews 12:7** it is for discipline that we are to endure hardship. **James 1:12** says, “Blessed is the man who perseveres under trials which will lead to approval which will lead to a crown of life. In **1 Peter 2:20** it says that we are not to endure harsh treatment for ‘sin’ but for ‘doing right’; but when we do right, we are to endure it. In **James 5:11** we count those blessed who have endured. He mentions Job seen at the outcome of the Lord’s dealing because Job endured, he persevered. Job was patient and he received a great outcome from God. In **2 Timothy 2:12** if we endure with Him we will also reign with Him. In **Romans 12:12** persevering in tribulation is mentioned.

So when Jesus says to endure what does He mean? When Jesus says to endure in context He is saying not to relinquish one’s *faith* in the face of conflict and opposition and even death, or as He says, “to the end”. The word for end is telios (τελιος). It’s not over until it’s over. Jesus is about completion of what we start; seeing it to the end, making it to the finish line. Jesus is no quitter. We do not give up or give in. The essence of what Jesus is saying is *to continue to act or to make decisions based on one’s commitment and relationship with Jesus*.

He is looking for consistency, and steady, daily walking in the light; not looking back like Job’s wife, but putting our hand to the plow and finishing the job *just as He did*. The Mind of Christ is full of *faithful determination*. He sees the goal or goals clearly and he stays the course to accomplish the good, pleasing and perfect will of God.

The question arises about “When does one flee persecution?” It seems to me that in the New Testament, the ones who are arrested even formally or illegally like Paul who was a Roman

citizen, or those taken captive by a mob like in Stephen's case, though they were Jewish leaders, the person was to accept what was happening unless God provided some miraculous escape like He did with Peter in Acts 12, the Apostles in Acts 5, Paul and Silas in Acts 16. Before arrest, like Paul in Acts 9, who under threat of death was taken secretly to Caesarea and in Acts 14 Paul and Barnabas, when they became aware of the plan to stone them, they got out of the city; they fled.

A similar thing happened in Acts 17 in Berea, in Acts 23 in light of the forty men who vowed to kill Paul; he was taken by the Romans to Caesarea. In Acts 9 Paul was let down over the walls of the city in a basket to escape harm. The point is that it is okay to flee persecution. In Acts 8 the disciples were scattered out of Jerusalem due to persecution. It is not a shame to run from those who would try to hurt us.

So Jesus tells His apostles that when persecuted in one city, flee to the next. There are plenty of cities. One is not a coward when death or harm can be avoided *without sacrificing our faith and integrity*.

Jesus reasons that there are plenty of cities and villages to be covered, but what does "until the Son of Man comes" mean? It seems to me in context it does not mean the second coming of Christ.

I think it is likely His coming in judgment on Israel. In Matthew 23 Jesus says the Apostles will be persecuted from city to city and that punishment for all the rejected prophets will come upon that generation. Then in **Matthew 23:39** Jesus says, "Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. *Jesus is the one*."

Also compare **Matthew 24:13-14** where we read, "But the one who endures to the end is the one who will be saved. ¹⁴ This gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all the nations, and then the end will come." This is as when the Gospel is going to be preached as a "witness" to all the nations. It's the context in which He talks about the end.

Matthew 24:29 and following ... It is the son of Man who sends forth His angels of destruction.

So I believe that when He says to persevere until the end in this limited commission, He is simply saying to them to keep on spreading the Gospel, the end is going to come one day to Jerusalem when the people of Jerusalem are going to be punished, the people of Israel are going to be punished because they rejected all the Prophets, and that came at the destruction of Jerusalem.

Well, I know we covered a lot of ground today, and we're still not out of this section yet. So, we're still in Section 70 and we'll pick that up again. He is going to talk a lot about the meaning of discipleship and we'll unpack that next week.

Thank you for joining us. You can go to our website at <https://www centralsarasota.org/> and you can find a lot of material there if you'd like. Have a great week, God bless and take care.