

## Confident to Serve

Matthew 10: 23-28

As we continue to study the conversation Jesus had with the disciples in order to prepare them for Kingdom ministry, again we find the Lord being totally honest with them about what to expect. While their task was certainly worthwhile, having eternal implications, it would not be without opposition or controversy. In fact, the mission they were about to engage in would be anything but easy. The Lord wanted them to be aware of the difficulties they would most certainly face, while making necessary preparations to deal with the adversity.

Cultures may change, but the depravity and needs of humanity do not. The work we are engaged in may look different on the surface, but the issues we face are very similar to that which the disciples faced. The devil continues an attempt to hinder and defeat every believer who is committed to serving the Lord. All people are not saved, and the majority today have no desire to hear the Gospel or serve the Lord. Those in authority are increasingly putting measures in place to restrict our voice and hinder the influence of the church. The mission we have received is anything but easy. It is not for the faint of heart or the uncommitted. We need determination, faith, and confidence in the Lord if we are to endure.

As we discuss the [details](#) Jesus provided the disciples regarding ministry, I want to consider: [Confident to Serve](#).

**I. The Presence of Opposition** (23) – *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.*

Having already warned of adversity, Jesus continued to reveal opposition the disciples would encounter as they ministered, sharing their faith. Consider:

**A. The Certainty** – *But when they persecute you in this city...* Jesus did not say, if they persecute you – He emphatically declared, when they persecute you. He wanted the disciples to know they would face persecution. This was never a question of if, but when. The enemy would see to it that they were opposed in the work, and Jesus desired them to be prepared for adversity.

- If you have served the Lord for any length of time, trying to do even the smallest task for His glory, you are aware of the presence of opposition. We have not faced physical violence like many around the world, but the work of the Lord always faces opposition from the world. We must expect it to come, knowing that all who serve the Lord will deal with opposition. [2 Tim.3:12](#) – *Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution.*

**B. The Responsibility (23a)** – *But when they persecute you in this city, flee ye into another.* Knowing persecution would come, they also needed to know how to respond in the face of difficulty. Jesus instructed the disciples to flee the city of persecution, going into another. They were not expected to remain among their persecutors, willfully tolerating their abuse. Jesus wanted the disciples to proclaim the truth to as many as possible. When persecution arose in a particular city, they were instructed to immediately flee that place, going to another that was more hospitable at that particular time.

- It is interesting to note that Jesus didn't instruct them to abandon their efforts and return home at the first experience with opposition. While He didn't expect them to remain in a volatile environment, He also didn't expect them to abandon the work simply because they faced opposition and persecution. (We share the same responsibilities. While we may not be expected to remain in a dangerous or unfruitful situation, we must not abandon our efforts simply because we have been opposed. While some will not be receptive, others will; and we must seek to proclaim the Gospel to as many as possible.)

**C. The Urgency (23b)** – *for verily I say unto you, Ye shall not have gone over the cities of Israel, till the Son of man be come.* This statement from Jesus has caused confusion and uncertainty among many. In fact, many of the commentaries I consulted ignored these words of Jesus altogether. Clearly Jesus was not speaking of the Second Coming happening before they would be able to share the Gospel throughout Israel. He was speaking of His being revealed as the Christ, offering Himself as the atonement for sin, and rising triumphantly in resurrection life. He wanted the disciples to sense the urgency of the moment. Even if they assumed He would establish the Kingdom then, they would have sensed the urgency of the moment. There was not time to waste.

- We too must sense the urgency of our time while serving the Lord. Our lives are but a vapor; none are promised tomorrow. We have a limited time to share our faith, and all men have a limited time to respond to the Gospel. The Lord is soon coming. Those who are saved by His grace will inherit eternal life, and those who have rejected the Gospel will face eternal death in hell. There is no time to waste. We must be faithful to the work we have received.

**II. The Principle in Opposition (24-25)** – As Jesus continued, He revealed an abiding principle regarding the opposition the disciples would face. Notice:

**A. Their Position (24-25a)** – *The disciple is not above his master, nor the servant above his lord.* <sup>[25a]</sup> *It is enough for the disciple that he be as his master, and the servant as his lord.* Jesus graciously reminded them they were no better than the Lord they served. The disciple is not above his

master, nor the servant above his lord. If their Master and Lord dealt with opposition and persecution, they need not feel as if it were undeserved for them. If Jesus was willing to endure difficulty, being the Son of God, these mere mortals must also be willing to endure difficulty for the Kingdom.

- Much too often we assume the “victim mentality” while serving the Lord. We come to the place where we believe we are the first to face such difficulty. Many times, we question why the Lord has allowed us to suffer as we strive to serve Him. Simply, if the Lord suffered, and we know He did, we are no better. We too must be willing to endure the adversities of life as we seek to remain faithful to the Lord. Jesus didn’t abandon the work He knew He came to accomplish when things got tough. We can’t either!

**B. The Expectation** (25b) – *If they have called the master of the house Beelzebub, how much more shall they call them of his household?* Jesus reminded the disciples of the treatment He had received at the hands of sinful men. They had accused Him of being of the house of Satan, doing the works He performed by the power of Satan. Jesus raised a valid argument – if they have treated me this way, how much worse will they treat those who follow me? He wanted the disciples to be prepared for, and expect to face opposition and persecution.

- We too must remember these words of wisdom. The very Son of God came to earth in the form of man. He lived a perfect, sinless life, doing good for many, healing the sick and raising the dead. His own people consented to His crucifixion. If the world will treat the Lord in that way, how can we expect them to treat those who serve Him any differently or better? [John 15:18](#) – *If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before it hated you.*

**III. The Priority through Opposition** (26-28) – Jesus wanted the disciples to maintain their focus and commitment to serve, even in the face of opposition. Committed service was their priority, regardless of the difficulties they endured. Jesus spoke of:

**A. The Disciples’ Awareness** (26) – *Fear them not therefore: for there is nothing covered, that shall not be revealed; and hid, that shall not be known.* Jesus instructed the disciples to have no fear of those who opposed them. They may seek to bring physical harm or slander their name and reputation, but truth would always prevail. The Lord would provide the wisdom needed to overcome such attacks, and vindicate those who followed Him. Many would reject the disciples and their message, but the Day of Judgment would reveal truth in every life.

- It is easy to get discouraged while serving the Lord, but we must remember that truth will always prevail. We are kept by the power of God, serving the King of kings. We may deal with adversity and pain in this life, but Judgment will reveal truth. They do not reject us; they reject the Christ we serve.

**B. The Disciples' Boldness (27)** – *What I tell you in darkness, that speak ye in light: and what ye hear in the ear, that preach ye upon the housetops.* Jesus did not want the disciples to cower in fear, afraid to proclaim the truth because of opposition. They were instructed to proclaim what they had heard in secret, publicly. The truths Jesus had taught them privately were to be shouted from the housetops for all to hear. They had not received truth to keep it hidden within themselves; they were to faithfully and boldly proclaim the Good News!

- What a challenge for the church today. Consider the truth we have received. Many of us have been taught the Truth for decades. We have studied the Word and now are obligated to boldly proclaim the Gospel. We cannot be content to keep the Word within the sanctuary; we must take it out into the streets, making known the Gospel of Christ!

**C. The Disciples' Faithfulness (28)** – *And 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.* Jesus knew they would be tempted to fear what men might do to them. Jesus warned that man may have the ability to take their lives, but that would only destroy their physical bodies. They must fear the God of heaven who was able to destroy both body and soul. Their fear of God and commitment to Him must exceed their fear of wicked men.

- This is difficult to remember and embrace. No one enjoys being ridiculed or abused. However, the truth Jesus spoke cannot be denied. Our loyalty must be to God and Him alone! Man may have the ability to take our physical lives, but the Lord is able to destroy body and soul. For the saved, He has promised and prepared an eternal home. We must abide faithful, regardless of the opposition we face!

**Conclusion:** I find it interesting when I study the life and ministry of Jesus. His approach is vastly different than the model most pursue today. Many departed from the Lord when He revealed what was expected. Truthfully, we cannot follow Jesus apart from His grace and provision. Are we confident in serving Him today? Do we have the needed boldness and faith to proclaim the Gospel in the face of opposition? Have you responded to His gracious offer of salvation in repentance and faith? If there are needs, come to the Lord today!