

## Have no Fear

The gospel for this coming Sunday (Fourth Sunday after Pentecost) is Matthew 10:5a-21-33. This text is Jesus giving his disciples instructions about what they will encounter as they go out to perform the mission he has given them. He forewarns them about the difficulties they will meet, but also buoys them up with the support he will give them.

Christ's ambassadors would be in danger even in the family circle. Parents would have more to fear than disobedience and disrespect from their children. Children would have more to fear from their parents than discipline and punishment. Unbelief is not tolerant toward Christian faith; it is violently opposed to it. This happened literally during persecutions of Christians from apostolic times to the very recent past and may still be happening in some places. This sort of atrocity will continue until the end of time.

Jesus follows the afore mentioned concerns with hope. The end seems far away, and the Lord may tarry before he comes, but He shall certainly come, and His reward is in His hand. Every servant of the Lord shall therefore with good cheer run the course of his calling; and with his objective before him.

The saying "*flee to the next*" seems to teach that the gospel will continue to be preached until Christ's second coming. He informs us thereby that we must not rush headlong to our destruction without necessity. The crown of martyrdom may become a crown of glory only when it is placed on our head by the Lord, not when we put it on of our own accord.

Jesus, the true Master of God's house, was labeled demonic. Jesus' disciples will be equally maligned.

Since it was Jesus who sent His disciples into the world, they could depend on His protection and have no fear. When Jesus says "*for nothing is covered that will not be revealed,*" refers both to the enemies of Christ and all their secrets and to the disciples and the blessed gospel secret. Everything shall come to light, so do not have the least fear either that you shall fail or that they shall succeed. That is still true for us today.

Jesus often told His disciples to keep quiet about who He was (12:16; 16:20; 17:9). However, the time was coming when He wanted them to proclaim the Gospel openly and boldly.

Jesus directs our attention to some common, ordinary birds to assure us of God's providential care. To this day sparrows are not highly valued compared to many other birds. At the time of the apostles, sparrows were sometimes used for food. Some tell us that sparrows were considered a delicacy, but the very low price for which they were sold seems rather to indicate that they would serve as food for poor people when they couldn't afford anything better. (A normal wage for a laborer was a denarius per day. A penny was 1/16 of a denarius.) Yet the God who created sparrows watches over them and not one of them falls to the ground unless He permits it.

Jesus goes on to say, "*even the hairs on your head are numbered.*" What no person would want to do, our Father has done: counted each hair on our heads. He knows us down to the minutest detail so there is nothing to fear,

Prayer: Holy Spirit, help me to stand firm to the end and faithfully witness to Christ in word and deed. Amen. (TLSB)