

Fourth Sunday after Pentecost

OLD TESTAMENT – Jeremiah 20:7-13

Jeremiah Persecuted by Pashhur

7 O LORD, you have deceived me, and I was deceived; you are stronger than I, and you have prevailed. I have become a laughingstock all the day; everyone mocks me. 8 For whenever I speak, I cry out, I shout, “Violence and destruction!” For the word of the LORD has become for me a reproach and derision all day long. 9 If I say, “I will not mention him, or speak any more in his name,” there is in my heart as it were a burning fire shut up in my bones, and I am weary with holding it in, and I cannot. 10 For I hear many whispering. Terror is on every side! “Denounce him! Let us denounce him!” say all my close friends, watching for my fall. “Perhaps he will be deceived; then we can overcome him and take our revenge on him.” 11 But the LORD is with me as a dread warrior; therefore my persecutors will stumble; they will not overcome me. They will be greatly shamed, for they will not succeed. Their eternal dishonor will never be forgotten. 12 O LORD of hosts, who tests the righteous, who sees the heart and the mind, let me see your vengeance upon them, for to you have I committed my cause. 13 Sing to the LORD; praise the LORD! For he has delivered the life of the needy from the hand of evildoers.

20:7–18 The sixth, last and longest of Jeremiah’s “confessions” (see Introduction: Author and Date). In some respects, it is the most daring and bitter of them all. (CSB)

The verse preceding our text (Jer 20:1-6) are a vivid portrayal of the suffering that may come to God’s faithful people precisely because they are faithful. Hence the believer dare not base his faith on what is visible, on the appearance of success or failure, on the evaluations of others. Jeremiah’s own ministry appeared to be a failure. Not only did the people refuse to believe the words of the Lord had given him, they put his very life in jeopardy and trusted instead the message of false prophets of hope. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 6, Part 3)

The structure of our text (Jer 20:7-13) is similar to many of the psalms of lament, of which there are about 50 (e.g., Psalms 3-7; 10-14; 22; 25-28; etc) In these an individual mourns his present unfortunate condition, then toward the end of the psalm breaks into joyful praise of God in light of His salvation. In our text verses 7-10 are a lament, while verse 11-13 rejoice in God’s eventual triumph and vindication of His faithful servant. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 6, Part 3)

20:7 Cf. 15:18. *deceived*. † Lit. “seduced” (Ex 22:16) or “enticed” (1Ki 22:20–22); see v. 10. Jeremiah did not become a prophet of his own volition, but the Lord assigned a task to him which brought him unanticipated suffering (see NIV text note; see also 1:7–8, 17–19; cf. Eze 14:9). (CSB)

Hbr verb means to persuade a person to take a certain course of action, usually to do wrong. Thus the same word may be used to describe a woman being persuaded to commit adultery or fornication (cf Ex 22:16) and a man alluring a woman to become his wife by speaking tenderly to her (Hos 2:14). Jeremiah is declaring that he did not become a prophet of his own will; he had to be prevailed upon to assume an obligation that brought him nothing but anguish and pain. Chemnitz: “[Jeremiah] is speaking of his prophetic vocation which, since it brings with it much hatred, criticism and dangers, as is clear from the content of the chapter, the prophet is overcome by the weakness of his flesh, but he is not only overcome by these things, but in a certain sense he is even arguing with the Lord” (*LTh* 1:193). (TLSB)

Jeremiah is not accusing God of lying but of duping him. The prophet charges that the Lord lured him into a task with painful consequences for which he was not prepared. (Concordia Journal – April, 1999)

Those whose love is deep also grieve deeply. Jeremiah grieved like Samuel (1 Samuel 15:35) who mourned for the fallen Saul. Jeremiah grieved like Paul (Romans 9:2) who could have wished himself cursed and cut off from Christ for the sake of his fellow Jews. Jeremiah grieved most of all like our Lord (Luke 19:40-44) who, when approaching Jerusalem, wept over it because He saw the destruction that would soon come upon the city. (PBC)

In his struggle with his grief, the prophet lashed out at the Lord. Grief may lead people to lash out at even those they love. Jeremiah complained that despite all his preaching and proclamation, not one word had been fulfilled.

You are stronger than I – Forcing the prophet into his reluctant mission. (Concordia Journal – April, 1999) – It means: lay hold of. It thus corresponds to ἄρξω, Isa 8:11, denoting the state of being laid hold of by the power of the Spirit of God in order to prophesy. (KD)

prevailed – yaw-kole', yaw-kole' A primitive root; to be able, literally (*can, could*) or morally (*may, might*):—be able, any at all (ways), attain, can (away with, [-not]), could, endure, might, overcome, have power, prevail, still, suffer. (CSB)

20:8 Jeremiah attributes his suffering to the Lord's demands on his life. (CSB)

violence and destruction. The prophet's message echoes the Lord's word (see 6:7). (CSB)

Jeremiah grieved because all his preaching had failed to produce repentance, any kind of turning toward the Lord. He knew that the Lord would keep His word and destroy the city. Because the people of Jerusalem had turned away, nothing could stop its destruction. (PBC)

reproach. See Ps 44:13; 79:4. (CSB)

As he experienced the increasing bitter opposition of his countrymen, he learned with sorrow that God's law does work wrath (Romans 4:15). It drives the impenitent into even more ferocious hatred for God. Jeremiah learned, to his sorrow, that for some the promise, the gospel itself, becomes "the smell of death" (2 Corinthians 2:16). (PBC)

I am become a laughing-stock all the day, i.e., incessantly. (KD)

20:9 A classic description of prophetic reluctance overcome by divine compulsion (see 1:6–8; Am 3:8; Ac 4:20; 1Co 9:16). (CSB)

I will not mention him – Jeremiah's initial reaction or resolution to this turmoil is to resign his post. The natural response is to escape the peril and pain by quitting his calling. (Concordia Journal – April, 1999)

in my heart as it as a burning fire. The figure is unique to the prophet Jeremiah (see also La 1:13). (CSB)

Though Jeremiah confesses his natural disinclination to be a prophet, he also bears witness to the mystery of divine inspiration. By the miraculous working of God, he became the instrument for the transmission of infallible truth. (TLSB)

He tried to stop preaching, but he could not. The Living Word within over-powered him and compelled him. He felt as Paul later would feel: “I am compelled to preach. Woe to me if I do not preach the gospel!...I am simply discharging the trust committed to me” (1 Corinthians 9:16,17). (PBC)

The word of God dwells in the heart; but from there outwards it acts upon his whole organism, like a fire shut up in the hollow of his bones, burning the marrow of them (Job 21:24), so that he can no longer bear to keep silence. (KD)

20:10 The Hebrew of the first two lines is identical with that of the first two lines of Ps 31:13. (CSB)

Terror on every side! The phrase is here used as a nickname for Jeremiah in the light of his doleful message. (CSB)

friends. Lit. “men of my peace/welfare” (a similar Hebrew phrase appears in Ps 41:9, where it is translated “close friend”). (CSB)

Friends is translated literally, “every person of my welfare” (that is, those who should be looking after Jeremiah’s well-being, are actually are actually looking for his undoing). (Concordia Journal – April, 1999)

watching for my fall. See Ps 35:15; 38:16. (CSB)

For any indication of stumbling on his part. (Kretzmann)

deceived. Same word used in verse 7 now describes his traitors. (Concordia Journal – April, 1999)

we can overcome him. Or so they think (see v. 11). (CSB)

Here too, the same word as in verse 7 is used. (Concordia Journal – April, 1999)

take our revenge on him. His enemies will not give up, no matter what it takes (see Ps 56:5–6; 71:10). (CSB)

20:11 *the LORD is with me.* Typical of the individual lament form, Jeremiah now moves from a state of extreme despair to one of affirmation and confidence in God’s vindication. Yahweh is with him as his champion. This statement reminds one of Luther’s bold affirmations in “A Mighty Fortress.”

dread. The Hebrew for this word is translated “cruel” in 15:21, where it describes Jeremiah’s enemies. Here it has a different nuance and is applied to God, whose “might” overcomes all “cruelty.” (CSB)

will not succeed – Once again Jeremiah uses the term “prevail.” Even though Yahweh prevails over His prophet (V. 7), His enemies will not. Perhaps Jeremiah here claims the promise God gave at his commissioning 1:18-19: ¹⁸Today I have made you a fortified city, an iron pillar and a bronze wall to stand against the whole land—against the kings of Judah, its officials, its priests and the people of the land. ¹⁹They will fight against you but will not overcome you, for I am with you and will rescue you,” declares the LORD.” (Concordia Journal – April, 1999)

The phrase “for I am with you” in verse 19 brings reminders of how the Lord made His presence known in the desert with a pillar of fire or smoke. It also recalls our baptism where Christ came to live in us.

Their eternal dishonor – This disgrace will befall the persecutors, because the Lord of hosts will, as Searcher of hearts, take the part of the righteous, and will take vengeance on their foes. (KD)

There is a child psychologist principle for when a child is the most rebellious and reacting in an angry manner. It says to hold him/her very tight to help him/her feel your unconditional love. You can almost see the Lord (covenant keeper) doing that with Jeremiah and others in Scripture who lashed out in lament. He does that with us too. Instead of responding in kind with anger (“righteous” in His case) and banishing us off to some spiritual timeout to pay for our disrespect and rebellion, God draws us so close to Him that we feel His loving heartbeat that puts us to rest like a baby goes to sleep on a mom’s bosom to the rhythm of her heart beat.

They would be heaped with eternal disgrace, the ignominy of which would attach to them forever. This confidence on the part of Jeremiah now finds expression in a fervent appeal to Jehovah to take his part and defend his cause. (Kretzmann)

20:12 Repeated almost verbatim from 11:20. (CSB)

let me see your vengeance – Jeremiah’s call for God’s “vengeance” is not motivated by selfish retaliation, as was the motive of his traitors. Instead it refers to appropriate and just vindication, a requital guided by righteousness. (Concordia Journal – April, 1999)

committed my cause – The prophet commits to Yahweh his “cause” a term that has legal associations. The Lord will be Jeremiah’s defense attorney. (Concordia Journal – April, 1999)

20:13 Prayer not only quieted Jeremiah’s fears but also gave him the boldness to “praise the LORD” as if He had already delivered him. (TLSB)

Sing ... praise the Lord. Praise is a powerful statement of faith. For Jeremiah and the psalmists, praise results from faith’s certainty that no matter how bad things are now, God will make good on His promises of final and complete deliverance. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 6, Part 3)

delivered... from the hand of evildoers. The believer thus possessing the gifts of the future by faith. But since Jeremiah, for the present, sees nothing but misfortune and sorrow, he cries out in the bitterness of his soul over his unhappy condition. (Kretzmann)

needy. By Jeremiah’s time, “poor/needy” had become virtually synonymous with “righteous.” (CSB)

Those who are poor in spirit, not necessarily poor of economic means (cf. Matt 5:3). Jeremiah is one who is “needy” because he is dependent on the Lord. He is not helpless or hopeless in the face of his enemies’ attacks, but his rescue is from Yahweh. (Concordia Journal – April, 1999)

EPISTLE – Romans 6:12-23

Dead to Sin, Alive in Christ

12 Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, to make you obey its passions. 13 Do not present your members to sin as instruments for unrighteousness, but present yourselves to God as those who have been brought from death to life, and your members to God as instruments for righteousness. 14 For sin will have no dominion over you, since you are not under law but under grace.

6:12 *let not sin reign in your mortal body* – To make this body the expressive instrument of our new life therefore calls for a continual exercise of the liberated will, a constant, resolute denial of the passions of the body. (Franzmann)

Christians are called to struggle against sin. The impulse to sin remains in us even after we receive God’s forgiveness. (TLSB)

6:13 Having been redeemed, we should not waste our lives pursuing opportunities to sin; we are called to follow and serve Christ. (TLSB)

not present your members. Put yourselves in the service of, perhaps also echoing the language of sacrifice. (CSB)

The imperative is therefore not merely the negative command to cease from wickedness; it is the positive command to serve God in the newness of our resurrection-life. (Franzmann)

parts of your body. All the separate capacities of your being (also in v. 19). – “Do you remember that wondrous word in Romans 6:13, where the Spirit exhorts us to yield our members to God as instruments? The marginal meaning of that word ‘instruments’ is ‘weapons.’ . . . God wants you to be a spear He can fit to His hand and hurl into the heart of the enemy’s country. God want you to be a keen, glittering blade with which He may cut His way through the very hosts of sin. God wants you to be a mighty battering ram, that He might break down the battlements of sin. (CSB)

6:14 *sin shall have dominion over you.* Paul conceived of sin as a power that enslaves, and so personified it. (CSB)

Sin does not control our lives (cf v 9). “The Holy Spirit does not permit sin to have dominion, to gain the upper hand so it can be carried out, but represses and restrains it from doing what it wants. If sin does what it wants, the Holy Spirit and faith are not present” (SA III III 44). (TLSB)

not under law. The meaning is not that the Christian has been freed from all moral authority. He has, however, been freed from the law in the manner in which God’s people were under law in the OT era. Law provides no enablement to resist the power of sin; it only condemns the sinner. But grace enables. (CSB)

For true good works, we are motivated by the Gospel, not the Law. God’s grace changes our lives. (TLSB)

under grace. For the disciplinary aspect of grace see Tit 2:11–12. (CSB)

The inward and renewing power of grace, not the external compulsion of the Law, is the power that enables us to live to God. (Franzmann)

6:1–14 We may be tempted to make grace an invitation to sin. Because God will forgive me, why not do what I want? This immature attitude misses this point: Christ unites Himself to us. In His death and resurrection, we receive forgiveness and life. He calls us to live in His life, not to turn back to a life dominated by sin. He enables us to live in the freedom of His grace. • Risen Savior, You died my death and gave me Your life. Abide with me that I may walk with You. Amen. (TLSB)

Slaves to Righteousness

15 What then? Are we to sin because we are not under law but under grace? By no means! 16 Do you not know that if you present yourselves to anyone as obedient slaves, [c] you are slaves of the one whom you obey, either of sin, which leads to death, or of obedience, which leads to righteousness? 17 But thanks be to God, that you who were once slaves of sin have become obedient from the heart to the standard of teaching to which you were committed, 18 and, having been set free from sin, have become slaves of righteousness. 19 I am speaking in human terms, because of your natural limitations. For just as you once presented your members as slaves to impurity and to lawlessness leading to more lawlessness, so now present your members as slaves to righteousness leading to sanctification. 20 For when you were slaves of sin, you were free in regard to righteousness. 21 But what fruit were you getting at that time from the things of which you are now ashamed? For the end of those things is death. 22 But now that you have been set free from sin and have become slaves of God, the fruit you get leads to sanctification and its end, eternal life. 23 For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

6:15–23† The question raised here seems to come from those who are afraid that the doctrine of justification through faith alone will remove all moral restraint. Paul rejects such a suggestion and shows that a Christian does not throw morality to the winds. To the contrary, he exchanges sin for righteousness as his master. (CSB)

The second half of the chapter is a restatement of the basic idea of the first half. We should remember that the apostolic letters were intended for the ear, being read to the assembled churches in their worship services (Col. 4:16; 1 Thess. 5:27; cf. Rev 1:3); the ear needs more repetition than the eye, which can go back at will to refresh the memory. But the restatement is made with a difference. While the first statement is an unfolding of Jesus' command to make disciples of all nations by "baptizing them" (Matt 28:19) and speaks of the new life created in man in terms of death and resurrection, the restatement is an unfolding of Jesus' command to make disciples by "teaching them" (Matt 28:20) and speaks of the new life created in man in terms of a liberation from the slavery to sin and a re-enslavement to righteousness. The restatement also contains an enrichment of the theme, a warning reference to the uncanny enslaving power of sin, which still threatens the new life in man, and a portrayal of the eternal consequences of the choice which the liberated will of man must make between the dominion of sin and the reign of God. (VV 16,20-23) (Franzmann)

6:15 *are we to sin...by no means* – If we are no longer hedged in by the command and the threat of God's law, are we not set free for a career of sin? Paul rejects the implications of this question as vehemently as he had rejected those of the original questions; and he answers the question in much the same way as he had answered it in 6:1-14. (Franzmann)

Paul again asks if forgiveness provides an excuse to sin. (TLSB)

6:16 The contrast between sin and obedience suggests that sin is by nature disobedience to God. (CSB)

Whatever we choose to serve, whether God or sin, will control us and shape our lives. (TLSB)

do you not know – "No one can serve two masters." (Matt 6:24). Both Jesus and Paul had an ancient slave in mind, who was the servant wholly and exclusively of the one master who owned him. He was at his master's disposal seven days a week and 24 hours a day. (Franzmann)

6:17 *have become obedient*. Christian obedience is not forced or legalistic, but willing. (CSB)

Not forced obedience, but a willing commitment. (TLSB)

Heart in the language of the Bible means the whole inner life of man, his thinking, willing, and feeling. (Franzmann)

standard teaching. May refer to a summary of the moral and ethical teachings of Christ that was given to new converts in the early church. (CSB)

The content of faith—the Gospel. (TLSB)

The of God is here called “standard teaching,” for here the transforming and formative effect of the Word is to be emphasized, an effect as decisive as that of Baptism. (Franzmann)

committed. The Romans did not commit themselves; they were committed, by God’s power, in Baptism. (TLSB)

6:18 *set free from sin.* The guilt and dominion of sin have been removed by Christ. (TLSB)

slaves to righteousness. A Christian has changed masters. Whereas he was formerly a slave to sin, he becomes a slave (a willing servant) to righteousness. (CSB)

Every aspect of our lives is used in service to God. (TLSB)

The freedom of communion with God, the liberty to live in the free obedience of a son of God (Rom 8:14-16; Gal 4:6-7). (Franzmann)

6:19 *I am speaking in human terms.*† An analogy, which may seem imperfect, from human society. The word “slave” when applied to Christians, who are free in Christ, naturally presents problems. (CSB)

Image of slavery illustrates the fact that we will serve something or someone. However, the illustration needs to be understood properly, lest we think it burdensome to serve God. (TLSB)

It means that your action is caught up in God’s action. (Franzmann)

The Romans are prone to fall into sin and need to be encouraged to serve God. Cf 12:1. (TLSB)

sanctification. Gk *hagiasmos*, “holiness.” Lives lived in response to the Gospel seek to serve God and others. (TLSB)

6:20 *slaves to sin* –They can and do ignore the will of God. (Franzmann)

One who serves sin has no desire to serve God and pays little attention to His will. (TLSB)

6:21 *what fruit.* Rotten results of sinful actions. (TLSB)

now ashamed? Only after conversion did the Romans fully recognize the sinfulness of their past lives. (TLSB)

end ... death. Unforgiven sin results in death. (TLSB)

6:22 *set free from sin.* See note on v. 6 (Set free from its shackles and power). (CSB)

sanctification. Slavery to God produces holiness, and the end of the process is eternal life (viewed not in its present sense but in its final, future sense). There is no eternal life without holiness (see Heb

12:14). Anyone who has been justified will surely give evidence of that fact by the presence of holiness in his life. For other occurrences of the word “holiness” see v. 19; 1Co 1:30; 1Th 4:3–4, 7; 2Th 2:13; 1Ti 2:15; Heb 12:14; 1Pe 1:2. (CSB)

Lives devoted to sin yield sinful results (v 21); lives devoted to God yield holy results. The Holy Spirit sanctifies us. (TLSB)

its end, eternal life. Sanctification does not earn eternal life. Christ won salvation and eternal life; through faith, the Holy Spirit imparts them to us and sanctifies us. (TLSB)

6:23 Two kinds of servitude are contrasted here. One brings death as its wages; the other results in eternal life, not as wages earned or merited, but as a gift of God. For the contrast between wages and gift see 4:4. (CSB)

wages of sin is death...eternal life – Sin is a tyrant who pays the stipulated soldiers’ pay, no more, no less. The wages sin pays is death. But God is the giver of the free and unearned gift, the dealer-out of blessings to His undeserving own. (Franzmann)

Death is the just punishment for sin. “All preparation for condemnation is by the devil and a person, through sin. In no way does it come from God, who does not want any person to be damned” (SD XI 81). *free gift.* Nothing can earn God’s grace. He gives it to people who can never deserve it, for Christ’s sake (cf 5:17). John Chrysostom: “After speaking of the wages of sin ... he does not say, the wages of good deeds, ‘but the gift of God;’ to show, that it was not of themselves that they were freed, nor was it a due they received, neither yet a return, nor a recompense of labors, but by grace” (NPNF 1 11:417). (TLSB) **6:15–23 Although many people consider freedom to be the ultimate human right, no one is truly free spiritually. We were slaves to sin and bound to death. Knowing this, Jesus came to serve us by giving His life on the cross and rising for us. Freed from sin, we can now serve God. Only when we are “slaves” to God will we have freedom to be the people He created us to be. • My Savior, thank You for serving me. Lead me to serve You and others. Amen. (TLSB)**

GOSPEL – Matthew 10:5a, 21-33

Jesus sends out the twelve Apostles

5 These twelve Jesus sent out, instructing them, “Go nowhere among the Gentiles and enter no town of the Samaritans,

10:5 *these twelve* – τούτους τοὺς δώδεκα ἀπέστειλεν ὁ Ἰησοῦς—The uniqueness of the apostles is underscored by the demonstrative pronoun τούτους and by the fronting of the direct object phrase “these twelve.” In some important senses, this sending and Jesus’ Missionary Discourse (10:5–42), which explains the sending, apply uniquely to the original apostles. (CC)

Jesus sent out – Prayer is good but is not a substitute for action. Those who pray should be prepared in case the Lord, to whom they present their requests, selects them to be his active agents in answering the prayer.

Jesus’ second discourse (vv. 5-42) concerns the upcoming mission of His disciples. This training would prepare them to serve the Church in the future, (TLSB)

Go nowhere near – The good news about the kingdom was to be proclaimed first to Jews only. After his death and resurrection, Jesus commanded the message to be taken to all nations (28:19; cf. 21:43). (CSB)

The disciples were to concentrate their immediate efforts on Jewish people living in Galilee. Only later would Jesus give them the command to go to all nations (v 18; 28:19). (TLSB)

Samaritans – A mixed-blood race resulting from the intermarriage of Israelites left behind when the people of the northern kingdom were exiled and Gentiles brought into the land by the Assyrians (2Ki 17:24). Bitter hostility existed between Jews and Samaritans in Jesus' day (see Jn 4:9). (CSB)

21 Brother will deliver brother over to death, and the father his child, and children will rise against parents and have them put to death, 22 and you will be hated by all for my name's sake. But the one who endures to the end will be saved. 23 When they persecute you in one town, flee to the next, for truly, I say to you, you will not have gone through all the towns of Israel before the Son of Man comes. 24 “A disciple is not above his teacher, nor a servant above his master. 25 It is enough for the disciple to be like his teacher, and the servant like his master. If they have called the master of the house Beelzebul, how much more will they malign those of his household.

10:21 *brother will deliver brother over to death* – 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. Unbelievers would in some cases go so far as to betray and accuse members of their own families and have them put to death. This happened literally during persecutions of Christians from apostolic times to the very recent past and may still be happening in some places. Under communist regimes, where atheism is official and all practice of religion is forbidden, many a Christian has been condemned to death for confessing and practicing his or her faith. This sort of atrocity will continue until the end of time. (PBC)

Jesus knew that His disciples might be tempted to give up their mission and their faith when even family members turned against them because of their loyalty to Him. Jesus encouraged the disciples to stand firm, always keeping in mind the highest goal, salvation. (TLSB)

10:22 *endures to the end* – The end seems far away, and the Lord may tarry before He come, 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. (Ylvisaker)

ὁ δὲ ὑπομείνας εἰς τέλος οὗτος σωθήσεται—This sentence occurs twice in Matthew, here and in 24:13. According to BDAG, s.v. τέλος, 2 b γ, the phrase εἰς τέλος is adverbial and means “in the end, finally.” The phrase with that meaning is quite common in the LXX; a few of the many references are Gen 46:4; Num 17:28 (ET 17:13); Deut 31:24, 30; Pss 9:7 (ET 9:6); 9:32 (MT/ET 10:11); 12:2 (MT 13:2; ET 13:1); 15:11 (MT/ET 16:11). The translation avoids the more literal “to the end” so that it does not sound like a reference to the parousia, for neither here nor in 24:13 does it refer to the second coming of Christ. (CC)

10:23 *flee to the next* – The saying seems to teach that the gospel will continue to be preached to the Jews 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. (Ylvisaker)

φεύγετε εἰς τὴν ἑτέραν—The imperative is present tense and thus somewhat emphatic, so it is italicized in the translation. A note of urgency is sounded here in the Lord’s words. This urgency is a key part of the interpretation of the verse. The adjective ἕτερος in classical Greek usually meant “the other” of two, but its use here provides a good example of how in the NT it often no longer carries the classical nuance of duality (see BDF, § 306.2), since Jesus is speaking of far more than two cities. (CC)

If persecution became too severe in one town, Jesus told His disciples to move to the next one. At times, Jesus Himself withdrew to escape danger (4:12). (TLSB)

Jesus tells us to flee to a safer location when we are threatened. He told the 12 that as they would flee from place to place to escape persecution, they would “not finish going through the cities of Israel before the Son of Man comes.” There would always be more places for the disciples to go as Christ’s witnesses. (PBC)

Sometimes persecution is necessary to get human beings to move out and witness. In Acts 1:8 Jesus tells His followers that they are to start in Jerusalem and move out from there ultimately into the whole world. But, in chapter 8 they are still comfortably in Jerusalem. The persecution mentioned in 8:1 finally gets them going.

You will not have gone – Nor will the difficulties in this mission to Israel continue indefinitely. These apostolic missionaries must always remember that the time for their outreach to Israel is shortened, and so they must hasten on in their work and not be reluctant to flee persecution in order to reach the next town (10:23a). “For truly,” Jesus declares, “you will certainly not complete the cities of Israel until the Son of Man comes” (10:23b). Now we arrive at one of the great interpretive challenges in the Gospel of Matthew. The problem is one of referent. To what event is Jesus referring when he says, “Until the Son of Man comes” (ἕως ἃν ἔλθῃ ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου)? (CC)

We can gain initial guidance by focusing upon the clause that immediately precedes: “Truly I say to you, *you will certainly not complete the cities of Israel.*” Given the missional context and the very specific limitations found in 10:5–6 and sprinkled throughout the first half of this discourse, the natural reading of Jesus’ words is “You will not be able to finish your preaching and miracle-ministry in the region of Palestine.” The note of urgency comes from the first half of 10:23: “Whenever they persecute you in this city, flee to the next.” The time is short; the Twelve must not tarry, and they surely must not seek martyrdom. What matters is carrying out their mission in as many of the towns of Israel as possible. (CC)

before the Son of Man comes – Likely refers to Jesus’ coming in judgment on Jerusalem, which was captured and destroyed by the Romans in AD 70. (24:2) (TLSB)

10:24 *disciple is not above his teacher* – Those who learn or serve strive to become more like their teacher or master, and should expect to be treated similarly. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 3, Part 3)

Teachers and disciples, servants and masters suffer the same. (TLSB)

As Jesus sends out the Twelve, He instructs them to do the work of the Kingdom only under His guiding. Perhaps He is warning them to control their egos. They will proclaim the Good News without thinking too highly of themselves. The glory must always go to God. The lesson teaches submission to Christ. The Twelve must not be afraid to imitate Jesus’ own example of servanthood. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 12, Part 3)

10:25 *it is enough for the disciple to be like his teacher* – They should not expect to be better off than their Lord and Master, the Head of the Christian household. The enemies of Christ had gone so far as to apply the epithet Beelzebub, lord of idolatry, prince of devils, to Christ. It would be presumption for his followers to expect less. This was the most vicious of slander. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 3, Part 3)

Disciples and slaves are not “independent individuals.” A disciple is essentially defined by the relationship he has with his teacher, a slave by the connection with his master. So it is with Christians. Jesus alone is, by right and nature, God’s Son. By virtue of his call to follow and believe in him, all of Jesus’ disciples have received the gift of calling upon the Father of Jesus as “Our Father who is in heaven” (6:9; see also “your Father” in, e.g., 5:16, 45, 48; 6:1, 4, 6, 8). Jesus, in his unique person and his saving deeds, is true Israel, the entire people of God reduced to one. Because Jesus has called them to faith and discipleship, all believers of all generations have become part of God’s people, the true Israel, which is centered in Jesus and reconstituted around the twelve apostles. (CC)

Jesus is also in mission—no, he *is* the Father’s mission to the world. In that divine compassionate outreach to a humanity in relentless rebellion against his Father, Jesus calls many to faith and restores their relationship to the Father. The Christ, however, also encounters misunderstanding, opposition, and hatred. Though filled with the Spirit of God as he casts out demons, he is charged by his enemies with demonic alliances: “In connection with the ruler of the demons he is casting out the demons” (9:34). Ironically, that very opposition to Jesus’ mission will issue forth in the climactic events that accomplish what his enemies deny he has come to do: his death and resurrection will pay the ransom for all sin, save all believers, and ultimately renew all creation. (CC)

It is enough for a disciple to be like his teacher. The Teacher is God’s mission to save Israel and the world; his disciples will also and always participate in that mission. With the proverbial declaration of 10:24, Jesus broadens the application of his teaching in the second half (10:24–42) of the Missionary Discourse (10:5–42). His words in the second half will still apply fully to the Twelve in their unique place and calling. But the Master’s words also apply to all missionaries that he will send throughout the centuries—pastors, teachers, and others—and in some ways, to every believer who finds himself in a situation where he can speak the Good News of the reign of God in Jesus. For the whole church is a church in mission; Jesus’ disciples are the earth’s salt and the world’s light, a city set on a hill (5:13–16). Gathered around Jesus, who came to save his people from their sins (1:21), the church in all of its parts and all of its members’ vocations will ever be in mission to save the lost. In that outreach, they will face difficulty and persecution. (CC)

In the twenty-first-century North American setting, many renounce the exclusive claims of the Christ and his Gospel. Many consider Jesus to be one savior among many and Christianity to be one of many religions offering truth that leads to eternal life. Many will not have the true God to be their only King and Savior. They will vilify and reject those “intolerant,” “narrow-minded” disciples of Jesus who claim that there is salvation to be found in no one else. But it is enough for these disciples to be like their Master.
(CC)

Beelzebub – The prince of demons (12:24); the Greek form of the Hebrew name Baal-Zebub (“lord of flies”; see 2Ki 1:2), a parody on and mockery of the actual epithet, Baal-Zebul (“Exalted Baal” or “Prince Baal.” The name came to be used of Satan. (CSB)

Jesus, the true Master of God’s house, was labeled demonic. Jesus’ disciples will be equally maligned.
(TLSB)

Βεελζεβούλ—In the Ugaritic texts, the ancient Canaanites called the fertility god Baal (whose name means “lord”) *zbl b'l 'art'*, “prince, lord of earth.” The first two of those words (in reverse order), “Baal/lord” and “prince,” make “Beelzeboul,” which became a name for the devil in Jewish intertestamental literature and the NT. Jesus’ explanation in 12:24, “Beelzeboul, rulers of the demons,” makes it clear that it is another name for Satan. The variant reading Beelzebub is a mocking malphemism that means “Baal/lord of flies.” (CC)

Baal was the most active deity in the old pagan Canaanite pantheon, the male god of fertility and storms, who also was the arch-enemy of Israel’s God. In Jewish though this name of Baal came to represent the “prince of demons” (Mt 12:24; Lk 11:15). Hebrew writers occasionally substituted bosheth, “shame,” for the name of Baal; Ish Bosheth in 2 Sam 2:8 is Esh-Baal in 1 Chron 8:33. If Christ was called the most shameful of names – Satan – His disciples and servants should expect the same. Persecutors will so confuse God with Satan that “anyone who kills you will think he is offering a service to God” (Jn 16:2), as did Jesus’ opponents. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 3, Part 3)

Verses 5-6 in this chapter reminds us that the disciples are not sent out among Gentiles or Samaritans, but to the lost sheep of Israel. The very fact that contradiction takes the form of blasphemy, the fact that men will call satanic what they refuse to recognize as divine, is, to faith, already evidence that God is present and at work when the Kingdom and the Christ are proclaimed. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 12, Part 3)

10:16–25 Jesus warns His disciples to expect persecution as they carry out their mission of being His witnesses. This opposition to the Gospel is evidence of sin’s grip on the human heart. When we experience abuse because of our loyalty to Jesus, we have His assurance that the Holy Spirit will help us to speak the right words. He will use our Gospel testimony to soften the hard hearts of unbelievers. • Holy Spirit, help me to stand firm to the end and faithfully witness to Christ in word and deed. Amen. (TLSB)

26 “So have no fear of them, for nothing is covered that will not be revealed, or hidden that will not be known. 27 What I tell you in the dark, say in the light, and what you hear whispered, proclaim on the housetops. 28 And do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. Rather fear him who can destroy both soul and body in hell. 29 Are not two sparrows sold for a penny? And not one of them will fall to the ground apart from your Father. 30 But even the hairs of your head are all numbered. 31 Fear not, therefore; you are of more value than many sparrows. 32 So everyone who acknowledges me before men, I also will acknowledge before my Father who is in heaven, 33 but whoever denies me before men, I also will deny before my Father who is in heaven.

10:26–42 Jesus continues his Missionary Discourse (10:5–42), whose second half (10:24–42) applies not only to the twelve apostles, but also more broadly throughout the ages. Jesus’ words in 10:26–31 are bound together by his gracious invitation: “Do not fear” (10:26, 28, 31). In light of the challenges and hardships to be faced by Christ’s missionaries—both the Twelve and others after them—his triple encouragement is a necessary antidote for the normal human reaction. Yet it should be emphasized that Jesus does not banish his missionaries’ fear by promising that he will keep them from suffering; to the contrary, those who are most faithful to him likely will suffer most. However, what the Messiah does in 10:26–31 is to invite his sent ones, both ancient and modern, to see the opposition that they might face in light of larger and eternal realities. (CC)

10:26 *no fear* – Since it was Jesus who sent His disciples into the world, they could depend on His protection. (TLSB)

nothing is covered – This 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. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 3, Part 3)

οὐδὲν γὰρ ἐστὶν κεκαλυμμένον ὃ οὐκ ἀποκαλυφθήσεται καὶ κρυπτόν ὃ οὐ γνωσθήσεται—The present indicative of “to be,” ἐστίν, plus the perfect passive participle κεκαλυμμένον is, technically, a periphrastic construction, “has been concealed.” However, the parallelism in this verse between the perfect passive participle κεκαλυμμένον and the simple adjective κρυπτόν shows that the participle is, in effect, an adjective functioning like a predicate nominative, “is concealed.” In this context, “or” is a fitting translation for καὶ since the second part of the saying, which follows καὶ, is not adding further material so much as offering an additional, equivalent statement. (CC)

be revealed – The day of truth will be told. God will vindicate His servants and mete out eternal punishment to the persecutors. Everything will come to light on that glorious final day. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 3, Part 3)

As the disciples carry out their mission, the need to be convinced that ultimately the truth of the Gospel will emerge. (TLSB)

Isaiah 42:2, He will not shout or cry out or raise His voice in the streets.” Note for this verse... He (Jesus the Suffering Servant) is so sure of Himself and of the cause He represents that He can well expect His message to carry itself successfully through every test. How often Jesus shunned publicity, even though His aim was to carry His gospel to all men. (Leupold)

Jesus continues his Missionary Discourse (10:5–42), whose second half (10:24–42) applies not only to the twelve apostles, but also more broadly throughout the ages. Jesus’ words in 10:26–31 are bound together by his gracious invitation: “Do not fear” (10:26, 28, 31). In light of the challenges and hardships to be faced by Christ’s missionaries—both the Twelve and others after them—his triple encouragement is a necessary antidote for the normal human reaction. Yet it should be emphasized that Jesus does not banish his missionaries’ fear by promising that he will keep them from suffering; to the contrary, those who are most faithful to him likely will suffer most. However, what the Messiah does in 10:26–31 is to invite his sent ones, both ancient and modern, to see the opposition that they might face in light of larger and eternal realities. (CC)

19:27 *tell you in the dark* – May refer to the instruction within the disciple group. (Ylvisaker)

proclaim on the housetops – This is the public proclamation of the Gospel. Jews had flat roofs surrounded by a cornice (parapet). From this point of vantage, a person could conveniently address the multitude below. (Ylvisaker)

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. (TLSB)

roof. Flat roofs of ancient houses made them practical as work spaces, spare rooms, storage areas, or as drying floors for crops (Jgs 16:27; 1Sm 9:25) (TLSB)

The gospel cannot be suppressed. The disciples are to understand this thoroughly from the very start and thus to speak out fearlessly, holding nothing back. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 12, Part 3)

In the first place, the disciples do not have to fear their opponents (“Do not *fear them*”) *because the day will come when every secret of God’s plans in Christ—and all of men’s hidden sin and rebellion—will be*

made known to all (10:26). The great paradox and contradiction of the present time, even including the ministry of Jesus himself, are that although the reign of God stands near (4:17), only the eyes of faith can see it. Even Jesus' own disciples (ancient and modern) may not always perceive the presence of that reign. This is especially true when Christ's apostles or pastors or other missionaries go out and faithfully proclaim and teach and are rejected for their very testimony. If God is faithful and present in Jesus, his only Son, why are Jesus' emissaries rejected and abused? This ought not be! Hidden things are at work, but on the Last Day, the truth will come out, and all the secret things will become known. (CC)

Since that is the case and Christ declares it, the disciples of Jesus, beginning with the Twelve, can be free to declare in the open what they have learned from Jesus in private. They will proclaim the counsels of God's Law and God's Gospel, the message of human sin and need along with God's provision of forgiveness, life, and salvation in Jesus, with the promise of vindication and resurrection on the Last Day. Until that Day when all things are publicly revealed—namely, the consummation of the age, when Christ returns in glory—his church, beginning with the Twelve, will teach the whole counsel of God in Christ (28:20). (CC)

10:28 *do not fear those who kill the body* – Even in the face of persecution and death, the Christian need not be afraid. There is a wonderful irony to be considered as executioners unwittingly admit saint into the kingdom of God. Men can kill but they cannot destroy. For no human being can kill a soul or make it alive, conduct it to heaven or hell. Rather than fearing men who can hurt us in this life, we must fear God who offers us eternal life (Is. 8:13). Obviously, this will not be accomplished without difficulty: The soul is of a substance different from that of the body; and yet there is an intimate union and connection, for the soul loves the body very much. They part from each other reluctantly. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 12, Part 3)

μη φοβεῖσθε ἀπὸ τῶν ἀποκτενόντων τὸ σῶμα, τὴν δὲ ψυχὴν μὴ δυναμένων ἀποκτείνειν—The prohibition with the present stem imperative φοβεῖσθε here seems not to have the force that such present forms can sometimes have, namely, “stop fearing” (as in 14:27; 17:7; 28:5, 10). The prohibition with the same verb two verses earlier is aorist stem (μη ... φοβηθῆτε, 10:26), and it makes little sense to translate that earlier form, “Do not start fearing.” The present stem forms may be more emphatic, so the translation italicizes them: “*Do not fear*” (μη φοβεῖσθε, 10:28, 31) and “*Fear*” (φοβεῖσθε, 10:28). (CC)

The contrast in the verse between the *present* participle ἀποκτενόντων and the aorist infinitive of the same verb, ἀποκτείνειν, may be of some significance. In contrast to the phrase with the aorist infinitive (“but are *not able* to kill the soul”), the present participle could be emphatic (“those who *indeed* kill the body”), or it may be conative (“those who *try to* kill the body”). Opponents may try to kill the bodies of the missionaries sent by Jesus, and in some cases, they may indeed succeed, but that is the most they can do. They are powerless to kill the soul! (CC)

In the second place, Jesus invites his missionaries (and all believers) to remember that even the worst that their persecutors can do to them will not destroy their relationship with the Father: “Do not fear” (10:28). The enemies of Christ and his church can, indeed, go so far as to physically kill the missionaries. They cannot, however, go any farther: “Do not fear those who kill the body but are not able to kill the soul.” The disciples' deepest reverence and loyalty must be directed toward God the Father: “But rather, fear the One who is able to destroy both soul and body in Gehenna.” Far better to be rejected and killed by enemies who themselves are mortal than to find that, because of your unbelief and apostasy, the Father has become your eternal enemy when you are raised on the Last Day and sentenced to eternal judgment in “the fiery Gehenna” (5:22)! (CC)

Jesus' words about the “soul” and the “body” here in 10:28 afford an opportunity to reflect on biblical anthropology and to avoid two unfortunate extreme positions. Sometimes, for instance, scholars wrongly

claim that the biblical doctrine of man has no room for distinct conceptions of “body” and soul” as the two constituent parts of human nature. One also hears objections to the Christian belief that at the point of physical death, the soul and body are separated from one another and that the soul has an ongoing (though little-understood!) conscious existence, either at rest with Christ or in torment separated from him—until the Last Day, when the bodies of all shall be raised and reunited with their souls; then as whole persons, believers shall enter everlasting life and unbelievers shall be consigned to hell (Mt 25:31–46; Rev 20:11–15). It is hard to imagine how Jesus’ words here about killing the soul but not the body and about God destroying both body and soul in Gehenna could be understood in any other way than as supporting that traditional Christian belief.⁷ Physical death does terrible damage to our human nature. Even so, persecutors can kill the body, but they cannot kill the soul.⁹ When any Christian believer dies, his soul experiences rest, free from sin and temptation and pain. For these reasons, death in Christ is “far better” than earthly life (Phil 1:23; cf. Lk 16:25; Rev 2:10; 14:13; 20:6). When a person dies, body and soul are separated; then on the Last Day, all the dead will be raised, their bodies and souls rejoined. God shall grant each believer a place in the new creation and sentence each unbeliever to damnation. Thus God, not Satan, is “the One who is able to destroy both soul and body in Gehenna” (Mt 10:28). God is the one to be feared! (CC)

Another unfortunate extreme, however, may be much more common among pious Christians in our day. That is the view that sees the “soul” as the essential component of human nature, with the body viewed almost as a superfluous addition that is not necessary in order to be fully human or to enjoy the fullness of God’s salvation. This unbiblical view likely arises from a number of ancient sources, including Greek philosophy and Gnosticism, and contemporary influences from Eastern religious thought. Often it creeps into hymns and prayers without objections from anyone. One hears, for instance, prayers that describe a Christian who has now died as someone who “has entered his eternal rest.” While that phrase perhaps could be understood in a biblical fashion, it is inherently misleading. “Eternal” in what sense? The Christian is dead. To be sure, his soul is with Christ; yet he is physically dead, torn apart, less than what God created and redeemed him to be. That condition will only last as long as Christ tarries in his coming. When the Lord returns, that state of rest for the Christian’s soul will be over, and death will be overturned, swallowed up by life (Is 25:7–8; 1 Corinthians 15)! Notice, indeed, that Jesus does not merely say, “But rather, fear the One who is able to destroy the (disembodied) *soul* in Gehenna.” No; his perspective is fully eschatological, and our anthropology should consistently reflect that as well. (CC)

Him – God. What mortals can do to a believer is nothing compared to what God can do. He alone is capable of punishing a person, body and soul, in hell. Not fear of humans but fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom (Pr 9:10). (TLSB)

hell – (The Greek word is *ge(h)enna*, which derives its name from a deep ravine south of Jerusalem, the “Valley of (the Sons of) Hinnom” (Hebrew *ge’ hinnom*). During the reigns of the wicked Ahaz and Manasseh, human sacrifices to the Ammonite god Molech were offered there. Josiah desecrated the valley because of the pagan worship there (2Ki 23:10; see Jer 7:31–32; 19:6). It became a sort of perpetually burning city dump and later a figure for the place of final punishment.). (CSB)

The disciples’ deepest reverence and loyalty must be directed toward God the Father: “But rather, fear the One who is able to destroy both soul and body in Gehenna.” Far better to be rejected and killed by enemies who themselves are mortal than to find that, because of your unbelief and apostasy, the Father has become your eternal enemy when you are raised on the Last Day and sentenced to eternal judgment in “the fiery Gehenna” (5:22)! (CC)

10:29 *penny*† - God even cares for little birds, sold cheaply for food. Three words used for Roman coins are *denarius* (Mt 18:28), *assarion* (Mt 10:29) and *kodrantēs* (Mt 5:26), very loosely related to each other

as are a 50-cent piece, nickel and penny. The coins here are *assaria*, so the transaction would be something like five birds for two nickels. (CSB)

The very poor purchased sparrows for food, paying c $\frac{1}{16}$ of a day's wage. This illustrates how little meat was eaten by the common people. (TLSB)

Jesus directs our attention to some common, ordinary birds to assure us of God's providential care. To this day sparrow 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 $\frac{1}{16}$ 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. (PBC)

apart from your Father – No sparrow, seemingly so worthless, will fall from its nest or experience harm in flight without God's knowledge and will. "He foresees and foreknows everything that is or will be" (FC SD XI 4). (TLSB)

Jesus' third invitation not to be afraid in the face of persecution comes at the end of his winsome argument from the lesser to the greater in Mt 10:29–31. Two sparrows could be purchased for one-sixteenth of a denarius. Since a denarius was normally regarded as a day's wage, the price of "an assarion" (10:29) would, for us, be equivalent to our pay for about half an hour. Yet such is the Father's concern for even these unimportant creatures that none of them falls to the earth without his knowledge. And if that were not enough, the Father's knowledge of Jesus' missionaries encompasses the number of hairs on their heads! (CC)

Does this mean that evil will not befall Jesus' disciples? No. Rather, it means that when difficulties or persecutions or even martyrdom comes, the disciples are still under the Father's loving care, and it means that he is with them even when they are suffering and dying. Probably the greatest fear of a Christian who is suffering for the sake of Christ is that God has abandoned him. The doubting human tendency is to think that God allows suffering and even death because he has forsaken us (cf. the disciples in 8:25). Jesus' words are as strong as they are gently understated: "Therefore, do not fear; you are worth more than many sparrows" (10:31). (CC)

10:30 *even the hairs of head are all numbered*– Absolutely nothing escapes God's notice or is beyond His power. We are safe in His hands. (PBC)

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. (TLSB)

more value than many sparrows – God's love and concern is so broad that even minor details are significant. If God will keep track of sparrows and hair counts, He will watch over every aspect of our lives. The disciple is to know that the life which he has laid into the Father's hand shall be kept safely there. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 12, Part 3)

10:31 *fear not* – Jesus commands the disciples to their mission. James tells us to be "doers of the word." Perhaps we can borrow the Nike motto: "Just do it!" (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 12, Part 3)

For the third time, Jesus tells His disciples not to be afraid (vv. 26, 28). The disciples had vastly greater value than a small bird. They had nothing to fear, because God blesses and rules over all creatures. (TLSB)

The Father has not and will not overlook his suffering ones. Their testimony to Christ brings glory to God the Father (cf. 5:16), who will strengthen them through the power of the Holy Spirit and preserve them unto life everlasting. (CC)

10:32 *everyone who acknowledges me* – Jesus promised His disciples that if they fearlessly confessed Him on earth, He would stand up for them before His heavenly Father at the last judgment and accept them into eternal life. (TLSB)

Acknowledging Christ may be seen in a street corner evangelist or a believer confessing the Nicene Creed. The confession from the mouth of a believer must reflect the hope that is in his heart. Jesus' admonition is still true today: "Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only he who does the will of my Father who is in heaven" (Mt. 7:21). . (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 12, Part 3)

Speaking of confessing Christ and his Good News, Paul says, "For with the heart it is believed for righteousness, and with the mouth it is confessed for salvation" (Rom 10:10). Confession is the evidence of what is in the heart. When a person has faith in Christ, he cannot help but speak of his Savior, and the church will continue to speak until Christ's final day of victory. The confession Jesus describes is essentially Christological: "Everyone who confesses *me* before men" (10:32). The message that Christ is the true and only Son of God, Israel's Messiah and the Light for the Gentiles, the Ransom for all world's sinners (20:28)—that is what missionaries, and indeed all Christians, are to believe and to say about Jesus. This is the message encapsulated in the ecumenical creeds (Apostles', Nicene, Athanasian) that the church confesses weekly and that individual Christians and families can confess daily. Jesus then promises that on the Last Day, he also will make a confession to his Father (cf. 25:21, 23, 34). Christ will confess the person who confessed him before others. He will say, "This one is mine." (CC)

Romans 10:9, "For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you confess and are saved."

10:33 *I also will deny* – Those who, from fear or doubt, deny Jesus will be denied by Jesus on Judgment Day. To deny Jesus is to reject the One who brings us to the Father (Jn 14:6; Eph 2:18). (TLSB)

Our greatest fear should be that of Christ disowning us. The cross has canceled all of our sins. We have fallen, but Christ has redeemed us. After Peter disowned Jesus, his loving Lord restored him. . (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 12, Part 3)

The terrible opposite is also true. To deny Jesus and the truth of who he is in the presence of others betrays either a complete lack of faith or a fear of men (and not of God; see 10:28) that erodes faith. Unless checked with repentance and renewed faith, this fear of what others may say and do can ultimately destroy saving faith. Jesus warns, "Whoever denies me before men, I also will deny him before my Father who is in heaven" (10:33; cf. 25:12, 26–30, 41). (CC)

In Matthew the verb used here, ἀρνέομαι, "deny," occurs elsewhere only in Peter's denial of Jesus (26:70, 72). In the description of Peter's first denial, the verb is followed by the same preposition (ἐμπροσθεν) as here in 10:33. The similarity between Jesus' saying here, "Whoever *denies* me *before* men," and Matthew's statement that Peter "*denied*" Jesus "*before* them all" (26:70) shows two things: first, the seriousness of Peter's public denial, which amounted to apostasy; but second, the bounty of Jesus' forgiving love, that he even pardoned Peter's eschatologically damnable sin! Peter, you see, will be among the Eleven who meet Jesus after his resurrection and are given the Great Commission (28:16–20; cf. Jn 21:1–19). (CC)

10:26–33 Enemies of the Gospel can persecute believers only within limits set by our heavenly Father. Because He is in charge of our lives, we need not be afraid of those who oppose us because we confess Christ. At the last judgment, our Lord will recognize faithful service and acknowledge us as His followers. We are confident of His love not because of what we have done but because He died and rose to redeem us from sin, death, and the power of the devil. • Heavenly Father, through Word and Sacrament, assure me of Your loving care and drive fear from my heart. Amen. (TLSB)