

## **Sermon Outline**

# **“Persecuted With Jesus,” Matthew: The Life and Words of Jesus, Part 32 – Matthew 10:16-33 – Joshua Harris – March 17, 2013**

## **Introduction**

1. To be with Jesus in his mission is to be with him in suffering persecution.
2. In this passage Jesus is speaking to the twelve disciples about the specific mission on which he is about to send them. But he also has a view to all Christians who will come after them. He looks down the corridors of human history and thinks of his disciples in every generation on every continent who will be hated and maligned and beaten and cruelly martyred. And he speaks to them...he speaks to us about the inevitable persecution involved with being with him in his mission.

## **The Harsh Reality of Opposition**

1. “I am sending you out as sheep among wolves.” Jesus doesn’t sugar coat this at all. He doesn’t downplay the danger. Without a spin, he tells us that being his disciple can involve being arrested, being betrayed by family, being hated, beaten, flogged and even killed. This has happened throughout church history and continues to happen to this day.
2. In light of this, Jesus commands his followers to be “wise as serpents and innocent as doves.” We shouldn’t be gullible or naïve about the way the world works. We need to be on our guard. We need to be “street smart.” Like a snake, we should learn to avoid being trampled. But we should never become cynical or hardened or vicious in our hearts. In the words of R.T. France, “We need the cunning of snakes without the venom.” The Apostle Paul was an excellent example of this lifestyle (e.g. Acts 16:37-40 and Acts 23-26).

## **Identifying with Jesus: Two Sides of a Coin**

1. We are only saved through faith in Jesus. Acts 16:31 says, “Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved.” And Ephesians 1:13 says, “And you also were included in Christ when you heard the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation.” We are saved by being included in Christ, identified with Christ, united with Christ. None of us will be welcomed into heaven because of our own merit or goodness. We will be forgiven and welcomed because we are with Jesus. It is only because of his righteousness and sacrificial death for us that we are saved.
2. But Matthew 10 reminds us that there are two sides to this coin. Through identification with Jesus we know salvation. But we will also face persecution in this world.

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3. Jesus makes it clear that the opposition of which he is speaking is on account of his name (10:18,22,25). We should view this as great honor because it shows that we are with Jesus. And just as he was despised, we will be despised. If they call our master the devil, it follows that they'll say the same of us. We shouldn't expect better treatment than Jesus. It was this knowledge that led the disciples to rejoice in Acts 5:41 "that they were counted worthy to suffer dishonor for the name."

## **Reasons to be Courageous**

1. First, in verse 16 we see that Jesus is sending us out. He has all authority, he has overcome the world. So our suffering, even our death, is not without purpose. We are sent by Jesus with a mission to make his name known. To spread the good news that he has come to restore God's reign to the world.
2. In verse 19 Jesus tells us that in our moment of greatest need, when we feel weak and stand before the powers of this world, we are not alone. The Spirit of our Father in heaven will give us the words to say.
3. In verse 22 Jesus promises that those who endure to the end will be saved. Those who keep trusting in and hoping in Jesus—even when it means pain and death—won't be disappointed. Jesus will have the victory! We will know his salvation.
4. The one who sends us out and calls us to suffer, is the glorious Son of Man who has come before God and been given the place of greatest honor and glory and power! The one we serve is seated in heaven and is interceding for us! Jesus, the King of Heaven, is watching over his mission! (Matthew 10:23 and Daniel 7:13-14).
5. In verses 29-30, Jesus tells us that God knows us intimately and cares deeply about us. You are not a number to God. He knows the smallest detail of your life—even the number of hairs on your head. He knows when a small bird dies. Think about how much more he cares for you.
6. In verse 28 Jesus tells us it's silly to fear people who can only kill your body. Isn't that incredibly comforting and unsettling at the same time? All those who have trusted in Jesus will be raised to eternal life on the last day. We will not face the second death; we will not face eternal spiritual death. We will be raised with Christ because we are with Jesus.

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### **Conclusion**

1. When we take Jesus at his word, we take risks. We live for his kingdom and not our own reputation or security.
2. To be with Jesus in his mission is to be with him in suffering persecution. Let's live so that everyone around us knows that we are with Jesus. Let's acknowledge him before men. Let's be willing to be hated and maligned and even killed for the sake of Jesus who has given us eternal life. He is worthy!

### **Fellowship Starters**

1. Take time as a Care Group to read Matthew 10:16-33
2. In this passage, who is Jesus addressing and what is he sending them to do?
3. In this passage, Jesus tells his disciples to expect opposition. Has this readjusted your expectations for your life as a disciple of Christ? How so?
4. Josh made the point that identification with Jesus is like a two-sided coin. What are the two sides? How has this expressed itself in your walk with the Lord?
5. Jesus not only warns us of opposition, he also gives us reasons to be courageous. How do we cling to these promises when we are tempted to shy away from confessing Christ?