



Sunday Summary

Matthew 10:24-39

Today's reading is a part of Jesus' instructions to the Twelve (10:1-42), whom he sends out to continue his ministry. Much of the material in the first section is found in Mark and Luke, not in their mission discourses, but in the eschatological discourses near the end of the gospels (Mark 13:9-13; Luke 21:12-19). The same kinds of warnings are found also in the farewell discourse in John (chaps. 14-16). Matthew, however, indicates that he sees persecution as part of the normal life of the Church rather than as a special sign of the end.

Matthew exhorts Christians to fearless confession. Disciples are encouraged three times (10:26, 28, 31) not to fear what any person can do. In contrast to fearing people, the fear of God is an open, reverent, humble awe. This trust in God bestows fearlessness upon all disciples. The death and resurrection of Jesus show that those who kill the body cannot separate disciples from God and from fullness of life. The denial or acknowledgement of Christ is the touchstone of each disciple's destiny.

Weekly Reflection



Today's gospel confronts us sharply with the reality of discipleship in New Testament times. "Do not be afraid of those who kill the body," advises Jesus, and we remember that death was a daily possibility for those who walked with Jesus and those who joined the Church after his death and resurrection.

Of course, there are still social consequences to being a professing Christian, some severe, some less so. An evening of television would convince us that Christians are among the last groups in America that can be safely ridiculed.

But in our hearts we know that these problems do not compare with the risk of exile, imprisonment and death still faced by many in the world today. What then do we have to fear?

We can fear our own faithlessness. We embody the Church as the sleeping servant, waiting for our Master to come. How easy it can be in our 21st-century sleep to forget for whom we wait, to trade in the dream of God's kingdom for the more easily attained American dream. Why should we not devote all our strength to our career, our family and our security? What difference could it make? What difference could we make?



Food for Thought

- ✧ When has your commitment to God's word caused others to reproach or deride you?



Food for Thought

- ✧ When might we wish to hide our identities as Jesus' disciples? Do we always have the courage to proclaim what Jesus has told us?

Bridges for Tridgers

Recipe for Awareness

Begin with a moment of centering silence and quiet reflection, setting aside the concerns and agenda of the day.



1 We come to an awareness of God's presence in our family.

"Dear God, who is present with our family now, and at all times and in all ways,..."

Continue with:

2 We express our gratitude for today's gifts from God.

"Today I give thanks for..." or,
"Today, I am grateful for..."

Pause again for another moment of centering silence and quiet reflection.

3 We come to an awareness of God's presence in our own experience.

Silently contemplate the question:
"When have I acted from love?"

Silently contemplate the question:
"When have I acted from fear?"

Based on your contemplation, create your intention to move forward as an expression of God's Love.

4 We plan and move forward with God.

"God, help me to manifest your presence today by..."

Invitations to Community

- In today's gospel, Jesus proclaims God's power and love to those who face persecution. Where do our brother and sister Christians face persecution, imprisonment and death today? Pray for the Church, that it may put its trust in God to give strength in every trial.
- In Romans 6:1b-11, Paul exults in our freedom from sin. How can we bear witness to this freedom in our own lives? in our homes? in our communities? Pray that this freedom may show itself clearly in our daily lives.

Suggestions for Families

Ask if anyone in the family can recall an instance of someone, in the past week, talking about God or Jesus in front of others? What happened? How did it feel? It may be easier to speak about this topic in the abstract—what others might or might not have said. Then move to talking about our own opportunities and choices. The goal of the discussion should be self awareness, not self condemnation for opportunities missed.

Lead a discussion on times when it might be hard to follow Jesus at school, at work or with friends. How can we help one another follow Jesus in difficult situations? Invite family members to talk about times when they've been challenged in their own discipleship.

Prayer Starter
Strengthen me, God,
as I face my fears...

