

Sunday 21st June 2026

The Third Sunday after Trinity

Gospel Reading

Matthew 10.24-39

‘A disciple is not above the teacher, nor a slave above the master; it is enough for the disciple to be like the teacher, and the slave like the master. If they have called the master of the house Beelzebul, how much more will they malign those of his household!

Whom to Fear

‘So have no fear of them; for nothing is covered up that will not be uncovered, and nothing secret that will not become known. What I say to you in the dark, tell in the light; and what you hear whispered, proclaim from the housetops. 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. Are not two sparrows sold for a penny? Yet not one of them will fall to the ground unperceived by your Father. And even the hairs of your head are all counted. So do not be afraid; you are of more value than many sparrows.

‘Everyone therefore who acknowledges me before others, I also will acknowledge before my Father in heaven; but whoever denies me before others, I also will deny before my Father in heaven.

Not Peace, but a Sword

‘Do not think that I have come to bring peace to the earth; I have not come to bring peace, but a sword.

For I have come to set a man against his father,
and a daughter against her mother,
and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law;
and one’s foes will be members of one’s own household.

Whoever loves father or mother more than me is not worthy of me; and whoever loves son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me; and whoever does not take up the cross and follow me is not worthy of me. Those who find their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake will find it.

Other Readings: Genesis 21.8-21

Psalm 86.1-10,16-17

Romans 6.1b-11

Homily

500-750 words

When people refer to the hard sayings of Jesus, today's Gospel reading must surely rank quite high. Are these really the words of Jesus Christ, the Prince of Peace? If hearing them makes us uncomfortable, perhaps they are meant to.

Putting it into context, Jesus is preparing his disciples before sending them out, so that they can do everything that he is doing to prepare the way for the Kingdom of God; preaching, healing, and casting out demons. And he's warning them that what they are about to do in spreading the Gospel is a very risky business. It will damage their reputations and strain family relationships and, if we read the rest of Matthew Chapter 10, we find that Jesus says even harder things. And 2,000 years later, there are still many Christian individuals and communities worldwide who face very real violence and discrimination in their discipleship, and who will find that Jesus' warning about injustice still endures daily.

But what about those of us in the western hemisphere who do not face a great level of persecution or fear of death because of their Christian faith. What might it say to us? Jesus addresses how we will all sometimes suffer injustice through the painful realities of life and faith, and his words offer hope and encouragement for those very times of adversity.

He tells us not to be afraid. Fear is one of the Bible's great themes, and it appears four times in this passage. Jesus says, 'have no fear' and 'do not fear', yet in our dark and troubled world, fear and hopelessness come easily. He tells us that we should not allow fear of what could happen whilst proclaiming the gospel, or what people might say or do, to restrict us. As disciples we may think we have no fear, but why then are we often so reticent about inviting new people to take a closer look at Christ and his Church? Why is it that we don't invite our friends to come and see the goodness of God for themselves? Is it because we are scared? Scared they might reject us, that they might ridicule or embarrass us, or they might ask a question for which we don't have an answer? Jesus encourages that if opposition comes anyway, we might as well proclaim the good news of Christ and do it boldly. Yes, following Jesus and spreading the good news should involve some risk and cost, but never forget the reward for faithfulness is eternal life.

He tells us of the unconditional love of God for all mankind by emphasising the value of the individual, and how God knows and cares for every detail of our lives. Even though sparrows are cheap, God cares for them, and we are worth more than a great many sparrows, with every hair on our head being counted. So, we can take rest in God's care for every detail of our lives, even amid those many temptations, distractions, and dangers we face.

He gives us courage to withstand attacks of every type at every level, by highlighting that the one we are serving is stronger than the strongest opponent we will ever meet. If we acknowledge him before all others, we will never be alone, because our Lord is with us, always. God sees us, knows us, and loves us at every moment of every day

and we should trust Him and follow his path. Jesus calls us to share that love with others through the gift of the Spirit of Truth held in our hearts, even when it is difficult and even when we are afraid.

So, the question we must ask ourselves is whether we trust God's love enough to live truly as disciples who fearlessly reflect His love in everyday situations with generosity and joy, imagination and courage?

Conversation Question

1. What else could you do if you weren't afraid to proclaim the good news from the housetops?
2. How has the Spirit of Truth shaped your life this week?
3. Is there anything else from the passage not already discussed that speaks to you? What is it?
4. What will you do this week in your Monday-to-Saturday ministry in response to what you have heard today? #everydayfaith