

## Matthew 10, 5a, 21-33

June 25 & 26, 2023

The story is told of a lady who was rather old-fashioned person, always quite delicate and elegant, especially in her language. She and her husband were planning a week's vacation in Florida, so she wrote a letter to a particular campground asking for a reservation. But she wanted to make sure the campground was fully equipped, but didn't quite know how to ask about the toilet facilities. She just couldn't bring herself to write the word "toilet" in her letter. She needed a nicer sounding term. After thinking about it for a while she came up with the term: "*Bathroom Commode.*" But when she wrote that down, she still thought she was being too forward. So, she started all over again and rewrote the entire letter referring to the bathroom commode merely as the "BC." So, she wrote: "*Does the campground have its own BC? How far away is the BC away from the campsites? How long are the lines?*"

Well, when the campground owner got the letter, he just couldn't figure out what was the "BC." After thinking about it for a while, he showed the letter to several campers, but they couldn't imagine what the lady meant either. So, the campground owner, finally came to the conclusion that the lady must be asking about the local Baptist Church. So, he thought it would be good to use the same abbreviation that this really nice sounding lady had used. His reply went like this:

*"Dear Madam: I regret the delay in answering your letter, but I now take pleasure in informing you that a "BC" is located nine miles north of the campground and is capable of seating 250 people at one time. I admit it is quite a distance away, if you are in the habit of going regularly, but no doubt you will be pleased to know that a great number of people take their lunches along and make a day of it. They usually arrive early and stay late. It is such a beautiful facility and the acoustics are marvelous. The last time my wife and I went was six years ago, and it was so crowded we had to stand up the whole time we were there. But they are planning on buying more seats for people to sit on. If you do decide to come down to our campground, perhaps I could go with you the first time you go and introduce you to all the other folks. Remember, this is a friendly community. Sincerely, Campground Owner."*<sup>1</sup>

Needless to say, that woman never showed up at that campground. All this woman needed to do was to be clear. She had a simple question which required a simple answer.

Jesus has no problem speaking clearly. The words of our text follow the words that were preached last weekend. He is sending his disciples to go out into the world. You might remember those words: "**Jesus called his twelve disciples to him and gave them authority to drive out impure spirits and to heal every disease and sickness.**" "**Heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse those who have leprosy, drive out demons.**" How would you feel if Jesus sent you out to proclaim his message and gave you this kind of authority? *Let's go!*

But Jesus doesn't stop there. He wants his disciples to know the harsh realities of doing ministry in this world. "**Brother will betray brother to death, and a father his child; children will rebel against their parents and have them put to death. You will be hated by everyone because of me, but the one who stands firm to the end will be saved. When you are persecuted in one place, flee to another.**" "**You will be hated by everyone because of me!**" Now I wonder how the disciples felt. Those words of Jesus are true, aren't they? From its birth, the New Testament Church has been a persecuted church. The religious leaders of Jerusalem tried to stomp it out. But all that did was to spread the church out further and faster. The Roman Empire persecuted Christians and tried to kill them. You could go on and on through the history in this world. The Church is still a persecuted Church.

We may not have to worry about being thrown into a lion's den. But we do live in a culture that is becoming less and less Christian. Even churches are pulling away from God's Word. Paul speaks about that in our second lesson this morning: "**For the time will come when people will not put up with sound doctrine. Instead, to suit their own desires, they will gather around them a great number of teachers to say what their itching ears want to hear. They will turn their ears away from the truth and turn aside to myths.**" Christians are feeling more and more alone in this world. Then Jesus says: "**The student is not above the teacher, nor a servant above his master. It is enough for students to be like their teachers, and servants like their masters. If the head of the house has been called Beelzebul, how much more the**

---

<sup>1</sup> [http://godslittleacre.net/funnies/bathroom\\_commode.html](http://godslittleacre.net/funnies/bathroom_commode.html)

**members of his household!"** In other words, none of this persecution should be a surprise. Jesus' followers will face persecution. Sounds pretty depressing, doesn't it?

The Jesus says: **"So do not be afraid of them, for there is nothing concealed that will not be disclosed, or hidden that will not be made known. What I tell you in the dark, speak in the daylight; what is whispered in your ear, proclaim from the roofs."** In other words, Jesus says: *Don't worry about all those who are out there trying to stop you from sharing Jesus. They can't take you down. They cannot kill your soul since I am protecting it.* The one you need to fear God says is God himself. He is the one who will judge those who are unbelievers. **"Do not be afraid of those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. Rather, be afraid of the One who can destroy both soul and body in hell."** But his followers, God will protect. God is on our side.

Since he is protecting us, he knows everything that is going on in our lives and he knows how to help. **"Are not two sparrows sold for a penny? Yet not one of them will fall to the ground outside your Father's care. And even the very hairs of your head are all numbered. So, don't be afraid; you are worth more than many sparrows."** In other words, if God cares for the sparrows and the number of hair that are on our heads, just think about how much he loves us. You are so precious because he shed his blood for me, for you and for this world. Maybe you too might be a little embarrassed to write the word, Bathroom, in a letter. But don't be afraid to share the message of Jesus. Don't be afraid to share the message of Jesus to those around us. Your heavenly Father has it all under control. **"So, don't be afraid."** Amen.