

## Jesus Told the Disciples Not to Be Fearful

In our last topic, we saw that we want to help our physical and spiritual children learn to prepare for opposition from some when they share the message of Jesus Christ. We want them to remember that those who oppose Christ will also oppose them when they share about Christ. In our topic today, we are going to see that Jesus taught His disciples not to be fearful because He knew everything that happened in their lives.

Jesus told His disciples not to fear those who rejected them. Matthew 10:24-26 says, “A disciple is not above *his* teacher, nor a servant above his master. It is enough for a disciple that he be like his teacher, and a servant like his master. If they have called the master of the house Beelzebub, how much more *will they call* those of his household! Therefore do not fear them. For there is nothing covered that will not be revealed, and hidden that will not be known.” Jesus gave the disciples two comparisons. First, he said a disciple is not above his teacher. Second, he said a servant is not above his master. Jesus was actually comparing these two relationships to Himself and His disciples.

Jesus was their Teacher and they were His disciples. At the same time, Jesus was also their Master, and they were His servants. In Mark 3:22, we read, “And the scribes who came down from Jerusalem said, ‘He has Beelzebub,’ and, ‘By the ruler of the demons He casts out demons.’” Matthew 12:24 makes it clear that these scribes, who earned their living by copying books of the Old Testament, were also Pharisees. Here, we see that the scribes from Jerusalem called Jesus by the name of “Beelzebub”. Beelzebub was a name of Satan. That name meant *lord of the house* or *prince of the evil spirits*. Jesus said that if these religious leaders called Him Satan, they would also call His disciples evil since they were part of the household or family of Jesus. The same thing is true for us today, because we are also a part of the household of Jesus when we repent of our sin.

Jesus said that because the disciples were a part of His household, they did not need to fear the scribes and the Pharisees. They might also be accused of being followers of Satan by the scribes and Pharisees, because they were followers of Jesus, but that was not a reason to fear them. The scribes and Pharisees were trying to cover their own evil by accusing Jesus of being the source of evil. However, Jesus said that such accusations could not hide the evil of the scribes. The evil that they were trying to hide in their hearts would be revealed and their evil would be revealed for all to see. Jesus had earlier said in Matthew 7:18-20, “A good tree cannot bear bad fruit, nor *can* a bad tree bear good fruit. Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. Therefore by their fruits you will know them.” Jesus said that the hearts of those who are evil would be revealed by the fruit of their lives.

In contrast to the evil hearts of the scribes, Jesus said that a good tree cannot bear bad fruit. As a result, Jesus told the disciples, in Matthew 10:27-31, “Whatever I tell you in the dark, speak in

the light; and what you hear in the ear, preach on the housetops. And do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. But rather fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell. Are not two sparrows sold for a copper coin? And not one of them falls to the ground apart from your Father's will. But the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Do not fear therefore; you are of more value than many sparrows.” Jesus had taught the disciples many times in private, when it was just He and the disciples. Now, as He sent them out to preach, Jesus told the disciples to speak and share those teachings with others in public. Jesus said that He had taught them when they were alone and they had heard what He said. Now, Jesus told them to preach those things from the housetops so that everyone could hear what Jesus had taught the disciples.

Jesus did not want the disciples to be afraid as they taught those things. Instead, Jesus wanted them to speak boldly. Then, Jesus told them who to fear and who not to fear. They were not to fear people because people can only kill the body but not the soul. Once people have killed the body, there is nothing more that they can do. In contrast, they needed to fear God because He is the One who will bring eternal judgment on those who reject Him. Revelation 20:15 says, “And anyone not found written in the Book of Life was cast into the lake of fire.” We might put it this way: if we fear people, we will not fear God; in contrast, if we fear God, we will not have a fear of people because we know that the One that we serve is much greater than those people.

Then, Jesus gave the disciples a comparison to help them understand that their lives were very valuable in the sight of God. People could buy two sparrows for a small copper coin that was worth about the same amount of money as the two coins which the poor widow gave in Luke 21:1-4. Luke 21:3-4 says, “So He said, ‘Truly I say to you that this poor widow has put in more than all; for all these out of their abundance have put in offerings for God, but she out of her poverty put in all the livelihood that she had.’” Jesus then said that the Father knows when every sparrow dies and falls to the ground, even though their value is very small. Then, Jesus went on to explain what the Father knows about each person. Jesus said that the Father knows how many hairs each person has which would mean that He knows whenever we lose even one hair.

This is a reminder that God knows everything about each person on the earth right down to the smallest detail (the number of hairs on our heads). Paul used that thought to show the greatness of the protection of the Lord when he said to the sailors of the ship, in Acts 27:34, “‘Therefore I urge you to take nourishment, for this is for your survival, since not a hair will fall from the head of any of you.’” In addition, the fact that God knows how many hairs you have at any moment also shows that God knows all things. Mark 4:22 says, “‘For there is nothing hidden which will not be revealed, nor has anything been kept secret but that it should come to light.’” God knows every single thing that we have ever thought or said. However, God gives a wonderful promise to those who trust in Him. Hebrews 8:12 says, “‘For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their lawless deeds I will remember no more.’” God knows every sin that a follower of Jesus has committed and chooses to remember them no more.

Jesus talked about the value of sparrows. Then, after He said the Father knows the number of our hairs, Jesus went on to say that we are of much more value than many sparrows. The Father stated how much value He placed on each of our lives when Romans 5:8 says, “‘But God demonstrates

His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.” God loves us and has given infinite value to our lives. Based on the fact that God has given our lives such great value, Jesus went on to say in Matthew 10:32-33, “Therefore whoever confesses Me before men, him I will also confess before My Father who is in heaven. But whoever denies Me before men, him I will also deny before My Father who is in heaven.”

The word translated “confesses” means *to say the same thing or to agree with another*. True repentance and faith will cause a person to confess that Jesus is the Christ. A lack of repentance and faith will keep a person silent. John 12:42-43 says, “Nevertheless even among the rulers many believed in Him, but because of the Pharisees they did not confess *Him*, lest they should be put out of the synagogue; for they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God.” In these verses, we see that many leaders were more concerned about the praise of men than that Jesus confess their names before the Father.

In contrast, Romans 10:9-10 says, “That if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.” True repentance and faith will cause us to confess with our mouth that Jesus is Lord. Repentance happens in the heart. 1 Thessalonians 1:9-10 says, “For they themselves declare concerning us what manner of entry we had to you, and how you turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God, and to wait for His Son from heaven, whom He raised from the dead, *even* Jesus who delivers us from the wrath to come.” Repentance is turning from sin and turning to God with the result that we want to serve Him. Such repentance in the heart will also cause us to confess with our mouths that Jesus is Lord. That is why we can know that Jesus will confess us before the Father.

The word translated “deny” means *to reject or to refuse something that is offered*. Those who deny Jesus before men show that they have refused to accept the eternal life that Jesus has offered to them as a free gift. However, this is also the word that is used in Matthew, Mark, Luke and John to speak of the denial by Peter of Jesus the night when Jesus was on trial before the Jewish religious leaders. Jesus had told Peter, earlier that evening in Luke 22:31-32, “And the Lord said, ‘Simon, Simon! Indeed, Satan has asked for you, that he may sift *you* as wheat. But I have prayed for you, that your faith should not fail; and when you have returned to *Me*, strengthen your brethren.’” Peter felt that He was such a failure because he had depended on his own strength that he felt the only thing that he could do was go back to fishing. That was why it was necessary for Jesus to come and restore Peter by telling him three times to feed His lambs and sheep.

Like Peter, we will act out of fear and deny Jesus if we depend on our own strength as Christians. That is why Romans 6:19-20 says, “I speak in human *terms* because of the weakness of your flesh. For just as you presented your members *as* slaves of uncleanness, and of lawlessness *leading to more* lawlessness, so now present your members *as* slaves of righteousness for holiness. For when you were slaves of sin, you were free in regard to righteousness.” We want to help our physical and spiritual children understand the importance of yielding our spirit to the Holy Spirit so that we

will speak boldly for Jesus. May the Lord richly bless you as you show your children how to speak boldly for Christ.