

Part 17: The War of the World

Matthew 10:16-42

March 18th, 2018

Announcement: Next week is Good Friday week and also our Spring Break from Community Group Homework. Groups will resume again the week of Easter.

Sermon Reflection

What did you find helpful or meaningful from the sermon this weekend? What stood out to you? [Note this is a question we are not putting in the bulletin, but we feel could be a good practice for groups do start with on a weekly basis. It gets people talking and helps bring people who missed up to speed.]

1) This text speaks of the opposition which Christ followers may face in life. What part was most challenging for you?

If we were to boil down this text into four primary challenges they would be: 1. You will be persecuted (10:16-24), 2. The Gospel will still be proclaimed amidst persecution (26-33), 3. The gospel will bring division into the closest of human relationships (34-39), 4. We must receive and care for those who are persecuted (40-42). Your group will most likely find different and more personal challenges in this text as well. It will also be helpful to ask them why these issues were so challenging. How do these challenges help you see places where you can grow in faith or endurance? Remember the main point of this text and sermon was not to predict when suffering will come, it was instead to prepare our hearts for when it does. So try to steer the group away from social commentary attempting to define and predict persecution in the States. Ultimately this sober text was intended to strengthen the disciples, not to make them more fearful.

2) In Matthew 10:26-31, Jesus calls people to have no fear and then expresses a confidence in God's sovereignty. How does this idea help them (and you!) overcome misplaced fears? How does the idea of God being near, involved and in control give you hope through the suffering you may experience later in life?

How does seeing the control of God give you confidence in times of trial and in peace? In one sense we know that whatever comes, comes at the hand of a Father who works all things for the good of those he loves (see Rom. 8:28-29). Everything God brings us works for our good in that it drives us to have a more sincere and pure faith (see also 1 Peter 1:6-7), this is what Paul means when he says in Romans 8 that we would be conformed into the image of Christ. Tyler also used 2 Corinthians 4:7-12 in the sermon and this text shows that persecution will never ultimately crush us for we are sustained by the power of God. We never suffer alone, and we never suffer arbitrarily or in futility. God uses persecution of all kinds to serve his purposes, proclaim his gospel, win his souls and strengthen his church. In moments of persecution we may not know the specifics of how God is good in the midst of it, but what we do know is that he is working for good, and we can trust that. The cross is proof that in the moment of greatest persecution and silence, God is most vocal in his efforts for good.

3) In this text we also see the promise of gaining our life (Matthew 10:39) and receiving great rewards (Matthew 10:42). In what ways did the text or sermon encourage you?

As mentioned before, this text was meant to be a sober encouragement for those whom Jesus was sending out. It promises the triumph of the gospel in the face of persecution, the reminder of the deliverance we have in Christ, the assurance of faith (look at the “worthy of me” verses), a life hidden in Christ (see also Colossians 3:1-4), and the rewards of the faith. The world and the Devil would have you believe that persecution destroys any good and is the worst enemy. But God is bigger than our greatest fear because he has already delivered us from sin and death. These verses are the confirmation of Joseph’s words to his brother in Genesis 50:20, “As for you, you meant evil against me, but God meant it for good, to bring it about that many people should be kept alive, as they are today.”