

Alêtheia Christian Fellowship

June 9, 2019

“Discipleship 301”

8:00 ~ Service - Communion is for all Christians

9:30 ~ Fellowship & Adult Sunday school

10:30 ~ Service with the King's Kid's - Communion is for all Christians

NEWS

VBS June 17th to the 21st

Church Camp August 23rd to the 25th

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- 1) What is the difference between a Believer, a disciple and an apostle?
- 2) What kind of person is described in verse 16 and the first words of 17?
- 3) When you are in a dire situation - how do you think you got there?

MATTHEW 10:16-23 ~ ¹⁶“Behold, I send you out as sheep in the midst of wolves; so be shrewd as serpents and innocent as doves. ¹⁷“But beware of men, for they will hand you over to the courts and scourge you in their synagogues; ¹⁸and you will even be brought before governors and kings for My sake, as a testimony to them and to the Gentiles. ¹⁹“But when they hand you over, do not worry about how or what you are to say; for it will be given you in that hour what you are to say. ²⁰“For it is not you who speak, but it is the Spirit of your Father who speaks in you. ²¹“Brother will betray brother to death, and a father his child; and children will rise up against parents and cause them to be put to death. ²²“You will be hated by all because of My name, but it is the one who has endured to the end who will be saved. ²³“But whenever they persecute you in one city, flee to the next; for truly I say to you, you will not finish going through the cities of Israel until the Son of Man comes.

A disciple is a _____ of a master, disciplined into conformity to him. An apostle is an emissary sent by a master to _____ him. Can such an emissary not be a disciple - can they not be a believer?

Obedient conformity to Christ means doing what He _____. His mandate is that all of His learners "Go and proclaim the Gospel," that all His disciples "Go and make other disciples," by "Teaching them to observe all that I commanded you" (Matthew 28:18-20, James 1:22-25).

We will all do it _____, but preach we must. You might think that you're not qualified. Never let anything, especially an excuse, keep you from _____ Jesus. Preach!

No one can dispute what Jesus IS to you.

Your job is not to get them to accept Jesus - your job is to show them the _____.

Jesus gave the Apostles their marching orders (vv. 5-15), now He's telling them the _____ of their mission.

Verses 16-23 are a sub-theme of _____ within the larger theme of discipleship.

What, other than a nuance shift, has changed?

Verse 16 was a reminder that the final disposition of all things had not yet taken place (Isaiah 11:6a & 65:25a, Revelation 22:3). Sheep are _____ against wolves.

The 12 were sent to minister to the ones _____ for change, not to _____ with the ones resistant to it.

“Innocent as doves” is ἀκέραιος (ä-kě-řĩ-ōs), unmixed, and so pure. The concept is to be devoid of any guile. No hidden _____, no ulterior _____. Be about My business, ministering to those who need Me, not for any other reason.

That is juxtaposed by “Shrewd as serpents.” “Shrewd,” is φρόνιμος (řř-ō-ně-mōs), from the verb φρονέω (řř-ō-ně-ō), meaning to think. This is the result, or _____ of thinking, and so means prudent, sensible, or wise.

There can be no _____, but there needs to be prudent wisdom.

Verse 17 opens with “Beware of men.” “Beware” is προσέχω (přř-ōs-ěčĥ-ō) it’s a movement towards something you hold, so it implies _____. It is being _____.

John 2:23-25, “Believed” as in “Many believed in Jesus,” is the same word as “Entrusting,” as in “Jesus, on His part, was not entrusting Himself to them.”

Fill out the other side, detach this part of the page, and place it in the offering plate or the prayer/suggestion box in the lobby or with an Elder or Deacon of the church.

God Bless You!

The "Courts" here refers to the local Synagogue courts administering _____ law.

The "Governors and kings" are the local political leaders like Herod Antipas and his vast array of local officials administering _____ law.

The civil courts were staffed with a lot of _____.

In verse 18, Jesus said, "For My sake." In verse 16, Jesus said, "I send you out." The word "I" is unnecessary and is included for _____.

The Apostles will find themselves in both religious and secular courts _____ Jesus personally sent them there for the _____ of bearing testimony about Him. (Exodus 14).

The Apostles would be dragged into situations by people who wanted them silenced, and through their efforts, God would use it as a _____. Acts 24-26.

This was not scorning _____, _____, or _____ it was scorning anxiety about _____ themselves. Don't worry about that, understand that you're there to preach. Then, also know that God is with you. (Luke 12:11&12, I Peter 3:15, Acts 26:32).

Check all that apply – detach and place in the offering or the prayer box

_____ I want to talk with the pastor about _____

_____ I want prayer for _____

_____ I want to volunteer to _____

_____ I want more information about _____

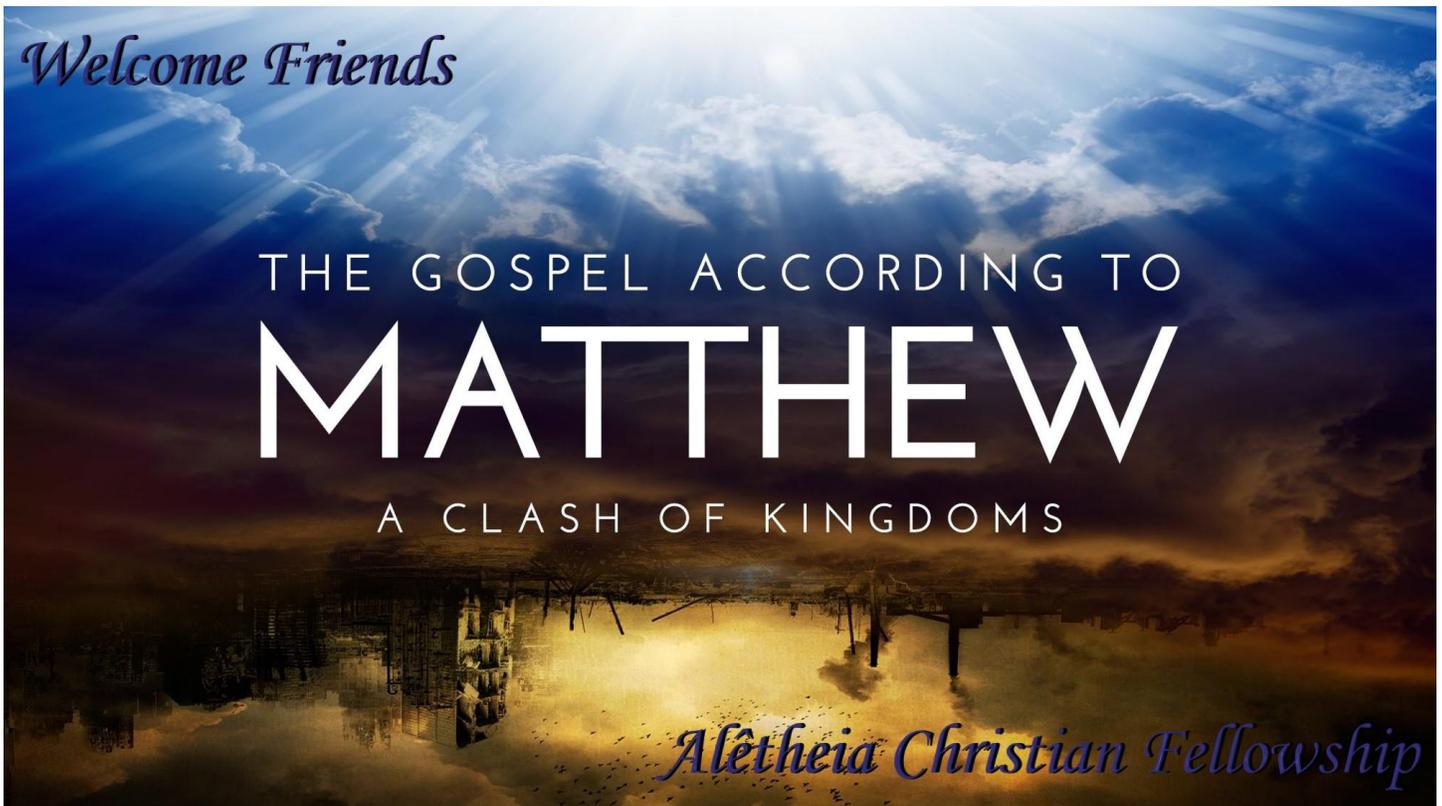
_____ Other _____

Name _____ Address _____

Phone _____ Email _____

Alêtheia ~ Matthew 10c ~ 060919

VBS June 17th to the 21st and Church camp August 23rd to the 25th (regular services at the church).



Last week, we stepped back from Matthew and introduced some general concepts related to Bible interpretation - today, we're back in the Gospel...



Matthew 10:16-23 ~ 16NASB“Behold, I send you out as sheep in the midst of wolves; so be shrewd as serpents and innocent as doves. 17“But beware of men, for they will hand you over to the courts and scourge you in their synagogues; 18and you will even be brought before governors and kings for My sake, as a testimony to them and to the Gentiles. 19“But when they hand you over, do not worry about how or what you are to say; for it will be given you in that hour what you are to say. 20“For it is not you who speak, but it is the Spirit of your Father who speaks in you. 21“Brother will betray brother to death, and a father his child; and children will rise up against parents and cause them to be put to death. 22“You will be hated by all because of

My name, but it is the one who has endured to the end who will be saved. 23“But whenever they persecute you in one city, flee to the next; for truly I say to you, you will not finish going through the cities of Israel until the Son of Man comes.

As we saw last week, we always want to be careful about context and about the author’s intent. We could easily see that there was a transition at the end of chapter 9, taking us into a new, but related theme in chapter 10.



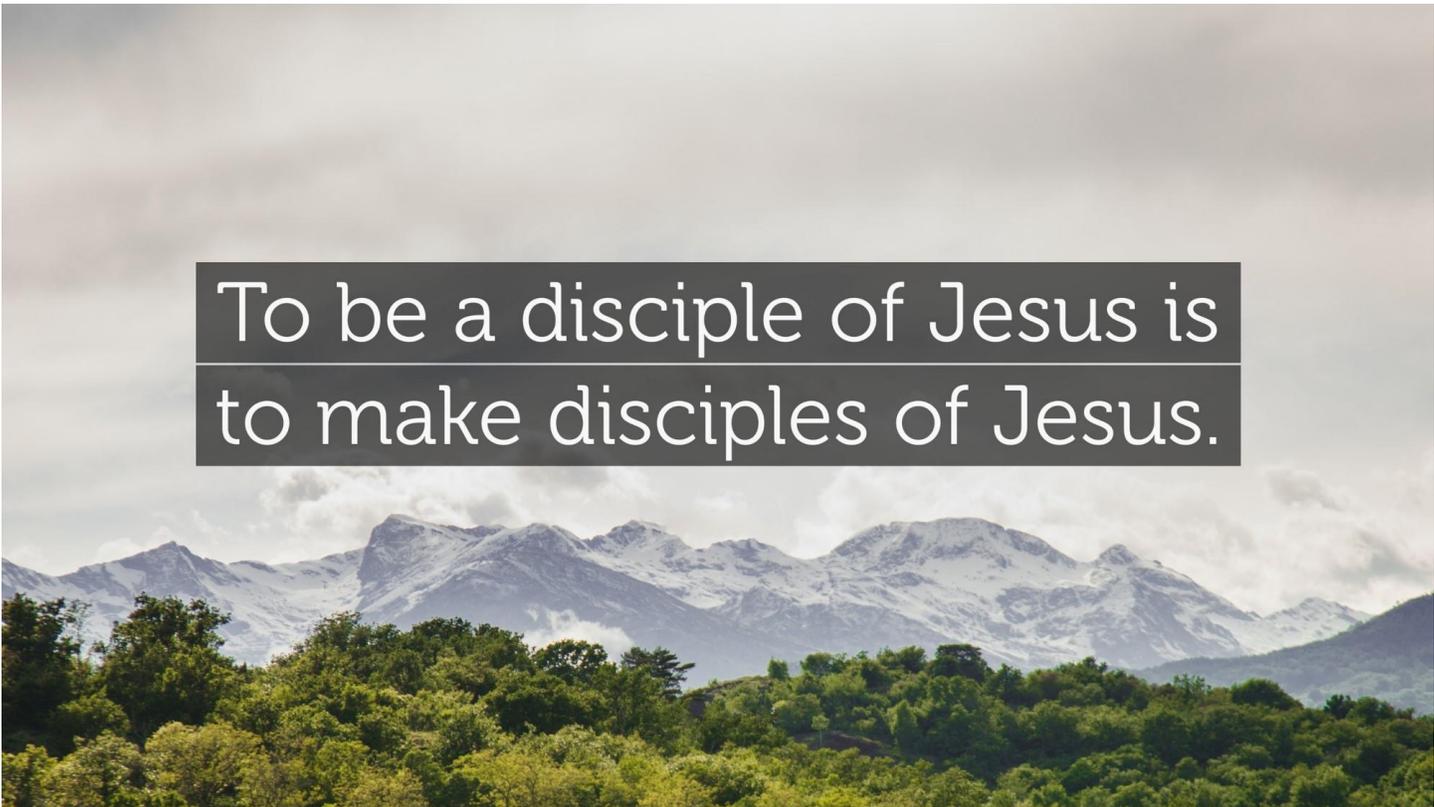
The theme is discipleship. Discipleship is best described as the discipline of obedient conformity to

the standard, the model, or in this case, conformity to the Master. It is followership in the sense of doing what the leader teaches.

People sometimes get the idea that a person can be a Christian without being a disciple. The notion that you can just believe in Jesus, be a reasonably decent person, and all is well. Being a disciple is not only essential to being a Christian, it is actually fundamental to the process of being saved in the first place - you can't have one without the other. Accepting Christ, means accepting Him as Lord as well as Savior. Never think that anyone can be a Believer and not simultaneously be a disciple of Jesus. Disciplined into conformity to Him.



Beyond that, people sometimes think someone can be a Christian disciple without being called as an apostle. The idea that a person can be a perpetual student, ever following the Master, ever doing Christianity within Christianity.



To be a disciple of Jesus is
to make disciples of Jesus.

It's not possible. In Christianity, being a follower of Jesus means obedient conformity - it means, by definition doing what He teaches and obeying what He mandates. His mandate is that all of His followers "Go preach," that all of His learners "Go and proclaim the Gospel," that all His disciples "Go and make other disciples," by "Teaching them to observe all that I commanded you."

Every Christian is called into obedience to the Lord and His command is to go out as apostles. Apostles with a little "a," but apostles, none the less, we are all called and commissioned by Jesus to "Go preach."

As apostles with a little “a,” we are equipped and sent in different ways. We all have different gifts. Where I might have no chance of reaching a person, you may be uniquely qualified to speak into their lives.

We are to be constantly on the go, in the sense that, we are living in tune with the Holy Spirit and have a ready, willing and able, attitude when it comes to proclaiming Christ.

As I say, we will all do it differently from each other and differently in each unique situation, but preach we must. You might think that you’re not qualified, or you’re not a good speaker, or that you don’t know enough, or that your Christian walk is not good enough - there are as many excuses as there are Christians making them. But excuses they are. Never let anything keep you from obeying Jesus. Preach!

How? My friends you are already the foremost expert on the planet when it come to your experience with Christ. No one knows that story better than you do. Simply share what Jesus means to you, how He has changed your life, what He has done for you and why you have an unshakeable hope in Him.

No one can dispute what Jesus is to you.

Everyone wants another evangelism class, or a church program, or a weekend seminar... Look, all those things can help, but in general, they simply delay action.

How many of you, off the top of your head, can remember what I preached 7 Sundays ago? I'm sure no one can, but if you had taken what was said and put it into practice in your life, you'd know. Don't delude yourself by merely being a hearer of the Word - be a doer (James 1:22-25).

If you're not able to articulate the doctrines of Christianity in an understandable way, that's fine, that's not how you preach. Do what you do. If the person you're ministering to needs something beyond your capabilities lead them to a brother or sister who can meet that need.

People often think they need to be involved in active ministry within the church - there's a whole field outside these doors that's ripe for harvest my friends. Go out there - minister in your gifts to them - bring them to

others in the church to minister to the needs outside of your ministry scope.

I know of recent converts to Christianity led to the Lord by regular folks with no more public speaking ability, no more theological training, no more official capacity, no more social skills than anyone here.

One woman led people far smarter and far more educated than her to Jesus because of her steadfast faith through adversity and her boldness in sharing the reason for the hope of her faith.

Another woman led an avowed atheist to the Lord through her repeated acts of kindness in the form of tangible service. Cooking, cleaning, helping out. You don't need a ministry degree; you just need to actively notice opportunities to share Jesus and then step out in faith. Pray for openings and be receptive to the Holy Spirit's prodding and share your testimony as long as the other person is amenable.

Never argue, never take it personally, never lose your cool. Minister only as much as the other person is willing to accept. Never take another person's right to

choose from them. It's called coercion and a coerced confession is meaningless.

Your job is not to get them to accept Jesus - your job is to show them the choice. Undue pressure only confuses the issue.

Beyond that, don't get impatient, frustrated, irritated, upset... any of that is a sign that you've taken it personally. You're not there to represent you, you're there to represent Christ. When you tell your story, you're not really telling them about you, you're telling them about Jesus - so let Jesus get offended at them, if He wants.

All of us are apostles with a little "a."



Anyway, Jesus gave the Apostles their marching orders between verses 5 and 15, now He's telling them the nature of their mission - what to expect out there.

Just to help us all get on the same sheet of music. There was the natural transition I mentioned at the end of chapter 9, where "Jesus was going through all the Jewish cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues and proclaiming" His Message, to that point in time, which was "Repent for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand." As a seal of His authority and so a validation of His new Message, He was "Healing every kind of disease and every kind of sickness."

It wasn't enough... Jesus was moved by His divine compassion because "The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few." Therefore, He called the 12 and we began the overall theme of discipleship in chapter 10.

Jesus gave the 12 His instructions on replicating His Own ministry and concluded starting in the last half of verse 13 with negative responses to their activity.



That final two and a half verses nicely transition us into a sub-theme about negative responses to the Apostles, which are to be seen for what they really are...

Negative responses to Jesus.

That's what verses 16 through 23 are... They are a sub-theme of rejection, hostility and persecution within the larger theme of discipleship.

These are some of the most misunderstood verses in the Bible and because of that they are also some of the most misused verses in the Bible.

First, nothing other than a theme nuance has changed. Jesus is still talking to the 12 on the occasion of their first sending. That's important.

Verse 16 couples two axiomatic sayings. They are metaphorical and as a type of analogy are imperfect. Sheep are dumb. Serpents are evil. Jesus does not in any way intend us to take those meanings here. I'm merely pointing out that you must be extremely careful about pressing symbolical language too far.

They were not yet in the time foreseen by the Prophet Isaiah where "The wolf will dwell with the lamb," and "The wolf and the lamb will graze together" (Isaiah 11:6a & 65:25a). Sheep are defenseless against wolves. That's Jesus' point with the first pairing. He was sending those guys out and did not want them defending themselves even from ravenous wolves.

They were to carry His Message and ministry to the “Lost Sheep,” not get into arguments and fights defending themselves against those who refused them.

The primary opposition would have been the self-righteous Jews. The Sadducees, Pharisees, Scribes and others who were relatively comfortable with the status quo. They didn’t want anyone stirring the pot.

The 12 were sent to minister to the ones ready for change, not to fight with the ones resistant to it.



I had a couple of great friends who flew the RF-4. It was a fighter converted to a photo-reconnaissance jet.

All the weapons were removed and replaced with sensors and cameras. They used to fly over areas just attacked by other jets to assess mission success.

Their motto was “Alone, unarmed and unafraid.” That’s sort of how this mission was. Not only were they not to attack, they weren’t even to engage in defending themselves. Just focus on the mission assigned.

They were to do nothing to hinder the spread of the Message - nothing to give a legitimate excuse for rejection - nothing to protect themselves except their wits, which brings us to the second pair.



“Innocent as doves” is ἀκέραιος (ä-kě-řĩ-ös), and means unmixed with anything else and so pure, unadulterated, authentic. The concept is to be completely devoid of any guile. No hidden agenda, no ulterior motive, honest, open, transparent and full of integrity. Jesus was saying, be there about My business to minister to those who need Me, not for any other reason.



That is juxtaposed by “Shrewd as serpents.” We take this second, because it’s easier when we have “Innocent as doves,” in mind. Serpents are known for many traits, but Jesus narrows the possibilities by His context and by the word translated as “Shrewd.”

It is φρόνιμος (frō-nē-mōs), is from the verb φρονέω (frō-nē-ō), meaning to think - φρόνιμος is the result, outcome, or content of thinking, and so has the meaning of being prudent, sensible, or wise.

“Shrewd” is okay, I guess, “Crafty” is worse. They both give the idea of deception or guile, which can be attributes associated with serpents, but not here, when

countered by “Innocent as doves,” and why I took that element first. There can be no deceptiveness or guile, but there needs to be prudent wisdom.



Verse 17 opens with Jesus defining verse 16 for us anyway. “Beware of men.” “Beware” is προσέχω (přros-ěĉhō) it’s to move towards something you hold, so it implies focus - paying attention. It’s not so much, “Beware” as it is being wisely aware. We see “Beware” and think of avoidance as an action - really a reaction. You see a sign “Vicious Wolf,” and you react to it by retreating.

The word is about being prudent, sensible and wise just like the serpent comparison. The action of avoidance comes from rightly discerning a danger, not just reacting to it without thinking. A good example comes in John 2:23-25, 23NASB Now when He was in Jerusalem at the Passover, during the feast, many believed in His name, observing His signs which He was doing. 24 But Jesus, on His part, was not entrusting Himself to them, for He knew all men, 25 and because He did not need anyone to testify concerning man, for He Himself knew what was in man.

Without a detailed exposition on that passage let me say that “Believed” as in “Many believed in Jesus,” is the same word as “Entrusting,” as in “Jesus, on His part, was not entrusting Himself to them.” They believed in Him, but He did not believe in them.

Jesus knew the fickleness of man and so the insignificance of man’s testimony. Jesus was wisely aware of the realities of the situation and that’s what He commanded His disciples to exercise as well.



Jesus went on to essentially say, people, being people, will be offended, irritated and scared of your message and so of you. They will appeal to the Religious officials.

The “Courts” here does not refer to the great Sanhedrin in Jerusalem, but to the small local religious courts. Each Synagogue had its own small court of Elders who administered religious law. If found guilty by the Elders, you would be punished with a penalty not to exceed 39 lashes with a braided leather whip.



The “Governors and kings” of verse 18, are clearly the local political leaders like Herod Antipas and his vast array of local administrators, magistrates, tax collectors, officials and law enforcement administering civil law.

The secular courts were staffed with a lot of Gentiles because the work was unseemly for a good Jew. The testimony was to the Jewish officials and as a natural result the Gentiles working with them.



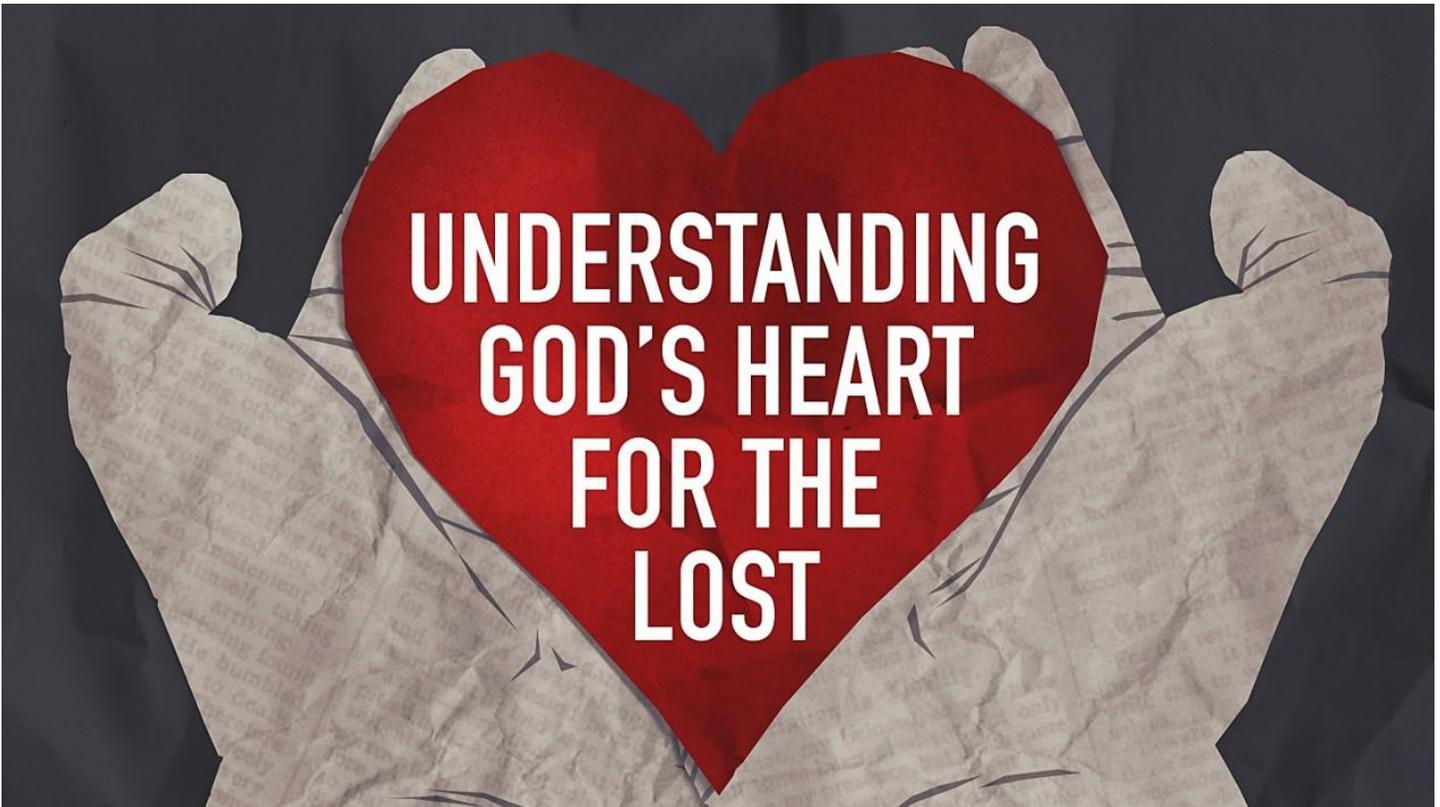
This is where it gets interesting. In the middle of verse 18, Jesus said, “For My sake.” Going back to verse 16, Jesus said, “I send you out.” The word “I” is unnecessary and so is included for emphasis. The verb contains the first person singular within it, so it is like saying, “I, I send you out.”

The Apostles will find themselves in both religious and secular courts because Jesus personally sent them there for the purpose of bearing testimony about Him - “For My sake,” He said. The testimony isn’t their defense, it is their preaching the Message.

There are two interrelated things I don't want you to miss and I'll use the Exodus to illustrate. After the 10th Plague the Jews left Egypt and promptly camped in the worst place possible, from a strategic point of view. One side was a mountain, the other side an Egyptian city, ahead the uncrossable Sea and bearing down on them from the rear, Pharaoh's army of chariots (Exodus 14). How did they get themselves in such an untenable place? How could they have been so careless to make camp where there was no possible escape?

God personally led them to that exact spot. Why? For His Name's sake. That trial, test, tribulation, would be a testimony to His children and to the world forever, just as the Apostles standing in the religious and secular courts would be.

1) It is God Himself Who personally puts His people in a seemingly terrible place, 2) but He does it for His eternal purposes. We find ourselves in a bad spot and all we can think about is how to get out of it, instead of seeing the opportunities the spot presents for sharing Christ and glorifying God.



The Apostles would be dragged into situations by people who wanted them silenced, and through their nefarious efforts, God would use it as a platform. Not only to reach more people with His Message, but to reach people the Apostles would never have access to otherwise.

That's the important point. Their "Testimony" in verse 18 and what they were "To say," in verse 19 wasn't about them and why they should be released, their "Testimony," how and what they were "To say," was about Jesus!

They were put there not to avoid a guilty verdict, but to preach the Message where it would otherwise not be preached. Because God loves them too.

Acts chapters 24-26 records the Apostle Paul doing just that. He got to preach to at least two Roman Governors, several members of the Jewish Royal Family and to the Emperor of Rome himself. Not to mention all the officials and guards and sailors along the way. All because some people wanted him silenced and they had him arrested to accomplish their nefarious purpose.

Now we have the proper context for the frequently misused verses 19&20. It is crazy how many wildly different ideas and even doctrines come out of abusing these two simple verses.



There is a whole diverse branch of Christianity that use them to denounce study - denounce Sunday school - denounce professional clergy - denounce seminary - denounce preparation of any kind.

The idea is preachers, whether formally from a pulpit, or informally witnessing to a passerby, should never preplan, just let 'er fly, off the cuff, wing it, all in the power of the Holy Spirit of course.

Anyone, regardless of intelligence, education, or experience, can just let the Holy Spirit speak through them and the result will be infinitely better than anything a prepared speaker could say.

Even among less extreme people, the taint of that thinking prevails. Many Christians think that when a pastor gives a prepared sermon, he is not as anointed as when he shoots from the hip. I had a whole huge section talking about this issue and left it on the cutting room floor - because the Holy Spirit told me to.

Is it possible that the anointing of the Holy Spirit upon the preacher takes place in the preparation of the sermon as well?

It's ironic that the folks who deride study, do so based upon a wrong understanding of Scripture that they would recognize, if they studied.

Further, these same people who disparage education and preparation claim the Bible as their source and yet the Bible was written by educated, prepared and well-studied men.

Paul was arguably the most intelligent and well educated of all the Apostles and is responsible for half the New Testament. Paul was so brilliant and so gifted that it has been said that if he had never become a Christian, we would still know his name today.

He authorized Hebrews, which is a work of obvious literary and rhetorical skill. He oversaw Luke-Acts written by a medical doctor who was clearly intelligent and educated and by his own admission “Carefully investigated everything from the beginning” (Luke 1:3).

Matthew is a work of a skilled author. John’s Gospel, especially chapter 1, is profound. There’s no other way to say it. It might be the most profound thing ever recorded. The Bible was written by different people with different abilities, but it was all well organized and planned out long before it was recorded.



What Jesus meant in those verses is, do not prepare a defense of yourself - you're in the situation you're in, because I put you there.

The nuance in Matthew is technical with the construction and the word choice, but you can easily see the point in Luke chapter 12. It starts out identically and then Luke records Jesus' clarifying words. Luke 12:11&12, 11NASB "When they bring you before the synagogues and the rulers and the authorities, do not worry about how or what you are to speak in your defense (ἀπολογέομαι [ä-pö-lö-gě-ö-mī]. Apology 7 words), or what you are to say; 12for the Holy Spirit will teach you in that very hour what you ought to say."

This was not scorning study, education, or preparation, it was scorning anxiety about defending themselves. Don't worry about that, Jesus was saying, understand that you are there, in that situation, to preach. Then, in that knowledge, also know that God the Father is there with you in the person of the Holy Spirit.

As a quick aside, we see the unity of the Trinity in the fact that the Holy Spirit can be called both the Spirit of the Father as here, and the Spirit of Christ, along with the Spirit as an individual (Romans 8:9, Galatians 4:6 etc.)

Later, the Apostle Peter would emphatically say that we should all, 15bNASB always being ready to make a defense (ἀπολογία [ä-pŏ-lŏ-gē-ä]. Noun form) to everyone who asks you to give an account for the hope that is in you. (I Peter 3:15).

God will guide you in how to navigate the court system, God will guide you in what you should say. Taking the example of Paul, we find that, from a human perspective, he said the wrong thing by appealing to Caesar... King Herod Agrippa told the Roman

Governor Festus, if Paul hadn't appealed to the Emperor, he could have been released (Acts 26:32).

Paul made a mistake, or did he? An angel told Paul not to be afraid, because he must stand before Caesar. Why, to defend himself against those who wanted him silenced? No, to preach to Nero himself.

I hope you can see that had nothing to do with being uneducated and unprepared and just winging it while hoping for the best. It had to do with recognizing that God was orchestrating things and giving them opportunities to preach to people they wouldn't have had access to any other way.

The 12 were prepared. to deliver Jesus' Message. It is often said that the Apostles didn't go to seminary. That stupid. The Apostles went to the highest, most perfect seminary possible, studying three years at the feet of God, made man.

They were educated, experienced, and prepared by Jesus Himself to deliver the Message entrusted to them. Remember, at that point, it was a fairly simple Message. We saw the details of it in the Sermon on the Mount.

As we move forward in the passage, it's worthwhile to say that this section of Scripture has a stairstep of time to it.

As much as I would love to talk about that right now it will have to wait until next time.