



## **Matthew 10:24–31**

24 “The student is not above the teacher, nor a servant above his master. 25 It is enough for students to be like their teachers, and servants like their masters. If the head of the house has been called Beelzebub, how much more the members of his household! 26 “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. 27 What I tell you in the dark, speak in the daylight; what is whispered in your ear, proclaim from the roofs. 28 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. 29 Are not two sparrows sold for a penny? Yet not one of them will fall to the ground outside your Father's care. 30 And even the very hairs of your head are all numbered. 31 So don't be afraid; you are worth more than many sparrows.

## **Reflection**

Yet again today we face a very confronting passage as Christians. Jesus has been

speaking to his disciples about what lays ahead of them on their mission in Galilee. But the more he speaks the more we realise he's also speaking to us. And what Jesus is saying is very confronting.

Jesus has said that the disciples will be like sheep among wolves. That they'll always need to be on their guard. That they'll be flogged and imprisoned. Betrayed by those closest to them. There has even been talk of death. And like all of Jesus' words, these words came true. They were flogged, they were imprisoned, they were betrayed by their brothers, they were put to death. And many Christians since have followed the same fate because of their outspoken faith in Jesus. And if we care to look, just a few keystrokes into Google, this is happening in our world today more

than ever before.

It's interesting, isn't it, that far from giving his disciples some motivational pep talk before sending them out Jesus is being very real with them and with us. This is reality. The world does not like us, 'You will be hated by everyone because of me', because the world hated him first. People everywhere have rejected God, and when he sent his son to earth they killed him. And this is about where our passage today begins:

24 "The student is not above the teacher, nor a servant above his master. 25 It is enough for students to be like their teachers, and servants like their masters. If the head of the house has been called Beel-

zebul, how much more the members of his household!

Now first of all here the word 'Beelzebul' is just another term for Satan. But before he gets to Satan Jesus says:

'The student is not above the teacher, nor a servant above his master.'

This is a fascinating thought when you stop and think about it for a moment. We're all followers of Jesus, his disciples. We look up to him, sit at his feet, learn from him – we want to be like him. So much of what it is to be a Christian, to grow as a Christian is to become increasingly like Jesus. It's the goal of our faith. Right?

We want to be filled with his wisdom, his

love, his compassion, his humility, don't we? But what about his suffering, his persecution and his rejection? Can we have it both ways? Can we become increasingly like Jesus but not be increasingly rejected by this world as we do so? What do you think?

The more open Jesus was about his faith, the more he was rejected, the more he suffered and in the end they killed him. What about us? Does it not follow that the more we grow as Christians, the more we look like Jesus, then the more we'll be rejected like he was?

I think this is Jesus' point when he basically said next, 'Look, if they're calling me Satan, then how much more are they going to call you followers of Satan?'

‘It’s inevitable,’ Jesus is saying, ‘this is how they treated me, and so this is how you’ll be treated. So don’t be afraid,’ he continues. ‘I’ve been teaching and training you in secret, if I hadn’t they would have arrested and killed me all the sooner, but the time is coming when those things I’ve taught you privately I want you to shout from the rooftops. Again, don’t be afraid. What’s the worst they can do? Kill your bodies? Grass that fades, flowers that wither, here today and gone tomorrow – but your souls, they’re eternal and they’re in my safekeeping. So keep an eternal perspective, human life hangs by a thread, what’s really at stake here is eternal life, heaven and hell. So shout it from the rooftops as my messengers to a world in great danger. You have nothing to lose but for

them, everything is at stake.

And remember, I've spoken about sparrows before. Don't worry, not only are you worth far more to my Father than tiny little sparrows, but everything, the hairs on your head, he doesn't need to count – he knows their number; everything is under his complete, sovereign and almighty control. So no matter how severe the trial, no matter how dark things may seem, your heavenly Father, my Father has got this covered, he has everything under control including this great mission you're part of.'

## **Think**

I don't know how you're feeling today but passage has probably sobered you up somewhat. Jesus is being very real with



us today, he always is, but particularly so I think today. What has caught your attention in these verses? Slow down for a moment now, before the day gets away, and think deeply about it. Has it ever occurred to you that to be like Jesus means to not fit in our world, to be at odds with the people around you? That to be filled with love and joy and peace will often mean to be rejected, shamed and despised. So if it's happening to you, something isn't wrong, something is very right. And if it's not happening, if you're very comfortable then it could be that you are in danger. Jesus was rarely comfortable, his followers were rarely comfortable, the greatest Christians down throughout the ages were rarely comfortable. Stop now and think, resolve, question, repent, rejoice.

# Pray

And then continue to pray. If you're uncomfortable right now Jesus is saying to you this morning, 'don't be afraid.' Take your eyes off small things, even big things, and keep your eyes fixed on 'above' things. The eternal is all that matters, so proclaim the truth from the roof tops. Pray for the courage and conviction and faith to obey Jesus in this way. And pray that the Holy Spirit would constantly remind you and me that the God of the universe is our precious Father, and that he holds you and I carefully, safely and wonderfully in the palm of his hand. And the gospel of his son is going out exactly according to his plan.