

Are we afraid of Heaven? Matthew 10:27-42

I have titled this message are we afraid of heaven?

No doubt all of you here are thinking that is crazy, who in their right mind would ever be afraid of heaven.

But sometimes we live our lives as if we are afraid of heaven.

- We hold onto things down here so tightly that there is hardly any real evidence that we believe we are going to heaven some day.

In this section Jesus is going to address some things that keep us from living like we are going to heaven one day.

- Such as fear, relationships and self preservation!

Jesus wants to get our minds focused on the fact that God is in control of our lives, and we are going to be with Him one day, and we are going to receive some rewards one day.

It's not so much the rewards themselves, even though biblically speaking God is our reward.

- God told Abraham, I am your shield, your exceedingly great reward.
- There is nothing greater or better or more magnificent and awesome that God can give us other than Himself.

But the fact that God the creator and sustainer and designer of the universe is going to reward us one day for the way we lived our lives for Him ought to blow us away! Amen!

When we truly believe we will be with God in heaven one day we will live our lives in utter abandonment for Him. Amen!

John Wesley: got saved at 35 yrs old then preached the gospel in the open air around England for 53 years, and he started the Methodist church, he built orphanages, he sent out missionaries and raised up many more preachers like himself.

- And when he died he was virtually penniless because he gave it all away.
- Yet the last words he uttered before he died were; the best of all God is with us, the best of all God is with us.

That's the heart Jesus is trying to instill in us this morning! Amen!

V27 read-slow;

Boldly preach: I love the fact that Jesus is in the midst of telling His apostles about the persecution that is going to come for serving Him, and in the midst of it He tells them to go and preach the gospel on the roof tops. Amen!

Jesus wants His Apostles to go out and boldly preach the gospel no matter what the cost.

- And not only preach the gospel but preach it from the roof tops so every body will hear you.

In those days both personal and official announcements were shouted from the roof that way as many people as possible could hear the announcement.

So when Jesus calls some one to preach the gospel He expects that person to be bold.

- And He wants them to proclaim it so everyone could hear it. Amen!

Paul: the Apostle Paul had a heart to preach the gospel with boldness.

- In fact he had such a heart to preach the gospel with boldness that he asked the Ephesians to pray for him.
- He said, pray that utterance maybe given to me, that I may open my mouth boldly to make known the mystery of the gospel.

Jesus is not only speaking to Apostles and preachers but to all those that are following Him and Laboring for Him.

- He wants all of us to boldly proclaim the gospel wherever we go.
- He does not want us to be arrogant but bold.

We're not called to be the silent majority but we are called to speak to people about the gospel of Jesus Christ.

America needs those to hear the call to boldly preach the gospel

- **Francis Asbury:** In 1771, at a gathering of Methodist ministers, John Wesley asked, "Our brethren in America call aloud for help. Who are willing to go over and help them?" Francis Asbury volunteered.
- When he became superintendent in 1784, there were 83 traveling preachers and less than 15,000 Methodists. When he died on March 31, 1816, there were 212,000 Methodists, 2,000 local preachers, and 700 circuit riders

I am asking everyone here this morning, Our brethren in America call aloud for help?

✠ Who will go out and help us?

V28 read-slow;

Jesus is addressing the subject of fear. What are we afraid of?

Remember Jesus said earlier beware of men. Even though we are to beware of men Jesus is telling us we should not fear them.

✠ One of the things that caused King Saul's downfall was that he feared men.

Peter failed and denied Jesus because he feared man.

MLK: did not fear man.

When we fear men it really messes things up for us. It causes us not to think clearly and it causes us to make so really bad decisions.

And when we have fear the devil has a field day messing with us.

✠ Proverbs tells us the fear of man is a snare!

When I first came out here to do this church plant I would have told anyone who asked me that I am not afraid of any man!

✠ But during this time God did show me that I did have a fear of man, not in the sense that I thought they would kill me or beat me up, but I was afraid of what they thought about me.

As we go out and minister in the name of Jesus and we can't go out with a spirit of fear.

✠ If we are fearful while we are trying to minister we will not bring forth fruit.

God has constantly wanted people to go out and minister without any fear.

Moses: when God called Moses, Moses claimed he could not speak.

✠ God said I will be with your mouth.

Joshua and the promise land: When God sent the children of Israel into the promise land under the leadership of Joshua, He gave the same command of do not fear.

- **Joshua 1:9** have I not commanded you? Be strong and of good courage; do not be afraid, nor dismayed, for the Lord your God is with you wherever you go.

Jeremiah: when God called Jeremiah, he said, behold I cannot speak I am but a youth.

✠ But God said, do not say that I am a youth, for you shall go to all to whom I send you, and whatever I command you, you shall speak.

✠ Do not be afraid of their faces. For I am with you to deliver you, says the Lord.

Timothy: it also seems like young Timothy was having some fear also, so Paul said to him

✠ For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of love and power and of a sound mind.

The worse that man can do to us is kill our body. But Jesus assures us that they cannot touch our soul.

The bible says to be absent from the body is to be present with the Lord.

✠ So should man kill our body they will only be delivering us to the presence of the Lord. Amen!

Spurgeon: There is no cure for the fear of man like the fear of God.”

Jesus wants His servants to be fearless and not fearful. He will take care of us and nothing will happen to us apart from our Father’s will.

When God has got our back there is no reason to fear. Amen!

Our true home is in heaven with God. Amen!

- So if our true home is with God in heaven what do we care if we get killed for serving Jesus. Amen!

Jesus has told us He is going to prepare a place for us and He is coming back to get us.

V29-31 read-slow;

Jesus is telling us here we need to trust our Father with our lives.

Father’s will: Many times we think that God is only concerned with the big situations of the world.

- But Jesus is showing us here that God truly cares for all His servants. Amen!

We have to take notice to the fact that Jesus says nothing will happen to us apart from your Father’s will.

- It’s not just anybody that is watching out for us but, it’s our Father in heaven who is watching out for us.

And Jesus wants us to understand that it is our Father in heaven that is watching over us and nothing can happen to us apart from His will.

Sparrows were so insignificant that in those days only the very poor people used them for food.

If our Father in heaven is involved in making decisions about insignificant birds, obviously He is very concerned with what is taking place in our lives. Amen!

To get even more personal Jesus tells us that our Father knows how many hairs we have.

- I can say that I am a blessing to my Father in heaven because I am cutting down on His work load by losing my hair.

Valuable to our Father: the point Jesus is making is that we are very valuable to our Father and we need to trust Him with our lives.

Psalm 139:1-6 O, Lord, You have searched me and known me. You know my sitting down and my rising up; You understand my thought afar off. You comprehend my path and my lying down, and are acquainted with all my ways. For there is not a word on my tongue, but behold, O, Lord, You know it altogether, You have hedged me behind and before, and laid Your hand upon me. And such knowledge is too wonderful for me; it is high I cannot attain it.

- **V16-18** Your eyes saw my substance, being yet unformed. And in Your book they all were written, the days fashioned for me, when as yet there were none of them.
- How precious also are Your thoughts to me, O God! How great is the sum of them! If I should count them, they would be more in number than the sand; when I awake, I am still with You.

This Psalm is telling us that God knows every single thing there is to know about us.

- He knows all of the thoughts we will ever have and He knows every word we will ever speak. He tells us His thoughts toward us are innumerable.
- And He knows exactly how many days we will have to live.

It ought to bless our soul that God knows all that about us. That demonstrates someone that totally cares about us.

- David uses the word You or Yours 24x just in the first 18 verses.
- And each of the 24x he uses that word it is indicating God speaking about us.

We need to have total confidence and trust in God's care for us. Amen!

Jesus: when Jesus was on earth and people came against Him to try and kill no one could do it until it was His time.

The same is true for us no one can take us out until it is our time!

V32-33: read-slow; reality of rejection. We need to be courageous.

We have come to one of the really tough saying by Jesus, but there is also a blessing with in it as well.

Before we look at the negative of what is being said here I want to briefly look at the positive.

Confess us: As we go about our life telling people about Jesus there is going to come a day when we are going to stand before Him and He is going to confess us.

- One day I am going to stand before Jesus and He is going to say, Father, here is Bob Hartmann He confessed Me before men and now I am confessing him before You. Amen!

To think that one day I am going to stand before Jesus and He is going to look at me and then confess my name before His Father in heaven just blows me away!

And that same thing is true for each and every one of us that confess Jesus before men.

✠ If you live a life that is faithful to Jesus one day He will confess you before His Father in heaven.

✠ Paul tells us in Romans not to be ashamed of the gospel of Christ.

Negative: Now with that same visual in mind there is going to come a day when some people are going to stand before Jesus and He is going to say, Father this one did not confess Me before men, so I can't confess them before You!

Now please understand Jesus is not speaking about a one time denial like Peter did.

- All of us at one time or another and in some way denied Jesus before people.

Confess means to agree with. IN other words we are living a life that agrees with what Jesus has said.

- We can't claim to be Christians and not live the way the bible says to live.
- We need to be reading the bible and live the way the bible says.

Jesus is speaking about a habitual and continual denial of Jesus.

- These are people that may deny Jesus with their words or their actions.
- Its one thing to confess Jesus but quite another to live for Jesus.

Newark bus terminal: As I witness for Jesus I meet so many people that profess Jesus to be their Savior. Yet their lives show no indication that they are truly following Jesus.

- Just last week I was at the Newark and I ended up speaking with a woman and she said she was saved but as I spoke with her **she realized** she did not know Him.

Early church: i mentioned last week that there were 10 major persecution of the early church by the Roman Emperors.

- In order for the Roman Empire to find out who was Christians or not they would make the citizens come and say Caesar is Lord.
- Now when the true Christians would be called they would not confess Caesar as Lord but they would say Jesus is Lord.
- And all of us here this morning that name the name of Christ are all a result of those that would openly confess Jesus as Lord!

Pistol Pete Story: girl who would not deny Jesus.

V34-36 read-slow;

Jesus is now assuring the apostles that the message they are going to preach will cause division.

- Jesus is quoting from the OT book of Micah when He is speaking about our own family members coming against us for following Him.

Figure of speech: Once again Jesus is using a figure of speech in order to assure His followers that they will definitely cause division for following Him.

Actually Jesus gives us two examples of where the division will come from.

- First He says there will be division in our families.
- Second it will cause division within our selves.

The bible is very clear that Jesus the Messiah is called the Prince of Peace. And there are many prophecies that speak about Him the Messiah coming and establishing peace on the earth.

- In fact in the gospel of Luke the multitude of angels said, Glory to God in the highest and on earth peace goodwill toward men.

We also know that once we receive Jesus as our Savior the bible says we now have peace with God.

- **Romans 5:1** Therefore having been justified by faith we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.

We have peace with God because our sin debt has been canceled through Jesus death on the cross.

- We are no longer separated from God because of our sin.

And once we have peace with God we will have the peace of God.

- Paul tells us it is the peace that surpasses all understanding.
- And Jesus said He gives us peace but not as the world gives us. And He said He will leave His peace with us.

Testimony: I can still remember the day I knelt down in my basement and received Jesus as My savior. I had finally come to understand that all my sin had been taken away and paid for by Jesus.

- And I can sloe distinctly remember feeling the peace of God.
- The moment I knelt down and received Jesus it felt like a literal weight was taken off my back. And I have never been the same since.
- When the Holy Spirit comes into your life He totally changes it.

One of the things that really speak to those that do not know Jesus is when they see the peace we have even when we go through difficult trials.

So many people in the world are looking for peace. And unfortunately they are looking to everything and anything in order to get peace.

- Yet the only way we can truly experience peace if from the Prince of peace.
Amen

The problem is though because we live in a fallen world not everyone is going to like or receive the message of Jesus so when we go and tell them about Jesus it is going to cause division!

- And unfortunately the division often comes from the ones we love the most.

Many Christians have the hardest time in their new life with Jesus from their families.

I have had people 2 people tell me they won't fully commit to Jesus because of what might happen in their family.

These are people that have counted the cost and have come to the conclusion that Jesus is not worth the division that might take place in their family.

- Now they have fallen into the category of those that deny Jesus before men.

V37-39 read-slow;

We see here that this message by Jesus is not getting any easier.

Taking up your cross was a subject that the Apostles were very familiar with.

- They perfectly understood what Jesus is speaking about here.
- They understood that taking up your cross means death to self.

A.W. Tozer used to say, you knew one thing about a man that was carrying a cross out of the city, you knew he wasn't coming back again.

Not only does the gospel message bring division into our families but it also brings division into our own lives.

Once we receive Jesus as our Savior were not supposed to live for ourselves anymore.

- But we are called to live for Jesus and Him alone!

This causes division in our own lives because we still want to live for ourselves

Difficult: We may look at this and wonder why is Jesus making it so difficult to follow and serve Him?

- It's like we think the Godhead was up in heaven and saying, now how can we make it as difficult as possible for people to follow us?
- And then Jesus said I got it! Tell people they need to take up their cross and follow Me.

Please understand! Jesus wouldn't tell us to do something if it wasn't the best thing for us! Amen!

When Jesus gives us this profound truth of taking up our cross and following Him, He is telling us this is the best way to live life. Amen!

The world tells us to live for ourselves and Jesus says to die to ourselves. They both can't be right.

People who live for themselves destroy all lives around them.

- People who die to self bless all lives around them.

I can honestly say that the darkest times in my Christian life has been when I was focusing on myself.

- If we spend time focusing on ourselves and our circumstances it will take us into a very dark place.

Glory to God: In order for us to bring the most glory to God we can and to live the abundant life Jesus told us about we must lose our lives for His sake. Amen!

- It's very difficult to live lives that bring glory to God when we are living for our selves!

The only way we truly find our life is by losing it.

Before we were saved we were living life for ourselves and that is not the life we were created for.

Even after we get saved and we still try and live life our way we are still not living the life we were created to live.

The only way we can live the life we were created to live is by losing this life and living totally and completely for Jesus. Amen!

- When we live for Jesus we will finally be living the life we were created for.

All I ever wanted in life was a family and to experience love:

- I knew there was a picture of love out there but I never experienced it.
- And I would have never experienced it without Jesus

All I can say is that since I have received Jesus and have tried to lose my life for His sake I have a great family and I have experienced love like I knew was out there somewhere.

When I met Jenn my heart went to a place it had never gone before.

- Then when Caleb came into our life I never thought the type of love I have for him was even possible.
- Jenn and I are praying for more children. And I tell the Lord that should He give us another child my heart would utterly burst with the love that I would feel.

The bible tells us that the love of God has been poured out in our hearts through the Holy Spirit that was given to us.

- So as Christians we are going to receive love when we become children of God.

But until we start to lose our lives as Jesus said here we will never, ever experience the life we were created to live.

Diamond and glorified: think of it this way: when God created each and every one of us we were like a perfect diamond. But when we came into this sinful world it messed up that original diamond.

- Inside of the body that we live in is the glorified person God has redeemed.
- And each time we die to self that glorified person is coming to light. Amen!

Jesus and Paul: As we read the NT the two people that make the greatest impression on us is Jesus and the Apostle Paul.

- These are both men that lost their lives and took up their cross and carried them
- And if we have any desire to be like these two we must take up our cross and lose our lives. Amen!

Columbine: Let me wrap this section up with an example that has taken place about a decade ago.

Rachael Scott and Cassie Bernall: On 20 April 1999 Richard Castaldo was sat eating lunch with Rachel outside the library by the parking lot. They saw Harris and Klebold approaching. Without warning, the two young men opened fire severing Richard's spine and shooting Rachel twice in her legs and once in her torso. It was 11.19am.

As Richard lay stunned and Rachel attempted to crawl to safety, the shooters began to walk away, only to return seconds later. At that point, Harris reportedly grabbed Rachel by the hair, held her head up and asked her the question "Do you believe in God?"

"You know I do," replied Rachel.

"Then go be with Him," responded Harris before shooting her in the head.

One entry in her journal says, "**He gave His life for me, I will give my life for Him**"

Eric Harris slapped the table under which Cassie Bernall was hiding and shouted “Peek-a-boo!” He pointed the gun at her head and asked, “Do you believe in God?”

She said, “Yes.”

He laughed, pulled the trigger and blasted her into eternity. She probably never heard his next question “Why?”

After the shooting Cassie’s parents found a book she had been reading called “Discipleship: Living for Christ in the Daily Grind”. In one chapter Cassie had underlined a solitary sentence: “**All of us should live life so as to be able to face eternity at any time**”

V40-42 read-slow;

Jesus is now ending this sermon on a positive note.

Jesus introduced this sermon by telling us the Harvest is plentiful and the laborers are few.

- And He has told us very clearly that serving Him will be a very difficult and dangerous act but the harvest is truly plentiful because we see here some will receive us. Amen!
- And the added bonus there will be rewards. Amen!

As we go out and labor for Jesus the thing that ought to keep us from getting discouraged is that some will believe.

Galatians 6:9 and let us not grow weary in doing good, for in due season we shall reap, if we do not lose heart.

Jesus identifies with us: I love the fact that Jesus is identifying Himself with us here.

- When we go out and minister and people receive us is as if they are receiving Jesus Himself. Amen!

Equal rewards: Jesus is also telling us there will be equality in rewards.

- Not all are sent and if you are not sent but you receive one who is sent you will receive the same reward.

Here at CCRC: we help support 3 foreign missionaries. 2 in India and 1 in Nepal. Locally we help support the pregnancy care center and other things that come up.

Every once in a while we get letters from our missionaries telling us about all they are doing and about how many people they are leading to the Lord.

- Even though not all of you are sent out you will receive a reward for the work they are doing because you are helping to support them through your tithes and offerings.

Nurse story: couldn't go on mission field but worked to support 3 nurses on mission field.

Maybe some of you can't go around the world but as you give of your tithes and offerings you can support the work that goes on here and around the world, and you will receive a reward for doing so.

Pregnancy care center: Jenn and I really have a heart for the Pregnancy care center but we are unable to serve over there now.

- So what we do is collect cans and bottles and recycle them and give them the money we get from it.

One of the things that stand out in this hard message by Jesus is that our Father in heaven is truly concerned with what is going on in our life and He is keenly aware of even the simplest act we can do.

✠ Whenever you and I do something so small like give a cup of cold water our Father in heaven is aware of it and He remembers it and He will reward us for it.

✠ In other words our Father remembers every thing we do and we receive rewards for it.

So are we afraid to go to heaven?

Most people live like this earth is everything and heaven is an after thought.

- But it is the opposite, the earth is the after thought and heaven is everything.

As Christians we have to remember this is not our home. Once we leave this earth things are only going to get better for us. Amen!

The bible says we have been created by Jesus and for Jesus and once we die we will finally be with Jesus. Amen!

Have you ever gone on a trip and no matter how good the trip is you still long to go home.

- Well this time on earth is merely a long trip and our hearts should yearn to be home with our God in heaven!

The entire theme from Genesis to Revelation is Jesus coming to save us and bring us to heaven.

Until God calls us home He wants us to lose our lives and live in utter abandon for Him.
Amen!!

Let's pray.

Communion!