

Matthew 10:17-23

When in the Midst of Wolves

- I. Be Aware 17-18
- II. Be Calm 19-20
- III. Be Patient 21-22
- IV. Be Mobile 23

INTRO –

Message 1: Nicene Creed – Alexander & Athanasius (ref – Trial and Triumph pp. 31-34)

Message 2: Col 1:24-29

- Suffering what is lacking in Christ's afflictions
- World hated him, persecuted Him, they will persecute us
- Jn 15:18-21 "If the world hates you, know that it has hated me before it hated you.¹⁹ If you were of the world, the world would love you as its own; but because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you. ²⁰Remember the word that I said to you: 'A servant is not greater than his master.' If they persecuted me, they will also persecute you. If they kept my word, they will also keep yours.²¹ But all these things they will do to you on account of my name, because they do not know him who sent me.
 - It's "for His names sake"
- Acts 9:1-5

Big Idea – How to handle the trials of service

Distinctive - Ready

Prop – 4 necessary actions for servants of Christ

READ – 16-23

Transition to broader teaching for disciples. We know because:

- No record of persecution on first trip
- V. 18 – Gentiles, but v. 5
- V. 23 – apocalyptic

I. Be Aware 17-18

A. Of religious persecution

- Acts 5:40
- Acts 22:19
- 2 Co 11:23-4 - Are they servants of Christ? I am a better one—I am talking like a madman—with far greater labors, far more imprisonments, with countless beatings, and often near death. ²⁴Five times I received at the hands of the Jews the forty lashes less one.

B. Of governmental persecution

- Acts 12:1-5
- Acts 16:16-24
- Acts 20:22-24

Suffer for His sake – v. 18

18b – persecution furthers the gospel

So, be aware, and:

II. Be Calm 19-20

A. Know your role

- Be dependent
 - Phil 4:6-7
- Be the mouthpiece
 - 2 Co 5:18-20 - All this is from God, who through Christ reconciled us to himself and gave us the ministry of reconciliation; 19 that is, in Christ God was reconciling[a] the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting to us the message of reconciliation. 20 Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, God making his appeal through us. We implore you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God.

B. Know God's Control

- Mk 13:11 - And when they bring you to trial and deliver you over, do not be anxious beforehand what you are to say, but say whatever is given you in that hour, for it is not you who speak, but the Holy Spirit.
- Lk 21:11-15

In serving Christ, be aware, be calm, know your role and God's control.

Distinctive – Ready

Portrait - Russ

Recent political play

Athanasius

III. Be Patient 21-22 (be hated)

A. Through Family persecution

- 10:35-6
- News story of teen woman fleeing family
- Disappearance of believers in Asia
- Open Doors

B. For Personal Redemption – 22

- Both sides – we endure, He enables it
- 1 Pet 1:3-9
- Jn 10:28-9 - I give them eternal life, and they will never perish, and no one will snatch them out of my hand. 29 My Father, who has given them to

me,[a] is greater than all, and no one is able to snatch them out of the Father's hand.

- Jude 1, 20-21, 24

- Phil 1:6 - And I am sure of this, that he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ.

In service to Christ – be aware, be calm, be patient, for your redemption draws near.

IV. Be Mobile – 23

A. Fleeing persecution

- Don't seek to be a martyr

- 1 Ki 19:1-4, 9

- Difficulty of service
- Potential of wrong perspective or motive
- Don't run in fear

- Acts 17:10 – fleeing Thessalonica - The brothers[a] immediately sent Paul and Silas away by night to Berea, and when they arrived they went into the Jewish synagogue.

B. Expecting redemption/consummation

- 24:30; 25:31; 26:64

- Acts – persecution of Xns was immediate,
- Acts 1 “go to all” to 8 Christians fled
- “have gone through” - accomplished
- Israel under Roman rule
- By 44 AD Jews were scattering
- Principle – always more to reach

- Titus 2:11-15

- 1 Pet 4:12-17, 19

Conclusion:

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Early church – it took one to stand

Today – it still takes individual choice to stand

Distinctive – Ready

Portrait - Alvyn

Michael Card recounts the story of a Masai warrior who demonstrated inspiring faith and courage in his quest to see his own people come to Christ. His name is simply Joseph, the man who stepped into the public square and changed his community through the word of Christ. One day Joseph, who was walking along one of these hot, dirty African roads, met someone who shared the gospel of Jesus Christ with him. Then and there he accepted Jesus as his Lord and Savior. The power of the Spirit began transforming his life; he was filled with such excitement

and joy that the first thing he wanted to do was return to his own village and share that same Good News with the members of his local tribe.

Joseph began going from door-to-door, telling everyone he met about the Cross of Jesus and the salvation it offered, expecting to see their faces light up the way his had. To his amazement the villagers not only didn't care, they became violent. The men of the village seized him and held him to the ground while the women beat him with strands of barbed wire. He was dragged from the village and left to die alone in the bush.

Joseph somehow managed to crawl to a waterhole, and there, after days of passing in and out of consciousness, found the strength to get up. He wondered about the hostile reception he had received from people he had known all his life. He decided he must have left something out or told the story of Jesus incorrectly. After rehearsing the message he had first heard, he decided to go back and share his faith once more.

Joseph limped into the circle of huts and began to proclaim Jesus. "He died for you, so that you might find forgiveness and come to know the living God," he pleaded. Again he was grabbed by the men of the village and held while the women beat him, reopening wounds that had just begun to heal. Once more they dragged him unconscious from the village and left him to die.

To have survived the first beating was truly remarkable. To live through the second was a miracle. Again, days later, Joseph awoke in the wilderness, bruised, scarred—and determined to go back.

He returned to the small village and this time, they attacked him before he had a chance to open his mouth. As they flogged him for the third and probably the last time, he again spoke to them of Jesus Christ, the Lord. Before he passed out, the last thing he saw was that the women who were beating him began to weep.

This time he awoke in his own bed. The ones who had so severely beaten him were now trying to save his life and nurse him back to health. The entire village had come to Christ.¹

Footnotes:

1 Michael Card, "Wounded in the House of a Friend," *Virtue* (March/April, 1991), quoted in John Piper, *Let the Nations Be Glad!* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2003), 93-94.