

Pentecost 4 6/21/2026
Matthew 10:5a, 21-33 7A

APPOINTED GOSPEL READING, THE 10TH CHAPTER OF MATTHEW'S GOSPEL

Any endeavor in earthly life is loaded with a host of **expectations**. For example, you order a pepperoni pizza, you expect to get ... a pepperoni pizza, right? You have a child, and you expect that child to be a bouncing, healthy baby. You graduate from high school and now, now, you can leave the nest you've known for 18-years and go live your life. You get married, and expect every day to be a most marvelous journey on the yellow-brick road, not one pothole in sight. You retire, and you expect days of ease, and joy, perfect health, without one financial concern. I would contend, My Friends, that much of life is shaped, defined, by expectations.

But, **to be perfectly honest**, many of our expectation are not realistic. You order a pepperoni pizza, something goes wrong, and you get an ... anchovy pizza. Life can be much worse than that. That bouncy baby boy, your pride and joy, that future All-American fullback, is born with Down's Syndrome. You leave the nest that you have known for 18-years, and the world turns out to be a scary place, and having your feet under mom and dad's table turned out not to be so bad after all. The day of your marriage, your spouse promised to love you "for better, for worse." Now, they don't, and your marriage has turned from the blessing God wanted and intended it to be into a curse. Infirmary has made your retirement a daily challenge, or an emotional roller coaster of being the care giver for your infirm spouse.

In our lesson this morning, Jesus is teaching His disciples – us -- about **expectations**. He is spelling out what they should expect as they follow Him on this on this side of heaven.

Their expectations were probably quite high. Look back to what had happened in our Gospel readings these past Sundays. He calls Matthew the tax collector and the Twelve. They see Him heal disease and every affliction (cf. 9:35). He sends them out *and gave them authority over unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to heal every disease and every affliction (10:1)*. Wow! Cool! This is incredible. This is exciting.

But Jesus just seems take like a bucket of ice water and douses their expectations. Yes, it is joyous and peaceful to follow Jesus, but following Jesus in this world means that you will have **trouble**. Look at the Savior's words,

“Brother will deliver brother over to death, and the father his child, and children will rise against parents and have them put to death, and you will be hated by all from my name's sake” (v. 21-22).

Talk about your failed expectations. How's that for an evangelism, outreach verse? Maybe we should print that on the cover of our bulletin every Sunday. Come join us here at Concordia {Zion}, where you will be hated by all.

Those words make us uncomfortable. And I'll tell you why: Jesus tells us that we are not of this world (Jn 17:14). But, we like it here. In fact, a little too much, to the point that we find ourselves loving the things of this world more than we love Jesus. The praise of men means more to us than the praise from God. So, we go along – we go along to get along with a world dead in sin. And our expectation is that we should feel right at home, here in this vale of tears.

I happened upon a most interesting question this past week: Do Christians still need to keep the 10 Commandments? Well, what say you, Lutheran? What say you baptized and redeemed child of God?

Fear God, well kind of, sort of, but our fear of men, what they think of us, is much **greater** than our fear of God.

We are to hold God's Word sacred and gladly hear it and learn it, but I'm just so busy, busy, busy with so many earthly attractions and activities that we have no time to spend in God's Word.

Honor your mother and father? Come on, who drives the speed limit, Child of God?

We're let to let the sun go down on our anger, but we are angry. We even think we have a right to be angry at our neighbor, and we just can't wait for the day he/she gets theirs.

We are to lead a sexually pure and decent life in what we say and do, but have we grown immune to all the perversity around us? You're watching a movie or even tv show and there is nudity or adultery and what is your reaction? Are you shocked? Outraged? Or, is it just oh hum, that's just the way it is, just like Sodom and Gomorrah.

We are to speak well of our neighbor and explain everything in the kindest way, but gossip is just too much fun, isn't it?

So I ask you again: Do Christians still need to keep the 10 Commandments? You don't have to listen to me. Listen to Jesus, who says,

"If you love Me, you will keep My commandments...Whoever has My Commandments and keeps them it is who loves Me" (Jn 14:15, 21).

Our sin shows how comfortable we are in the world. And, the last thing want is to be hated, rejected.

Yet, rejection, hatred, by this world should not surprise us, My Friends in Christ. Look at the words of Jesus,

“A disciple is not above his teacher, nor a servant above his master. It is enough for the disciple to be like his teacher, and the servant like his master. If they have called the master of the house Beelzebul, how much more will they malign those of his household” (vv. 24-25).

He came to His own, and His own people did not receive Him (Jn1:11).

Our Master’s brothers and sisters thought he was crazy, so they wanted to lock him in the attic to keep from embarrassing them. The people wanted to throw Him off a cliff to kill Him. Finally, they shouted, “Crucify Him,” because they would rather see a murderer go free than a carpenter from Nazareth.

Jesus comes to call God’s people back to Himself, to bring healing and hope, and to reveal God in truth. And what happens? They kill Him for it. What Good News His death on that cross means us, My Friends. It means we are forgiven for all the times we feared men more than God, all the times we loved the things of this world more than Jesus, all the times we put what we wanted before what God wanted. His blood has washed and cleansed us from all of our sin.

“A disciple is not above his teacher, nor a servant above his master” (10:24). Baptized and living in Christ, we should expect that following Jesus means carrying a cross, just as He did.

But that is not all we should expect. We also know we will be expect saved. *“The one who endures to the end will be saved” (v. 22).* That is Jesus’ promise to you. Like Jesus, who endured to the point of death we endure hatred, rejection, as we follow Him faithfully (cf. He 12:1-3). Our faithfully following Jesus leads to heaven, where God will wipe all the tears from our eyes and we will rest from all of our earthly struggles in the bosom of Jesus.

And that means today, the resurrection and salvation that are ours in the Savior means we can follow Jesus **without** fear of men, or their words, or what they may do to us.

Jesus sent His disciples into the world, a world in which they would not be at home, to serve others. My Friends, He sends us to do the same. As you know – many of you all-too-well – our neck of the woods got hit by almost tornado-force winds. And that meant damage – trees, homes, property. And what did we do? We helped our neighbors – cut down trees, remove branches, boarded up broken homes, and a whole host of such things, because when we do that, we are being Christ to our neighbor.

And, as we do that, we can share with them the promise of salvation in the death of resurrection of Jesus, that removes **all** fear.