

Copyright © Two Journeys Ministry

Andrew M. Davis

Sermon Notes

www.twojourneys.org

Please use in accordance with the copyright policy found at twojourneys.org

Banishing Fear With Eternal Perspective

Matthew 10:26-33

I. Perspective Conquers Fear

A. Florence Italy, 1400's... "Vanishing Point" discovered... adds perspective and realism to drawing

B. Albrecht Durer, German draftsman and artist

Illus. Durer a great friend of the German Reformation; said that listening to Martin Luther preach banished his fears and anxieties

This is precisely what Christ is seeking to do for the Messengers of His Kingdom: Banish Fear By Perspective... Eternal Perspective

C. The Instinct to Fear

1. Biologists and Psychologists will tell you that fear and the drive to survive are essential to being alive
2. Based in self-preservation common to all thinking creatures
3. Fear anticipates dangers and seeks to protect life

Fear of loss: loss of life, liberty, property... loss of loved ones, reputation, position,

Fear connects to anything we value in this world... and fear can paralyze the Gospel Messenger

4. BUT fear is the enemy of the Gospel advance!!
5. Here in this text, Christ seems to believe that fear can be banished by proper perspective... He seeks to teach us and reason with us until fear is gone
6. Gospel messengers can banish their fear by eternal perspective

Seeing their own lives in light of eternity

Seeing their enemies and persecutors in light of eternity

Seeing their suffering in light of eternity

Seeing all success and failure, all advances and retreats in light of eternity

Christ seeks to lift your eyes off the suffering intrinsic to being a Gospel Messenger

Christ seeks to give you eternal perspective, so the Kingdom can continue to grow

D. Context

1. Matthew's Gospel: A King and His Kingdom
2. Sermon on the Mount: Kingdom Life... a life under the rule of the King
3. Miracles: Kingdom Power... the authority of the King over every form of evil clearly demonstrated
4. Kingdom: "Already, Not Yet"

Already:

Matthew 4:17 From that time on Jesus began to preach, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is near."

Matthew 12:28 But if I drive out demons by the Spirit of God, then the kingdom of God has come upon you.

Not yet:

Matthew 6:9-10 "Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.

5. Mission: People harassed and helpless like sheep without a shepherd... this is the context of the advancing Kingdom of Heaven

Matthew 9:36-38 When he saw the crowds, he had compassion on them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. 37 Then he said to his disciples, "The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few. 38 Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field."

Christ's response to a lost a dying world... He turns to His disciples and challenges them to by His Gospel Messengers... the message of the Kingdom of Heaven is the only hope the helpless sheep have

BUT the life of the Gospel Messenger is extremely dangerous

6. Instructions to the Twelve: Danger Ahead

vs. 14 If anyone will not welcome you or listen to your words, shake the dust off your feet when you leave that home or town.

vs. 16 I am sending you out like sheep among wolves. Therefore be as shrewd as snakes and as innocent as doves.

"Be on your guard against men; they will hand you over to the local councils and flog you in their synagogues. 18 On my account you will be brought before governors and kings as witnesses to them and to the Gentiles.

21 "Brother will betray brother to death, and a father his child; children will rebel against their parents and have them put to death. 22 All men will hate you because of me, but he who stands firm to the end will be saved. 23 When you are persecuted in one place, flee to another.

Clear warning: to be a Gospel Messenger will bring you into grave danger and even death... some of the harshest circumstances imaginable will occur

Betrayal by your own brother or father or children!! Worldwide rejection and hatred!! Fleeing from one city to the next!!

All of this because of a Christ-hating world that would rather kill the messenger than believe the truth of the message

7. Natural response: FEAR FEAR FEAR!!

And fear will paralyze the gospel advance

In verses 26-33 he seeks to give His disciples an eternal perspective that will banish fear and make them fruitful!

II. Christ Banishes Fear

A. Fear Rooted in Unbelief

B. Fear Paralyzes Kingdom Messenger, Hinders Kingdom Advance

1. Christ intends to send us into harms way

2. That's where the battle for people's souls is raging

3. Fear causes us to go AWOL... to choose a lifestyle of comfort and ease when we should be out fighting for the Lord

Illus. Piper's statements on concern for safety... inner city ministry

Matthew 16:24-25 Then Jesus said to his disciples, "If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. 25 For whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for me will find it.

C. Christ Fights Against Fear Constantly

vs. 26 Do not be afraid of them.

vs. 28 Do not be afraid of those who kill the body, but cannot kill the soul.

vs. 31 "So don't be afraid."

John 14:27 Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid.

D. Christ's Tactic: Faith-filled Reasoning

1. Already used this approach in the Sermon on the Mount with anxiety

Matthew 6:25-27 Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or drink; or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more important than food, and the body more important than clothes? Look at the birds of the air; they do not sow or reap or store away in barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not much more valuable than they? 27 Who of you by worrying can add a single hour to his life?

- a. God cares for the birds and the flowers
- b. you are worth more than birds and flowers
- c. God will take care of you
- d. also, worrying cannot add anything to your life... nothing positive happens through worry
- e. conclusion: mindset on the Kingdom

Matthew 6:33 But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.

Worry gets your mind off the Kingdom of God... that's why it must be banished

Christ's strategy is faith-filled reasoning!! He reasons on the basis of faith until our anxiety is gone

He does the same thing here with fear of evangelism

Are you afraid to suffer for the Gospel? Afraid to venture forth in witness and mission for Christ? Afraid of what your friends, neighbors, relatives, and fellow Americans will think of you if you open your mouth and testify to Christ? Then here is Christ's remedy for your crippling fear! He gives you eternal perspective on

Persecutors and their secrets... the Gospel message itself... the limitations of human enemies... the awesome power and authority of God Almighty... and Judgment Day motivations of rewards and punishments

Bottom Line: Do not fear temporary, earthly opposition... rather fear God and seek to please Him.

D. Paradoxes in Matthew 10

1. Selfless courage commanded
2. Self-preservation in view

vs. 22-23 All men will hate you because of me, but he who stands firm to the end will be saved. When you are persecuted in one place, flee to another.

"Stand firm" but also "flee"?? Stand firm in your heart, but flee for your body

III. Eternal Perspective Banishes Fear

Eternal perspective = 1) There is a God who rules over heaven and earth

- 2) There will be a Judgment Day in which all human hearts will be revealed
- 3) There is for every human an eternity to be spent in either heaven or hell
- 4) The Gospel of the Kingdom of Jesus Christ is the only hope this world has
- 5) Earthly troubles and concerns are puny compared to these things

A. Eternity Exposes Secrets (vs. 26)

B. Eternity Validates Christ's Words (vs. 27)

C. Eternity Reveals Human Weakness (vs. 28)

D. Eternity Demonstrates God's Absolute Power (vs. 29-31)

E. Eternity Displays Rewards and Punishments (vs. 32-33)

A. Eternity Exposes Secrets (vs. 26)

vs. 26 "So do not be afraid of them. There is nothing concealed that will not be disclosed, or hidden that will not be made known."

1. "Therefore" = because persecution is inevitable, I will give you some instructions to help you
2. "Do not be afraid"
 - a. fear can be controlled... you are not the slave and fear the master
 - b. some say "I can't help how I feel!!" Jesus says "Yes you can, and you must!!"
3. "Of them" = of human persecutors

whether government leaders who hunt you down, or neighbors who mock you, or of family members who turn you in

Proverbs 29:25 Fear of man will prove to be a snare, but whoever trusts in the LORD is kept safe.

Psalm 56:11 "...in God I trust; I will not be afraid. What can man do to me?"

Isaiah 2:22 Stop regarding man, who has but a breath in his nostrils. Of what account is he?

Very difficult to push off fear of human persecutors... think of the midnight Gestapo raids in Nazi Germany; or of prisoners of war in Vietnam; or of Chinese house church pastors tortured day after day by their guards. King David was so afraid of being hunted down by men that he chose a plague as his punishment when he took the sinful census

But yet, Christ commands that we see these persecutors in an eternal perspective

4. Eternal perspective: enemies secrets will be revealed and exposed
 - a. persecutors make secret plots to snare messengers of the Gospel
 - b. their true motives are also concealed... malice toward God, hatred of the holiness of the Christian's life

5. All sinners seek to CONCEAL their sin... Judgment Day will reveal all secrets
 - a. Adam and Eve concealed themselves behind bushes and with fig leaves
 - b. Cain concealed the dead body of his brother Abel in the ground
 - c. the wicked people of Noah's era had only wicked thoughts in their hearts all the time... concealing their true nature
 - d. Judgment Day is the time for all secrets to be revealed

Everything you do in secret, someday will be pulled out into full light to be seen by God Himself with you present... this is the essence of Judgment Day

Revelation 20:12 And I saw the dead, great and small, standing before the throne, and books were opened. Another book was opened, which is the book of life. The dead were judged according to what they had done as recorded in the books.

Christians will not have to undergo wrath and punishment for their evil deeds, but they will have to give an account to God for everything

2 Corinthians 5:10 For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive what is due him for the things done while in the body, whether good or bad.

B. Eternity Validates Christ's Words (vs. 27)

vs. 27 What I tell you in the dark, speak in the daylight; what is whispered in your ear, proclaim from the roofs.

1. Persecutors keep their malice and their plots secret
2. Gospel Messengers MUST OPENLY PROCLAIM the Gospel... the words of Christ
3. This Gospel is meant for all ears to hear... including kings and persecutors
4. Christ spoke His words openly for all to hear... no secret doctrines
5. Speak my words boldly!!!

Matthew 24:14 This gospel of the Kingdom will be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come.

Isaiah 40:9 You who bring good tidings to Zion, go up on a high mountain. You who bring good tidings to Jerusalem, lift up your voice with a shout, lift it up, do not be afraid; say to the towns of Judah, "Here is your God!"

Eternity will reveal the power of Christ's words... people will go to heaven forever simply because they heard Christ's words and believed them!

Eternity will reveal Christ's words to be more lasting than the earth itself

Matthew 24:35 Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will never pass away.

C. Eternity Reveals Human Weakness (vs. 28)

vs. 28 Do not be afraid of those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul.

1. These persecutors look so powerful!!
2. If they are governmental rulers, they have tanks, helicopter gunships, and missiles
3. They also have intimidating positions of authority, sitting in tribunal over you
4. But all they can do is make your earthly life miserable, or at most kill your body

Illus. Polycarp

"I will cause you to be consumed by fire, unless you repent." But Polycarp said, "You threaten a fire which burns for an hour, and after a little is quenched; for you know not the fire of the future judgment and of the eternal punishment which is reserved for the impious. But why do you delay? Do what you will."

5. To Jesus, physical death was a small thing!!! You're already under a physical death penalty anyway

Hebrews 9:27 "...man is destined to die once, and after that to face judgment,"

6. As a Christian, you've already "died" to the world

Colossians 3:3 For you died, and your life is now hidden with Christ in God.

Galatians 2:20 I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.

To be a Christian means to pass a death sentence on your life here on earth... the only reason you're still alive is to serve God's purpose in advancing the Kingdom

7. Joyful good news!!! No power on earth can steal your true treasure, your soul!!

D. Eternity Demonstrates God's Absolute Power (vs. 29-31)

1. Absolute power over the soul's final destiny

vs. 28 *Rather, be afraid of the One who can destroy both soul and body in hell.*

Jesus espouses a fear greater than that of man... we must not fear man, but the fear of the Lord should purify us from earthly terrors

Illus. Witnessing in Salem, afraid of witches

Isaiah 51:12 Who are you that you fear mortal men, the sons of men, who are but grass, that you forget the LORD your Maker, who stretched out the heavens and laid the foundations of the earth, that you live in constant terror every day because of the wrath of [man]

Fear of the Lord's opinion should drive out ANY CONCERN WHATSOEVER messengers of the Gospel have for human opinion

- a. fear of the Lord is the beginning of the Christian life
- b. fear of the Lord guides us all along the way
- c. NOTE: this does NOT teach annihilationism

John Stott, noted conservative Anglican scholar, holds tentatively to an annihilationist position, the idea that souls perish in hell and at some point cease to exist

The traditional view is that hell is eternal, and that souls that perish there perish eternally

Mark 9:47-49 And if your eye causes you to sin, pluck it out. It is better for you to enter the kingdom of God with one eye than to have two eyes and be thrown into hell, 48 where "their worm does not die, and the fire is not quenched." 49 Everyone will be salted with fire.

Matthew 26:41 "Then he will say to those on his left, 'Depart from me, you who are cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels.

Matthew 26:46 "Then they will go away to eternal punishment, but the righteous, to eternal life."

d. this DOES teach the horrible power of hell

Bodily resurrection for BOTH righteous and unrighteous!! Wicked suffer with their bodies in hell, after the resurrection

John 5:28-29 "Do not be amazed at this, for a time is coming when all who are in their graves will hear his voice 29 and come out-- those who have done good will rise to live, and those who have done evil will rise to be condemned.

Do not fear people who have such limited power... fear God who has power over your eternal soul

Care what His opinion is!!

2. Absolute power over earthly events and history

vs. 29-31 Are not two sparrows sold for a penny? Yet not one of them will fall to the ground apart from the will of your Father. 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.

- a. another reason not to fear is the present power of God over every area of life in this world
- b. DOCTRINE destroys fear
- c. God's OMNIPOTENCE... God rules over all things no matter how small
- d. God's OMNISCIENCE... God knows all things, no matter how small

Christ argues in both cases from the greater to the lesser... If God cares for little birds, and none of them perish apart from His sovereign will, why would YOU? You are worth more than many sparrows!!

If God numbers the very hairs of your head, why would He not number your days of suffering and the weight of your trials?

Note: the doctrines of God's omnipotence and omniscience is a problem for us if we think that only "good" things will happen to us the way most people define "good"

But God has already said He considers you sheep for the slaughter, just as He did His own Son

Romans 8:36 As it is written: "For your sake we face death all day long; we are considered as sheep to be slaughtered."

These doctrines do NOT protect us from earthly suffering and harm

"Not that you won't suffer, but that you won't suffer in vain!"

E. Eternity Displays Rewards and Punishments (vs. 32-33)

vs. 32-33 "Whoever acknowledges me before men, I will also acknowledge him before my Father in heaven. 33 But whoever disowns me before men, I will disown him before my Father in heaven."

1. "Acknowledges" = confesses openly and unashamedly
2. Will you claim Christ as your Savior in this rebellious age? Will you own Him as your Lord, in a world that hates Him? Will you stand up for His and His Kingdom, though it cost you everything earthly?

If so, Christ will stand up on Judgment Day and confess that you are one of His children, one of His own

Hebrews 2:11 Both the one who makes men holy and those who are made holy are of the same family. So Jesus is not ashamed to call them brothers.

Jesus is not ashamed of you, if you are not ashamed of Him on earth

3. But, if you deny knowing Him, if you have a secret faith that cowers before the opinions of men on earth, then Christ will disown you before His Father in heaven

Eternal welcome vs. eternal rejection

Nothing could be clearer

4. BUT Peter denied him and he's in heaven

Yes, it's true... Peter stands as an example of how human weakness and fear can overwhelm us at key moments... but Peter repented, he turned back to an open confession of Christ

And forty days later, he was boldly standing in front of a huge crowd in Jerusalem on the Day of Pentecost, proclaiming Christ without fear

5. Christ's final word on this

Mark 8:38 If anyone is ashamed of me and my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, the Son of Man will be ashamed of him when he comes in his Father's glory with the holy angels."

IV. Application

A. Review

Eternal perspective = 1) There is a God who rules over heaven and earth

- 2) There will be a Judgment Day in which all human hearts will be revealed
- 3) There is for every human an eternity to be spent in either heaven or hell
- 4) The Gospel of the Kingdom of Jesus Christ is the only hope this world has
- 5) Earthly troubles and concerns are puny compared to these things
 - Eternity Exposes Secrets (vs. 26)
 - Eternity Validates Christ's Words (vs. 27)
 - Eternity Reveals Human Weakness (vs. 28)
 - Eternity Demonstrates God's Absolute Power (vs. 29-31)
 - Eternity Displays Rewards and Punishments (vs. 32-33)

B. Application: Do not be afraid to stand up for Christ... to be a witness for Him

350 people will interact with thousands of lost people in the Triangle region this week... will you speak for Christ? Or will fear rule you??