

The 4th Sunday after Pentecost  
“Boldly Confess Jesus!” Matthew 10:31-33  
June 21, 2026  
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Grace to you and peace from God our Father and our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Dear brothers and sisters in Christ, our text for this 4th Sunday after Pentecost is from our Gospel reading, Matthew 10:31-33.

**“31 Do not fear therefore; you are of more value than many sparrows. 32 “Therefore whoever confesses Me before men, him I will also confess before My Father who is in heaven. 33 But whoever denies Me before men, him I will also deny before My Father who is in heaven.”**

So far our text:

Who is Jesus speaking to in these verses? Well, our Gospel reading helps us to see that Jesus is speaking to His 12 apostles. For it includes verse 5 from last Sunday before it jumps into verse 21. **“5 These twelve Jesus sent out and commanded them, saying:”**

Remember what Jesus told them?

**“Do not go into the way of the Gentiles, and do not enter a city of the Samaritans. 6 But go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. 7 And as you go, preach, saying, ‘The kingdom of heaven is at hand.’ 8 Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out demons. Freely you have received, freely give.”**

This was a specific mission that Jesus sent them on. For He had seen, going from city to city all the people who were like sheep without a shepherd...not being taught the true Word of God by the Pharisees. What is that true Word of God?...that we have Mediator, Jesus Christ, the Son of God, whose kingdom of grace has come by His very arrival in the flesh for the salvation of the world. Preach this message which all people need to hear...fathers especially as we pray for our Christian fathers today, who will teach this message of repentance and forgiveness in Jesus to their household!

Yes, this was a specific mission to the lost sheep of Israel, ...first, and later the mission would expand to the Gentiles...to us. Jesus gives instructions to His 12 apostles in our

Gospel readings from last Sunday and today. They were told what to bring and not to bring, what to do when they arrive in a city and what to be ready for. Matthew, unlike Luke and Mark, alone records these directives.

They would meet some opposition, of course. But for the most part, Jesus would bear the brunt of persecution, and later, after Pentecost, His disciples would suffer like their Master.

Yes, these are specific instructions. But at the same time Jesus uses some generalities that apply to all Christians, to you and me, who are part of Jesus mission to save the lost sheep!

For Jesus speaks to each of us in our text with some very direct words. **“Whoever confesses Me before men, him I will also confess before My Father who is in heaven. 33 But whoever denies Me before men, him I will also deny before My Father who is in heaven.”**

This “whoever” includes everyone. Jesus is speaking to you and me. There are two results of hearing God’s Word and only two. You believe in Jesus, and confess all that He has done for you...your salvation...your new life...your eternal inheritance with Jesus’ Father in heaven, secured for you in your baptism. Or you do not believe in Jesus as your Lord and Savior and deny Him, resulting in your eternal denial by Jesus’ Father and your eternal punishment in hell.

God’s Word does not come back void as Isaiah 55 tells us:

**“10 “For as the rain comes down, and the snow from heaven And do not return there, But water the earth, And make it bring forth and bud, That it may give seed to the sower And bread to the eater, 11 So shall My word be that goes forth from My mouth; It shall not return to Me void, But it shall accomplish what I please, And it shall prosper in the thing for which I sent it.”**

Yes there is rejoicing in heaven by the angels over one sinner who repents, whose soul has been watered and refreshed with the saving Word of God. But also, Jesus told His apostles this condemnation that we heard in last week’s Gospel reading:

**“14 And whoever will not receive you nor hear your words, when you depart from that house or city, shake off the dust from your feet. 15 Assuredly, I say to you, it**

**will be more tolerable for the land of Sodom and Gomorrah in the day of judgment than for that city!”**

And you can imagine how intolerable it is for Sodom and Gomorrah. Jesus tells us where real fear should be found in verse 28 of today’s Gospel. **“28 And do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. But rather fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.”**

This is the starkest Law. This causes all people, you and me included, to humble ourselves before God, acknowledging our sins before Him, but most of all, acknowledging our Mediator Jesus Christ who has defended our souls with His precious shed blood.

So we say with the Psalmist in Psalm 25:

**“To You, O Lord, I lift up my soul. 2 O my God, I trust in You; Let me not be ashamed;”**

And in the words of today’s introit, Psalm 56, we also proclaim:

**“For You have delivered my soul from death. Have You not kept” my feet from falling, That I may walk before God In the light of the living?”**

And how has God delivered your soul from death? Our epistle reading from Romans 6:23 tells us!

**“23 For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.”**

God gives us the free gift of eternal life through the suffering, death and resurrection of His Son Jesus Christ. He is the Master of the household who suffered all for us. He was called Beelzebub, was told that He had a demon, and died forsaken by His creation. But by Jesus’ death we are set free from our slavery to sin and now are slaves to God!

**“22 But now having been set free from sin, and having become slaves of God, you have your fruit to holiness, and the end, everlasting life.”**

What does a slave of God do then? Serve our Master and Lord Jesus Christ without fear. Serve Him faithfully, confessing Him before all here in church and in public.

Is that a fearful thing to do? To tell people that you believe in Jesus? Well, Jesus tells us that how the unbelievers treat the Master will be the same way that they treat the household of believers, including you and me.

**“If they have called the master of the house Beelzebub, how much more will they call those of his household! 26 Therefore do not fear them. For there is nothing covered that will not be revealed, and hidden that will not be known.”**

Therefore...do not fear them...God sees all and you are in His care. Speak in the light what you have heard. Preach from the housetops the Word of God! For they cannot harm your soul!

Are you not more valuable than sparrows? God knows the very number of hairs on your head. Therefore...do not fear.

Therefore...since all this is true...confess Jesus as your Lord!

Therefore, therefore, therefore. We hear Jesus using this word often to show His compassion and love for you and all mankind.

**“The harvest truly is plentiful, but the laborers are few. 38 Therefore pray the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into His harvest.” (Matthew 9:37-38)**

**“All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. 19 Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, 20 teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.” Amen. (Matthew 28:18-20)**

And so the apostles preached. And so we too, members of the household of God, God’s workers, joyful slaves of God, boldly confess Jesus with your lips and with your life. We call upon all people to receive the Word of God which Peter preached.

**“those things which God foretold by the mouth of all His prophets, that the Christ would suffer, He has thus fulfilled. 19 Repent therefore and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, so that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord,” (Acts 3:18-19) Amen**

**And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.” Amen. (Philippians 4:7)**