

# INI

St. Paul's Lutheran Church  
2100 16<sup>th</sup> Street SW  
Austin, MN 55912-1749  
Pastor Ted Barthels  
Sermon preached on  
July 12, 2020  
6<sup>th</sup> Sunday after Pentecost

Scripture Lessons: Jeremiah 28:5-9, Romans 6:1<sub>b</sub>-11

Hymns: 234; 421; 408; 40-9:1

Grace be unto you and peace from God our Father and our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Amen.

Sermon Text: Matthew 10:34-42

“Do not think that I came to bring peace on earth. I did not come to bring peace but a sword. <sup>35</sup> For I have come to ‘set a man against his father, a daughter against her mother, and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law’; <sup>36</sup> and ‘a man’s enemies *will be* those of his *own* household.’ <sup>37</sup> He who loves father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me. And he who loves son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me. <sup>38</sup> And he who does not take his cross and follow after Me is not worthy of Me. <sup>39</sup> He who finds his life will lose it, and he who loses his life for My sake will find it. <sup>40</sup> “He who receives you receives Me, and he who receives Me receives Him who sent Me. <sup>41</sup> He who receives a prophet in the name of a prophet shall receive a prophet’s reward. And he who receives a righteous man in the name of a righteous man shall receive a righteous man’s reward. <sup>42</sup> And whoever gives one of these little ones only a cup of cold *water* in the name of a disciple, assuredly, I say to you, he shall by no means lose his reward.” (NKJV)

This is the Word of God.

Sanctify us, oh Lord, through Your truth. Your Word is truth. Amen.

In Christ Jesus, God our Savior, dear fellow Redeemed:

INTRO: False Expectations. --

Whether we like to admit it or not, we all fall victim to false expectations. Promises are made in a scam email, or for a stock investment, or a real estate sales gimmick, all you have to do is trust someone with just a couple of bits of personal information, and you will be the recipient of riches beyond belief. Scam artists know that there is a little bit of greed in everyone, enough that it will tip the scales for at least a few people. But then we are forewarned and prepared for scams artists that make promises that are too good to be true, aren't we? And yet they keep on calling, and everyday many people, even smart people, fall victim to those who make promises on which they cannot deliver, and it doesn't even bother them. All one has to do is lead people down the path of false expectations.

There is flip side to these scams that isn't often talked about. When one falls victim to false expectations one also rejects as unsuitable the real expectations for what life may bring. And even more people fall victim to that. Because of the preponderance of get rich schemes, including state run lotteries, people reject sound savings and investments plans as being for chumps. They even have radio spots to encourage regular savings and realistic long term expectations.

But then no one would do such a thing with religion, would they? They would, and have! False teachers proclaim false expectations on just about every level within the realm of religion and even under the name of Christianity. Too many self-proclaimed preachers are ready to tell people what they want to hear whether it's true or not. One might hear anything and everything from get rich schemes if you send your money in to the TV evangelist, to social justice and peace and harmony among the nations of the world, to peace with God apart from repentance so that one can please the world and one's sinful flesh while also pleasing God by being nice.

Jesus' own disciples suffered from these very same false expectations promoted within Jewish society. One religious party, the Sadducees, pushed a world peace and power agenda, while another, the Pharisees, promoted a message of peace with God

through good works. There were others as well promoting the pleasures of this world. They all appeal to the flesh.

Throughout Jesus' ministry it was necessary for Him to present the real --

**THEME:** Expectations of Discipleship.

Jesus began with the expectation of --

### **I. A Sword.**

As true disciples of Jesus we will remember that our faith and life are built upon the sacrifice Jesus made. Of course we focus on the cross, but we also know that Jesus endured much abuse and hatred long before He went to the cross. He spoke plainly of the fact that the disciple is not above his Master. If the world hated Jesus, and it did and it still does, then it will also hate the true and faithful disciple of Jesus.

But what's to hate about Jesus? To begin with people didn't like it that Jesus called out sin and hypocrisy. He did so because sin brings death. Sin separates the soul from God both here in time and hereafter in eternity. Jesus called for repentance, true repentance that turns away from sin and rejects the sin. We ought to be repulsed by our own sinful lusts, and confess a total reliance upon the merits of Christ for the forgiveness of sins. We know and believe that Jesus went to the cross to suffer for our sins. That was the greatest of all sacrifices made for us and for our salvation.

The world rejects all this. The world has embraced as good and wholesome many gross sins. For example the world declares that abortion is a woman's right to choose, and the control of her own reproductive system, and not the killing of a baby, which only in the context of abortion is declared to be nothing more than a mass of cells. The world has declared sins of moral turpitude a protected right so that people might be true to themselves! These sins are celebrated with parades and a special month of recognition. Any dissension is considered hate speech that must be silenced. Calls for repentance bring out the sword of vehemence against the child of God. The Lord's calls for repentance are declared bigoted. The

world has decided there is no sin for which anyone needs to repent other than failing to embrace the sins of others.

But the sword is also drawn against the gospel. We know and believe that it is *“not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us.”* (Titus 3:5) The world rejects the idea that people cannot be saved by their own works of righteousness. They contend that they can and do please God by their own merits and conduct. The world despises the idea of repentance, saying there is peace with God because God is love. It is true that God is love. However God is also just, and sin must be addressed in a just and fair manner. God did this in Christ Jesus, for *“what the law could not do in that it was weak through the flesh, God did by sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, on account of sin: He condemned sin in the flesh, <sup>4</sup> that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit.”*

(Romans 8:3-4)

This is where we come to the expectation of discipleship also including sacrifice. Jesus is telling us that the gift of peace with God that comes to us through the grace of the gospel does not always bring us peace with the other people in our lives. Most certainly the peace of God that comes to us through the gospel does not bring peace with the world. We will experience the sword of the world's hatred in the form of protest to the truth of God's Word, and ridicule and anger and rejection. A recent Supreme Court ruling went against a Christian seminary expelling students who were living in open homosexuality, even though the seminary acted in accordance with their Christian faith and teaching. Realistic expectations is that the world will turn against the truth and those who hold to the truth.

Even close family ties will be challenged when family members choose the ways of the world over the truth of God's Word. Jesus reminded the disciples and so also us that *‘a man's enemies will be those of his own household.’* (v. 36) That is real sacrifice that is to be expected, and faced with a clear testimony. We also are armed with a sword, the sword of the Spirit which is the Word of God! When family, loved ones, conform to the world and are true to the world, we must continue to be true to Jesus and the sacrifice He

made for us. We don't respond with what we think, but what the Word of the Lord says. Jesus made it clear that we may be called upon to make sacrifices for Jesus involving even family ties.

**Matthew 10:37-39** "He who loves father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me. And he who loves son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me. <sup>38</sup> And he who does not take his cross and follow after Me is not worthy of Me. <sup>39</sup> He who finds his life will lose it, and he who loses his life for My sake will find it."

We cannot compromise with the world. To try to please the world or make room for the sins of the world while claiming to be true to Jesus is falling for the world's scam. If you seek to preserve this life to please your flesh it will cost you your spiritual and eternal life. If, as disciples of Jesus, we accept sacrifice in this temporal life, then the Lord preserves our eternal lives. This will impact every area of life, our family lives, our social lives and our professional lives, but the Lord knows and compensates any sacrifice we may experience with the true peace that comes to those who know the love of Christ.

As disciples we also live in the expectation of --

## **II. Life Fulfillment through Service.**

We are disciples of Jesus Christ. "*The Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many.*" (Matthew 20:28) We are followers of Jesus Christ who served us and gave Himself for us. He also continues to serve us at the right hand of God where He makes intercession for us before the throne of God. He is continually pleading for forgiveness for our sins, and protection from harm and danger, and the continuation of all the blessings we need for body and life. Jesus serves us richly every day, and we praise His glorious name! As disciples of Jesus Christ the Lord presents us with the opportunities to respond to His kindness by to serving our neighbor.

This begins with serving others with the gospel, starting with those whom the Lord has placed closed to us in our lives, relatives, friends and acquaintances. We serve others with the gospel of Jesus Christ, and share the hope that we hold in our hearts. Those

who hear and gladly receive us are in fact receiving Jesus. Those who spurn the gospel are not rejecting us, but Him who sent us.

We also have opportunity to do good to those who preach the gospel, as well as those who are our brothers and sisters in Christ. Jesus said, *“He who receives a prophet in the name of a prophet shall receive a prophet’s reward. And he who receives a righteous man in the name of a righteous man shall receive a righteous man’s reward.”*<sup>42</sup> *And whoever gives one of these little ones only a cup of cold water in the name of a disciple, assuredly, I say to you, he shall by no means lose his reward.”* (Matthew 10:41-42)

We ought to realize that lovingkindness in serving others is something the Lord looks for in the lives of His disciples, and He receives such kind words and actions as offerings of praise and glory to His name. It will be remembered as the Lord, according to His grace, receives us into our heavenly home. What may seem to us to be little things mean a lot both to the people we interact with and to the Lord! A word of kindness, a visit or even a phone call can cheer a fellow Christian’s heart. Note in our text how Jesus uses the example of giving a little child a glass of water. Think of that, something as simple as offering a glass of water can be done in Jesus’ name, as a disciple. Who can’t offer something as simple as a glass of water?

In this time of pandemic the Lord reminded us that our brothers and sisters in Christ who are in India or various countries across Africa, in Myanmar and Pakistan are in dire need. As followers of Jesus, as disciples who rejoice in all the blessings He has showered upon both spiritual and material we also rejoiced in the opportunity to serve others and present a glass of water in His name. Jesus granted us the privilege of being the vehicle through which He blesses them in their hour of need. And that is how it works the Lord prepares beforehand works of kindness for us to do, and the wherewithal to do them.

We started talking about expectations, and how easy it is to be taken in by the false expectations presented by the deceivers in this world. Now, we should not think that we need to lower our expectations as disciples of Jesus. In fact Jesus raises our expectations from earth to heaven. We live with the greatest of

expectations that have their foundation in the cross of Christ. It is this cross of Christ that shapes our expectations of discipleship so that we follow where our Savior leads. We rejoice in the meaning and purpose this discipleship brings to our otherwise transitory and mundane lives. We rejoice in great expectations as we serve the Lord and our neighbor with gladness all the days of earthly pilgrimage.

**AMEN.**

And the peace of God which passes all understanding shall keep your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus. Amen.