

A Deep Hurt

Matthew 10:1, 5a, 17-23

In the same breath that Jesus promises that his Disciples are going to see great and wonderful things, demons cast out of hopeless lives and healing given to a weak body, he shares with them that they would also see a bit of hardship.

For those just joining us in this new series titled "For the Sake of the Call," we are hearing Jesus' advice and parting words to those going out on mission to the lost and hurting world for Jesus. They had been with Jesus for quite some time now, but the Scriptures give us the image that they had only been merely "observant" of Jesus' ministry to this point, but now they are becoming active participants. They liked the idea of Jesus but now they were having "to be" Jesus.

Maybe that's some of us in this room. Maybe you have spent time around Jesus now for a while, but the idea of "going" for him seems to be the next step you may or may not be ready for. Well, whatever it may be, this sermon is for you. In fact, this series of sermons is going to continue to give us insight into the nature of Jesus' conversation with his Disciples. Last time we heard of the blessings in store for those who serve the Lord in mission to the lost and hurting, the blessing of being a laborer for God, but now Jesus turns to what some may consider a "curse" of going for God, the hardships we may face.

One of the hardest pains of life to deal with and live through is the loss of a loved one, this is, while they are still living. This brings not only emotional pain, but spiritual and physical pain as well. It makes us sick all over to know that things that were once well between us and another are now as distant as death. The feeling of being estranged from someone once close brings a tear to our eye and a gut-wrenching feeling to our stomachs. It's bad enough that we will have struggles and trials in our lives with people we don't know very well, but we occasionally have hard dealings among those we deeply care about and Jesus said when it's about me, this is something we should come to expect. When we live to serve him, we will find ourselves from time to time at odds with people we don't know so well, but that won't hurt as much as the hard dealings with the people we love because of Jesus.

Now, I must qualify this statement with context that this will, not maybe or might will, but will happen for those who go forth into the world with the gospel of Christ. If this has happened, or is happening

in your life, praise God because you are at odds with the Devil. You say, "What? Praise God?" Yes, because you are helping people find help and hope in Jesus and the Devil can't stand it! He can't have a second chance in Christ and he doesn't want anyone else to have it either. Satan is attacking you in an attempt to break the heart of God. And it does, not only is he upset that you are afflicted, but that even though many will come to Christ, many will not because of the efforts of the Devil. Jesus recognizes this as one of the greatest tactics of the Devil and shares this reality with his Disciples: that the Devil is going to attack our relationships. He tells them to stand strong against the Devil in this way. Despite the kings, governors, preachers, teachers, mothers, fathers, brothers, sisters, and everyday people that stand up against you, Jesus says you have a message to bring and a hope that can change the lives of all who are saved as you.

In Ephesians 6:11 we are told to "Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the schemes of the Devil" (ESV). One of these pieces of armor is the Helmet of Salvation. When we place it on our heads we guard our minds with the knowledge that we are saved, that nothing can harm us if we are in Christ, and the lost in this world need to know the same. In effect, against this world we need to be "hard-headed" for Jesus. And don't worry about what to say or how to respond, God will give you the words, but we have to get off the bench to experience the glory of God revealed in our dependency upon him even when our loved ones come against us for the call of Christ in our lives.

Stand firm to the end Child of God because you are saved and no one can snatch you out of the Father's hand (John 10:28). You will not perish for you will be carried through by remembering what is ahead. The Devil inflicts a deep hurt sometimes, but we must press on.