

Confessing for All to Hear that Jesus is Here!

4th Sun. after Pent. – 06/21/26 – Mt. Calvary Luth.

Text: Matthew 10:5a, 21-33 Pastor Keith Besel

v. 32, [Jesus said,] **“So everyone who acknowledges Me before men, I also will acknowledge before My Father who is in heaven.”**

Introduction

⊗ Chip, a middle schooler, was often ashamed and embarrassed by his dad – no surprise there. Many children are embarrassed by their moms and dads at that age. But Chip’s father had become the butt of many public jokes and put-downs; not only by Chip’s friends, but by most of the adults in their community as well.

→ You see, Chip’s dad was the local street sweeper in their small town, who also had the unenviable task of cleaning out the street gutter drains when they got clogged with gunk and debris. It was a dirty, thankless, often smelly job. So, when Chip’s dad came to his school plays, concerts and athletic games – which he never missed, he would often show up still in his dirty and smelly work clothes. Chip was so embarrassed by this that he was afraid even to acknowledge his father at these public events, because he knew if he did, his friends would shame and ridicule him even more than they were already doing.

→ But then, one day, in the midst of a torrential down-pour, the gutter drain directly outside of Chip’s school had become clogged with debris from the branches that came down in the wind. It meant that all of the water uphill from school had nowhere to drain and a pool of swirling water quickly was growing in size. The students and teachers watched from their classroom window in horror as they saw a young puppy that had climbed under its fence nearby, rushing down in what was now a river of water headed straight toward the clogged drain and debris.

→ But just then, a city truck splashed onto the scene and out jumped Chip’s dad, soaked to the bone. And without any hesitation, he stepped into that river of rain water, just in front of the struggling puppy, and snatched it up into his arms. The puppy happen to belong to Veronica, one of Chip’s most ardent hecklers, who watched the whole thing unfold from within the same room as Chip. She screamed in relief. And Chip, now beaming with pride – and to the cheers of everyone in the school – took Veronica by the hand and said, “That’s my dad! Here, let me introduce you to him.”

I. Persecution for Confessing Jesus (vv. 21-23)

⊗ As Jesus sent His disciples out into the region of Galilee to publicly proclaim the truth that, in Him, “The reign and rule of heaven is now near” (Mt. 10:7), He warned them that making this public witness would not always be easy. Sharing the fact that their heavenly Father had now sent His Son, Jesus here to earth to get down and dirty in the sin-clogged gutters of our lives; to willingly even put His own life eventually at risk in order to save everyone caught up down here in the flood of this world’s self-righteous judgments; everyone at serious risk of drowning in all of the lies and the false accusations of this world because of our own selfish pride and our own sin-drenched fears – Jesus warned that sharing these truths about Him could not be done without risk and personal suffering.

→ In fact, Jesus says, this hazing and persecution would often come at us from those with whom we are the closest; our own family members, friends, and co-workers. He says boldly in verse 22, “You will be hated by all for My name’s sake.” Sadly, now 2000 years later, this is still the case around the world today. Stories abound from countries that are primarily Islamic, Hindu and Communist-based of those who make their faith in Jesus known only to be disowned

by their parents or children; often even beaten and regularly killed because they have proudly proclaimed their joy in Jesus.

→ Jesus says in this text, this “will” happen, not it “might” take place. Not that Jesus wants this kind of negative reaction to come against His followers, but when it does, Jesus encourages us in verse 22 to see the bigger picture; to take heart in the fact that “the one who endures” in faithfully confessing Jesus “before men” (v.32), “will be saved.” But remember, it’s not our confessing of Jesus that will, or ever can, save us. That is just the fact of the status we’ve already received from Jesus by His grace and His sacrificial work, so that as we happily proclaim what Jesus has already done for us, we still have the peace and assurance of knowing that our eternal salvation is rock solid and secure!

- ✘ Yet that security in Jesus doesn’t mean that when we do face relentless insults, hatred, shame and even physical harm, that we must just stay in those abusive situations indefinitely like gluttons for punishment. No, in verse 23 Jesus says, “When they persecute you in one town, flee to the next....”

→ So, yes, there comes a time when you or I find ourselves in relationships with unbelievers who are less than cordial about our beliefs or even downright hateful, as Jesus says some will be, it’s then, after we have carefully shared Jesus’ love and respectfully sought to serve them in His name, that we may need to remove ourselves from that relationship for our own safety and for the good of our relationship with Jesus.

→ But remember, that person’s salvation is not our personal responsibility. You and I can never save another person, just as no person could ever save us. That responsibility and power belongs only to Jesus and the Holy Spirit. We are called only to share Jesus and His saving power from the cross, knowing that the Holy Spirit can still use what we have already shared, sometimes years later, to bring that soul into the saving arms of their heavenly Father.

- ✘ But, if someone is exercising his/her free will to reject Jesus right now in your presence, God will sadly, at times have to give them over to their unbelief, so that we can “flee to the next” town; to another, hopefully more eager and willing soul in need of the saving gift that Jesus has to offer to them.

II. Expect to be Treated as Jesus Was (vv. 24-25)

- ✘ Remember this important truth that Jesus gives to His disciples then, and to us today when we face difficulty because of our connection to Him. In verses 24-25, “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.”

→ The point is this: if Jesus was ridiculed, falsely accused, shamed and threatened because of who He was and what He proclaimed, then we should not be surprised when we endure a similar treatment from those around us because of our commitment to Jesus.

- ✘ In fact, Jesus refers to one of the names that they called Him at the time – “Beelzebul.” That was back in chapter 9:34 after Jesus had cast a demon out of a man and the crowds were marveling that Jesus had displayed His godly power over the devil. The Jewish Pharisees, in their jealousy, tried to undermine Jesus’ work of grace, by saying that Jesus was only casting out demons by “the prince of demons,” which is what the name “Beelzebul” literally means. In fact by the time of the New Testament, the name “Beelzebul” had become a derogatory term that also meant “lord of dung.”

→ Jesus endured all kinds of belittling names and false labels, often from those who should have known better than to act like young children on the school playground and call names. In John 8:48 the Jewish leaders said to Jesus, “Are we not right in saying that you are a Samaritan

(they hated the Samaritans) and have a demon?" And in John 10:20 they said of Jesus, "He has a demon, and is insane; why listen to Him?"

- ✘ Friends, if this is what Jesus endured, then we should not be surprised when people and groups call us names, question our sanity and try to shame us into silence. In fact, we should receive all of this as an honor that we are able to follow in the footsteps of our Savior and teacher. When the early apostles were beaten by the Jewish Council and charged never "to speak in the name of Jesus" again, Acts 5:41 says, "They left the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer dishonor for the name" of Jesus.

III. Do Not Fear, Jesus is Here (vv. 26-33)

- ✘ Of course Jesus does not want these kinds of things – threats and persecution and difficulty because of our faith in Him, to overwhelm us with fear and trepidation. And so three times, in verses 26, 28, and 31 He tells the apostles (and us) "do not fear."

→ How can He say such a thing? Yes, I know Jesus suffered so much worse than any of us ever could imagine suffering, but still it's scary; it's no fun to be threatened, shamed, bullied, put down and criticized just because we love Jesus more than anyone or anything else in the world.

- ✘ Jesus knows that. So in verses 26-33, Jesus seeks to ease the minds of His believers by reminding them and us, that these earthly entities that come after us just because of our Christian faith are only that, earthly powers and pressures. And even the devil and his demonic powers – though they can exercise spiritual powers that can do us great earthly harm, as long as we are under the protection and care of the Triune God, Satan's powers are severely limited. He cannot, as Jesus says in verse 28, "kill the soul."

→ You see, Jesus needs us all to know in full confidence and faith that there are such greater issues involved in all of this than merely the suffering and difficulty we may have to face here on earth; even greater than the loss of this earthly life.

→ And that is, as Jesus shows in verse 33, the eternal danger and consequence of "denying [Jesus] before men." That is, refusing to "acknowledge" Him as "the Way and the Truth and the Life" (Jn. 14:6); to acknowledge Him as the only One whose spilt blood at the cross was able to pay fully for the guilt of my sin, your sin and the sins of all of mankind. Refusing to believe in Jesus also as "the Resurrection and the Life" as Jesus said of Himself in John 11:25, so that "Whoever believes in Me," Jesus said, "though he die, yet shall He live, and everyone who lives and believes in Me shall never die."

→ To deny that Jesus not only can, as the Son of God, but does have the power to raise us physically from the dead, and reunite the souls and bodies of those believers who have already died believing in Him, and take us all on the Last Day to be with Him forever in eternal perfection before His heavenly presence; to publicly deny these truths about Jesus here in this life; when that happens, Jesus says that He will – based upon that person's own denial, be forced to "deny" that soul "before [His] Father who is in heaven."

- ✘ And as verse 28 says, only the Father is able, by His always perfect judgment of souls, to "destroy both soul and body in hell." But you, my fellow believers in Christ; you need never have that fear, because your sins have been covered by the blood of Jesus. You have been washed and cleansed of all guilt in the water and Word of Holy Baptism. Once you have been trained in the Word and have publicly confirmed your faith in Jesus, you are being fed and forgiven regularly with the faith-strengthening body and blood of Jesus in Holy Communion.

→ Just as Jesus assures us in verses 29-31, He is right here with you in this life; caring for you; protecting you and embracing you in His immeasurable love every moment of every day. If Jesus cares enough about you and me to know the number of hairs on our head, then He

certainly cares enough to strengthen us and guide us through any and all of the challenges we may have to endure in this life because we belong to Him.

Conclusion

✘ And so, my dear Christians, we need never fear any or all of the earthly consequences and challenges we face because we believe in Jesus. Just as Chip proudly shared his dad with his detractors once he saw his dad for who he truly was, now you and I ... we have seen firsthand who Jesus really is; His sacrificial love for us all; His power to save and His free gift of life now and into eternity.

➔ Filled with that unsurpassed joy and confidence of Jesus, we publicly and proudly confess Him now before everyone and in everything that we do and think and say. We live this beautiful Christ-filled life confessing that Jesus is Lord and He is here with us ... today and forever! Amen.