

## Ready to Face Opposition

### Matthew 10:16-26

By Phillip G. Kayser at DCC on 7-18-2010

#### Introduction

I read some old news about a major battle between Tamil guerillas and the Sri Lankan army. One of the captured guerillas was a woman. As she was overpowered by the government soldiers, the woman struggled desperately trying to get a cyanide pill that was concealed in her necklace into her mouth so that she could commit suicide. Every Tamil Tiger carries a cyanide pill so that they won't be tortured into giving away secret information. But they managed to take the pill away and hauled her off to jail. She was a very well known guerilla, and everyone knew that she lived for a single cause: the war to gain homeland rule for the Tamil population of Sri Lanka.

After her capture, an official of the Sri Lankan government visited her in prison because she was quite a notable figure. As he talked to her, he was amazed by her absolute commitment to the cause – even after abuse; even in jail. One of the ones who had first hand information said this,

She didn't beg him for her life. She didn't offer valuable secret information to save her skin. Fully aware of her impending execution, she appealed to him: "Please help our cause. When we are in power, we will remember you."

Now think of that statement. She is the one about to be executed and she is encouraging *him* to think of *his* safety for the future, because her cause will win. It reminds me of our evangelistic message. In some countries Christians are a persecuted minority, yet they are pleading with people to think about their future safety and their future escape from hell. The report goes on and says,

When he asked her why she joined the liberation movement, she gave him the following explanation: She said, "I was in my late 20's, well-educated and working as a medical doctor. Then one day my whole life was changed when my parents were killed by soldiers. I left my profession and everything I knew, and subjected myself to vigorous training to become a freedom fighter."

When I read that statement, I thought, "There is a person who has what it takes to win battles." Unfortunately she doesn't have what it takes to

© Copyright 2010 by Phillip G. Kayser. Permission is granted to all readers to download, print, and distribute on paper or electronically any Sermons, provided that each reprint bear this copyright notice, current address, and telephone number, and provided that all such reproductions are distributed to the public without charge. They may not be sold or issued in book form, CD-ROM form, or microfiche without prior permission.

Phillip G. Kayser • Dominion Covenant Church • 307.N 41st Ave. Omaha, NE 68131 • 402.934.3300

win spiritual battles; she was deceived. But from a physical perspective she was convinced of all four points of the outline. She knew the cost of being a Tamil Tiger and embraced it. She had a vision of victory that drove her. She had learned how to conquer her fears. And to her, the rewards were well worth the sacrifices. Without those four issues settled, it is rare that we will win a battle; in fact usually we will only timidly and half-heartedly join the battle. In fact, many Christians are like the Scottish noblemen in Braveheart – constantly compromising.

In my last message from chapter 10 I looked at the most encouraging part of evangelism – the high probability that you have of winning your entire oikos to salvation. But this chapter doesn't just deal with oikos evangelism. There is some sharing that we need to do with those who hate us or at least don't like us. These are the ones outside of our oikos (or our immediate sphere of family, friends, and influence) that Christ calls us to be willing to talk to. Every one of us will be given some opportunities by God to talk to strangers. And that thought terrifies some Christians. In the next two messages I want to give some answers to those fears. But today I want to encourage you to no longer make excuses and to stir yourselves up to embrace these four points just like that Tamil woman did.

## **I. Know The Cost Of Being A Witness: We Should Expect That Soldiers Are Sent Into Danger (vv. 16-26)**

First, you need to know the cost of being a Christian witness, and embrace it; embrace that cost with your whole heart. Every Christian is a soldier, and we should expect that soldiers are sometimes sent into danger. If you were living in North Korea it would almost seem suicidal to be a Christian, because your lifespan as a witness would be very short. In China it is dangerous, but not suicidal. In America it is inconvenient. But if we know the cost before we start, we will at least be more prepared to bear the cost.

### ***A. Christ Sent Them Knowing Some Would Be Killed (v. 16,21)***

In verse 16 Jesus said, “**Behold, I send you out as sheep in the midst of wolves.**” What do wolves do? They eat sheep, don't they? And if you come to Christ in some towns in India today, you may very well be beaten to death. In Saudi Arabia, you will be executed. In Egypt, you may have death threats, your car windows bashed in, your children stolen from you and sold into slavery, and yes, several have been brutally murdered. In country after country, these words have real meaning. If you keep your mouth shut, you may avoid detection by the wolves out there for a while, but if you open your mouth in any way and name the name of Christ, you may be torn to

pieces by the wolves of Satan's kingdom. And yet Jesus told them to preach the Gospel anyway. He said, "**I send you out as sheep in the midst of wolves.**" Every one of these disciples was embracing possible cost just like that Tamil woman did.

Now imagine that you are in Egypt, and you read these words: I send you out as sheep in the midst of wolves. Are you willing to go? Are you willing to let people know that you are a Christian? Or would you be ashamed of Christ? Verse 38 says, "**And he who does not take his cross and follow after Me is not worthy of Me.** [Wow! Even in a country like North Korea? Yes, even in a country like North Korea. He goes on:] **He who finds his life will lose it, and he who loses his life for My sake will find it.**" The cross was not only the symbol of shame and suffering - it was identified with death. Christ was saying that when you come to Him you have already died to yourself; you've already taken up your cross.

And so this is not a theoretical question. Your willingness to take up the cross and follow Christ is what divides the sheep from the goats; true believers and false believers. Just as a soldier who is unwilling to fight, to face danger, to face the hatred of the enemy and the risk of death is not really a soldier, in the same way, if you are not willing to suffer for Christ, you are not even a Christian, by Christ's definition. Christ calls us to a life of self-denial.

Now it's easy for us to think we are willing to lay down our lives for Christ when there is no threat of death. But think about this: I have talked to people who have said that they are willing to die for their wives, but they aren't willing to go through the hassle and the discomfort of counseling to save their marriage. Wouldn't you say that puts in question whether they really love their wives enough to die for them? If they won't do a small sacrifice for their wife, doesn't it put into question whether they will make the ultimate sacrifice?

Well, I want you to judge how you measure up to the first main point by the same standard. I am sure that all of you would affirm that you are willing to die for Christ, but are you willing to obey Christ's call to have devotions, to keep the Sabbath, to spend time with your children, to have purity of thought, to witness, and to studying the Bible. These are tasks that require discipline and a measure of self-denial. Don't tell me you would be willing to die for Christ if you are not willing to get up on time for Christ on Sunday morning; or you are not willing to face the fear of witnessing, or you are not willing to fast for Him. If you do not do the lesser, it is unlikely that you would do the greater. Listen to what God says in Jeremiah 12:5: "**If you have run with the footmen, and they have wearied you, then how can**

**you contend with horses? And if in the land of peace...they wearied you, then how will you do in the flooding of the Jordan?"**

***B. Christ Sent Them Knowing Some Would Be Captured, Be Tried, and Suffer Pain (v. 17)***

Let's quickly read through some of the other costs that disciples of Christ must be willing to face. Verse 17 says, **"But beware of men, for they will deliver you up to councils and scourge you in their synagogues."** Are we willing to face courts where men are hostile and disagree with our faith? Are we willing to suffer pain?

***C. Christ Sent Them Knowing Some Would Be Interrogated (v. 18)***

Look at verse 18: **"And you will be brought before governors and kings for My sake, as a testimony to them and to the Gentiles."** Christ sent some of His disciples to be interrogated by magistrates. Be thankful that Christ's call to you to be witnesses today involves a far lesser sacrifice. But we still need to be prepared for greater sacrifices than we have to date.

***D. Christ Sent Them Knowing Some Would Be Betrayed (v. 21)***

Look at verse 21: **"Now brother will deliver up brother to death, and a father his child; and children will rise up against parents and cause them to be put to death."** Some people will do anything to maintain peace in the family; and *yes*, as much as depends upon us, we are to be at peace with all men. But Christ calls us to be willing to face family persecution and betrayal.

***E. Christ Sent Them Knowing They Would Be Hated (v. 22)***

We don't like to be hated. Nobody does. But that is precisely what Christ sent His disciples into. They are soldiers; that's what you expect soldiers to face - hatred. Look at verse 22: **"And you will be hated by all for My name's sake. But he who endures to the end will be saved."** Are you willing to endure hatred of others? Do you love Christ enough to be willing to do that? Soldiers can expect that the enemy will hate them.

***F. He Has Sent Them Knowing They Would Be Misunderstood And Slandered (v. 25)***

Look at verse 25: **"It is enough for a disciple that he be like his teacher, and a servant like his master. If they have called the master of the house Beelzebub, how much more will they call those of his**

**household.”** That’s slander, and slander hurts. When you stand up for Christ, you have the potential of being slandered. And so there is a cost to being a soldier of Christ. There is a cost sometimes to being a witness. After the past evangelism class we watched a hilarious video of eight reasons why I can’t be a witness. And even though the reasons were exaggerated for humor’s sake, they represent various kinds of costs that we need to be willing to face. Not all of us will face all of these things. Our cost may be much lower, but there will always be a cost. So my question to you is, “Have you counted the cost of discipleship?” It is the same cost as the cost of witnessing. And are you willing by God’s grace to embrace that cost? We will be seeing that we aren’t unarmed sheep. Like the picture in your bulletins, Christ spiritually equips us. But we still need to face the enemy.

## **II. Know The Vision For Being A Witness: Our Goal Must Be To Win, Not To Passively Die As Martyrs (vv. 15-26)**

### ***A. Winning Armies are on the Winning Side (v. 15)***

But the second point that we must be convinced of is that *we will win this battle*. That Tamil guerilla had a false assurance of victory that drove her, but we have the promise of a leader who has never lied and who upholds all things by the Word of His power.

Verse 15 says, “**Assuredly, I say to you,** [In other words, this is guaranteed. “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!**” When that city cast the disciples out it might have looked like that city won, but these disciples knew better. They were assured that those cities would be nuked by God’s spiritual judgments, but that they would escape. They had a total confidence that Christ’s armies are on the winning side. Jesus promised, “**I will build My church and the gates of hell will not prevail against it.**” Winning armies are on the winning side. And if you know that you are part of a winning army, it helps to give you a winning attitude. It helps you to make the sacrifices of the first point. It gets you excited.

### ***B. Winning Armies Seek To Minimize Their Losses***

#### **1. We are to be wise & holy (v. 16b)**

But winning armies aren’t just suicidal maniacs. They try to minimize their losses. You can see that in verse 16. “**Behold, I send you out as sheep in the midst of wolves. Therefore be wise as serpents and harmless as doves.**” Though Christ called them to be willing to face persecution and

martyrdom, He didn't want them to welcome persecution and martyrdom. That was one of the problems in the early church – there were plenty of people who tried to get martyred. They felt bad that others got captured and they didn't, so they deliberately turned themselves in so that they would be killed. And that's not Biblical. Can you imagine what the commander of an American army unit would think if a soldier walked over to the enemy line and asked them to shoot him? He wouldn't get a medal. In fact the commander would be pretty hacked about the soldier deliberately exposing himself.

Well, Jesus is upset with people who needlessly expose themselves to danger, or who ask for persecution. He is upset with people who try to get their unbelieving family mad at them or who witness in such a fashion as to deliberately turn people off. That is not a good thing. Christ's purpose is to win the battle, not just to suffer. Serpents represent the enemy, and we need to understand them; know where they are coming from, not only so that we don't get sucked in, but also so that we can win them to our viewpoint. Doves represent the good guys, and Christ is counterbalancing, "While you need to be wise and crafty in your witness, don't ever compromise your integrity. Don't deceive; don't be evil." Peter says much the same when the church was suffering persecution. He said that they could rejoice in their suffering if it was for the sake of Christ, but if they were suffering simply because they were being jerks, there wasn't any glory in that. Actually, he didn't use the word jerks. He said that some of them were suffering simply because they were evil.

Here's how Romans 13 words it: "**If it is possible, as much as depends on you, live peaceably with all men. Beloved, do not avenge yourselves, but rather give place to wrath; for it is written, 'Vengeance is Mine, I will repay,' says the LORD. 'Therefore if your enemy hungers, feed him; if he thirsts, give him a drink; for in so doing you will heap coals of fire on his head.' Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.**" Paul is saying that our goal in spiritual battle is to win, not to suffer; it's to overcome, not to be overcome. And in verses 9-18 he gives many practical commands that will keep us from suffering for the wrong reasons.

## 2. We are to beware of men (v. 17)

So in verse 17 Jesus tells us, "**beware of men.**" Be on guard. Don't just take a fatalistic attitude – "Oh well, if I get killed, I get killed." No, you watch out. You are bold enough to be willing to die, but careful enough hopefully to not die. So he says, "beware!" Watch out!

### 3. We are to try to avoid capture (v. 23)

He also warned them to try to avoid capture in verse 23. “**But when they persecute you in this city, flee to another.**” They were to minimize their losses. Why would they need to minimize their losses if the church is going to be defeated anyway, and if martyrdom is the goal? That would make no sense. If our calling is to suffer, then let’s invite the suffering. But Christ doesn’t do that. Christ’s purpose was not to suffer, but to eventually win the war (even if it required suffering). So there is a call to suffering, but it isn’t our primary call. Our primary call is to win – to fulfill the Great Commission.

#### C. *Winning Armies Seek To Win*

##### 1. The vision of those captured is a winning vision (vv. 18-20)

###### a) Captured for Christ’s sake (v. 18a)

And so point C says that winning armies seek to win. That’s what that Tamil woman was all about. She wasn’t interested in just holding her own. Everything in those soldiers was geared to win. Let me briefly show a few ways in which this was communicated by Christ. Verse 18 gives one purpose for capture: “**And you will be brought before governors and kings for My sake, as a testimony to them and to the Gentiles.**” He is saying that if you get captured, it’s not an accident. I have put you there to be a testimony. When Paul was imprisoned by Rome, he described himself as a prisoner of Christ. He hoped to preach to Nero. Christ had really put him there, and it was for the purpose of winning people to the Gospel. That is what Christ says here. Why will they witness before kings? It would be for the purpose of converting their captors. That’s why Paul said from prison, “**All the saints greet you, but especially those who are of Caesar’s household.**” Who is winning? Well, from one perspective Caesar is winning, but from another perspective Paul was winning. Caesar’s guards had been chained to Paul and when they got converted they converted others in Caesar’s family. This means that when Paul was chained to those guards, he didn’t see himself as the loser. He saw *them* as a captive audience. Your perspective can make all the difference in the world when you face opposition.

**b) converting the captors (v. 18b)**

**c) Boldness of speech (v. 19a)**

Verse 19 tells them not to worry. And in my next sermon, Lord willing, I will be looking at how to obey that command and put off your fears in witnessing.

**d) Convinced of our superior strength, by the Spirit (v. 19-20)**

In verses 19-20 He tells them that God's Spirit is with them and can confound the enemies right in their own camp. The reason for their boldness is that **“greater is He who is in us than he who is in the world.”** They may think that you are helpless, but Christ says, **“it will be given you in that hour what you should speak; for it is not you who speak, but the Spirit of your Father who speaks in you.”**

**2. The vision of those not captured is a winning vision (vv. 22-26)**

**a) The promised deliverance enables endurance (v. 22)**

Verse 22 promises, **“But he who endures to the end will be saved.”** The end is not every Christian being killed. Yes some will be killed. But the end is our victory and deliverance. In *any* army, a knowledge of certain defeat makes it very difficult to endure, whereas a promised deliverance can give people enormous endurance.

**b) The promised reinforcements keep us mobilized (v. 23)**

The promised reinforcements also helped keep them mobilized. Verse 23 says, **“But when they persecute you in this city, flee to another. For assuredly, I say to you, you will not have gone through the cities of Israel before the Son of Man comes.”** Before these apostles had even finished evangelizing throughout Israel, the Son of Man came in judgment on that nation in the seven year tribulation of 66-73 AD. Certainly He sent His heavenly armies, and The Romans, the Jewish eyewitness Josephus, and the Talmud all speak of everyone seeing heavenly armies rushing through the air. But Christ elsewhere indicated that He was going to be sending the Roman armies against Israel as well. He would use these reinforcements to

knock the wolves off the backs of the church. It's just another promise that they are on the winning side.

- c) **Our Leader's experience gives us encouragement (vv. 24-25)**
- d) **No need to fear (v. 26)**
- e) **Convinced that falsehood will be exposed and truth will triumph (v. 26)**

Verse 26 says that truth will ultimately triumph in the world: **“Therefore do not fear them, for there is nothing covered that will not be revealed, and hidden that will not be known.”** The conspiracies of falsehood will eventually be exposed. Are there conspiracies of falsehood in America? Yes there are. From the time of Jesus to the present there have been various organizations that have tried to conspire to bring about a one-world government. Sometimes new organizations spring up, and sometimes old ones morph into new ones. But there has been one frustrating setback after another to these humanists. Why? Because God knows how to expose their secrets and frustrate their plans. If you read the history of conspiracies from a Providential perspective, it will give you confidence that the traitors in Washington, DC who are doing everything in their power to overthrow our republic can be overturned and hung on their own gallows just like Haman was hung on his own gallows in the book of Esther. May it be so Lord Jesus!

I think of that Tamil guerilla who said, ““Please help our cause. When we are in power, we will remember you.” She was convinced that she was in a cause worth dying for and she was convinced that it was a cause that was guaranteed to win. She felt sorry for her executioner who didn't understand what he was facing. Well, in a much greater way, we have every reason to be convinced that we have a cause worth dying for and it is a cause that will win. According to Psalm 72, Isaiah 9, Isaiah 42, the Great Commission and so many other passages, there is coming a day when every nation will be a Christian nation, and Christ will be saying, “Larry & Julie, you had a part in this glorious victory. Toby and Josh, you had a part in advancing God's kingdom.”

There are two more points that we must master that we will look at in the next two sermons, Lord willing. We must learn how to tame our fears and we must learn how to experience the perks of being witnesses for our

great and awesome king. When you see the blessings, it far outweighs the costs of being a witness and makes it all worthwhile.

But for today, I encourage you to have a greater reason for witnessing than that Tamil guerilla had. We have a greater cause, a greater king, greater methods, greater resources, greater outcomes, and are indwelt by the very Holy Spirit who is needed to convict the world of sin, of righteousness and of judgment. Brian and Donald are training many of you in how to do Kamikaze evangelism. Last week we saw that for most of us, that may only be 5-10% of our total evangelistic success. We saw that our oikos was where most of our focus should be, and Ray Comfort's methods can be helpful there too. But today's message is simply a call to not neglect the 5-10% of the opportunities that God will open up to you to evangelize wolves. Commit yourselves to embrace the cost of dealing with wolves and be convinced that despite what opposition you may face, that you are on the winning side. Amen.

(to be continued in future weeks)

### **III. Know How to Put Off Fear**

### **IV. Experiencing the Perks of Being a Witness**

# Ready to Face Opposition

## Matthew 10:16-26

By Phillip G. Kayser at DCC on 7-18-2010

### Introduction

- I. Know The Cost Of Being A Witness: We Should Expect That Soldiers Are Sent Into Danger (vv. 16-26)
  - A. Christ Sent Them Knowing Some Would Be Killed (v. 16,21)
  - B. Christ Sent Them Knowing Some Would Be Captured, Be Tried, and Suffer Pain (v. 17)
  - C. Christ Sent Them Knowing Some Would Be Interrogated (v. 18)
  - D. Christ Sent Them Knowing Some Would Be Betrayed (v. 21)
  - E. Christ Sent Them Knowing They Would Be Hated (v. 22)
  - F. He Has Sent Them Knowing They Would Be Misunderstood And Slandered (v. 25)
- II. Know The Vision For Being A Witness: Our Goal Must Be To Win, Not To Passively Die As Martyrs (vv. 15-26)
  - A. Winning Armies are on the Winning Side (v. 15)
  - B. Winning Armies Seek To Minimize Their Losses
    1. We are to be wise & holy (v. 16b)
    2. We are to beware of men (v. 17)
    3. We are to try to avoid capture (v. 23)
  - C. Winning Armies Seek To Win
    1. The vision of those captured is a winning vision (vv. 18-20)
      - a) Captured for Christ's sake (v. 18a)
      - b) converting the captors (v. 18b)
      - c) Boldness of speech (v. 19a)
      - d) Convinced of our superior strength, by the Spirit (v. 19-20)
    2. The vision of those not captured is a winning vision (vv. 22-26)
      - a) The promised deliverance enables endurance (v. 22)
      - b) The promised reinforcements keep us mobilized (v. 23)
      - c) Our Leader's experience gives us encouragement (vv. 24-25)
      - d) No need to fear (v. 26)
      - e) Convinced that falsehood will be exposed and truth will triumph (v. 26)



(next week)

III. Know How to Put Off Fear

IV. Experience the Perks of Being a Witness