

## **INTRODUCE**

Good morning church! My name is Kyle, if I haven't met you yet, I'm the Youth and Digital Minister here at Fathom Church.

I am really excited to be up here today and have the opportunity to speak on our next section of Matthew, so if you have your Bibles with you this morning go ahead and open them up to Matthew chapter 10, that's where we will be this morning. If you don't have your Bible open up a Bible app on your phone or tablet, whatever works best for you.

## **INTRODUCTION: LET'S GET READY TO RUMBLE**

While you're turning there, the last time I was up here at the very beginning of the year, I told you about my son Austin who is now almost 5, and how he is really into fighting...pretend fighting, but really just wrestling.

Who would win between this guy and that guy...

How he would stand in front of me wherever I'm at and say "Let's do this" and then just charge at me and start wrestling me

- Well not a lot has changed
- And actually, if anything it has escalated
  - Lately, instead of getting a warning of "Let's go Dad"
  - I haven't been getting any warning at all, I mean AT ALL
- If I'm laying on the couch next to him
- all of us watching a show on the TV
- I'm relaxing when all the sudden SMACK!
- He just decides to smack me in the stomach...no warning!
- Or when I'm getting something in the refrigerator

- And i'm searching for something deep in there and he comes up behind me and punches right in the side...no warning!
- Or like just the other day I was bending down to get my shoes out of the closet
- He sneaks up behind me and jumps on my back...no warning!

I have to consistently remind him, "Hey bud you gotta give me a warning."

I mean I love playing with him, wrestling with him and everything I really do, I just need a warning, he's getting too sneaky with all this.

## TRANSITION

I don't know about you, church but I like to be prepared, I like to be ready for things. And especially if it's something serious or something maybe even dangerous, I like to be warned so I can be ready.

This next section we're going to go through today in Matthew does exactly that.

- Jesus gives us warning on what's to come
- for those who are in Christ and
- how we need to be ready!
- how we need to be ready to fight

So Pastor Chris has been having all of these catchy, cute titles to his sermons lately and so I thought well why can't I??

So I'll jump on the train too and I'm calling this sermon **SLIDE LET'S GET READY TO RUMBLE.**

Because as Jesus is now sending out his closest friends on mission, as he is sending us all out on our mission to share the Good News of his Gospel message today, he warns us of a fight that's coming, he wants us to be ready, and not just be ready, but to know how to respond.

And I mean, if Jesus is warning us about something...I think we need to drop what we're doing and really pay attention.

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## UNIVERSAL MISSION

But before we get into the text I want to just remind us where we're at here in Matthew chapter 10...

- Last week Chris talked to us about mission
- How Jesus sent out his disciples, his followers
- to the Jews first
- To *evangelize*
- To run the race, run the race with authority, run the race with a crew, and run the race where we're at
- Jesus has called us believers to Dig Deep & Reach Wide, that's what we're about here at Fathom.

Now, like last week's section, this section of Matthew 10 is also about evangelism and mission,

- But as last week Jesus called his disciples to go to the Jews first

- In this next section Jesus is calling his disciples to a more Universal Mission
- Sending them out to the Gentiles, to the rest of the world, to the ends of the earth.
- He is highlighting, Ok this also isn't just for those who believe in me now...
- It's time to tell everyone!

## TRANSITION

Remember church, YOU are the plan!

- YOU are God's plan to share the love of Christ to those in your life, where you live, where you go to school, where you work and play.

BUT

If you didn't know this already...

- this plan doesn't come wrapped in a pretty little bow
- this mission doesn't come easy like the first round of the playoffs for the Avalanche...it's more like the Rockies season! It's rough.
- this mission of being the hands and feet of Jesus Christ, in a broken and sinful world, is not going to be easy.
- In fact, Jesus promises us that we are in for a fight! So it's time to get ready to rumble!

So let's go ahead and start reading the warning Jesus gives his disciples and to us...so we'll start at Chapter 10 verse 16

## **MATTHEW 10:16**

[16] "Behold, I am sending you out as sheep in the midst of wolves, so be wise as serpents and innocent as doves."

### **EXPLAIN: SENDING US OUT**

So, first we have Jesus speaking here, right after he has charged his disciples to go out amongst the Jews

- Healing the sick
- Raising the dead
- Cleansing the lepers
- Casting out demons

And now we get to the verse that every Christian parent loves to pray over their child as they head on out to public school right?

*"I am sending you out as sheep in the midst of wolves..."*

Joking...but kind of not! Hey we're gonna have a public school kid this fall so you bet I'll be sending him into the wolves there!

But let's break this down a little bit, even before we get to the sheep and the wolves stuff we have Jesus here saying to his disciples, "I am SENDING you out..."

- We have a present tense of “sending” them out, meaning that we as followers of Christ today, in 2021, in Littleton Colorado, can read this and know that Jesus is speaking to us as well...right now. This is relevant for us!
- “I am sending you out” Kyle into Littleton.
- “I am sending you out” right now
- “I am sending you out” as you’re reading this.

It’s a reminder to us every single time we read this, that this mission is an ongoing thing. It was for them when they watched Jesus speaking these words, and it’s for us 2000 plus years later... it’s a NOW thing, church!

And we will see a little reminder of that again at the end of this section as well.

## **EXPLAIN: SHEEP/WOLVES**

And so Jesus says he’s sending them out, and sending us out,

*“As sheep in the midst of wolves, to be wise as serpents and innocent as doves.”*

So after Jesus says he’s sending them all out, now he tells them what they’re gonna face, what’s out there for them as followers of Him.

Which is not pretty...

They are like sheep

- Not the first time they were referenced as sheep

- If we remember just back in chapter 9 "When Jesus saw the crowds he had compassion on them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd"
- They were like sheep, going into a world even beyond the Jews and into the land of wolves
- We are the sheep, sent into a world of wolves
- If you don't see how that's a bad thing...go flip on Planet Earth or the Discovery channel when you get home, find the one about the food chain and tell me the sheep are not in trouble!
  - Right? And by the way, probably not the best idea
  - flipping through the TV channels with young ones
  - and stumbling upon one of those shows...
  - yeah you've got maybe a 50/50 chance of seeing something eating something else and scaring your child for life. Just a warning

Jesus is letting them know, this is how it's going to be. It's going to be dangerous out there. You are definitely not at the top of the food chain if you're following me...

You will be the ones that everyone is gunning for.

Just so you know, you will have people out there waiting to tear you apart, waiting to devour you.

- 1 Peter 5:8 reminds us of that danger too when Peter says "Be sober-minded; be watchful. Your adversary the

devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour.”

- So whether it's a lion or wolves, either way, it's not the best. It's not gonna be easy, it will be hard.
- We are sheep in the midst of wolves

## **EXPLAIN: SERPENT/DOVES**

[16] “Behold, I am sending you out as sheep in the midst of wolves, so be wise as serpents and innocent as doves.”

Now after Jesus promises that this isn't going to be easy, saying there will be persecution, there will be adversity, there will be problems and suffering because you are choosing to follow me...

Here is how I want you to respond. Here is how you need to react.

And I want to spend some time really dissecting how Jesus wants us to react to persecution, when things don't go our way, when we are hated for following Him.

First, he says “Be wise as serpents”

- In Genesis 3:1 the serpent is described as the “most crafty” of the animals
- Now does that mean be a liar and and be sneaky, no
- Jesus tells us to be wise, be smart, be carefully calculated in our response to the hate we will receive because of him.



Jesus is calling for our behavior to persecution to be that which will represent the gospel in such a way as to bring people to God without provoking them. Not push them further away!

Don't allow your response to things to be a deterrent for those who need to hear the gospel from you.

So be wise as serpents.

And on the flipside of that Jesus says also to be "innocent as doves"

- Now does that mean to lay down, to not stand up for what you believe, to just let the hate and persecution steam roll you and not to do anything? No, of course not.
- But...it means that our response should be gentle, should be kind, should be loving.

So let me make my first point about how I believe Jesus is calling us to be ready to rumble when persecution comes our way...

And that is I believe God wants us to be **SLIDE HUNGRY & HUMBLE**

In the face of hate for being a Christian, God wants us to get after it, he wants us to be hungry and wise and calculated.

- He has given us his authority, we know that already from the past few weeks, so he wants us to be smart about our response...to *have* a response.
- BUT, he wants us to be humble, to be humble in character, to be innocent and kind and loving.
- We need to be both of these things, church!

- Be Hungry & Humble

“Well, I was kind when I saw that hateful comment on Facebook directed towards Christians and I actually didn't respond to it (even though I thought of what my response would have been in my head)”

- Yeah, great, but then when you had a similar conversation with your friend who believes the opposite of you and blames Christians for all the bad in the world, you blew up at him and cussed him out!

“Well I posted a very loving Bible verse on my Instagram so my non-Christian friends could see it and know what I truly stand for.”

- Oh ok sure, but then what about when one of those friends posted that really negative article directed at Christians and you decided to write two paragraphs on the post telling them how terrible of a person they were for judging you?

We can't just be one or the other, Jesus tells us our response to the hate we are promised to receive for loving and following him while out in the world is to be wise as a serpent AND innocent as a dove. Both.

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## **MATTHEW 10:17-18**

Now let's move on to more warnings that Jesus gives of things that will happen because we follow him, verse 17...

[17] Beware of men, for they will deliver you over to courts and flog you in their synagogues, [18] and you will be dragged before governors and kings for my sake, to bear witness before them and the Gentiles.

## EXPLAIN

Now here we have Jesus again reiterating that this mission is now both for the Jews AND the Gentiles.

- His examples of persecution here for both groups being “they will deliver you over to courts and flog you in their synagogues” That was directed at the Jews because they would’ve understood that persecution.
- And then he adds on “you will be dragged before governors and kings for my sake”, an example that the Gentiles would’ve understood.

But even though Jesus again talks about the bad that is for sure coming their way...he reminds them of what all this is for.

[18b] to bear witness before them and the Gentiles.

All of this, all of this hate you will receive for loving me, all of this rejection and persecution and hurt you will receive from the world because of me..

- Is to bear witness
- To share the gospel message
- To show them love...to show them ME

- *“You will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.”* It says in Acts chapter 1.
- All of this to share more of me!
- Jesus is promising them that he will turn any situation around as an opportunity for the gospel.

Have you been there?

- Have you ever been in a situation of hurt, or persecution, or just like things really aren't going your way
- And then have you ever just sat in that moment and thought, “Oh Jesus is going to use this for good”
  - Yeah, rarely me too!
  - I'll admit, it is hard to know what God is doing through a situation of pain and hurt when you're neck deep in it.
  - It's hard to understand and even believe that what you're going through will turn out for the good of God's Kingdom. I know trust me.
  - That is hard. But Christ promises us that these times...
  - That are coming
  - Will hurt...But, through our steadfast faith and perseverance, we will be witnesses to the world of what Christ is doing in us and through us!
  - That's a promise, church.

**MATTHEW 10:19-20**

Let's keep going and hear another promise Jesus gives us in the face of hate and persecution for following him, let's look at verses 19 and 20...

[19] When they deliver you over, do not be anxious how you are to speak or what you are to say, for what you are to say will be given to you in that hour. [20] For it is not you who speak, but the Spirit of your Father speaking through you.

Jesus starts this next section of what our response should be when we as sheep are sent out amidst the wolves in this world by saying "When they deliver you over..."

- Again, *When*
- Not if, but when they do,
- Jesus is saying, if you go out on mission, you will face opposition. It's an inevitable event (and remember your mission being...your life of following Christ, wherever you are, wherever God has sent you)

*"When they deliver you over, do not be anxious how you are to speak or what you are to say, for what you are to say will be given to you in that hour. For it is not you who speak, but the Spirit of your Father speaking through you."*

**ILLUSTRATION: ENNEAGRAM 9**

I don't know if you've ever heard of this little thing called the Enneagram. Anyone? Yeah? If you're younger than 40 you probably know about this

- It's like the new, hip, personality test. New-ish I guess, it was first sort of released out there in 1915...so yeah new-ish
- But of course like all those things it's really only become pretty popular over the last maybe year or two
- It's a 9 point geometric model to help identify 9 different personality types. Ok, that's the simple way of saying it
- Those of you who know it, know it's a lot deeper than that

But I gotta be honest with you, I really hate personality tests, and I'm sure I'm not the only one, right.

I just hate being labeled, and put in a box and told who I am and this is what makes you tick and all that.

- But I gotta be honest again, I really like this personality test!
- I do, over the past year or so I've really enjoyed diving into the Enneagram more
  - Learning that it's not just a personality test, it really is great for learning how you best communicate with others, how others in different parts of the 9 types would communicate best with you, how you best respond to things like difficult situations, and in what situations you best thrive in.
  - It's actually been really eye-opening for me

- My wife and I have really enjoyed it, we started off the Men's Cohort here by reading a book about the Enneagram
- It's a really great tool to help you grow as a person, not the be all end all! But it's a interesting and fun tool

Now, full disclosure, I'm a 9 on the Enneagram

- And again for those who know, you know what that means, but for those that have no idea
  - That means I'm the Peacemaker. I'm labeled as the Peacemaker.
    - So, definitely writing a sermon on fighting and being prepared for conflict...really suits me well
- But one of the main staples to a 9 on the Enneagram, the Peacemaker, is that...you guessed it...they like peace!
  - I like my peace
  - I like when others are peaceful around me
  - I like to try and create peace
  - My wife and kids know, Dad needs his peace and quiet
  - I don't like conflict!
  - I will avoid conflict at all costs
  - Arguing and debating really just makes my skin crawl
  - I hate it
- If I'm put in a situation where I am in a conflict or argument or whatever, I hate it because I have no idea what to say...
  - I wish so bad that there was a script for people like me that would just pop up when conflict comes up are and

argument is brewing, so I could just know what to say to dissolve the situation, have peace, and move on!

- I really do!

These two verses for someone like me put me at peace even more!

Jesus says don't be anxious with how you will speak when these tough situations come to you

- Well, that's easy for you to say Jesus
- Why should I not be freaking out on what to say when someone attacks me for being a Christian, why should I not just curl up into a ball of worry and anxiety and just run away?
- *"For what you are to say will be given to you in that hour"*
- *"For it is not you who speak"* THANK GOODNESS
- *"But the Spirit of your Father" the Holy Spirit "speaking through you."*

In the face of persecution, in the face of hate and ridicule, Jesus reminds us, those who are in Christ...

- Hey, remember my Spirit is with you.

And as my first point was to be Hungry & Humble in order to get ready to rumble, get ready for the fight...

My second point is this...

- Remember the Holy Spirit **SLIDE HOLY SPIRIT**
- The Spirit of God is within you



- And not only is he with you...he will speak for you, you *will* have the right things to say in that moment because he will give you the right things to say.

Church, I think as believers, as those of us who are in Christ Jesus, I think we sometimes forget that we are currently, right now, filled with His Spirit.

And I think there's some of us that do remember the Holy Spirit lives in us, but we don't remember

- that He is fighting for us
- That he is there, ready
- Ready to fight on our behalf
- Ready to help us with the right words to say

We need to remember that the Spirit of God is active in us right now!

That the Holy Spirit is an ongoing active relationship that we have with God the Father at all times!

Christian we need to remember that the power of the Holy Spirit coming upon us isn't just a one and done sort of thing that happens when we are saved and born again!

- It's an ongoing, active relationship, that is promised to us to be our right words when we need them.
- Jesus promised if we follow him this will be an ongoing fight against hatred toward us, so it's a good thing we have the ongoing manifestation of God within us ready to back us up in the Holy Spirit.

So just as I'm an Enneagram 9 and I would hate to be in conflict cause I don't want to say the wrong thing or make things worse, I just want peace, but it all just freaks me out...

I can have peace knowing I don't have to worry about what to say in those situations. I've got the Spirit in me, speaking through me, and that gives me the peace I need deep inside...no matter what happens next.

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### **MATTHEW 10:21-22**

Ok let's go ahead and start wrapping this up and look at the next couple verses starting with verse 21

[21] Brother will deliver brother over to death, and the father his child, and children will rise against parents and have them put to death, [22] and you will be hated by all for my name's sake. But the one who endures to the end will be saved.

Alright, as harsh as these verses are...they're true.

- They're true, what Jesus is saying here is
- Hey if you didn't hear me the first time that you're going out amidst the wolves, and you *will* face pain and trouble because of following me
- Just to make sure you know the severity of this

- This opposition isn't just going to be coming from the world, from the strangers you pass on the street, from the people commenting on the internet hateful messages towards those who call themselves Christians...
  - This will also hit even closer to home
  - *“Brother will deliver brother over to death, and the father his child, and children will rise against parents and have them put to death”*

You have to understand, in the first century the nuclear family was so much tighter than it is today.

- So Jesus now talking about this persecution and pain and this fight will be coming from actual family members,
- That hit differently for them
- Especially for those who came from a family who wasn't following Christ and they made the decision to follow him and become a Christian
  - Professor and Theologian D.A. Carson puts it this was in his book *When Jesus Confronts the World* by saying, *“Conversion would bring shame on the family, and in a shame-based culture this would be deemed betrayal.”*

Now maybe you have a family that believes in Jesus like you do so these words to you might not hold that much weight,

Hey I'm extremely blessed to have an amazing family of Christ followers, but others don't. That's the hatred they face every day.

- Many Christians back then and even today experience their own family rejecting them for following Christ.
- And my question to you today church is, even if you're family is also believers and followers of Christ...
- Would it be worth that?
  - If this would happen to you that your closest family, brother, sister, mom, dad, child...
  - Rejected you for following Christ
  - Would it be worth it?
  - Would it be worth calling Jesus Christ your King and Savior, if it meant you lost those closest to you?
  - Would it be worth it?

## CHURCH ISN'T COOL

[22] and you will be hated by all for my name's sake. But the one who endures to the end will be saved.

The reality with all of this church

The reality of choosing to follow Christ with your entire life

Is you will be hated. **SLIDE HATED** You will be hated.

The world hates you right now for choosing to put your life in Jesus Christ.

Listen church,

- You will be hated...for your stance on things, your belief about certain things.

- You will be hated for believing in hell, believing there's a literal hell that is talked about in the Bible. That's something that people just don't like to hear, right.
- You will be hated for your belief and stance on gay marriage.
- You will be hated for believing that there's only one way to eternal life in heaven and that's through Jesus Christ.
- These aren't popular stances!

You will be hated for this.

But...You know what that doesn't mean?? Being hated for these things doesn't mean you can be a jerk!

This doesn't mean that being hated means you get to be a jerk back!

Doesn't mean we should be returning hate with more hate!

- I'll be honest church, especially over this last year I think many Christians have responded to certain things, certain hate or anger, the completely wrong way!
- I've seen way too much anger and hate and frankly just Christian jerks out there thinking that that's the way to respond.
- Which is not what we are called to do.
- We should be thinking more wisely about a response to hate, we should be careful with our words.

And I think some of us need to hear just that today...You will be HATED...but don't be a jerk! Stop being a jerk! Stop responding to the hate and evil you might be receiving with more hate and evil just to defend Christ, just to make a point.

Listen, a couple weeks ago Chris was up here talking about how this isn't the popular thing to do!

- Being a Christian isn't getting more popular
- You will be hated by the world for loving Jesus
- Hey we see this all the time where churches are trying to make Christianity "cool". Trying to make going to church the cool thing to do, trying to make it all hip and popular
  - Listen, I came from the generation when churches did this! When churches did everything they could do to be cool and not be hated.
  - When they would try to be so attractive to the younger generation because they were so afraid that kids wouldn't think the real Jesus was cool enough.
  - So they would try to do everything they could to make this all seem hip, make this all look cool. And hey churches still do this today!
- But hear me church,
- If you stand for Christ,
- If you stand up and fight for Jesus
- If you stand up for those things you believe Jesus would say are wrong
- If we as a church stood on truth and the gospel
  - Listen, You WILL be hated
  - Hey, if we're doing this thing right, we will be hated by the world.

- The minute we try and avoid being hated because it's not popular or because someone else said it's not the cool thing to do...is the minute that we fail in our mission that Jesus called us to.

Stop trying to make Jesus cool. Stop worrying about whether this is the popular thing to do or not, cause trust me, in today's world...it's not.

You will be hated. It comes with the territory of knowing and following Christ.

BUT...the rest of verse 22

**“But the one who endures to the end will be saved.”**

### **MATTHEW 10:23**

So where is that end? How far does this persecution go? When will this be over? I have taken such a beating already from friends, family, coworkers, strangers on the internet, our government...

When will this just end?

Verse 23

**[23] When they persecute you in one town, flee to the next, for truly, I say to you, you will not have gone through all the towns of Israel before the Son of Man comes.**

When will this hate for those who are in Christ end?

Is there an end to persecution?

I mean the short easy answer is no. It won't end.

And there's no running away from it either.

- He says when they persecute you and hate you in one town, just flee to the next town. And the next, and the next...
- Now this doesn't mean we run from persecution! This doesn't mean we give up and just try and find the most comfortable place to live and work where no one is going to question our beliefs.
- Did this mean for his disciples that when it got hard they needed to run away? No
  - For them and for us as we are sent out by Jesus into the mission field, and when we hit a wall of hate and persecution, we are called to continue on. To keep going.
  - To go to the next town, or the next job, or the next family member and continue our mission of sharing the good news of the gospel.
  - This last verse, the emphasis is not on fleeing persecution but on the continuance of the mission in sharing the love of Christ to the world.

## CONCLUSION

So church,

- Are you ready? Are you ready for the fight?
- Cause it's coming if it isn't at your doorstep already



- As we prepare for the wolves, are you ready to respond by being Hungry AND Humble, like snakes and doves?
- Are you ready to let the Spirit of the living God speak for you to those who oppose you?
- Are you ready for this fight all the way to the end?
- Is it worth being hated?

**John 15:18**

[18] "If the world hates you, know that it has hated me before it hated you. [19] If you were of the world, the world would love you as its own; but because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you."

I hope we can go today in confidence knowing that we have a Savior who was hated first and who will be in our corner as we continue this fight, this race, set in front of us.

Let's pray now! **LYRICS SLIDE W/PADS**

## RESPONSES:

Well, every week at Fathom we respond in 4 ways:

- COMMUNION – THE LORD’S SUPPER (we do this every week, and we ask if you are not a Christian joining us to just abstain from communion. We are so glad you’re here and you are welcome here but we believe communion is for those who have put their life in Jesus Christ).
- GIVING TITHES & OFFERINGS – [fathomchurch.org/give](http://fathomchurch.org/give) (also if this is not your home church than don’t feel obligated to give at all, just be our guest today)
- PRAYER - [fathomchurch.org/prayer](http://fathomchurch.org/prayer)
- SINGING

So, I’m going to read the Words of Institution from the Apostle Paul, we’ll take communion, and then we’ll sing:

### 1 CORINTHIANS 11:23–26 – WORDS OF INSTITUTION

[23] For I received from the Lord what I also delivered to you, that the Lord Jesus on the night when he was betrayed took bread, [24] and when he had given thanks, he broke it, and said, “This is my body, which is for you. Do this in remembrance of me.” **TAKE**

[25] In the same way also he took the cup, after supper, saying, “This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me.” **TAKE**

[26] For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.

Love you church, let's stand and sing together.