

**MINISTRY BY MAIL**  
**Lutheran Conference of Confessional Fellowship**  
[www.lutheranlccf.org](http://www.lutheranlccf.org)  
**Third Sunday In Lent, March 23, 2025**

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(Hymns found in The Lutheran Hymnal, CPH, 1941)

Hymns: 437, 427:3, 263, 421, 552:6-8.

Lessons: Isaiah 43:1-15, Hebrews 11:32-12:3, Matthew 10: 1-28.

Sermon Text: Matthew 10:26-28.

Sermon by Pastor Robert Mehltrittter

In the name of Jesus Christ, Dear Fellow Redeemed,

Aren't we living in an age of great fear?

People are afraid of what is going to happen tomorrow. People are afraid of their personal economic situation. People are afraid of their future personal health. People are afraid of violence. People are afraid of what is going to happen to our country and in the world. People are afraid of what the weather will bring. People are afraid of what will happen to our environment, our air, water, and even our soil, the food we eat, and all sorts of things. People are afraid of war in the world and fighting even our own country. And the list could go on and on. If you were to sit down this afternoon and make a list of things that stir even a little fear in you or others, it would be a very long list.

But this sermon isn't just a list of fears. This is a sermon about overcoming fears. This is about who and what we should really be afraid of. God's got it! Fear not. Don't be afraid.

**DO NOT FEAR THE ENEMIES OF CHRIST!**

- 1. Jesus lists many of his enemies, who are also the enemies of believers,**
- 2. And Jesus assures us that we are not to be afraid of his enemies.**

Chapter 10 of Matthew's Gospel is full of many ideas, as you heard in our Gospel lesson. It begins with Jesus sending his twelve apostles out to proclaim the Gospel message especially to the people of Israel. They are to teach and preach, to tell the message of eternal salvation through faith in him.

Matthew ended the previous chapter with the words *"Jesus went through all the towns and villages, teaching in their synagogues, proclaiming the good news of the kingdom and healing every disease and sickness. When he saw the crowds, he had compassion on them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. Then he said to his disciples, 'The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field.'"* (Matthew 9:35–38, NIV)

Then *"He called his twelve disciples to him and gave them authority to drive out evil spirits and to heal every disease and sickness."* (Matthew 10:1, NIV84) He gave them power over unclean spirits and powers of healing. The authority to heal was especially necessary for the work in Galilee, since Jesus himself had done much miraculous healing in Galilee and people would naturally demand some proof of their authority if they claimed to be teaching what God says.

This chapter contains a lengthy speech by Jesus to his disciples as he sent them out to heal, to perform miracles, and especially to tell about the good news of the forgiveness of sins and eternal salvation.

He warned his disciples about all the servants of Satan in the world.

He bluntly warned his apostles *"I am sending you out like sheep among wolves. .... 'Be on your guard against men; they will hand you over to the local councils and flog you in their synagogues.'"* (Matthew 10:16–17, NIV84) They are to expect that people will not want to hear their message about the Savior.

He tells them they will not be welcome everywhere. He says *"If anyone will not welcome you or listen to your words, shake the dust off your feet when you leave that home or town. I tell you the truth, it will be*

*more bearable for Sodom and Gomorrah on the day of judgment than for that town. I am sending you out like sheep among wolves.”* (Matthew 10:14–16, NIV84)

He tells them *“Be on your guard against men; they will hand you over to the local councils and flog you in their synagogues.”* (Matthew 10:17, NIV84) Not only will their fellow Israelites seek to harm them, beating them even in their places of worship, but others with greater authority than their fellow Jews will arrest them. He tells them that *“On my account you will be brought before governors and kings.”* (Matthew 10:18, NIV84) But while all these things are happening to them, they are to be *“witnesses to them and to the Gentiles.”* (Matthew 10:18, NIV84)

He tells them they will be arrested and severely beaten – flogged!

He tells them they will be persecuted.

He warns them *“All men will hate you because of me.”* (Matthew 10:22, NIV84)

He tells them of terrible things that will happen. *“Brother will betray brother to death, and a father his child; children will rebel against their parents and have them put to death.”* (Matthew 10:21, NIV84) Even in our lifetimes, some of us have experienced discord, controversies, separations and even hatred in our families because of the stand we have taken on Scripture, because of our confession of faith. We have been especially blessed that none of our immediate fellowship has yet been put to death!

He tells them that just as he has been and will again be called Beelezebub, that is, the prince of devils, his followers will also be called devils, and servants of Satan.

But he gives them the beautiful words of comfort: *“So do not be afraid of them.”* Do not be afraid. Do not fear.

Do not be afraid of men. He specifically says do not be afraid of those who can only kill your body. After all, after this human, earthly body is destroyed, is decayed in death, everyone who believes in Jesus as Savior will be taken to heaven. Our hope and confidence is expressed in the words of Job: *“I know that my Redeemer lives, and that in the end he will stand upon the earth. And after my skin has been destroyed, yet in my flesh I will see God; I myself will see him with my own eyes—I, and not another. How my heart yearns within me!”* (Job 19:25–27, NIV84) In this very chapter, Jesus tells us *“All men will hate you because of me, but he who stands firm to the end will be saved.”* (Matthew 10:22, NIV84)

Because we are human and sin daily and much, our sinful flesh will certainly be afraid of God.

But how many times and how many places in Scripture doesn’t God tell us not to be afraid! One writer has found at least 85 passages in the King James Version of the Bible that tell us, that warn us not to be anxious, but to take courage and to find comfort in the Scriptures. Do not fear but trust in God.

Especially when our children were small, we often had to comfort them when they were afraid of something. What words of comfort did you Christian parents use? The best words were words from Jesus about how he loved them and will take care of them.

The words I want to remind you of today are God speaking to you for today, and for tonight and for tomorrow, if you aren’t taken to heaven by then!

Scripture says much more in this chapter, but today we concentrate on Jesus’ words: *“So do not be afraid of them.”* And *“do not be afraid of those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. Rather, be afraid of the One who can destroy both soul and body in hell.”*

The New Testament uses the word “fear” in two senses, and its meaning is based on the context of the passage. This passage uses the word to mean be afraid of, to be frightened, to be terrified, to be fearful.

Yes, our sinful flesh is terrified of God because of the punishment God promises for sin. Our sinful flesh is afraid of God. Satan and all his evil angels are terrified, too, afraid of God because they know he will destroy them in hell. And deep down, couldn’t that be said of everyone who does not believe in Jesus as Savior? Isn’t there something in every unconverted human being that is terribly afraid? Afraid of death, afraid of illnesses, afraid of what is after death? Of course, some may boldly say that they think of death as a sort of restful sleep, a peaceful “time”. But God’s word gives a different picture. After death there is either eternal damnation in hell or eternal blessedness in heaven. Only one of two things will happen. One is eternal damnation and suffering in a lake of burning fire, as we read in the book of Revelation. That is complete separation from God and everything

good. Do you remember the parable of the rich man and the beggar Lazarus? The rich man was in torment in hell, where he imagined that even a drop of water on his tongue would give him some relief.

The second is being taken to a place of unending glory, happiness and peace with God forever in heaven.

The other use of the word “fear” is the way Luther uses it in his explanation of the commandments where we are “to fear and love God”, meaning to have respect for, to honor, to place his word and command above the word and command of anyone else.

Jesus says ‘do not be afraid of men. ***“Do not be afraid of those who kill the body.”*** And isn’t it hard to not be afraid of those who can harm our bodies, to say nothing of kill our bodies?

But all our enemies, even Satan, can do no more than kill our bodies. That may be a terrible thing in itself, but in that very moment when they seem to be prevailing over us we shall victoriously escape from them, and our Lord and Savior will receive our souls unto himself into the glories of heaven.

So it is really foolish to be concerned primarily about escaping from our earthly persecutors and allowing them to intimidate us. We rather want to be concerned about how we stand before our holy God, for he is the only one who can cast both soul and body into hell. God is our judge, not Satan, and he assures all who believe in him that he has prepared a place for them in heaven. Jesus, the Good Shepherd, promises that no one will be able to pluck believers out of his hand.

How can we not be afraid? Well, you can look for comfort. Where? In the words of our God. We find example after example of God rescuing his believing children from things that would frighten them.

We could start with Eve and Adam who were afraid God would punish them for their disobedience. But God promised a Redeemer. We could go on to Abel whose brother took his earthly life although ***“The Lord looked with favor on Abel and his offering,”*** (Genesis 4:4, NIV84). We could go all the way through the Scriptures to the book of Revelation, where, for example, God promises ***“Be faithful, even to the point of death, and I will give you the crown of life.”*** (Revelation 2:10, NIV84) And he will give his believing children to drink ***“from the spring of the water of life.”*** (Revelation 21:6, NIV84)

Where is your trust? What do you put your confidence in? ***“Do not put your trust in princes, in mortal men, who cannot save.”*** (Psalm 146:3, NIV84) We certainly can’t put our trust and confidence in men and what they promise to do for us. We certainly can’t rely on words of men for lasting comfort.

We must put our trust and confidence in the words of God. And the words of God have been revealed in language we can read and understand.

Open your hearts to what the word of God says and ***“Do not be afraid of those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul.” “Do not be afraid of them.” “Thus saith the Lord that created thee, ... Fear not: for I have redeemed thee, I have called thee by thy name; thou art mine. When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; And through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee: .... For I am the Lord thy God, The Holy One of Israel, thy Saviour.”*** (Isaiah 43:1–3, KJV)

And remember that these words weren’t only given to you. Jesus tells us: ***“you will be my witnesses.”*** (Acts 1:8, NIV84) You can share with anyone such beautiful words of comfort from the Word of God! Amen.

The LCCF has made a study of passages in Scripture which tell us ***“Fear Not!”***. To receive this list of passages in the King James Version and in the New International Version of 1984, please contact us through Pastor Mehltrittter’s email address, telephone, or address on the CONTACTS page of our website, [www.lutheranlccf.org](http://www.lutheranlccf.org).