



Pentecost 5 – June 27/28/29, 2026

Preacher: Pastor Scott Oelhafen

Sermon Theme: No Fear

Of those who oppose us 2. That the LORD has forgotten us

Sermon Text: Matthew 10: 24-35

**<sup>24</sup> “The student is not above the teacher, nor a servant above his master. <sup>25</sup> It is enough for students to be like their teachers, and servants like their masters. If the head of the house has been called Beelzebul, how much more the members of his household! <sup>26</sup> “So do not be afraid of them, for there is nothing concealed that will not be disclosed, or hidden that will not be made known. <sup>27</sup> What I tell you in the dark, speak in the daylight; what is whispered in your ear, proclaim from the roofs. <sup>28</sup> 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. <sup>29</sup> Are not two sparrows sold for a penny? Yet not one of them will fall to the ground outside your Father’s care. <sup>30</sup> And even the very hairs of your head are all numbered. <sup>31</sup> So don’t be afraid; you are worth more than many sparrows. <sup>32</sup> “Whoever acknowledges me before others, I will also acknowledge before my Father in heaven. <sup>33</sup> But whoever disowns me before others, I will disown before my Father in heaven. <sup>34</sup> “Do not suppose that I have come to bring peace to the earth. I did not come to bring peace, but a sword. <sup>35</sup> For I have come to turn “a man against his father, a daughter against her mother, a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law—**

Dear fellow followers of our Savior, Jesus Christ,

You can learn a lot about life from slogans printed on T-shirts we see at splash pads, baseball games, or walking around town. We learn to “Live Generously” from the Thrivent-themed t-shirts that are everywhere. I remember seeing one T-shirt that said: “Everybody’s got to believe in something. I believe I’ll have another beer.” Interesting. I’d like to have a conversation with that guy. But, the one I want us to zero in on this evening/morning is the T-shirt that says: “No Fear” Have you seen that one before? What is that T-shirt trying to say? Of course, it reflects a confident attitude. And confidence is an important quality to have, wouldn’t you say? Well, from God’s perspective, it depends where we put that confidence.

I say that because many in our world have a false sense of confidence ... of *No Fear*. Polls tell us many falsely put their confidence and hope in their own abilities and reason. That’s why kids aren’t afraid of disobeying their parents or others in authority. That’s why teens and adults aren’t afraid to experiment with illegal drugs or abuse alcohol. Sex isn’t saved for marriage, suicide has become a viable escape option, and God’s Word is largely ignored. Here is a trustworthy saying that deserves full acceptance: people have no fear of God. They don’t care what He’s done for us, what He’s said, or how He wants us to live. And sometimes, we have to admit we’ve had this cavalier *No Fear* attitude when it comes to God’s Word. For we too often feel the stinging guilt of sin.

Maybe you didn’t realize it, but it IS important to have a healthy “fear” of God. In his explanation to the 10 Commandments, Martin Luther described our Christian response this way. He said: “We should fear and love God ...” In other words, we place our confidence in our Savior-God because we fear him. It’s not that we’re scared into following him. But, we do fear

him. That means we respect His divine authority, His mighty power, and His faithful love in our lives.

Now, instead of being fear-full, cowering in fear when life throws us curve balls, Christians can & should be fearless. That happens when we place our worries, fears, and confidence in the right place, in our LORD Jesus Christ. Then, we can truly say: *No Fear*. No matter what, God's in control of our problems and we're confident He'll give us strength to deal with them, one at a time.

The Bible gives many examples. In Bethlehem's fields, the shepherds were sore afraid at the news of the birth of Christ. Years later, the women were saddened & confused at the empty tomb of Jesus. To both, the angels' said: *Do not be afraid (Luke 2:10 & Matthew 28:5)*. A more contemporary translation would be: "**no fear**."

Into that setting, comes our sermon reading. Jesus is forecasting the future for His followers, then and now. And unlike modern-day weathermen who mistakenly predict sunshine instead of rain, Jesus Christ is right on the money. Even better, He stands with us – always. Let's look closer at the words of Matthew, chapter 10 and we'll see reasons for **No Fear**. Yes, **no fear** of those who oppose Christians. And **no fear** that God has ever forgotten about us."

At first glance, our reading doesn't sound like a compelling recruitment speech to be a follower of Christ. For Jesus tells us up front that his followers can expect abuse. To put it bluntly, "at no time in history has it been easy to be a Christian. It still isn't". But, believe me and believe Jesus. Remaining a Christian gives us God's grace that is literally out of this world. Jesus promised: *... Be faithful even to the point of death, and I will give life as your victor's crown (Revelation 2:10)*.

Jesus begins this way: (v24-25) <sup>24</sup> **"The student is not above the teacher, nor a servant above his master. <sup>25</sup> It is enough for students to be like their teachers, and servants like their masters. If the head of the house has been called Beelzebul, how much more the members of his household!** With these words, Jesus gives us a preview of the treatment believers can expect. And it isn't always the royal-carpet treatment. Actually, it's the same treatment Jesus received. Remember how He was unfairly stricken, smitten, and afflicted. Jesus was often falsely accused of being in league with Satan. That means there will be times followers of Christ like us will endure unfair treatment, persecution of all kinds, and maybe even death. That shouldn't come as a surprise.

It came true in the lives of all Jesus' disciples except John. Tradition tells us that all the disciples gave up their lives for Christ. If we could interview the disciples today, and ask them, "was it worth it?" What do you think they'd say? Each would totally agree with the apostle Paul when he said: ***What is more, I consider everything a loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whose sake I have lost all things. I consider them garbage, that I may gain Christ (Philippians 3:8)***. Following Christ is worth everything. Still is. But, keep in mind. Following Jesus requires total commitment.

It's been said that it costs us nothing to become a Christian. It's free. The Bible says: *So if the Son sets you free, you are free indeed (John 8:36)*. By His cross and empty tomb, Jesus has already freed us from the damning guilt of our sins, which separated us from God. He freely laid down His perfect life in exchange for our sinful lives, that we might enjoy eternal life in heaven. And He frees us from our fears too. It cost us nothing to become a Christian. But, it

will cost us everything to remain a Christian. For, the devil will stop at nothing to distract us from following Christ.

So where does fear come from? God's word tells us. Along with death, fear is one of the horrible results of sin, since Adam & Eve plunged our world into sin at the Garden of Eden. Now, fears flood our hearts everyday. And when fears attack us, we can feel like a helpless bug on a windshield. Basically, there are 5 fears we have deal with. 1) Eternal fears - what will happen when I die?. 2) Physical fears - Is my job secure? Will my health hold up? Will my bank account be enough? 3) Emotional fears - Will my feelings (of loneliness, jealousy, and anger) control me? 4) Spiritual fears - did God really forgive all my sins? 5) Relational fears - how do I get along with my family/friends and boss? Left unchecked, these fears will make us freeze up, lash out, despair, or give up.

When your fears strike, listen to Jesus' words: (v26-28) **"So do not be afraid of them ... <sup>28</sup> 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.** In other words: Jesus is telling us: *No Fear. don't be afraid of anything on earth that stands between you and God.* Why? Look at it this way. Suppose you are reading a suspense novel, and you can't stand the suspense anymore. Well, you're holding the book in your hands. All you have to do is skip ahead, and read the last chapter. Then, you'll know the ending. You can be at peace as you read the rest of the novel. In a better way, God has revealed the last chapter of our lives. No matter what fears we face, even if it costs us our lives to remain Christians, we have an eternity in the perfection of heaven to look forward to. Our enemies won't win. It's a done deal. It's guaranteed on the pages of Scripture as the apostle Paul said in Romans 8: 38-39: ***We are more than conquerors through Him who loved us. For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons nor anything else in all creation will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.*** What a comfort to realize we have **No Fear** of those who oppose us.

Imagine you're holding on to that book again, the novel of your life. For many of us, it's not quite the last chapter. More will be written. What will bring us hope? How can we have this **No Fear** attitude? Jesus simply says. He'll never forget us. He put it this way:

(v29-31) <sup>29</sup> **Are not two sparrows sold for a penny? Yet not one of them will fall to the ground outside your Father's care.** <sup>30</sup> **And even the very hairs of your head are all numbered.** <sup>31</sup> **So don't be afraid; you are worth more than many sparrows.** These passages assure us that God takes care of the big and small details of our lives. He's taken care of the big details such as guaranteeing our eternal salvation with the blood of Jesus and by giving us exactly 206 bones, 640 muscles, 2 eyes, 2 ears, and 1 mouth. But, He's also interested in the smallest details of our lives: the sparrows flying over us, and even the exact number of hairs on our heads. That means he's interested in whatever is troubling you: your health, your family, what you're thinking about right now. What a comfort to hear His invitation: ***Come to me all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest (Matthew 11:28).***

But, God doesn't just say: **No Fear**. He asks us to replace that fear with an active faith. He asks us to be his witnesses. And we can witness for him in our conversations in the parking lot, in the community, and even at the family table. Sometimes it's hard to witness. We're fearful of what others think about us. Instead, let's remember Jesus' words: (v32) ***Whoever acknowledges me before others, I will also acknowledge before my Father in heaven.***

Yes, we still may have to face those 5 fears (*raise 5 fingers*): eternal, physical, emotional, spiritual, and relational. But, when those fears strike, remember the 10 fingers (*raise 10 fingers*) of the worship leader at the end of the service, when he raises his hands in blessing to remind us of God's final blessing, first given to Aaron in the Old Testament. He reminds us that, because of Jesus Christ, God will never leave us or forsake us, not in this life or the life to come. For the LORD is the one who blesses and keeps us, every day, week, month, and year. Because of Him, we now have that confident attitude: **No Fear ...** when our faith is in Jesus. Can you think of a better slogan to share with someone this week? Amen.