

Confessing Christ Before Men

By Rev. Erik Guichelaar

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Bible Text: Matthew 10:32-33
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Grace Protestant Reformed Church

O-11225 8th Ave NW
Grand Rapids, MI 49534

Website: www.graceprc.org
Online Sermons: www.sermonaudio.com/graceprc

For the scripture reading this evening, we turn to Matthew chapter 10. Matthew chapter 10. It would be nice to read the whole chapter. The whole chapter contains the event of Jesus sending out the twelve apostles to preach to the lost sheep of the house of Israel and in the first few verses of Matthew 10, we have the list of who the apostles were, and in verses 6 and 7 and 8, we have the commission that Jesus gives. Let's read that, verses 6, 7, and 8. "But go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. And as ye go, preach, saying, The kingdom of heaven is at hand." That's the gospel. That's the good news. Verse 8, "Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out devils: freely ye have received, freely give." Now, let's go to verse 16 and pick it up there and let's read through the end of the chapter. This is still Jesus speaking.

16 Behold, I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves: be ye therefore wise as serpents, and harmless as doves. 17 But beware of men: for they will deliver you up to the councils, and they will scourge you in their synagogues; 18 And ye shall be brought before governors and kings for my sake, for a testimony against them and the Gentiles. 19 But when they deliver you up, take no thought how or what ye shall speak: for it shall be given you in that same hour what ye shall speak. 20 For it is not ye that speak, but the Spirit of your Father which speaketh in you. 21 And the brother shall deliver up the brother to death, and the father the child: and the children shall rise up against their parents, and cause them to be put to death. 22 And ye shall be hated of all men for my name's sake: but he that endureth to the end shall be saved. 23 But when they persecute you in this city, flee ye into another: for verily I say unto you, Ye shall not have gone over the cities of Israel, till the Son of man be come.

And now it's at this point where you could say that his instruction to the twelve apostles now really broadens out especially, and it includes instruction to all his disciples. Verse 24,

24 The disciple is not above his master, nor the servant above his lord. 25 It is enough for the disciple that he be as his master, and the servant as his lord.

And this is encouragement. He's giving them encouragement in all these verses that we're going to read now.

If they have called the master of the house Beelzebub [or devil], how much more shall they call them of his household?

That's encouragement. If you are persecuted, you're on the right track.

26 Fear them not therefore: for there is nothing covered, that shall not be revealed; and hid, that shall not be known. 27 What I tell you in darkness, that speak ye in light: and what ye hear in the ear, that preach ye upon the housetops.

And that's encouragement too. You will be vindicated. You will be shown to be right.

28 And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell. 29 Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing? and one of them shall not fall on the ground without your Father. 30 But the very hairs of your head are all numbered. 31 Fear ye not therefore, ye are of more value than many sparrows. 32 Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven. 33 But whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father which is in heaven. 34 Think not that I am come to send peace on earth: I came not to send peace, but a sword. 35 For I am come to set a man at variance against his father, and the daughter against her mother, and the daughter in law against her mother in law. 36 And a man's foes shall be they of his own household. 37 He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me: and he that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me. 38 And he that taketh not his cross, and followeth after me, is not worthy of me. 39 He that findeth his life shall lose it: and he that loseth his life for my sake shall find it. 40 He that receiveth you receiveth me, and he that receiveth me receiveth him that sent me. 41 He that receiveth a prophet in the name of a prophet shall receive a prophet's reward; and he that receiveth a righteous man in the name of a righteous man shall receive a righteous man's reward. 42 And whosoever shall give to drink unto one of these little ones a cup of cold water only in the name of a disciple, verily I say unto you, he shall in no wise lose his reward.

So far we read God's holy and infallible word.

The text is verses 32 and 33, and this, as it fits in with the context, this is a word of encouragement. That's what we're going to see at the end of the sermon especially. This is a word of encouragement.

32 Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven. 33 But whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father which is in heaven.

Beloved congregation of our Lord Jesus Christ, the last time that we had a confession of faith we began a short series on discipleship. This evening we continue to make progress in that short series. If you remember in our first sermon in that series we looked at how a person becomes a disciple of Jesus Christ. We looked at Matthew the publican and how he was money changer, he was a tax collector, and he became a disciple of Jesus Christ because of the powerful, effectual call of Jesus. A person becomes a disciple of Jesus by receiving that powerful call of the gospel, the call to follow Jesus. And that's what a disciple is, a disciple is a follower of Jesus. A disciple is one who walks with Jesus. A disciple is one who sits at the feet of Jesus and learns from him. And a disciple is one who strives to imitate Jesus. Last time we also looked at a few other marks of a disciple. We saw that a disciple of Jesus is one who repents of his sin, as Matthew did, and turns from his sin and follows Jesus. A true disciple is one who obeys the word of Jesus. A true disciple is one who is committed to Jesus, devoted to Jesus, and a true disciple is one who has a deep and fervent love for Jesus. And we also saw that there's great encouragement for us in becoming disciples of Jesus because Jesus calls sinners to be his disciples. He came not to call the righteous, but sinners to discipleship.

Well, this evening on this joyous occasion, we continue in our series by considering tonight one of the most basic fundamental callings of a disciple, the calling to confess Jesus before men. That's our theme tonight, "Confessing Christ Before Men." We look at that theme under three points. First, the public activity, what confessing Christ is. Second, the amazing promise Jesus gives in the passage. And then third, the strong encouragement. Jesus says in Matthew 10, verse 32, "Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men." The question we need to deal with right away is what does that mean to confess Jesus? Well, the word that Jesus uses there for confess, is literally a word that means to say the same thing as another. So the idea is someone says something, and now you come alongside them and you say the same thing as they. What you are doing when you do that is making a confession. Maybe when we think of the word confession, we first think of making confession of our sin and there the idea is really the same. God is the one who says something about us, namely that we are sinners, and then we in response come humbly before God and we say, "Lord, you are right. I am a sinner. And what you point out as sin in my life, I also point those things out as sins." And we confess our sins. We say the same thing as God about our sins. We acknowledge they are horrible sins, sins we ought to be disgusted with and hate and we confess we are worthy of eternal punishment for our sins. We confess our sins to the Lord and then we fly to the cross of Jesus Christ and we find our refuge in the perfect satisfaction Jesus made on the cross and then we turn and forsake our sins.

Here in the text the idea is similar. At this point in Matthew 10, Jesus has been preaching and teaching for about two and a half years. He has been very open through this time in declaring himself to be the Son of God. He has shown very openly through his miracles, through his preaching and teaching that he is the Christ. And now Jesus is sending out his

disciples to preach the gospel, to preach the kingdom of heaven, to heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, and cast out devils. And in this verse, what Jesus is basically saying is this, "Everything that I have told you about myself, everything that I've showed you about myself, who I am as the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world, who I am as the Son of God, the Christ, you now go forth and you say the same things about me. Tell others who I am." That's what it is to confess Jesus. "Tell others about who I am as the son of righteousness, who rises with healing in his wings. Tell others about who I am as the light of the world, who I am as the way, the truth, and the life, and that no man comes to the Father but by me. And that all who come to me, I will in no wise cast out. Tell others about me." That's what it is to confess Christ.

To confess Christ, though, also means this, to add something, it means to speak fully and to speak freely about who Jesus is. To confess Christ is to be just honest about who Jesus is without hiding anything, without concealing or be embarrassed about anything. Just like when you confess your sins, right? When we confess our sins, we speak openly before God. We speak honestly. We don't hide anything. We confess. And to confess Christ, then, is the same thing. It is to suppress nothing about what we know about Jesus. Is Jesus really God come in the flesh? Do you really believe that, that he is the Word who was in the beginning, by whom all things were made? Jesus, who was a man who walked on the earth 2,000 years ago, do you believe that? Yes, I confess Jesus to be God, the maker of heaven and earth, come in the flesh so that the blood of God was shed on the cross.

Is Jesus the only one who can save us from our sins? Out of all the religions of the world, you think that the scriptures are the only place that reveal to us a Savior? Yes, I confess that there is none other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved. Is the man Jesus Christ sitting in heaven at God's right hand, right now, ruling over all creation? Do you really believe that? Yes. I confess that this is where my elder brother is right now, and this is what he is doing right now, even though I can't see him with my physical eyes. Did Jesus teach that he died only for his sheep and that one day on the day of judgment he's going to come on the clouds of heaven and he's going to make a division between the sheep and the goats, and that all who do not call upon his name are condemned already? Did he teach that? Yes, I confess that this is what Jesus teaches. I confess openly, unashamedly, all that Jesus has taught in the scriptures. I take it for truth, I take it as my own teaching, my own instruction, what I believe, exactly because Jesus is my teacher because I am his disciple, I am his follower.

And now to get more to the point, is this Jesus, the Jesus of the scriptures, is this Jesus your King, your Savior, and your friend? Is this Jesus of Nazareth, born of a virgin, a carpenter's son, is he the one that you bow down before and worshiped as God incarnate? Do you associate yourself with that man? Yes, Jesus is the Christ of the scriptures, and he certainly is my King and my Savior. He, as God in the flesh, died on a cross 2,000 years ago, and as my King, he also lived a perfect life of obedience. After he died, he rose again on the third day, he ascended into heaven, and through all his work, he has obtained for me, secured for me everlasting life, the forgiveness of sins, a perfect standing before

the maker of heaven and earth. He is my King. I belong to his kingdom already now and I worship him alone as my Lord and my God.

That's what it is to confess Christ and to confess Christ is to confess that he is a complete Savior. I'm saved by grace alone, through faith alone, in Christ alone. I'm a sinner. I have nothing of myself to contribute to my salvation but Jesus is my complete Savior. He's not only the one who died for my sins, but he's also the one who in time, at a certain point in my life, whether you believe it or not, he at a certain point in my life raised me from spiritual death. He regenerated me with the effectual call of the gospel. He drew me unto himself and made me his own. Unto him belongs my whole life. All my heart. He is the one that I now live for and he is the one I will die for. To confess Christ is to count ourselves as belonging to him. I bear his name. I represent his cause in the world. Ultimately, I'm a citizen of a nation here below, but we might say ultimately, my citizenship isn't here below. I'm a citizen of a heavenly kingdom, a spiritual kingdom. I've been born from above, and right now I'm a pilgrim and a stranger passing through this earthly sojourn, looking forward to going home.

All of this is involved in confessing Christ and then, to confess Christ means not only that we say all this with our mouths, but that we actually confess this with our lives. And that's true because ultimately to confess Christ, to truly confess Christ is something that arises from the heart. A true confession of Jesus Christ is not just saying words from my mouth. Anyone can do that at least for a time. No, a true confession of Jesus is saying all these things because these things are the reality for me in my own heart. And I not only speak accordingly, but I live accordingly too, because I love Jesus. I want to honor Jesus every single day of my life. My life is committed to him, what I do in my own life. I want to do it all for him. And then in my interaction with others, to be a blessing to them, that they might also do the same in their lives. I want others to know about my Jesus. I want others to worship Jesus with me. I want the King to receive the glory that he rightfully deserves. I am jealous over my Jesus.

That's what a disciple of Jesus is and to confess Jesus is then also to confess that except others forsake their sins, forsake their own self-righteousness and bow down before the name of Jesus Christ and believe in him, they will perish everlastingly in their sins. That in summary form is what it is to confess the name of Jesus and now, as I've already implied, this confession is a confession, Jesus says, that is made before men. Jesus says, verse 32, "Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men." This is a confession that takes place before others. It starts right here in church, doesn't it? I confess Jesus before my brothers and sisters in the Lord. Right here in church, I stand up and I identify with Jesus. He is my Lord. I join my voice with others in confessing that Jesus is the Christ, the Messiah, the Son of God. Right here in church, I sing his praises unashamedly, openly, fully with my brothers and sisters. Right here in church, I bow myself. I sit down under the authority of his word. Right here in church, I remind my struggling brothers and sisters of who the Lord Jesus is. Jesus saves. Jesus saves. I tell them, our Lord Jesus will never leave you. He will never forsake you. He is with you always, even to the end of the world. And I tell them again, look to the cross of Jesus because if he bled on the cross and endured the shame and humiliation of the whole world for you on the cross,

well surely don't you think that right now as he sits on the throne, he's going to work all things together for your eternal well-being? I tell them, oh magnify the Lord with me and let us exalt his name together here in church and then outside of church too. Come my wife, come my children, come my friends and family, my friends on Friday night, let us confess the King. Let us spend our leisure time in a way that pleases and honors the King. And even when we are together before the world, let us stand together and confess before each other in the sight of the world, the worthiness, the holiness, the power and goodness of our King with our money, with our leisure, with our Sundays, with our whole being, let us confess who Jesus is as the Christ, the Lord of all.

But then not only do we confess Jesus Christ before our brothers and sisters in the Lord, but we confess him before all men, also hostile men and women. That's really the context of these verses. Jesus is sending out the twelve disciples to preach the gospel, and he is now preparing them for the hostile environment that they are going to enter into. They will tell others about who Jesus is, and they're going to get mocked for it. Right? I don't know how old they were, but 30-year-old, 40-year-old, 50-year-old men, not just college students and young people, but grown adult men are going to get mocked and scorned because they love Jesus. They will get thrown into jail for it. Their backs will be whipped for it. Some will be sued for it, lose their jobs for it. This will be normal. They will tell others about who Jesus is and they will be called little devils, Beelzebub. They will be intimidated. They will be made to feel like they are crazy, that they are crazy for confessing the name of Jesus. They will be tempted with earthly riches if they but only keep quiet about Jesus. They will receive death threats, and many will pay for their confession of Jesus with their very lives. This will be normal.

This is the world we live in, beloved, because we are pilgrims and strangers and this is where the temptation to deny Jesus becomes very real because of these hostilities in the world, because of the unapproving faces of men and women and children. In verse 33, Jesus speaks of denying him. He says, "But whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father which is in heaven." Now to deny Jesus obviously is the opposite of confessing Jesus. To deny Jesus is to disown Jesus. To deny Jesus is really to say no to Jesus.

Now, there's a few different ways to deny Jesus. One way to deny Jesus is like how Peter denied Jesus. Think about the night before Jesus was crucified. You remember Peter, well, even in the morning, right? Peter, in a moment of great weakness as the cock crew, he denied Jesus three times, "I know not the man." In a certain sense, we deny Jesus whenever we sin. Right? We say no to Jesus. Right now, I want to sin. I'm going to sin. No, Jesus. I will not confess you in my own personal life. And truly, we're all prone to that kind of behavior. Maybe we're embarrassed of Jesus, and we keep silent at the workplace, or when the fear of man overtakes us. And we always understand it takes wisdom how to confess Jesus, and yet, are we confessing Jesus that that's always a struggle? But this is deadly serious when we deny Jesus like Peter did.

But then you have to ask, when you think about Peter's case, how does the child of God respond when those things happen? Right? You look at Peter, how did Peter respond?

Well, we read that when the cock crew and he saw the eyes of Jesus he went out and he wept bitterly. His heart was pricked. His heart was broken with grief over how he rejected his own Savior in that very moment. He wept and he repented and then, as we all know from the rest of his life, he confessed Jesus before men.

That's not really what Jesus is addressing in the text. That's truly when we through weakness fall into this kind of sin of denying Jesus we must repent and we will repent and we will learn to confess Christ before men. We will learn it. Jesus will teach us as his disciples how to do it and to do it. But what Jesus is addressing here in the text in verse 33 is more than just a denial of Jesus through weakness. What Jesus is addressing here is a constant pattern, a lifelong persistent denial of Jesus, which has its source in a heart that hates Jesus and that rejects the gospel. To deny Jesus means a few things. To deny Jesus, of course, implies first that you know Jesus, you know who he is, because you can't deny someone you really don't know. It means you've been instructed in his word, but then it means you reject him. I keep my distance from him and I'm going to choose other things besides him. Right? I choose my lusts. my desire for earthly esteem or earthly prosperity, I choose that instead of Jesus. Maybe I choose my girlfriend or my boyfriend who has the marks of an unbeliever or who is ensnaring me to sin. I choose them instead of Jesus. Or I choose money. I choose comfort. I choose an earthly kingdom. Or I choose this sin again and again and again and I give up Jesus to have it. And that's what's happening.

So when we think here of denying Jesus, let's not first look at someone like Peter. His experience is a very cautionary experience. It's worth careful attention in its own right but I think we need to look here at someone like Judas Iscariot. Outwardly, Judas Iscariot was making a good confession; for a time you couldn't distinguish who he was from any other disciple of Jesus. But then Jesus so worked the circumstances of his life that the time came when Judas ultimately had to make his choice, either confess Jesus and bear the earthly loss and the reproach that comes with it or deny Jesus for the hope of some money and earthly security. And Judas showed what was really in his heart. He just didn't care about Jesus. Peter was enthusiastic about Jesus and Peter fell because he was not watching unto prayer. Judas Iscariot fell because his heart was not in it, and Jesus finally guided the circumstances of his life so that the confession that Jesus was requiring of Judas was a confession that Judas just wasn't willing to make. There are other examples we could give besides Judas. There's more we could say, but this is the activity of confessing Christ before men.

Well, Jesus knows that confessing him before men is a difficult calling, and so he is giving encouragement. That's what this whole section is about. And here in the text, he gives an amazing promise. That's really the whole point of the text, to encourage, and for the encouragement, he gives a promise. "Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven." Jesus says, "Those who confess me here on earth before men, before others, those are the people I will confess before my Father in heaven." Now what does that mean? Well it means this, for us, who are not ashamed to confess Jesus before men and women here on earth, Jesus will not be ashamed to own us as his own people before God in heaven. He will declare openly before God that yes, he associates with us. We belong to him. He will speak fully

and freely about who we are as those who are his, and that's amazing when you think about it, right? It's one thing for us to confess Christ and that should be easy and obvious. It is a privilege to confess Christ. He is the King of kings. He is the Lord of lords. He is God exalted over all. But it's quite another thing for him to confess us and the text says that's exactly what he will do, confess us. Before his Father in heaven, he will fully declare that we are his, we are his property, his responsibility, his peculiar treasure, his people. And what he will say is this, "These people, they are the people you gave me, Father. They are the people that I died for on the cross. These are the people that I've sealed with my Holy Spirit. And without embarrassment, I confess them as mine before your holy presence." You, sinner though you are, Jesus says before the Father, "You are mine, or she is mine. She is mine. She is mine." And beloved, that's our salvation. For Jesus to confess us before his Father is salvation. It is to say that Jesus is our mediator. He is interceding before the Father for us. "They are sinners, Father, but I died for them. Their sins are washed away in my blood. They are mine for my sake. Accept them in mercy. Just as thou art well pleased with me, and thou dost receive me unto thyself, receive them unto thyself also." And for Jesus to confess us before his Father also means that on the day of judgment, he will still be saying the exact same thing. "They are mine, heavenly Father. Look what I did on the cross. I bore their sins and the curse due to them. I have already borne the day of judgment for them on the cross of Calvary on the basis of my finished labors. Give them the eternal life that has been ordained for them before the foundation of the world." That's what it is for Jesus to confess us before the Father, his Father in heaven.

That's an amazing promise but it's also a severe warning because as you read in verse 33, Jesus says, "But whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father which is in heaven." And of course what that means is this, those who disown Jesus here on earth, those who by wicked doctrine and wicked lifestyle reject Jesus and say no to Jesus, I don't want you Jesus throughout their life, Jesus will also reject them before his Father in heaven. Already now for those who know about Jesus, already now for those who have been taught about Jesus, who know the good news of the gospel and yet do not confess Jesus Christ by their words and by their living and and who are not willing to own him day by day as their own Lord and King, and they show that by continuing to walk in their sins, not speaking the name of Jesus before men, concerning them, Jesus says, already now, before the Father, "I also reject them. They are not mine. I did not die for them. I did not blot out their sins." And on the day of judgment, Jesus will also say to them, "I never knew you. Depart from me, ye that denied me, and that worked iniquity."

That's very sobering. I can't help but wonder what Judas Iscariot was thinking, right, here in Matthew 10, when Jesus speaks these words to the apostles. Maybe inwardly, Judas Iscariot scoffed at these words. Maybe he made himself numb to these words, right? Let them go in one ear and out the other ear. It's easier that way. But these are the people Jesus is referring to. They know Jesus, but they do not love Jesus. They know Jesus but they are embarrassed by Jesus. It's a sobering word. And maybe we should be clear here, maybe we need to add this extra explanation, let's understand it's not because we confess Jesus on the basis of our confession of Jesus that he also will confess us, it's not like Jesus

is saying, "You will earn my confession before my Father in heaven if you first confess me before men." That's not the meaning here. This is a statement of fact, right? It's a statement of fact. It's meant to motivate and encourage. All who confess Jesus before men, then he will confess before his Father in heaven. It's a promise. It's not a condition. It's a promise. Right? "Whosoever comes to me, I will in no wise cast out." That's a promise.

All who confess Jesus before men, he will confess them before his Father in heaven and to understand this, we need to remember what we already said in the sermon. Why does a Christian confess Jesus before men? It's because there's a change that's already taken place in his heart because Jesus has already operated within him so that that man, that woman, that child loves Jesus and trusts Jesus. And as we know, that love for Jesus and that trust in Jesus is something Jesus works within us and I'm not making this confession to earn anything. No, but I'm making this confession because I love Jesus. Because he's worked this confession within me, I must confess Jesus. The love of Jesus constrains me. And yet at the same time, there is this real consideration we need to emphasize, if I'm not confessing Christ, I need to reckon with the reality that this is evidence of a dead faith. Denying Jesus is evidence of unbelief. And there is no comfort, there is no joy when a person walks in that path of unbelief.

"Whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father in heaven." That's a severe warning but again, the encouraging promise is this, "Whosoever therefore, all whoever, each and every one who confesses me before men, him will I also confess before my Father which is in heaven." As I was thinking about that this past week, I couldn't help but think of the thief on the cross next to Jesus, who in the last minutes of his life his heart was changed, and what does he do? He confesses Jesus before his fellow malefactor, rebuking him, telling his comrade in crime to fear the Lord. And he knew, in that short time, he knew, also because Jesus gave him that word directly, but he knew Jesus was going to confess his name before his Father in heaven, and that he would be in paradise with Jesus that same day.

I can't help but think of someone like Nicodemus, right? One of the 70 of the rulers of the Sanhedrin and finally, he was compelled, push came to shove, you might say, and he was compelled to take a public stand for Jesus and there you see him walking out of the darkness, publicly confessing that Jesus is his Lord and Savior by going to the middle cross in front of all eyes, in helping Joseph of Arimathea take down the body of Jesus from the cross. These are men who were constrained to confess the name of Jesus before others.

Consider this, think of the many countless others who have laid down their lives, whether it be through lifelong obedience, living not unto themselves, but unto the Lord, or whether it be through actual martyrdom. Think of the men and women at work, toiling away, diligent in their calling, serving the Lord. Think of the mothers in the home, serving the Lord as they shape and train the next generation. Think of the young adult in college, defending the honor of her Jesus or his Jesus against the scoffs of unbelief, confessing the name of Jesus. Think of the church member who does not tolerate what

Jesus finds offensive, but stands up in his own personal life against his own sinful nature. He confesses the name of Jesus, his Lord. That's what discipleship is. A disciple is one who confesses Christ before his old man of sin and before the whole world.

Yes, some of us maybe confess Jesus more boldly than others, maybe some of us confess Christ in the face of greater opposition and danger than what others maybe experience, some maybe more consistently than others. We all need much grace and much strength to confess Christ. It's not of ourselves. But the point is, the one who belongs to Jesus cannot but confess that he or she knows Jesus, loves Jesus and is living for Jesus and wants to live for Jesus more and more. That's how true faith will reveal itself and the amazing promise Jesus gives is this, "All who confess me before men, them I will also confess before my Father in heaven." And as I said, this is not just an amazing promise, this is also a strong encouragement. A strong encouragement in the midst of a hostile environment to confess the name of Jesus. As John Calvin puts it, let that reality, speaking of this instruction, he says, let that reality inflame your zeal in the matter, and that's really the word, "Therefore, whosoever therefore shall confess me before men." The idea is, yes, I know your calling will be difficult. You will be tempted to fear men. I am sending you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves and now because the difficulty is real, I therefore, I therefore give this encouragement so that your zeal in confessing my name might be strengthened with this consideration, "Whosoever confesses me before men, I will also confess before my Father in heaven."

That's a real consideration to encourage and strengthen us in our zeal. Doesn't that knowledge give comfort to the child of God? Doesn't that promise move you as God's child to say, who cares what men may think? Why am I fearing what men may say? Jesus puts it very powerfully, why am I fearing only those who can kill my body? Confessing Christ here below, I know he will confess my name before the one who can destroy both body and soul in hell.

Where are my priorities and where is my confidence? Who do I trust? Yes, I know this is my duty to confess Christ before men, but this is my Savior who loves me and is compassionate with me and gives me encouragement. Confessing Christ before men, I know, because of the words of Jesus, I know he's also confessing my name before his Father in heaven. Young ladies, this is also a great joy and encouragement to you as you enjoy this special day. Your confession itself is that Jesus has brought you to this point. He's worked this very confession in you. Nevertheless, you also feel this own constraint within you in your own heart to confess before men who Jesus is as your Savior, your Lord and your King. You freely admit that what Jesus teaches is truth. You count yourselves as belonging to him. That's your identity. You're members of his bride, his body, his flock. You are committed to live in such a way that you show you agree with Jesus. You are of his party. He's your King and your Savior.

And this is all great joy but now what is also part of your joy this evening? Part of your joy is also this, you know, having made that confession from the heart, you know, on the authority of God's word, you know Jesus is also confessing your name before his Father in heaven. That's an awesome thought. That's our joy. That's our encouragement in the

day-to-day activity of confessing Christ before men. And knowing that joy congregation, the word that comes to you and that comes to me is this: keep, keep confessing Jesus Christ. He who endures to the end shall be saved. Young ladies, you'll face temptation to be silent. You'll face intimidating glances, maybe the reality that you lose your job or lose maybe a so-called friend or lose earthly honor, earthly esteem, and if it even comes to that point, lose limb in life. But where is your comfort? Where is my joy? By confessing that this is my identity, I belong to Jesus, he's my Savior, he is my everything, and then what do we say? I will put my trust in him. I will wait on him. I will put my trust in his word of promise. I will put my trust in his faithfulness. What a word of encouragement for all of us, beloved. Live faithfully as a disciple of Jesus. Go forth confessing his name. Amen.

Let us pray.

Our Father, help us. We love thy name. We love the name of Jesus. The Spirit is willing, the flesh, oh, is weak. Strengthen us and even through this promise that thou dost give to us, encourage us to confess Christ boldly, freely before each other and before others, to the honor of thy name, and so that we also too might enjoy the sweet comfort that comes in the way of making this right and good confession. Bless this preaching to our hearts. Bless these young women. Bless all our young people and young adults as we together as one body strive with one voice to confess faithfully, fully the name of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. In his name we pray, amen.