

Third Sunday after Pentecost / Second Sunday after Trinity / Non Festival half of the church year – whatever you call it. We are now into the more mundane part of the church year. From Dec through May we have so much going on liturgically, and not only that but in our worship we are always hearing about all the wonderful things that Jesus did for us. But now we are settling into the long period of time when there are no festivals, there isn't that much going on liturgically, in our sermons it's going to be more focused on what we need to do.

It like when you finally finish college, and there is always so much going on in College, and you have your friends with you constantly, and it can be hard but it can also be a lot of fun. And now you are done and you have to settle into the rest of your life.

So we are settling into our lives as Christians here, and not only is it not as much fun but it is dangerous and tiresome work.

You see this in the psalm "God will deliver you, God will protect you, God will strengthen you" all of this implies that there is danger and we are tired and weary of walking in the way of the Lord, but the Lord is there to protect and strengthen us.

You see it in the Old Testament reading from Jeremiah. Where Jeremiah is constantly being persecuted from every side and is just weary of being a prophet. But the Lord won't let him rest.

You will see it in the Epistle reading, which talks about this kind of constant battle that is before us with our sin.

And then finally in the sermon text, which talks about the persecution that we will endure but then the salvation that the Lord will deliver to us.

And so the key words for this Sunday are persecution from the world and our own sinful nature and then our response is perseverance, and patience.

**Matthew 10:21-33** <sup>21</sup> "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. <sup>22</sup> "And you will be hated by all for My name's sake. But he who endures to the end will be saved. <sup>23</sup> "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. <sup>24</sup> "A disciple is not above *his* teacher, nor a servant above his master. <sup>25</sup> "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! <sup>26</sup> "Therefore do not fear them. For there is nothing covered that will not be revealed, and hidden that will not be known. <sup>27</sup> " Whatever I tell you in the dark, speak in the light; and what you hear in the ear, preach on the housetops. <sup>28</sup> "And do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. But rather fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell. <sup>29</sup> "Are not two sparrows sold for a

**copper coin? And not one of them falls to the ground apart from your Father's will. <sup>30</sup>  
"But the very hairs of your head are all numbered. <sup>31</sup> "Do not fear therefore; you are  
of more value than many sparrows. <sup>32</sup> " Therefore whoever confesses Me before men,  
him I will also confess before My Father who is in heaven. <sup>33</sup> "But whoever denies Me  
before men, him I will also deny before My Father who is in heaven.**

The other day I mentioned to someone, “ you know it might be kind of fun to take the fox river around and up to Appleton – kind of a week long canoe camping trip.” Or take the Wisconsin River down to portage and get over to the Fox River and take that up to Appleton.

But noticed in both cases I’m traveling down river. There is a good reason for that isn’t there. It’s much easier to go down river with the flow of the water than to paddle back against it. And so we have the common English Idiom going with the flow. It’s always easier to go with the flow.

This is what our text is partially all about. It’s nearly impossible to swim against the current. You fight and you fight and you fight and if you give up for even a few minutes to rest, you lose ground. Swimming against the current is exhausting and seems impossible, and it’s so much work and it’s just really hard to keep going. But the question is why are you doing it? Is the goal worth it?

Our text today talks about this, here Jesus says it’s going to be hard and there are going to be some really terrible consequences, but the end, the goal is our salvation, and furthermore if it may seem impossible Jesus will bring us to the finish.

Really this is what all the verses in our text point to, and Jesus just keeps repeating the same lesson over and over again with many different analogies. 1. It’s going to be really tough and there are going to be really bad things along the way. 2. The end of all of this is going to be worth it because it is our salvation, 3. The Lord will be with us every step of the way

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Jesus always told us it would be tough and here He reminds us in no uncertain terms just how terrible it will be, that even our parents, and our brothers, and our children will persecute us and even deliver us up to death. It’s bad enough that we are delivered to death, but that it should be our own parent or our own child that would do it, the very people we love the most. This is probably the worst thing that could happen.

Dawkins tries to use all the bad things that happen as proof that Jesus was just a man. If he was really God, he claims, why didn’t he tell his disciples not to do these things? Well actually in some places he

clearly does, in other places he clearly states that this is what we can expect in this life, and again in still other places he clearly says they will even do it in his name.

Basically though the road is long and dark. Rather than these things causing us to doubt or lose our faith, we should recognize that this is exactly what Jesus said would happen.

But the end is the Lord's Salvation. Again we talked about this word last week, telos means not just end but the finish, the completion. The Lord has a plan and how much it might lead through darkness and danger the result, the finish, is a wonderful thing indeed. All my time in Africa and India I had to "endure" and I use that word very lightly here. What I "endured" there is nothing to what a Christian must endure in this life. But what I endured in India and Africa wasn't such a problem because I knew it was only temporary. I knew that I would soon be going home. So to we have much that we endure in this life but what is that to us when we know that this life isn't our home.

Now our text says he who endures, and that might at first sound like this is something that we are doing. But actually other passages and indeed even other verses in our text remind us that the power to endure is not in us. What did we read in our epistle but that we are by nature slaves to sin, and everyone of us would remain such and indeed keep on sinning, and even turn back to sin, unless the Lord changes our hearts. So the natural course of man is always towards sin. And each of us would indeed lose faith and go with the flow. But our Savior reminds us that we are worth more than sparrows.

Sparrows are sold Jesus says for a copper coin. This was about 1/16<sup>th</sup> of a workers daily wage, so that would be about \$5 today. Sparrows are sold for \$5 then they are eaten. And yet not a single one of the falls to the ground without the Father allowing it to be so.

The point here is that yes there is persecution but only to a limit. God allows a lot of bad things, but He also puts limits on it. And He watches over you all the time. Not even a hear falls without Him allowing it. So we don't need to lose heart.

We endure through His will to the end the completion that He has in store for us.

AMEN

The peace of God that surpasses all understanding shall keep your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus.