**Matthew 10:5a, 10:21-33**

These twelve Jesus sent out, instructing them…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. [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. [24] "A disciple is not above his teacher, nor a servant above his master. [25] It is enough for the disciple to be like his teacher, and the servant like his master. If they have called the master of the house Beelzebul, how much more will they malign those of his household. [26] "So have no fear of them, for nothing is covered that will not be revealed, or hidden that will not be known. [27] What I tell you in the dark, say in the light, and what you hear whispered, proclaim on the housetops. [28] And do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. Rather fear him who can destroy both soul and body in hell. [29] Are not two sparrows sold for a penny? And not one of them will fall to the ground apart from your Father. [30] But even the hairs of your head are all numbered. [31] Fear not, therefore; you are of more value than many sparrows. [32] So everyone who acknowledges me before men, I also will acknowledge before my Father who is in heaven, [33] but whoever denies me before men, I also will deny before my Father who is in heaven.

**“Confession Christ Is The Mission”**

 Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ, who gave himself for our sins to deliver us from the present evil age, according to the will of our God and Father, to whom be the glory forever and ever. Amen. (Galatians 1:3-5). If the 500th Anniversary of the Reformation began with Marin Luther and his 95-Thesis, then June 25th, 1530 celebrates the first united confession by Lutheran 487 years ago. The Augsburg Confession received its name from the place where a good confession of Christ had to be made. Before that time, you could say there was some “wiggle room.” Confusion rattled the Holy Roman Empire from within, but also the threat of war came from the outside by the Turkish Empire.

 However when the opportunity came, young emperor Charles V ordered all rulers in the empire to meet in Augsburg, Germany. He wanted to settle the Reformation dispute and reunite security to be back under the Rome Church. Of course, Martin Luther was an outlaw and could be killed on the spot. His companion Philip Melanchthon went instead along with several German leaders to present the Lutheran confession. When the time arrived, Charles used pressure through tactics of power, embarrassment, and appealing to fear. It ended up that one the signer to the Augsburg Confession finally told Charles V, “Before I would deny my God and His Gospel, I would rather kneel down before your Imperial Emperor and let you cut off my head.”

 From that moment in Augsburg, everything went in a different direction for Lutherans, but also Christianity, because freedom was bigger than securities for this life. As Jesus said in our Gospel reading today, “So everyone who acknowledges me before men, I also will acknowledge before my Father who is in heaven…” They confessed against all fears because the promise by faith in Jesus worked eternal salvation perfectly for sinners. The Church throughout the ages has had to confess in different ways, but it has always gone back to Jesus and His Word. Since Jesus delivers us by His grace, we can boldly confess Him today even when we have fears to face.

1. **Standing on a firm foundation before God is always the goal.**
* Whether sending out the twelve apostles or later those having to confess at Augsburg, it all came down to faith in Christ.
* The apostles did not first grasp those original words, “But the one who endures to the end will be saved” (Matthew 10:22)
* Their endurance would fail before the cross, only to prove, “the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord” (Romans 6:23).
* This victory is what those at Augsburg clung to trusting that clean hearts and consciences are free before God by believing in Jesus.
* They confessed how it happens, “So that we may obtain this faith, the ministry of teaching the Gospel and administering the Sacraments was instituted.” (Article V)
* To confess today still takes us back to the salvation only won and given by Jesus.
* The Creator of the universe has become man because all are helpless before the Law judged as sinners.
* The Ruler of nations now reigns by His cross with love that removes the guilt and shame of sin.
* The Lord of life conquered death promising now, “Whoever believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live…” (John 11:25).
* Confessing Christ is to confess what He says and what He says binds us to the Bible for both life and salvation before God.
1. **Yet, the threat of violence still brings real fears against confessing the Gospel.**
* We have a reminder that in every age opposition will rise up.
* Jesus told His disciples, “If they have called the master of the house Beelzebul, how much more will they malign those of his household.”
* Early Jewish Christians watched their status, jobs, and even families abandon them for confessing Christ.
* The Lutheran princes and theologians faced more than pressure, but had no securities accept Scripture and Christ.
* What outweighed the risk came with words at Augsburg, “Most gracious Emperor, this is a Confession that will prevail against the gates of hell, with the grace and help of God.”
* Fear stands against confessing Christ and plenty exists in these last days.
* We are called to love and not hate but we hear those words today from Jesus, “you will be hated by all for my name's sake.”
* Supreme Court Justice Alito at a recent commencement address said, “The idea that speech can be banned if it expresses an idea that is offensive is spreading around the country.”[[1]](#footnote-1)
* The Gospel is an offense because God’s power is perfect in weakness and He saves only sinners.
* Fear can rattle life itself, but the better promise remains for the baptized, “you are of more value than many sparrows.”
1. **Confessing Christ is good for our souls, helpful to others, and celebrates life.**
* The comfort that goes with the Gospel is, “do not be afraid.”
* This was what Jesus constantly said to His disciples so that they could confess Him before men.
* They were unsure of themselves and had plenty of fears, but they naturally confessed from knowing how much Christ loved them.
* The Augsburg Confession is not about Lutherans picking a fight to say they were better than everyone else before God.
* Instead, it was to offer a way of love to discuss the truth of God’s Word and allow fellow Christians to understand the disagreements.
* Confessing Christ today is so badly needed because there is much fear.
* Do not be afraid! Life is more than opinions for St. Paul says, “the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.”
* Do not be afraid! Since Christ forgives you, sharing that good news of God’s love makes you the proof others need.
* Do not be afraid! Those that hate us have more fear, because Jesus dares to speak up for us before His Father in heaven.
* Do not be afraid! Our Lord’s Word and presence in the sacrament is life that goes with us into the world.

 About 500 years ago, a few boldly confessed and that seed of the Gospel has come to our shores and even called us to confess Christ. Freed from sin and death, there is plenty of mercy to give, but the best thing always is that you have something to speak. Since Jesus delivers us by His grace, we can boldly confess Him today even when we have fears to face. Amen. Now the peace of Christ that passes all understanding be with your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus to life everlasting. Amen.

1. http://www.newsmax.com/US/samuel-alito-supreme-court-commencement-religious-freedom/2017/05/18/id/790968/ [↑](#footnote-ref-1)