

To understand the meaning of this Gospel passage for today, we have to peel it like an onion to consider each of four messages that Jesus spoke that day to the Apostles. Initially, they may look unrelated, but this is not the case.

In Chapter 10 of Matthew's Gospel, recently Jesus had identified His 12 Apostles by name. Then He told them how to prepare to go out to the towns and proclaim his message about the "Kingdom of God being at hand"; for example, Christ brings hope, forgiveness, and mercy to all who seek Him.

Message 1: Jesus said to the Twelve: "Fear no one. Nothing is concealed that will not be revealed, nor secret that will not be known. What I say to you in the darkness, speak in the light; what you hear whispered, proclaim on the housetops."

Meaning 1: We seek *courage under persecution as we live out our calling*.

"Courage is fear that that has said it's prayers" is a wise saying.

This year we certainly have the opportunity to be fearful from the pandemic COVID-19 Virus, a deteriorating economic situation, and now unrest in our streets.

We should include in our daily prayers that each of us can change our fear into personal courage that Jesus will show us the way and path to make progress in this environment.

Also, there may be other people in our Church community who can benefit from our experience and learning, changing their fear into faith that God loves us and is still providing hope and direction.

Message 2. 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 Gehenna.

Meaning 2: *Grave sin is what can destroy both soul and body in Gehenna (hell.)*

Message 3: “Are not two sparrows sold for a small coin? Yet not one of them falls to the ground without your Father’s knowledge.

“Even all the hairs of your head are counted. So, do not be afraid; you are worth more than many sparrows.”

Meaning 3: God is aware of all the details of everything he has created, therefore, He is certainly aware of all the events for people involved in following His commands (like preaching, teaching, and ministering to our neighbors with love.)

Message 4: Everyone who acknowledges me before others I will acknowledge before my heavenly Father. But whoever denies me before others, I will deny before my heavenly Father.”

Meaning 4: “What Jesus **will** say about us depends upon how faithful we are **daily** to the unique mission for which God formed us in the womb.”

(Sr. Elizabeth Nagel).

It is **faith** and **prayer** that will bring us the Spirit to live out our duties to make this community a place where **Jesus is known by the actions we take.**

We cannot let fear of the virus prevent us from continuing building the Christian community God calls us to be.