

12TH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

Matthew 10:26-33

“What is fear costing me?”

There is a question hidden inside today's Gospel that most of us never ask. And it is not, "Am I afraid?" But rather, "What is fear costing me?"

Because fear is expensive. Fear has stolen conversations we should have had. Fear has stopped prayers we should have prayed. Fear has buried dreams God planted in our hearts. Fear has convinced us to settle for a smaller life than the one God intended. And Jesus knows it. That is why, three times in today's Gospel, He says, "Do not be afraid." Three times. Not because He is frustrated with us. Not because He is disappointed in us. But because He knows how much fear has already taken from us. Some of us are afraid to trust God completely. Some of us are afraid to forgive. Some of us are afraid to let go of old wounds because they have become part of our identity. Some of us are afraid of what people will think if we actually live our faith. And some of us are afraid that if we truly gave our lives to Christ, He might ask for more than we want to give.

Fear always convinces us to protect ourselves, stay comfortable, and play it safe. But fear never tells us the whole story. Because every time fear says, "Stay where you are," God is saying, "There is more." More peace. More freedom. More joy. More life. And then Jesus says something extraordinary: "...all the hairs on your head are counted." Think about that. There are billions of people on this planet, yet God knows you with such intimacy that nothing about you escapes His attention. The tears no one saw. The burdens you never spoke about. The disappointments you carry quietly. The prayers that seem unanswered. God sees all of it.

The world notices us when we succeed. God notices us because we are His. That is the difference. And maybe that is why Jesus speaks about sparrows. A sparrow was worth almost nothing in the ancient world. Nobody paid attention to sparrows. Yet Jesus says not one of them falls without the Father knowing. In other words, if God notices what the world overlooks, how much more does He notice you? How much more does He love you? How much more does He care about your life? My friends, perhaps the greatest fear we carry is not fear of suffering or failure. Perhaps it is the fear that we do not matter. The fear that our lives will never make a difference. But into that fear, Jesus speaks these words: "Do not be afraid... you are worth so much more."

Not because of what you have accomplished. Not because of what you own. Not because of your success. You are worth more because you belong to God. That is why the Gospel ends with a challenge: "Everyone who acknowledges me before others, I will acknowledge before my Father." Notice what Jesus is really saying. Do not hide. Do not shrink away. Do not live beneath who you are. The world does not need a version of you that is controlled by fear. The world needs the person you become when you finally believe that God loves you. The saint you are called to be is waiting on the other side of fear. The family God wants to build through you is waiting on the other side of fear. The peace you long for is waiting on the other side of fear.

So today, hear the voice of Jesus speaking directly to your heart: Do not be afraid. Not because life will be easy. Not because nothing will go wrong. But because you are seen. You are known. You are loved. And you are worth more than you could ever imagine.