

When we are persecuted, stand firm!
Matthew 10:16-33

1. What did you find comforting, disturbing or confusing about Sunday's message?

2. Read Matthew 10:16-33 and Matthew 28:16-20. Both deal with sending us out. What differences does it make in your life and family life to embrace this mission?

b) To whom have you been sent? What are you doing about it?

3. V16, Jesus mentions 4 animals to help us understand our present situation and mission. What do you appreciate most and least about this knowledge?

4. V17-20. Read Acts 4:1-22 and Acts 5:17-42. Persecution happened very quickly after the arrival of the Holy Spirit, Acts 2. What connections would you make between the disciples persecution and the arrival of the Holy Spirit? What similarities do you see between what Jesus said in verses 17-20 and actual events?

5. V21-23 speak of betrayal and hatred from those who persecute you. Read Acts 6:8-7:1, 7:54-8:3, looking at Stephen, do you think he knew he was being set up or was he ignorant of unfolding events? Explain.

b) What does it feel like to you to be betrayed by one you trust?

6. Acts 1:6-9 Jesus speaks one last time to the disciples about mission and purpose. After Stephen's death there is a scattering that takes place, Acts 8:4-5, Acts 11:19-26. List the evil and the good that happened because of persecution against the church.

Evil

Good

What are your thoughts on why God allowed the martyrdom of Stephen?

7. 26-31, the “do not be afraid” are given to encourage us to stand firm to the end. What questions or fears remain in your mind and heart even after hearing these words?

B) Which one gives you the most encouragement?

8. I Peter 4:12-19, Peter writes to the persecuted church. Knowing he was persecuted and died at the hands of Romans soon after writing these words, what encouragement do you receive from his words?

9. How can the team pray for you?