

*Faith Cometh
By Hearing*

Keep On Faithing

*Sermon Preached By
Joseph Cortes*

Let us go to Matthew 10:16, 17. This is where the disciples learned to expect persecution in the future.

Verse 16: 'Behold, I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves: be ye therefore wise as serpents, and harmless as doves. But beware of men: for they will deliver you up to the councils, and they will scourge you in their synagogues;'

Just imagine what was going through the disciples minds as Jesus was speaking. He's telling them that they are going to be sent and they are going to be like sheep in the midst of wolves. Unless there is a Shepherd, sheep do not survive very long around wolves. They would be defenseless, ripped apart, and consumed in a short matter of time. Now, here is Jesus telling His disciples to expect this to happen.

I only can imagine their shocked expressions as Jesus was describing what they could expect in the future. I can only imagine what I would have looked like and how I would have reacted. **'Behold, I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves ...'** Thank God, we have a Chief Shepherd who watches over us while we are in the midst of wolves. Now we might not ever experience anything like the disciples would eventually have to experience, but the promise is still the same - that He is our Chief Shepherd and that He is watching over us whilst we are in the midst of the wolves. And there are plenty of wolves out there.

Then we have the next statement, **'Be ye therefore wise as serpents, and harmless as doves ...'** This sentence isn't relevant to tonight's message, so I'll just move forward to, **'But beware of men: for they will deliver you up to the councils, and they will scourge you in their synagogues...'** These disciples were eventually going to preach about Jesus Christ and salvation through His death and resurrection. They would be scourged in the synagogues for it. They became outcasts in the religious world of their time.

We can get over-dramatic as preachers about the woes that we face from our religious brethren. However, the woes that we face today are nothing compared

to what these disciples went through. Remember, they killed Jesus because He said that He was the Messiah. They persecuted the disciples because they preached that Jesus was the Messiah, the Messiah who would deliver us from the sins of this world and give us eternal life to be with Him forever. If you believe in the message that you are preaching, no matter who you are, then stand up and preach it. Don't dwell on what the ramifications might be.

Verse 18: 'And ye shall be brought before governors and kings for my sake, for a testimony against them and the Gentiles'.

Verses 21 and 22, 'And the brother shall deliver up the brother to death, and the father the child: and the children shall rise up against their parents, and cause them to be put to death. And ye shall be hated of all men for my name's sake ...'

No matter what you say or do, some individuals will despise you for preaching the true gospel of Jesus Christ.

'And ye shall be hated of ALL men for my namesake: but he that endureth to the end shall be saved.' Circle the word 'endureth' and put a circle around the word 'end'. I am going to come back to these words later. Now, I want to share with you an excerpt from an article by Phelps that I came across this week. I felt it was fitting to insert it in this message. Bartolome de las Casas wrote the excerpt taken from a diary of Christopher Columbus first voyage to America. It's an interesting account of the journey of the Nina, the Pinta, and the Santa-Maria from Spain to what Christopher Columbus thought to be the Indies. Columbus never expected that he was sailing towards the Americas. He thought he could sail from Spain to the Indies without any landmasses in between. I don't need to review the whole story because most of you learnt about it in school as you were growing up. However, it's still an interesting account. The first entry of his journal was made on the day of his departure – Friday, August 3rd, 1492. But what does this have to do with Matthew 10:22? You will see the connection. Just hang in there with me.

'Friday, 3 August 1492. Set sail from the bar of Saltes at 8 o'clock, and

proceeded with a strong breeze till sunset, sixty miles or fifteen leagues south, afterwards southwest and south by west, which is the direction of the Canaries.'

'Saturday, August 4th they went west by south. Sunday August 5th, they went on their way in between day and night went on their way and made more than 40 leagues.' Mundane stuff I know, but let's keep reading.

'Monday, August 6th. The rudder of the Pinta broke and the men began to toil and argue.'

Just like so many Christians! As soon as things don't go their way, they start to argue and quarrel amongst themselves and to God. They don't expect all the hardships.

If you are denying yourself; taking up your cross and following Jesus, you had better expect all hell to break loose around you. You had better decide whether you want to follow God or go back to the damnable way you were heading. There is no nice way of putting it. You have two choices. Follow the way of the world to eternal damnation. Or follow the way of Christ with all its hardships and problems. Yes, you are going to have problems in this world – the rain falls on the just and unjust alike – but you need the Holy Spirit and the Lord Jesus Christ to see you through the tough times.

Sure, you might get through on your own strength and power, but then you won't receive the promise of imputed righteousness for the Faith that you have demonstrated in his word. Make your choice, your way, or God's way. Now, let us get back to Columbus.

'Monday, August 6th. The rudder of the Pinta broke and the men began to toil and argue. Finally, they made between day and night 29 leagues.

Tuesday, August 7th. The rudder again lost its fastenings but this time we traveled 25 leagues.

Wednesday, August 8th. We would have liked to go to grand canaria to leave the badly damage Pinta because she leaked badly and had a damaged rudder. We were not able to reach it that day.

Thursday, August 9th. We reached the Grand Canary and fixed this ship.'

So we find out that despite the circumstances and repeated quarrels, they sailed on. I want you to remember those three words. **'They sailed on.'** Write them down in your margin next to Mathew 10:22.

'September 7th. All of Friday and on Saturday, until the third hour of the night, we were in very light winds, not much happening.

Saturday September 8th. At the third hour of the night on Saturday, it commenced to blow from the northeast and we took course to the west. We took much water over the bow, which hindered our way, and we made that day and night only nine leagues.'

They were in rough seas. They were in stormy seas. And they took a lot of water over the bow, which hindered their progress. Over the course of that day and night, they covered only nine leagues. But on that day, **'they sailed on'**. Remember that.

'Thursday September 13th. That day and night going on their course, which was west, they made 33 leagues, the currents were against him, but on this day, we sailed on.

Saturday September 15th. They sailed that day and night 27 leagues and a few more on their route west. On this night at the beginning of it, they say a marvelous branch of fire fall from the sky. This is from them 4 or 5 leagues.

Monday September 17th. He sailed on his route west and made day and night somewhat more than 50 leagues. The current was helping them.

Friday September 21st. That day was mostly calm. They made between day and night no more than 13 leagues. Some of it on the course and some of it not. But this day we sailed on.

Wednesday September 26th. They thought they saw land and spent the entire day sailing towards it only to discover it was sky. But this day they sailed on.'

I have skipped across some dates in the log. That's because what interests me most is that, no matter what the day brought, at the end of practically every entry

was, 'And this day we sailed on'. Some days, nothing happened. There were uneventful, probably boring and mundane days. No matter what - they sailed on. In fact there were many days when the only entry was 'and we sailed westward on our course today'. Some days, the crew turned on each other and questioned the legitimacy of the mission. But at the end of those logs was still, 'this day we sailed on'. Some days, the sea was calm and peaceful and on these days, they 'sailed on'. Some days, the seas rose from storms and they took water on board. But still, 'this day they sailed on'.

Obviously, something possessed Christopher Columbus. He had a vision and purpose of what could be. Whatever it was, it drove him on in the face of adversity, boredom, difficulty, fighting amongst his crew and disappointments. It meant that at the end of each day, he could sum up his day by saying, 'and this day we sailed on'. It wasn't easy, but we sailed on. We suffered setbacks, but we sailed on. We didn't get as far as we wanted today, but we sailed on. We took on water today, but we sailed on. We got off course, but we sailed on. We chased after land that wasn't there, but we sailed on. At the end of the day he said, 'this day we sailed on'.

How many of you out there, through all of your adversities, your difficulties, your disappointments – can say, at the end of the day, and this day I kept Faithing on in God's word. I don't know if Christopher Columbus was a Faithing man in God's word, but I definitely know he had perseverance. He had tenacity. He had the endurance to keep on sailing westward until he reached his destination. And through all the setbacks, through all the crew problems, through all of his ships' problems, he kept sailing on.

I made a note to myself as I read this. No matter what my difficulties are, I just have to keep Faithing on in God's word. I have to remember that He is the captain of my ship, He knows the direction it's going, and He knows how to get me there. All I have to do is trust in Him and His word.

Now I'd like you to go to Genesis 45. Joseph's brothers came to Egypt looking for food during the famine. Joseph was the governor of Egypt and had total

control over the distribution of food and other necessities. Joseph's brothers didn't know he was still alive and didn't recognize him when they finally presented themselves to him. Joseph told his brothers that God had sent him to Egypt to prepare the way for the survival of the people of promise, so they would not be **wiped out** during that famine.

God was in control of Joseph's life. All through his struggles and hardships, Joseph remained faithful as he kept Faithing on. He kept Faithing on when his brothers threw him into a pit. He kept Faithing on when he was sold into slavery. He kept Faithing on while serving as a slave to his master. He kept Faithing on through the temptations and lies of an unfaithful woman – lies that would eventually land him, undeservedly, in prison.

Nevertheless, after several years in prison, God puts Joseph in a position where he had control over events in Egypt as well as the surrounding known world. **People** came from as far away as Greece and beyond, searching for food. God had sent a man to Egypt. God took care of the situation and He ensured the survival of Israel, assuring Jacob's lineage. He brought the Israelites down to Egypt and He would some day take them out.

Now after Joseph revealed himself to his brothers, he sent them back to tell their father. He gave them remnants, gifts and equipped them with wagons, loaded with food, for the hungry inhabitants. However, I find it interesting that when Joseph gave his brothers instructions for the journey, he didn't tell them to be careful with the riches or the food. He only mentioned Genesis 45:24 – **'to be sure that you fall not out by the way'**.

Turn your bible to Genesis 45, verse 24. So Joseph sent his brothers home and, as they departed, he said to them, **'See that ye fall not out by the way'**. The remnants, gifts, and food would be useless if the brothers did not make it back to Israel. The remnants, gifts and food would take care of themselves, as long as Joseph's brothers delivered them to Jacob. Therefore, the most important part of the mission was for Joseph's brothers to get to where they were supposed to, without being side-tracked.

Imagine Joseph's brothers' reaction when he finally revealed to them who he was. These were the same brothers who previously wanted to kill Joseph, but then sold him into slavery. Now they were kneeling at Joseph's feet. I can guarantee you his brothers were trembling and shaking in their sandals. They probably had a flashback of all the evil they had done to their brother. And now he was second only to the pharaoh. What goes around comes around.

I can't go through the whole story this evening but, eventually, Joseph sends his brothers back with new remnants, gifts and food. He also sends Benjamin back with 300 pieces of silver and 5 changes of remnants. For his father, he sends off 10 asses laden with the good things of Egypt and another 10 asses laden with corn, bread and meat. Joseph knew his brothers were disloyal and not trustworthy. He knew they were capable of betrayal. He knew that deep down they were scoundrels. So Joseph told them, '**See that ye fall not out by the way**'. He wanted the food and gifts to get back to Jacob. He was planning to bring Jacob, as well as the rest of the children of Israel under Jacob's care, to Egypt. So it was vital to counsel his brothers, '**See that ye fall not out by the way**'.

I checked out the Hebrew words when I studied this verse so I could get a feel what Joseph was trying to communicate to his brothers. I looked into the word 'out' as written in this verse. In Hebrew, it is 'ragaz'. It means to shake with a violent emotion with fears and anxieties. So Joseph said to his brothers, as you go back home, see that you fall not by the way with violent emotions, violent shakings - with fears and anxieties. Why would they have fears and anxieties?

Well because now they had to go back and tell Jacob that Joseph was alive. Moreover, they probably had to tell him what had really happened to Joseph, years earlier. Talk about being in a difficult situation. It might have taken a while, but those lying, treacherous, scoundrels eventually got caught in their evil ways. They got caught because of their treachery. They were caught lying to their father.

I think I'd be shaking in my sandals if I were one of those scoundrels. And

Joseph knew that they would be frightened. That is why he tells them, **‘See that ye fall not out by the way’**. He’s saying that they should keep Faithing on and trust in God. Not to dwell on their past sins, all was forgiven. Keep Faithing on and trust in God. That was the past. You made your mistakes. But now there is a new way, a new direction.

That’s what repentance is all about. Let God now control your path and life. We will never let God control our lives if we don’t trust and have Faith in His word. We are going to stumble. We are going to fall. But we are going to get back up again as long as we trust in God’s word. Jesus will never leave us or forsake us.

So as you start following Jesus, don’t fall out of the way. Stay on course. Keep Faithing on in God’s word. We were given the gift of grace. We have our new remnants and our wagons are loaded with food, the food of God’s word. All we have to do is keep Faithing on in Him.

The most important thing to remember about this bible lesson is that Joseph’s brothers reached their destination without getting side-tracked. I’m sure they encountered sandstorms, but they pressed on. I’m sure they encountered resistance, but they pressed on. I’m sure they got tired and wanted to settle down along the way, but they pressed on. I’m sure they fought, but still they pressed on. I’m sure they looked at all that Joseph had given them and were tempted to say, ‘why do we want to make the effort to return to Jacob when we have what we need, right here. We have silver, gold, clothing, food, enough to last us a through this famine. Let’s just settle here and enjoy the gifts.’ Somehow, they made it back.

Too many Christians listening to me tonight enjoy the gift of grace, enjoy the gift of salvation, but then sit back and let somebody else do what they should be doing to press this ministry on. Well this ministry is going to be Faithing on in his word. I hope that you are there with us as we make that trip. Don’t be a distant onlooker – get involved.

Gen 45:27:28, ‘And they told him all the words of Joseph, which he had said unto them: and when he saw the wagons which Joseph had sent to

carry him, the spirit of Jacob their father revived'.

And in verse 28, 'And Israel said, 'It is enough. Joseph my son is still alive: I will go and see him before I die.'

Eventually the wagons and the gifts had arrived for Jacob. Joseph's brothers had finally decided that, no matter what happened, they would not fall out by the way. They got their act together. They had been a miserable lot for most of their lives. They hadn't lived a life of Faith, but then they got their act together. They were finally obedient to the Faith. And even though, earlier in their lives, they had been faithless and jealous of Joseph's dreams from God, now they were obedient and faithful to His command.

Satan and his demons had tried to destroy Joseph but God's hand had been continuously on him and he had remained faithful. Now many preachers like to maintain that Joseph's faithfulness was just too good to be true. But I'm sure he had his doubts. I'm sure he wondered about what was going on in his life. After all, all he had done was to dream dreams and receive a coat of many colors. Then suddenly he was thrown into a pit and sold into slavery. Joseph would have had doubts. However, he focused on being faithful to God rather than dwelling on and believing his doubts.

Some of you probably like to dwell on your miseries and your problems, thinking that God will never deliver you from them. But that is just Satan whispering in your ears. God said there were going to be problems. There are going to be many trials and tribulations. However, you have a choice of living your life in Faith and trusting that God will see you through your problems, or you can choose to sit in your misery, dwelling on it and letting Satan destroy you and break down the Faith connection that you can have with your Lord and Savior. You have to make the choice.

The remnants, gifts and food from Joseph were transported by ordinary people who, quite simply, were determined that no matter what happened they would not fall out by the way. Make the commitment right now; no matter what comes against you, you will keep Faithing on in God's word. What God is looking for,

more than anything else in us, is obedience, commitment and perseverance – or ‘*trying endurance*’, to see if we will trust in His word.

The instructions for the church in 2006 are the same instructions that Joseph gave to his brothers. ‘I have given you gifts; I have given you remnants and I have given you food and caravans to take back to a world that doesn’t even believe I am even alive. And my only instruction to you is, ‘**See that you fall not out by the way**’. You will encounter persecution, but keep Faithing on in His word. You will encounter problems, but keep Faithing on in His word. You will encounter criticism from your own brothers and sisters, but keep Faithing on in His word. Some days will be laborious, but keep Faithing on in His word. Some days will be perilous, but keep Faithing on in his word. See that you fall not out by the way. See that you don’t apply ‘ragaz’, the Hebrew word. See that you do not let your emotions, your violent emotions; create extreme fears and anxieties that keep you away from Faith in God’s word.

I guarantee that if that you trust in His word, you will not fall out by the way. However, remember that it is a **continuous** Faith walk - not one to be done occasionally. You just can’t do this when you feel like it. Living a life of Faith is a full time commitment. Yes, there are times when it is a little easier. However, you have to develop the mind frame that you are ready to do battle with the enemy at any time. You have to accept this concept, or you will fall out by the way, instead of keeping on the path of Faith.

The devil and his demons don’t rest. They are constantly attacking. Once you become a Faithing Christian, their whole goal is to destroy you. They will not be satisfied and they will not let up until they accomplish that. In Ephesians 6, God has provided weapons to use against our spiritual enemy. You have to wear those weapons. You have to use those weapons. You can never let them out of your sight. Especially that shield of Faith - to quench those flaming arrows coming at you constantly. Use those weapons. They are there for a reason. They are there to protect you. They are there so you don’t fall out by the way.

I’d like to quote Phelps one more time here. Have you ever entered in a drawing

and read the words, 'you must be present to win'. That is the stipulation we see in life. 'You must be present to win.' Paul went to the chopping block, not with a spotless record, not with the testimony of a man who had never made a mistake. But he will always have on his record, **'I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that loved his appearing'**.

Paul is saying, 'I have made my mistakes, but I kept Faithing on in His word. I was beaten, but I kept Faithing on in His word. I was persecuted, but I kept Faithing on in His word. I was shipwrecked, but I kept Faithing on in His word. The time of my departure is at hand and my testimony is this - I did not fall out by the way. **'At my first answer no man stood with me'** but I kept Faithing on in His word.' Many times, he must have been tempted to give up, but he finished the course. He didn't fall out by the way. He kept Faithing on in God's word.

In Job 17:9, 'The righteous also shall hold on his way, and he that hath clean hands shall be stronger and stronger'. God is looking for righteous people – and I have told you that you get righteousness through faith – people who just hold onto God's word. Our strength will keep increasing by just holding onto His word. Our way will always lead us in the wrong direction every time. When you hold onto His way, He is directing your path; He is captain of your ship. God is looking for righteous people who will just hold on to His way. Our strength is gained by Faith. Just keep Faithing on and your strength and Faith will be increased.

Our first reaction is always to complain when there are troubles, trials and tribulations because we do not want to go through all that. But that is the only way we are going to increase our Faith in His word. That is the only way that you will gain strength, from day to day. No matter what the course of life – no matter what you are hit with, God is looking for people who will just keep Faithing on in His word.

Timothy 3:11 says, ***'that in the last days perilous times shall come'***. In Verse 14, ***'But continue thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned them ...'***

Some days the only entry in our spiritual journey is 'and this day we kept Faithing on in His word'. We didn't see any fire fall from the sky. We didn't discover any new land. We only kept Faithing on in His word. However, it is during those times that God is building character in us. It is during those times that God is strengthening our Faith in Him. It is in those times that God uses monotony to build perseverance in us. God wants people who will be faithful in the times of silence.

Is there anyone who is just about to give up? Let me tell you what you need to do. You just need to keep Faithing one more day. I know that things are coming against you, but this day keep Faithing on in His word. I know that things are less than perfect in your life, but this day keep Faithing on in His word. I know that the temptation is to give up and turn back, but this day keep Faithing on in His word.

In Revelations 2:10: ***'Fear none of those things which thou shall suffer: behold, the devil shall cast some of you into prison, that they may be tried; and ye shall have tribulations ten days; be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life'***.

Just be faithful until the end and the crown will become yours.

Have you been going through rough seas lately? Let's go back to Matthew 10:22. Do not think it is strange when you come up against the world and they hate you for His namesake. I am telling you Jesus told us to be ready for that. Jesus told His disciples to be ready for it. That you are going to be a ***'sheep in the midst of wolves'***.

'And ye shall be hated of all men for my name's sake: but he that endureth to the end shall be saved.' (Matthew 10:22)

At the start of the evening, I asked you to circle the word 'endureth'. The Greek

definition is, 'to endure or sustain a load of miseries, adversities, persecutions, provocations in Faith'. I found that interesting when I read this particular definition. It didn't say to endure or sustain a few miseries or adversities, it said a **load**. There are going to be many of them and they are going to come at you constantly all through your life. You will never graduate from them. Remember that you will not endure any of this for His namesake if you are not in Faith.

'And ye shall be hated of all men for my name's sake: but he that endureth to the end shall be saved.'

I also asked you earlier to circle the word 'end'. The Greek word is 'telos'. Write it in your margin. Telos - the goal reached and the completion or conclusion at which anything arrives. Therefore, it does not mean the termination with reference to time. Rather it means the goal reached; the completion or conclusion at which anything arrives.

'And ye shall be hated of all men for my name's sake: but he that endureth to the end shall be saved.' Re-write this verse. This is how it should read.
'And ye shall be hated of all men for my name's sake: but he that endureth, or sustains a load of miseries, adversities, persecutions, or provocations in Faith to the completion of the goal shall be saved.'

Let it sink in. Now what is our goal? To be forever with our Lord and Savior who died and shed His precious blood for us. And how do we achieve that goal? By Faith! Faith! Faith! I cannot say it enough. Faith in God and His word.

This message is not difficult to understand, just hard to apply. Imagine what the disciples were thinking when they heard this message. Jesus was telling them that they were going to sustain a load of miseries, adversities, persecutions, provocations. Some of you would probably have walked out, murmuring, 'Well this is too tough. I'm not going to follow Jesus. There's not much promise in it'. Yes, it can be tough now but ahead is the promise of eternal life. There is either eternal life or eternal damnation. The devil wants to confuse you and fool you that there is another message that it is going to be easier. No there isn't.

In Jesus' own words – ***'And ye shall be hated of all men for my name's sake:***

but he that endureth to the end shall be saved'.

Or as I re-wrote this verse, ***'And ye shall be hated of all men for my name's sake: but he that endureth, or sustains a load of miseries, adversities, persecutions, or provocations in faith to the completion of the goal shall be saved***'.

That is why Paul said, 'I have fought the good fight, and I have finished the course'. He completed his goal. Now he was ready to be presented to his Lord and Master to live and reign for eternity.

The Faith road is going to be tough. I'm not talking about the professing faith road, but the true Faith that Jesus taught as He was trying to prepare His disciples, as well as all generations to the end of time. You are going to come across rough seas. You are going to have leaks in your boats. You are going to drift off course and get lost, on occasion.

However, remember to put your focus back on Jesus and God's word. Go through all the adversities in your life in Faith, Faith, and Faith. Then, like Paul, you will be able to say, 'I have completed my course. I have achieved the goal that the Lord wanted me to achieve. And with that I have the promise that I shall be saved for eternity. Because I kept my ship on course and I kept Faithing on in His word through the perilous times. I have kept the Faith. I have finished the course'.

In addition, thank the Lord for the promise that He gave at the end of this particular verse that 'ye shall be saved'. I am hanging on to it. I trust you are too. If you're not, it's not too late to get on-course. Stop wondering if you are off-course because the difficulties, adversities, and miseries. They are there for a purpose - to complete us in Faith.

And how does that completion happen? God looks at us during these situations to see if we are going to have Faith in Him and His word. It is never too late to change the course and the direction of your ship as you sail towards eternal life by living a life of Faith. And that's what this ministry is all about - living the life of Faith and teaching you what this life of Faith means. It's time for some of you to

get on board with Jesus and start sailing with Him.

In conclusion - remember the wonderful gift we receive - imputed righteousness. Our goal should be to achieve anything that that God wants us to have. And His promise to us of imputed righteousness is there through Faith. Never let go of that promise and keep Faithing on in His word. Remember faith pleases God. Keep living a life of Faith. God will be there with you. That's a promise from our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

www.TeachingFaith.com

Copyright 2006 Faith Cometh By Hearing