INTRODUCTION: The Christian can never escape the duty of being different from the world. It is not our
duty to be conformed to the world; it is our duty to be transformed from it. What a great reminder to teachers of
the Bible that the truth that changes, changes from within. Transformation is the word from which we derive
metamorphosis. The Lord must change each of us from within.

In the passage before us, Matthew records Jesus’ words of encouragement for His followers to be people of
courage and He promises them His care and compassion. The key word that allows me to embrace this is
conviction.

I. COURAGE. 28

“soul” – speaks here of the eternal spirit, not just life in the body; the eternal. It is the part of you that will
never die. This is the eternal, not the external. It’s the greater vs. the lesser.

The point of Jesus’ sermon is that the only “fear” a believer should have is of Him Who is able to destroy
(kill) both body and soul in hell; and only God can do that.

Note: Fear is used twice in v.28. The first has to do with fright and terror; the second fear has to do with
awe and veneration.

There may be a price to pay for speaking God’s truth in the light and proclaiming it as broad as possible.

EXAMPLE: Paul’s desire to go to Jerusalem despite warnings.

Acts 21:10-14, “And as we stayed many days, a certain prophet named Agabus came down from
Judea. When he had come to us, he took Paul's belt, bound his own hands and feet, and said, ‘Thus
says the Holy Spirit, So shall the Jews at Jerusalem bind the man who owns this belt, and deliver him
into the hands of the Gentiles.' Now when we heard these things, both we and those from that place
pleaded with him not to go up to Jerusalem. Then Paul answered, ‘What do you mean by weeping
and breaking my heart? For I am ready not only to be bound, but also to die at Jerusalem for the
name of the Lord Jesus.’ So when he would not be persuaded, we ceased, saying, ‘The will of the
Lord be done.’"

Paul had no fear of those who could kill the body.

Acts 20:24,”But none of these things move me; nor do I count my life dear to myself, so that I may
finish my race with joy, and the ministry which I received from the Lord Jesus, to testify to the gospel
of the grace of God.”

“destroy” – here it is not annihilation, but eternal punishment in hell (Gehenna). The lost will not cease to
exist. The word does not convey the notion of extinction but of great loss or ruin.
Paul used this same word in 2 Thess. 1:9

“These shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power.”

To the believer, fear is not of terror or fright, but of reverential awe and honor. It is not that a believer is in danger of having his soul and body cast into hell, because his eternal destiny is heaven.

Reverence of God in His sovereign majesty is a powerful motivation for Christians to serve Him and to be fearless of any earthly, physical consequences that service may bring.

When Hugh Latimer was preaching one day in the presence of King Henry VIII, he reports that he said to himself, “Latimer! Latimer! Remember that the king is here; be careful what you say!” Then he said to himself, “Latimer! Latimer! Remember that the King of kings is here; be careful what you do not say!” For such unflinching faithfulness Latimer was eventually burned at the stake. But he feared failing God more than he feared offending men.

The faithful disciple values his soul immeasurably more than he values his body. Jim Elliott said, “He is no fool who gives up what he cannot keep to gain what he cannot lose.”

Many believe that verse 28 was Jesus’ warning directed at Judas, as an early appeal for him to consider that the God he rejected was able to destroy both his soul and body in hell. Beyond that, it stands as a continuing warning to the unbelieving Judases of all time.

II. CARE/COMPARISON. 29-31

NOTE: Luke 12:6-7

"Are not five sparrows sold for two copper coins? And not one of them is forgotten before God. But the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Do not fear therefore; you are of more value than many sparrows."

The extra one was thrown into the bargain as having no value at all. God cares even for the sparrow which is thrown into the bargain, and which on man’s counting has no value at all. Even the forgotten sparrow is dear unto God.

Not one sparrow will fall to the ground without the knowledge of God (omniscience). Word fall makes us think of death, but is a translation of a word which means to light up on the ground. It is not that God marks the sparrow when the sparrow falls dead; it is far more; it is that God marks the sparrow every time it lights and hops upon the ground.

So it is Jesus’ argument that if God cares like that for sparrows, how much more will He care for you. People say that God cares about the big things but not about little details. But Jesus says that God’s sovereignty over the tiniest detail should give us confidence that He also superintends the larger matters.

Again, if God is aware and in control of such minor details, “how much more” will He not care for His own people and vindicate them despite their present suffering.
v.30  “But the very hairs of your head are all numbered.”

Spurgeon said, “The hairs of their heads are all numbered and catalogued. Numbered, not counted in a total, but numbered individually.”

Luke 21:18, “But not a hair of your head shall be lost.”

Average hair count on the human head is said to be about 140,000.

Matthew 10:31, “Do not fear therefore; you are of more value than many sparrows.”

Matthew 6:30, “Now if God so clothes the grass of the field, which today is, and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will He not much more clothe you, O you of little faith? “

“From among the finest athletes in the Roman Empire, Nero selected a group called The Emperor’s Wrestlers. Their motto was, ‘We, the wrestlers, wrestling for thee, O Emperor, to win for thee the victory and from thee, the victor’s crown.’ The wrestlers were also soldiers and were often sent out on special military campaigns. On a certain mission in Gaul (modern France), many of the wrestlers were converted to Christ. Upon hearing the news, Nero ordered the commander, Vespasian, to execute any wrestler who refused to renounce Christ and swear religious as well as military allegiance to the emperor. The emperor’s orders were received in the dead of winter, as the men were encamped on the shore of a frozen lake. When Vespasian assembled the soldiers and asked how many were Christians, forty men stepped forward. Hoping not to lose any of these fine men, many of whom were his friends, he gave them until sundown the next day to reconsider. But at the given hour, all of them still refused to renounce Christ. In order that they not die at the hands of their comrades, the commander ordered the forty men to disrobe and walk naked out onto the ice. Throughout the night the soldiers on shore could hear the forty sentenced men singing triumphantly, ‘Forty wrestlers, wrestling for Thee, O Christ, to win for Thee the victory, and from Thee, the victor’s crown.’ The singing grew fainter as morning neared, and at dawn a lone figure walked back and approached the fire. He confessed that his faith was not strong enough to face death. When Vespasian then heard the faint strains of ‘Thirty-nine wrestlers, wrestling for Thee, O Christ,’ he was so moved that he threw off his armor and clothes and marched out to join the others, shouting as he went, ‘Forty wrestlers, wrestling for Thee, O Christ, to win for Thee the victory, and from Thee, the victor’s crown.’”

III. CONVICTION. 32-33

Firm belief in His sovereignty and care of me leads me to be a person of conviction.

“Confess” – means confess in Me; indicating a sense of unity with Christ and of Christ with the man who takes the open stand for Him.

“Whosoever” (everyone) is an inclusive term that gives a sober warning to all would-be and all professing believers for careful self-examination.
Romans 1:16, “For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Greek.”

Paul was not ashamed to acknowledge the person and work of Christ.

Confess means to agree and affirm. It is not simply to recognize a truth but to identify with it. We do not confess Christ simply by acknowledging that He is Lord and Savior, but by acknowledging and receiving Him as Lord and Savior.

Romans 10:9-10, “that if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.”

Outward confession with the mouth is a reflection of genuine belief in the heart.

1 John 4:15, “Whoever confesses that Jesus is the Son of God, God abides in him, and he in God.”

Revelation 2:13, "I know your works, and where you dwell, where Satan's throne is. And you held fast to My name, and did not deny My faith even in the days in which Antipas was My faithful martyr, who was killed among you, where Satan dwells.”

To confess means to back up that statement with the life. The walk and the talk must go together.

If we confess Him here, He confesses us there.

Martin Luther: 2 Days/This day/That day

When Christ confesses us before the Father, He is securing for us the benefits of His sacrificial work on the cross.

This reminds us that our final destiny depends solely on His word. Your eternity depends upon your relationship to Him now.

Acts 4:12, “Nor is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved.”

To confess is to acknowledge or trust in; it’s to declare one’s allegiance to Christ.

v.33 “deny” – disown, saying no to Christ, complete breach, to repudiate Him.
It is still possible for a man to deny Jesus Christ.

1. **We may deny him with our words.** It is told of J.P. Mahaffy, the famous scholar and man of the world from Trinity College, Dublin, that when he was asked if he was a Christian, his answer was: ‘Yes, but not offensively so.’ He meant that he did not allow his Christianity to interfere with the society he kept and the pleasure he loved. Sometimes we say to other people, practically in so many words, that we are Church members, but not to worry about it too much; that we have no intention of being different; that we are prepared to take our full share in all the pleasures of the world; and that we do not expect people to take any special trouble to respect any vague principles that we may have.”

2. **We can deny Him by our silence**

3. **We can deny Him by our actions**
   We can live in such a way that our life is a continuous denial of the faith which we profess.

“Almighty God, give us grace to be not only hearers, but doers of thy holy word, not only to admire, but to obey thy doctrine, not only to profess, but to practice thy religion, not only to love, but to live thy gospel. So grant that what we learn of thy glory we may receive into our hearts, and show forth in our lives: through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.”