

Matthew 10:32-42

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Date: 27 February 2022

[0 : 00] And we read the Word of God found in Matthew chapter 10, starting in verse 32. And I'll read down to the end of the chapter, which is just the verse 42. Jesus here is speaking again to His disciples.

He's not speaking, we don't know if this is one discourse. More than likely, Matthew has taken a collection of teachings of Christ and put them together. So He's speaking to us, not just to the twelve apostles here, but He's speaking to us here as well.

Jesus says, And he who loves son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me.

And he who loves son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me. And he who does not take his cross and follow after me is not worthy of me. He who has found his life will lose it.

And he who has lost his life for my sake will find it. He who receives you receives me, and he who receives me receives him who sent me. He who receives a prophet in the name of a prophet shall receive a prophet's reward.

[1 : 27] And he who receives a righteous man in the name of a righteous man shall receive a righteous man's reward. And whoever in the name of a disciple gives to one of these little ones even a cup of cold water to drink, truly I say to you, he shall not lose his reward.

Let's pray. Lord, we thank you so much for this day. We thank you for the great privilege it is of gathering together as your people.

We thank you for the opportunities which we've had already today to set our hearts and minds upon you. Lord, now we pray that we would be attentive. That we would hear exactly what it is you want us to hear.

That we would hear the very word of God speaking to not only our minds, but also to our hearts. That it would penetrate to the very depth of our being and by the power and the presence of the Spirit.

Lord, that you would shape us and move us and conform us. That you would move us from where we are, and you would call us to where you're leading us. We ask that you would be glorified and you would be honored.

[2 : 32] We pray, oh Lord, that your name would be exalted in our midst. And we ask it in Jesus' name. Amen. You may be seated. We're looking at the life calling of discipleship.

Because part of discipleship is living on missions. Henry Blackaby said it best that you can't go with God and stay still. You can't follow Christ and remain where you are at.

Jesus is concerned about the lost and the dying. He's concerned about the multitude. He's concerned about the sick. And he has called his people to be his hands and feet. He has called the church to literally push against the gates of hell.

It is to be on the offensive, not on the defensive. The church isn't to sit still and wait on darkness to attack it. The church is to be on the offensive and to be attacking darkness. In your individual life, in your private life, your relationship with other believers should be a direct attack upon the strongholds Satan has upon your life.

We call that iron sharpening iron, right? We call that discipleship. True discipleship happens when you meet with another individual or another individual meets with you. And you both challenge one another.

- [3 : 42] And you confront problems that you have. Because, yes, even though we may all say we're fine and everything's great. I don't use the word fine or I'm doing okay anymore. I always say I'm well.
- Because it is always well with my soul even when things aren't good. Because we all have bad days. And we all have issues. And we all have those problems. But true discipleship happens when God uses an individual, a brother in Christ, and pushes me and pushes back against the strongholds of sin in my life.
- And the believers are called to be those who are on the offensive, pushing back. This past week, I had an opportunity to go sit down and do Q&A; with some teenagers. Carrie and I did.
- And it's always kind of this open forum. You can ask whatever you want to. And we're always amazed at the questions that get asked. One of the questions, how many, should I forgive someone who doesn't ask me to forgive them?
- One of my friends says yes. The other one says no. Well, I absolutely forgive them for your sake, right? And all these things. What is spiritual warfare? What does spiritual warfare look like when I have this sin I wrestle with?
- [4 : 46] And I say, well, you know, all sin really is spiritual warfare. Because every temptation to sin is all this. And then I get to go, do you have any verses that can help me with that? I love that question because now we're wanting to help push that, right?
- Push back. How can I find the tools to fight that battle? Because the church is the offensive weapon. It is to be the one that is moving forward. And we're to live that life of discipleship, of helping to push against these things.
- But as we do that, there are certain character traits or certain callings upon our life which we must settle at the very beginning. Things that Christ here assumes and even declares must be.
- And things that each of us must look in our own life and examine. As the psalmist cries out, search me, O Lord. Try my heart. Know my thoughts. Help me to understand my ways.
- And we need to know this. Are we living out the life calling of discipleship? The first one is very clearly stated. It is a life of public confession.
- [5 : 49] It is a life of public confession. Jesus says, therefore. Now, I love this. Public confession stands upon the assurance of God's concern.
- Because we don't fear man. And because we don't have to fear those who may hate us. And we don't have to fear those who could persecute us. And we don't have to fear those who are limited in scope what they can do to us.
- Because we understand that he who is above all things is the one that is concerned about us. Therefore. Because, see, one of the greatest tools that Satan uses to silence believers is fear.
- It is personal concern for one's own well-being. It is saying, well, what if they reject my message? Or what if they don't like me? Or what if they don't want to hear this? But we need to know about the one who is concerned about us.
- Therefore. He says. Because the only one that ultimately matters is concerned about his people. Therefore. Everyone who confesses me before men.
- [6 : 52] I will also confess him before my father who is in heaven. Here we see that the life calling of discipleship is a life of public confession. To confess here means to declare allegiance to.
- To proclaim it true. That I am united and I have an allegiance to Christ. He is my savior. He is my lord and master. I am following after him.

Discipleship during the times of Christ was very public. Because as a teacher would arise. And an individual wanted to be a disciple of that teacher. He would leave everything behind and follow that teacher wherever he went.

There would be no doubt that he was a disciple of this teacher. Because wherever he went he would go and he would follow him. And he would sit at his feet. And he would listen to what he said. And he would do what he did. And he would mimic his behaviors.

And he would follow his examples. And everyone knew you are a disciple of that individual. Because it wasn't something done in secret or private. It was something declared in public.

[7 : 50] That I am uniting my life with this individual. And Jesus here declares that the life calling of discipleship is a public confession. This is not just a public confession by what we say.

It is also a public confession by how we live. Because see we confess him with our life and our words. We confess our allegiance to him through our actions. And through what we say.

Because teaching without action really is useless. It is called hypocrisy. This is why Jesus would say about the Pharisees.

Do what they say but don't do what they do. Right? They are teaching you proper truth but they are not living a proper life. Don't follow the example of their life. But at least heed the warning of their words.

Because they are declaring to you truths from the Old Testament. And those must be upheld. But the practices that they are putting in practice in their life. And the way they are behaving. Don't even mimic those. Don't even look at that.

[8 : 52] But this is also why Paul could declare. Paul says be imitators of me. Right? Paul didn't say just say what I say. Paul said be imitators of me.

Why? Be imitators of me as I imitate Christ. Follow my example. In the book of Acts we see it over and over again. People are coming to faith in Christ based on what they see and hear of the disciples.

Because see what the world desperately needs is not someone standing on the street corner declaring a message. What they need is someone living a life throughout the days who is declaring the same message.

They don't need someone to tell them you need to love your enemies. They need someone to show them what it looks like to love their enemies. They don't need someone saying well you need to do this this and this.

They need someone to put that on display publicly. Because Christ has called us to live lives of public confession. This is why so many of the attitudes that we see throughout the Beatitudes in Matthew chapter 5 based upon how we live.

[9 : 56] How we behave. To be lowly and meek and humble and to be quiet. These are all struggles. These are all struggles. I share the example quite often.

I was a little bit fiery when I came to Christ. I'm a little bit fiery now. And I know my tendencies and I know my mannerisms. And I was always so thankful to have someone that would remind me of those. Use it quite a bit.

But the greatest example of that would be whenever I was coaching a multitude of sports. And I would have a disagreement with an official. One thing that I always did every baseball season.

Baseball was my sport. I enjoyed that sport. And I coached it quite a bit for a while. Coaching three teams a year. At least having a part in it. And I would always have the rule book with me. I knew the rules.

I always felt like it was important that if you were going to officiate a game you needed to call it properly. And if you didn't call it properly I would let you know you didn't call it properly. Because I'm one of those weird guys who took the time to read the rule book.

[10 : 56] And I would know it. And I could always say well if you'll turn to page 16 in the book you gave me you are wrong. And I was always so thankful that my wife didn't act that on.

As a matter of fact as I left the dugout she would be standing on the fence going remember you're a pastor. Remember you're a pastor. Remember you're a pastor. Because something about the mannerism of the way I was walking probably wasn't going to line up with the life I was declaring.

And I would I remember one time in particular the gentleman just blew the call. It was bad. And I was going and I was going to do the old you know Tommy La Russa kick dirt on the home plate.

Throw a fit and probably see if I could get myself and this man both kicked out of the game of a kids baseball game. And I was just really upset. And she was saying remember your pastor. Remember.

I mean she was screaming. I thought everybody in the crowd probably hears it. And I got to home plate and all I could do was hug the man. Now I wanted in the very depth of my being to kind of gut shot him while I was hugging him.

[12 : 01] But I didn't. I'll never forget. He looked at me. He knew he was coming. He was about to get his ears folded back. And I just hugged him. And I said man all I can tell you right now is I love you in Christ.

And I walked off. I think my wife was praying really really hard. Because see what was about to happen no matter what I had said.

And the fact that I had kneeled in prayer with the kids before the game. It wasn't going to matter. Based on how I acted to that individual in front of the whole crowd.

It didn't change the call. It didn't even change the outcome of the game. But it changed me. And it changed the next time I walked up to the man to talk to him at the next game.

And I walked up to people and I began to garner a little bit of respect with the officials. Because see to publicly confess is to confess through our actions and our words.

[12 : 59] And Jesus says whoever confesses me before men I will also confess him before my father who is in heaven. But he also says this but whoever denies me before men I will also deny him before my father who is in heaven.

See Jesus isn't going to force us to go anywhere. He will only take us as far as we are willing to go public with.

If we don't want to be public about him. Then he's not going to be public about us in heaven. He's not going to force us into the Lord's presence. He's not going to force us into God's presence.

He's not going to force us into the courtroom of heaven. But if we are willing to stand before men and to live a life of meaningful discipleship. And to live a life of meaningful profession.

And to allow our lives to be conformed based on how we behave and what it is we say. Then he says. I will also confess you before my father who is in heaven. And that's a great motivating factor.

[14 : 01] Because he has called us to live a life of public confession. It has often been said. And I think that it is very fitting to say there's no such thing as an undercover believer.

We meet a couple of those in scripture. And we meet them in passing. And we don't know anything about them. Nicodemus came to Christ by night. He was a believer.

We don't know of anything else that Nicodemus did. No other prophets. No other foretelling of any actions that he did. We know that he also came with. You know and helped with the burial and all this other stuff.

But there's nothing else that he did. We don't. There's no other declaration throughout history of anything he did. There's no other confession. Joseph of Arimathea was a believer. But secretly.

Because he didn't want the Sanhedrin to know about it. They weren't there when they made the verdict. And they found Christ guilty. Because some of them were private believers inside the Sanhedrin. But they didn't want to go public with their faith.

[14 : 58] And so they just decided to step back. We don't know anything other about Joseph of Arimathea. Other than the fact that he lent his tomb. And he helped prepare the body. Probably in a pretty bad way. Because the ladies were watching.

And they came back to finish the job. That's not to say anything disparaging about them. We're thankful for them. There's a great testimony there. But that's all we know. History doesn't record anything else about them.

Right? There's no great testimony that resonates for the undercover believer. There's none. Because he has called us to live lives of public confession.

Not only is the life calling of discipleship one of public confession. Number two. It is one of primary devotion. It is one of primary devotion.

Now, for some of us, this is a very hard text. It's hard on a multitude of levels. It's hard because we are all the children of someone. And many of us have kids. And many of us love our kids very dearly.

[15 : 58] And we want our kids to respond back to us. But the text is here. And we must look at it. He says, do not think that I came to bring peace on earth. I did not come to bring peace but a sword.

Now, automatically we'll say, well, wait a minute. Jesus tells us, I leave you my peace. That's right. The believer has a peace that passes understanding. But on this earth, there is no peace.

You say, well, wait a minute. When Jesus was born in the stable and there was this great declaration, the angels stood before the shepherds and said, I come to bring you good news and great tidings of joy. There will be peace on earth.

Finish the verse. Finish the verse. Peace on earth with men with whom he is well pleased.

There is peace for the believer, but there's not peace on earth. There will be no peace on this earth until all of heaven encompasses this earth and everything, as Peter says, is renewed as if by fire.

[17 : 03] It's on a spiral trajectory going down. Things are not getting better. I was reading the book of Job this week. Some of you are reading through the book of Job. It's a great book, right?

It's a really encouraging book. And you're just so renewed reading the book of Job because Job is a righteous man who suffers. And his friends tell him he needs to get his life right because he's sinning.

And he's like, I'm not sinning. I know I'm not sinning. And they're like, oh, yeah, you are, Job. Just confess it. Just tell us what you did. I mean, your children all died. You lost all your wealth. And then Job makes this declaration.

Job, by the way, you need to understand this. The oldest book in the Bible. The oldest book. I know it's not first. I know Genesis is first. But Job, most people, just about every Bible scholar believes, the oldest book in the Bible, the oldest recorded scripture written by an individual.

You know what he says? The moon has no light on its own. So that's an obscure passage. Think about this just for a moment.

[18 : 01] Think how long it took science to catch up with the reality that the moon was reflecting the light of the sun. And Job declares it. Way back when, before the invention of a telescope, before the invention of all this scientific research, Job says the moon has no light on its own.

And man and his wisdom and he's thinking about things of God and he's thinking about the truth. Also, the book Job says, and we've dug canals and we've searched through the depths of the earth and we're swinging to and fro in these caverns and we're mining out silver and gold.

See, man's not getting better. Man's getting worse. And there's less peace on earth now than there ever has been. And that's to be expected. Do not think that I came to bring peace, but I came to bring a sword.

Which leads us to this reality, the primary devotion of discipleship. Because look at what he says. For I came to set a man against his father and a daughter against her mother and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law.

By the way, that's an Old Testament reference. One of the minor prophets in the Old Testament have that scripture contained there. We'll look it up. Because the prophets are declaring things that are going to happen in the end times.

[19 : 06] And if you look at that scripture and that minor prophet, what he's declaring, these things are going to happen before the Savior comes. Wow. The Bible is bringing itself to light. Right?

He says, and the man's enemies will be the members of his own household. Christ is honest here. He says, your devotion to me as a disciple is going to cause some division. And it's going to cause division in some of the most intimate places.

Right? He's going to cause division among families. Family structure in the nation of Israel is very important. Family structure all throughout the nation's history is very important. A man's heritage rests upon his family.

And a man's testimony rests upon his family. And Jesus says, your allegiance to me as a disciple is going to create schisms in the family. He says, that's okay.

It has to be expected. It's because your primary devotion is not to your family. Now think about this.

[20 : 10] Again, we go through this in pre-marriage counseling. I look at each husband-to-be and each wife-to-be and I tell them these same truths. Your primary devotion is not to your family.

Because he who loves father or mother more than me is not worthy of me.

And parents, he who loves son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me. It doesn't say you don't love father and mother.

It doesn't say you don't love son or daughter. It doesn't say you don't love your family. What it says is they're not the greatest love of your life. Your greatest devotion, your primary objective is not to love your family first.

It is to love your Lord and Savior. It is to love Jesus Christ with all of your heart, with all of your soul, with all of your strength. And then to love your neighbor as yourself.

[21 : 20] And the closest neighbor you will ever find are those of your family. We understand this. The disciple's primary devotion is not to his family. It is to his Lord.

And I know that's hard. Listen, I wrestle with that. Because our greatest devotion is not to one another, but it is to he who has redeemed us and called us to himself.

And the more devoted we are to him, the greater devoted we can be to one another. I cannot truly love my wife unless I love my Savior first. Because I don't know what love is.

I cannot love my children properly unless I love my Savior first. We cannot love one another properly unless we love our Savior first.

Rather than diminishing love that one has for his family, it really increases the love that one has for his family. It is when these things get out of sort. It is when we begin to put one ahead of the other that things begin to diminish.

[22 : 27] See, our primary devotion is to Christ. That's the calling of discipleship. It's a hard battle, but it's a reality.

Because, listen, he's got enough. He's called me to himself, but he's also made me the father of a woman. And he's made me the husband of a bride.

He's made me the father of sons and daughter. He's made me all these things. But he's called me to himself first. He's called me to himself first. And that's the way it should flow in my life.

It's the way it should flow in your life. It is a life of primary devotion. And just to push a little bit further, number three, not only is there a life of public confession, a life of primary devotion, number three, the life calling of discipleship is one of personal ambition.

One of personal ambition. And Jesus here really drives the point home. Because it is not enough just to love him more than we love others, even those closest to us.

[23 : 43] It is not enough that we would love him more than we love our wives, or more than we love our husbands, or more than we love our children. It is not enough just to love him more than we love everybody else. Jesus says we must love him more than we love ourselves.

And he says it like this. By the way, this is the most often repeated phrase of Christ, found five times in the four gospels.

What I have found in scripture that if God repeats himself, he wants you to pay attention to it. If he repeats it more than once, he probably ought to pay attention to it.

If it's repeated five times in four books, then we better stand up and pay attention to it. And it is this. He who does not take up his cross and follow after me is not worthy of me.

The most often repeated saying of Christ is that whoever will not take up his cross and follow after me is not worthy of me.

[24 : 51] As some said, a man carrying a cross only faces one direction. His past doesn't matter and he has no future. He can't make personal plans and he has no more personal ambitions.

Because when you put the cross beam on your shoulder, you know you're going to your death. No one survived crucifixion. No one. The Romans were masters of it. They didn't invent it, but they mastered it.

They knew exactly how to do it. They would hang you on a cross and allow you to suffer long enough. And then when they were ready for you to die, they would go ahead and break your legs so that you would suffocate. Because, see, it wasn't the pain of crucifixion that killed you.

It was the suffocation. It was the reality that when your arms were pulled up like this and it ended up for the collapsing of your lungs and you wouldn't be able to breathe. And they would put this little seat behind you so that you could push up. And that's why they would put a nail going through your ankle bones.

And you could push up on that nail. And by pushing up, you could pull yourself up and get a grasp of air. And when they were done watching you suffer, they would break your legs so that you could no longer push up. And when you could no longer push up, you'd eventually suffocate to death.

[25 : 51] And no one survived crucifixion. No one. And no one, after having the cross being laid on his shoulder, got out of crucifixion.

Because once the law had been declared, it was declared. So to take up your own cross was to say, I'm dying to myself. My past no longer matters.

I don't have a future. I don't even have a present. I don't have any ambition. I don't have anything else before me. All that I have in front of me is my death. It is to lose one's self.

It is to love the Savior more than you love yourself. And this is really where the rubber begins to hit the road. It is to no longer have personal ambition. To no longer have personal concern.

The ultimate goal is that you will not even be in the picture anymore. Even though we know in the flesh that's hard. Humility is not walking around with a sad, sad face.

[26 : 56] Humility is not walking around with a false sense of humbleness. Humility is not even thinking of oneself anymore. No longer being concerned about one's own personal affairs.

It is to live a life completely focused upon Christ. And it is to take up the cross and follow after Him. It says, because he who has gained his life will lose it.

If we're more concerned about gaining our personal ambitions than we are following the Savior, He says, we're going to lose it. But he who has lost his life for my sake will gain it.

Now this is kind of an ex-moron, right? It doesn't seem to make sense. To lose ourselves in Christ and devotion and following Him, Jesus says, is to actually gain.

But to gain ourselves and our ambitions, our efforts, our activities, and our desires, and our plans, and our purposes, and all of our personal ambitions, is ultimately to lose it.

[28 : 01] Jesus told a parable about that, about the farmer whose field had a bumper crop, right? And he didn't even have barns big enough to hold everything to deharvest. And he said, what should I do? He said, I know what I'll do. I'll build bigger barns and I'll put up all my grain and I'll say, take rest, my soul, for you have laid up plenty and you have nothing else to do.

Everything's going good. And I'm paraphrasing. And Jesus says, what would God say to him? God said, you're a fool. This very night, your soul will be required of you. Then what will you do with all you have stored up?

If all we're concerned about is making sure we store up enough for our own personal concerns and that we someday can just sit back and take it easy and everything will be good and everything will be wise.

Now, I'm not saying we don't be wise financially. I'm not saying these things. I'm just talking about our own personal ambitions. Like, all I care about is making it easy on me. Jesus says, there will be a day where God looks at us and says, you're a fool.

Read the book of Ecclesiastes. Read the book of Job. What did Job say? A man mines to the depths of the earth, goes into the caverns of the deep, pulls out gold and silver, and a man gains all kinds of wealth and prepares all kinds of food, and then he dies and he has no control where it goes.

[29 : 12] He doesn't know. Because he who has gained his life will in the end lose it, but he who loses his life for the sake of Christ will in the end gain it.

The life calling of discipleship is to live without personal ambition, but with the ambition of Christ and Christ alone. It is to follow him completely.

And then he says, then whoever receives you receives me, and he who receives me receives him who sent me. We begin to be a direct representation of the Savior to the world around us.

We begin to be a direct representation to those near us of Christ's concern and care for them. And those who receive a prophet will receive a prophet's reward. Those who receive a righteous man will receive a righteous man's reward.

Those who give a cup of cool water to drink to the little one, in the name of the disciple will receive a reward. What is he saying? Then all of a sudden we begin to be a blessing to the community. We begin to be a blessing to those around us.

[30 : 15] Not because of who we are, but because of who he is through us. Our representation of Christ in the world around us begins to be a blessing.

The great question resonates. If the church you were a part of did not exist, or if you no longer existed, would the world suffer loss because of that?

Or is it not making any direct impact whatsoever? Jesus says, as we live the life calling of discipleship, the world around us will be blessed by our presence.

And it is up to us to say, search me, O Lord. Know me. Try my heart. And see if these truths be so in my life.

Let's pray. Lord, we thank you for this day. And we thank you for your faithfulness. We thank you for your word. Pray that your word would speak truth into our hearts.

[31 : 14] Lord, you would call us closer to yourself for your glory. We ask it all in Jesus' name. Amen. Amen. Amen.

Amen. Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

[34 : 51] Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

[37 : 21] Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.