

# THIS WEEK'S MESSAGE

MAY 16TH-17TH, 2020 // BOOK OF MATTHEW

## FOLLOWING (MATTHEW 10:24-31)

### A REALISTIC VIEW OF BEING A CHRISTIAN

After seeing miracles and lives changed, Jesus points out the hard parts of being His follower. Jesus' argument was that if the leader gets mistreated, that the followers will as well.

- **If God incarnate is accused of being Beelzebul, "lord of the flies," how much more can we expect to be treated poorly?**

### THE AMERICAN CHURCH STRUGGLES WITH THIS

We live in a nation of remarkable comfort and that has caused many professing Christians to take their faith for granted and even become entitled, thinking God or the church owes us something.

- **This is not the attitude of Christ or the Gospel of the Bible. We've twisted the Word into an American Dream.**

### HARD TIMES SHOULD BRING US CLOSER

Going through difficult times should push us into a greater dependency on God, and times of being mistreated because we are Christians should bring us joy because it more closely associates us with Him.

- To be clear, we've yet to see real persecution in this nation, hence why these passages seem so distant.

### A FEAR OF NOT RECEIVING JUSTICE

Jesus knew that one of His disciples' fears would be if justice would be served to those that oppress them. He told them, "don't be afraid...since there is nothing covered that won't be uncovered."

- **No action escapes God's eyes. Every person will be justly held accountable eventually.**

### ANOTHER FEAR WAS BODILY HARM

It is natural to be afraid of getting hurt, but Jesus tells us that our fear should be for our eternal lives not our earthly ones.

- We often fear physical harm, but **any physical pain we feel here is nothing compared to an eternity without God.** We must first "fear Him Who is able to destroy both soul and body."

### HEALTHY AND UNHEALTHY FEAR

It is ok and natural to be afraid at times, but **we aren't designed to live in constant fear and anxiety** (2 Tim. 1:7, Phil. 4:6) **over our social or even physical status.**

- **A healthy fear is one of the Lord. We know from the Word that we will not always be popular and that we may even lose our lives for our faith.**

### "...WORTH MORE THAN MANY SPARROWS."

God knows every time an insignificant bird hits the ground and we know that we're made in His image, so we should not be afraid because He is in control and He loves us.

- **God knows we will be afraid, that is why we must go back to Him and His Word to encourage ourselves in the Lord.**

## LOST & FOUND (MATTHEW 10:32-39)

### ADOPTING A FEARLESS PERSPECTIVE

Jesus affirms "everyone who will acknowledge me before others, I will acknowledge...But whoever denies me before others, I will also deny him before my Father in heaven."

- This is taken at face value. **Jesus is the advocate for the faithful, but if we cower to culture now, He will not acknowledge us before God later.**
- **2 Corinthians 5:10 (CSB)**

### FEARLESS DOESN'T MEAN FOOLISH

Though we are to live above constant fear and anxiety, that doesn't give us license to do things foolishly. We are still called to "count the cost" (Lk. 14:25-33) and pray for God's wisdom, knowledge and discernment.

- **Oftentimes, people use their faith as an excuse to do rash and hasty things. This is a sign of spiritual immaturity.**

## "I DID NOT COME TO BRING PEACE, BUT A SWORD."

Jesus had told His disciples that "peacemakers" were blessed, but here we see that His mission would cause division, even amongst families (Micah 7:6-7).

- This isn't a contradiction. **The Gospel brings internal peace, but the truth always draws a line of right and wrong, and absolutes cause division.**

### LOVING JESUS ABOVE EVERYTHING ELSE

Jesus moves from the division and hardships following Him will incur to the standard by which a Christian is to be held.

- We must love God more than anyone or anything else on this earth, even our families. It is by "seeking Him first" that everything else is properly put into place (Mt. 6:33)

### AT FIRST THIS SOUNDS PRETTY HARSH

What we need to learn is that **until we love God more than anything or anyone else we are incapable of loving the other things in our lives properly.**

- To be good parents, spouses, children, co-workers, people in general, we must first be close to God and full of His Spirit.

### ANOTHER STANDARD OF A CHRIST-FOLLOWER

First, we love Him above all things. Second, we must be willing to endure to the end. Jesus tells us that we're to "take up a cross" and be willing to "lose our lives in order to find it."

- This means **we give up our rights for the sake of His kingdom. This may be our passions, possessions, dreams, and even our literal lives.**

## ETERNITY (MATTHEW 10:40-42)

### GETTING BACK TO TRAVEL INSTRUCTIONS

Jesus gets back to telling the disciples how to travel and be hosted while doing ministry. Jesus tells them that acceptance or rejection isn't based on them, but on the Gospel they are presenting.

- **The acceptance of truth is not up to us, just the presentation of it.** Each person is responsible for their choice.

### GOD HONORS THOSE WHO SHOW HONOR

Jesus assures us that those that show righteous people honor will be honored by God both now and for eternity. But, **our culture knows very little about honor.**

- We're a disrespectful, entitled, and rude culture that demands that we be served first before we will even consider serving others.

### WE'RE A PEOPLE THAT DON'T VALUE TRUE REWARD

Jesus tells His disciples that those that give "even a cup of cold water to one of these little ones... will never lose their reward." Anyone can give water to someone in need. Jesus was saying that we can all serve the kingdom, but it will take time to receive our full reward.

- **The problem is we want our reward now and with no effort on our part.**

### GETTING HIS FOLLOWERS TO LOOK FARTHER

Jesus wanted His disciples to know that though there are benefits of following Jesus now, the real reward comes after this life.

- The perspective of our lives must be from a heavenly one. **Living for Jesus makes life better (not easier) now, but it is the life to come that will truly be amazing.**

### LEARNING TO REALLY LIVE

- What has been the cost of society's constant grasp for more of what we want? **Has our pursuit of self given us the fulfillment we've longed for?**
- To truly live we have to choose to die to self. We must intentionally desire God's ways and His kingdom in order to be fulfilled, changed, and saved.

### CHRIST WANTS US TO DIG DEEPER

- Is being a Christian easy? Absolutely not, but we have to look beyond what is temporary and catch a glimpse of the eternal. **God wants more for us than what this life has to offer!**
- God also wants to extend this truth to others that need it. The world needs a "cup of cold water."
- God loves us and He wants to expand our view to see something greater than just our limited ideas and dreams.
- Do we trust that God will be faithful, even when we can't see the outcome? Do we long to dig deeper? Are we willing to lay ourselves down in order to find what living really is?