

## **“Faithful”: Living It-Part 3**

in Matthew 10:24-42

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on July 31<sup>st</sup>, 2016

at JF Believers Church

in Menomonie, Wisconsin



**Matthew 10:24-42** *"A disciple is not above his teacher, nor a servant above his master. 25 "It is enough for a disciple that he be like his teacher, and a servant like his master. If they have called the master of the house Beelzebub, how much more will they call those of his household! 26 "Therefore do not fear them. For there is nothing covered that will not be revealed, and hidden that will not be known. 27 "Whatever I tell you in the dark, speak in the light; and what you hear in the ear, preach on the housetops. 28 "And do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. But rather fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell. 29 "Are not two sparrows sold for a copper coin? And not one of them falls to the ground apart from your Father's will. 30 "But the very hairs of your head are all numbered. 31 "Do not fear therefore; you are of more value than many sparrows. 32 "Therefore whoever confesses Me before men, him I will also confess before My Father who is in heaven. 33 "But whoever denies Me before men, him I will also deny before My Father who is in heaven. 34 "Do not think that I came to bring peace on earth. I did not come to bring peace but a sword. 35 "For I have come to 'set a man against his father, a daughter against her mother, and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law'; 36 "and 'a man's enemies will be those of his own household.' 37 "He who loves father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me. And he who loves son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me. 38 "And he who does not take his cross and follow after Me is not worthy of Me. 39 "He who finds his life will lose it, and he who loses his life for My sake will find it. 40 "He who receives you receives Me, and he who receives Me receives Him who sent Me. 41 "He who receives a prophet in the name of a prophet shall receive a prophet's reward. And he who receives a righteous man in the name of a righteous man shall receive a righteous man's reward. 42 "And whoever gives one of these little ones only a cup of cold water in the name of a disciple, assuredly, I say to you, he shall by no means lose his reward."*

Just like in the days that the apostles walked out their earthly ministries, we too often have occasion to wonder why we must endure trial, testing, and persecution. If Jesus is the King, then why must His followers suffer and fight instead of reigning as princes? Verses 24 and 25 moves to deal with this age-old quandary by presenting an honest appraisal of our relationship to Him. Because truth be told, we really don't get this. We more often than not imagine our position to be one that looks like children on summer vacation rather than members of a Navy Seal Team.

According to scripture, we are the *disciples*; He is our Teacher. We are the *servants*; He is our Master. We are *members of the household* and He is the **Master** of the house! Discipleship means *following* the Teacher, not usurping His position as the Teacher. For despite our best attempts and constant pushing, we are **not** the teacher. We are NOT the Master of the House! And it therefore stands to reason that it's a mistake to think that we should somehow expect to be treated better than our Master.

“Peace on earth, good will towards men?” Certainly there is that side of our Lord, but sadly no one writes songs and makes banners that speak of Jesus saying “*I didn’t come to bring peace on earth but a sword!*” Why not? Because like the Pharisees before us, that’s not the Messiah we want! Because we know Jesus would one day make that call that He does in this passage, saying we are to be like Him, and frankly we really don’t want to!

He would tell us that unless we “take up our cross”...or “die to this life and this world” that we cannot be His disciple. So we reject the real evidences of His personality, character, and purpose and reinvent Him into a passive hippy driving around in a VW. I guess it means we have to really understand what *heavenly* peace looks like, in contrast to worldly peace. The reality is we must know that worldly peace is not necessarily divine peace! We see peace most often as a calm and stable environment. But that kind of peace was never enjoyed by the Master, and won’t be for His disciples either!

Seeking and embracing the nature and character of Christ...*making it personal* is a dangerous proposition! And if you yourself or the church you attend attempt to embrace and propagate the real Jesus you had better be prepared to be called names and be persecuted extensively! Because again, **HE** was, so why would we think we would receive any less? And to deny such...rejecting His call to get into the game, has damning consequences. Because He tells us that He will in turn deny us before the Father. Now that sounds like eternal ramifications!

We cannot so cling to grace that we reject obedience and commitment! We do indeed NEED grace most assuredly! But with our redemption actually comes expectation of living like we really WANT His redemption. How many of us claim we *want* salvation, but we utterly reject discipleship. As if the two were able to be separated! In other words, if we truly desire and seek after salvation, it must be motivated out of love of Christ for His sacrifice on the cross, not merely a desire to stay out of hell. That’s not love. That’s fear, and self-preservation. For Jesus and this whole faith life is centered on *love*. His love for us, and our reciprocal love for Him. Any other motivation is false and inadequate, and will only result in our eventual spiritual demise and our ultimate ‘rejection’ by the King Himself!

The passage says that if we “deny Him before men” that He will deny us before the Father. What does “denying Him” really look like? We most often imagine such to be an overt rejection of our Christ affiliation when confronted by a member of the unredeemed world. Sort of pulling a Peter in the midst of a verbal exchange. But the fact is, we can ‘deny’ Jesus in so many less overt ways!

When our lives are lived different than His, we effectively deny Him...we deny His example and teaching of what the life of a believer looks like. When we reject obedience and live for ourselves and our self-interest, we mis-represent Christ and thus ‘deny’ that His life and call upon us is something else. When we push away the Holy Spirit’s leading, we say to the world around us that such is not necessary to be a Christian, thus denying the person and directions of Christ. By doing these things, rejecting His hand...we say Jesus is a liar. To deny Christ in this sense means to refuse to recognize His claims over one’s life. A life that effectually says, “I never knew You” will hear Him say at the end of that life “I never knew you...”

The bottom line here is that Jesus left us a clear lifestyle dynamic of a faithful believer, and when we reject such we do in fact reject HIM! Do you and your living clearly and publically “*confess Him before men?*” Please don’t misunderstand me on this: I am not saying that you must be flawless. You never will be! But where is your heart? Where are your efforts? Are you growing **toward** Him or **away** from Him? Do you repent of your sin, or sanction it? Is your passion to serve, live, love, and share Christ to the lost world around you? Or are you essentially hiding? Are you misrepresenting the true life of a believer? Let’s call it for what it is in fact: *denial*.

Verse 27-28 calls us out! *“Whatever I tell you in the dark, speak in the light; and what you hear in the ear, preach on the housetops. And do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. But rather fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.”*

Then in verse 35-37 He puts to rest the “family first” heresy that is so propagated today. *“For I have come to ‘set a man against his father, a daughter against her mother, and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law’; and ‘a man’s enemies will be those of his own household.’ He who loves father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me. And he who loves son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me.”* Please note that it doesn’t say you aren’t to love them, but it does say clearly that you are love Jesus *more*. No games here Christian! Be straight about this matter! Jesus comes first or He is *not* first. That’s the reality! It matters little what we say, just rather what we *do*.

It was and is yet ironic that they called Jesus ‘Satan.’ In Matthew 12:24 we read *“But when the Pharisees heard about the miracle, they said, “No wonder he can cast out demons. He gets his power from Satan, the prince of demons.”* Mark 3:22 reads *“the scribes who came down from Jerusalem said, “He has Beelzebub,” and, “By the ruler of the demons He casts out demons.”* By the way, they also said He was crazy in Mark 3:21, and called his church a cult in Acts 24:14. So people are going to say a lot of things about you and when they do you can count Jesus Himself as part of your company!

But oh how we hate such open persecution! We seem to need so badly to have people...*all people*, speak well of us. We forget that Luke 6:26 warns us *“Woe to you when all men speak well of you...”* The NLT renders that passage *“What sorrow awaits you who are praised by the crowds...”* For some of us, it just *kills* us to go to a church that some people speak badly about! We are often more concerned about what is *said* then what is *true*!

Verses 26-27 say *“Therefore do not fear them. For there is nothing covered that will not be revealed, and hidden that will not be known. Whatever I tell you in the dark, speak in the light; and what you hear in the ear, preach on the housetops.”* Jesus reminds us that...*as in all matters*, He has us covered. That we need not fear those who attack us...especially those who do so with lies, rumors and innuendos, because the fact remains that given time *“there is nothing covered that will not be revealed and nothing hidden that will not be known.”*

According to the instruction of Christ, we would be more righteous to instead say what we have to say even louder! I have found such transparency and honesty to be a formable reply to such attacks! It has repeatedly been my practice when the pool is muddy, to get everyone into one room and lay it all out...to present the whole issue and answering every word. The truth and the facts have a way of shutting people up.

We get so angst up about our street cred, when believers in other countries are just trying not to be *killed* for *their* faith! But even in that, Christ says He has our backs! He calls us in this passage to an eternal perspective in a generation and culture that wholly lives for the world and clearly strives for such in their practical living. But it remains that even those of us that claim salvation so often seem to have a ‘small God’ these days. One where we imagine Him aloof from our troubles, weak in battle and disinterested in our comings and goings. But such is a lie of Satan! One that is propagated by the unredeemed world and timidly supported by the believer who doesn’t know the nature of his God.

Verse 39 says it all believer! "*He who finds his life will lose it, and he who loses his life for My sake will find it.*" We cannot have both! Becoming a Christian is giving up your life as you know it, in exchange for the life that Christ gave you breathe in order to live out. It's *His* way now! It won't likely be easier, and won't result in more comfort, social esteem, and worldly position. It will however result in fulfillment and joy on our part.

*In his biography, C.S. Lewis wrote of his search for the source of joy: saying that, in a sense, 'the central story of my life is about nothing else.' At its heart, his life was about "an unsatisfied desire which is itself more desirable than any other satisfaction." Joy, as he used the word, is sharply distinguished from both happiness...which is dependent on circumstances, and pleasure....which is always related to the senses. Joy transcends circumstances and senses. C.S. Lewis described it "I doubt whether anyone who has ever tasted it would ever, if both were in his power, to exchange it for all the pleasures in the world."* (from "Fools Talk," by Os Guinness)

1Peter 1:8 "*...whom having not seen you love. Though now you do not see Him, yet believing, you rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory...*" 1John 1:4 "*And these things we write to you that your joy may be full.*"

Verse 41-42 says "*He who receives a prophet in the name of a prophet shall receive a prophet's reward. And he who receives a righteous man in the name of a righteous man shall receive a righteous man's reward. And whoever gives one of these little ones only a cup of cold water in the name of a disciple, assuredly, I say to you, he shall by no means lose his reward.*" While we know that we cannot **earn** our salvation, the fact remains that we live our salvation in action. It's a fact! Oh how we must stop excusing ourselves in this matter! We must stop separating the living from the believing...the reality from the philosophy ...the practice from the theory! A "life changed" will actually *change*!

Three times in this passage Jesus tells us not to fear. He has our backs. Down to the smallest detail of our lives, He is there. He '*knows how many hairs you have on your head.*' Does it not then make sense that He is intimately aware of your needs? Your finances? Your health? Your marriage? Your vocation? I'm not saying we are to adopt a fatalistic lifestyle! No, Jesus wants us involved and engaged. The problem is rarely that we are choosing wrongly in our attempts to live out Jesus, but rather that we are not choosing at all. It's generally not that we are making mistakes or stumbling some, but rather that we aren't engaging at all. We talk it, but refuse to live it.

You faith today...are you "living it" or just "believing it?" **He is Faithful!** He has proven such over and over again in our lives and in this fellowship.

***Are you?***

*"It would seem that Our Lord finds our desires not too strong, but too weak.  
We are half-hearted creatures, fooling about with drink  
and sex and ambition when infinite joy is offered us,  
like an ignorant child who wants to go on making mud pies in a slum  
because he cannot imagine what is meant by the offer of a holiday at the sea.  
We are far too easily pleased."*