

Matthew: Cost of the Kingdom

Discussion Guide for Matthew 10:34-42 on Aug. 31 and Sep 1, 2025

Summary

In this sermon, we read Matthew 10:34-42, addressing how followers of Jesus can find true fulfillment in Christ rather than worldly success. He challenges the American Dream ideology that suggests satisfaction comes through achievement and material gain, pointing out how even successful celebrities admit to feeling empty despite their accomplishments. The sermon focuses on three main calls from Jesus: to reorient our desires with Christ as our highest priority, to release control of our lives to God, and to receive the reward that comes from faithful discipleship.

Intro Prayer

"Heavenly Father, as we gather to discuss Your Word today, we ask that You would open our hearts to hear what You want to teach us. Help us examine where our desires may be misaligned with Your kingdom values. Give us the courage to release control of our lives to You and the faith to trust that Your rewards far exceed anything this world offers. May our discussion today lead us closer to You and to living as true disciples. In Jesus' name, amen."

Ice Breaker

What was something you desperately wanted as a child that you were convinced would make you completely happy?

Key Verses

- Matthew 10:38-39
- Matthew 16:26
- 2 Corinthians 5:15
- 1 Corinthians 15:58
- James 1:2-4

Questions

1. In what ways have you seen the 'American Dream' philosophy influence your own expectations for happiness and fulfillment?
2. Jesus says, 'Whoever finds his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life for my sake will find it.' What do you think this paradox means for your daily life?
3. The sermon mentions that 'sin often arises not from loving bad things, but from loving good things in the wrong order.' Can you identify any good things in your life that might be out of proper order?
4. How might 'taking up your cross' look different in your life compared to the early disciples who heard Jesus say these words?
5. In what areas of your life do you find yourself 'gripping the steering wheel too tightly' rather than releasing control to God?
6. Jesus talks about rewards for those who receive His messengers. How does this perspective change how you might view serving others, especially those who seem 'insignificant'?
7. The pastor mentioned being impacted by funerals of godly people. How might regularly considering the end of your life change how you live today?
8. What's one area where God might be calling you to 'lose your life' right now in order to find it in Him?

Life Application

This week, identify one area where you've been seeking fulfillment or control apart from Christ. It might be career advancement, financial security, relationships, or even how you spend your leisure time. Commit to intentionally 'loosening your grip' in this area through a specific action. This might mean setting aside time you'd normally use pursuing this thing to instead serve someone else, pray, or study Scripture. It could mean giving away something you've been holding onto tightly. Whatever form it takes, practice what it means to 'lose your life' in this small way, and journal about what you experience as you release control to God.

Key Takeaways

1. True fulfillment comes not from achieving worldly success but from reorienting our desires to make Christ our highest priority.

2. The paradox of the Christian life is that when we try to control and secure our own happiness, we lose it; but when we surrender control to Christ, we find true life.
3. Even small acts of service done for 'insignificant' people are noticed by God and carry eternal rewards.
4. Our love determines our behavior - where our deepest affections lie is where our actions will follow.
5. The cost of discipleship is great, but the reward of being with Christ now and eternally far outweighs any sacrifice we make.

Ending Prayer

Lord Jesus, thank You for Your invitation to find true life by losing ourselves in You. We confess that we often cling to control, seeking fulfillment in things that cannot ultimately satisfy. Help us to reorient our desires around You, to release our grip on our own plans, and to receive with gratitude the rewards of following You. Give us courage to take up our crosses daily, remembering that any sacrifice we make pales in comparison to what You've done for us and what You promise us. May we leave this discussion with renewed commitment to give our lives away for Your sake, finding in that surrender the abundant life You promised. In Your precious name we pray, amen.