

COUNTING THE COST

PART 1 - MATTHEW 10:1-20

21: COUNTING THE COST - part 1 (Matthew 10:1-20)

Forgiveness & eternal life are *FREE GIFTS* from our gracious God, but following Jesus *IS* going to *COST US* time & effort to take the Gospel to others, & a willingness to be made fun of...or worse.

Following Jesus means Facing Persecution to Get the Gospel to Others.

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teachingnotes

Followers of Jesus are commanded to carry the good news to others, but the Gospel message will not always be embraced.

Counting the Cost means Following Jesus & Facing Persecution to Get the Gospel to Others.

Catch the Context

Matthew 9:35-38 (NIV) Jesus went through all the towns and villages, **teaching** in their synagogues, **proclaiming the good news** of the kingdom and **healing every disease and sickness**. When He saw the crowds, **He had compassion on them**, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd.

Then He said to His disciples, "The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few. **Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field.**"

Jesus *showed* His disciples how much these people needed a shepherd. He didn't just want his disciples to PRAY. He wanted them to be the answer to that prayer! And that's exactly what Jesus sent them to do!

The 12 Apostles Given Miracles to back up the Message

Matthew 10:1-4 (NIV) Jesus called his twelve disciples to him and **gave them authority** to drive out impure spirits and to heal every disease and sickness. These are the names of **the twelve apostles**: first, Simon (who is called Peter) and his brother Andrew; James son of Zebedee, and his brother John; Philip and Bartholomew; Thomas and Matthew the tax collector; James son of Alphaeus, and Thaddaeus; Simon the Zealot and Judas Iscariot, who betrayed him.

These disciples of Jesus are referred to as "**the twelve apostles**." **Apostles** means "sent out" as an ambassador/messenger. **Matthew** makes sure to include himself as well as the one who ultimately **betrayed** Jesus.

- Note: This authority was NOT given to every disciple of Jesus, but only to these 12 at this time.

Jesus gives them incredible **authority - HIS authority** to do what they had seen Him do - to **drive out** demons & **heal** all kinds of **sickness**. (Jesus later sends out 72 disciples with the same authority to prepare the people for Jesus' upcoming visitation to their towns - Lk 10:1, 17). Jesus sent them out in pairs (Mark 6:7). **WHY?** Everybody needs another brother/sister!

The Kingdom Has Come Near

Matthew 10:5-8 (NIV) These twelve Jesus sent out with the following instructions: "Do not go among the Gentiles or enter any town of the Samaritans. Go rather to the lost sheep of Israel. As you go, proclaim this message: **'The kingdom of heaven has come near.'** Heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse those who have leprosy, drive out demons. Freely you have received; freely give.

The 12 disciples are going to the 12 tribes, whom Jesus calls "**the lost sheep of Israel**".

- Note: *This is NOT a command for us to go ONLY to the Jews to share the gospel*, but it was a command for these 12 at that time. The gospel was to go to the Jews first (Rm 1:16), and then to the Gentiles (as seen in Acts).

Their message: "**The kingdom of heaven has come near.**" The disciples of Jesus were to act as heralds preparing people for a glimpse of heaven on earth. To back that up, the miracles of **healing the sick, raising the dead, cleansing lepers, and driving out demons** would demonstrate that the message was true.

God Provides For His Servants Through People

Matthew 10:9-13 (NIV) Do not get any gold or silver or copper to take with you in your belts—no bag for the journey or extra shirt or sandals or a staff, for **the worker is worth his keep**. Whatever town or village you enter, search there for some **worthy person** and stay at their house until you leave. As you enter the home, give it your greeting. If the **home is deserving**, let your peace rest on it; **if it is not**, let your peace return to you.

This is NOT a command for all short/long term missionaries. Jesus wanted to show the 12 how He would provide for their needs through people, because what they are doing is **worth** it.

- Paul later quotes Jesus regarding providing for pastors who teach & lead the church of Jesus (1 Tim 5:17-18).

God will provide places to stay and to be fed by **worthy** people - those who respond to the Kingdom message. The disciples were to bless those people with the age-old Jewish greeting - *shālôm* - **peace** - meaning wholeness & favor with God.

However, **not every home would be deserving** to listen to their message and provide for their needs. This is *the first time that resistance to the disciples' gospel message is referenced*, but, as we're about to see, it will not be the last.

Judgment for Those Who Refuse to Listen

Matthew 10:14-15 (NIV) If anyone will not welcome you or listen to your words, leave that home or town and shake the dust off your feet. Truly I tell you, it will be more bearable for Sodom and Gomorrah on the day of judgment than for that town.

Jews made it their practice to **shake the dust off** their feet when reentering the Holy Land from a Gentile land - a picture of leaving the pagan practices & ideas in the dust behind them.¹ Now Jesus commanded his disciples to respond this way, when their message was rejected by Jews (Matt 10:14; Mark 6:11; Luke 9:5). These people who would **not welcome** nor **listen** will be more responsible for their rejection of God's message - backed up by the miracles, than the people of **Sodom and Gomorrah** would be in the future **day of judgment**.

- ② **Christians never judge?** *The first followers of Jesus were to walk away from those not willing to listen, while warning them of God's future day of judgment.*

Dangerous Mission & Smart Sheep

Matthew 10:16-18 (NIV) **I am sending you out** like **sheep** among wolves. Therefore be as shrewd as snakes and as innocent as doves. Be on your guard; you will be handed over to the local councils and be flogged in the synagogues. **On my account** you will be brought before governors and kings as **witnesses to them and to the Gentiles**.

Jesus didn't sugar-coat what His disciples would face. The Gospel message is **dangerous** because it is **divisive** (read the rest of the chapter on your own this week). Followers of Jesus are sent into enemy territory, **like sheep among wolves**.

The apostles & fellow believers would sometimes be arrested & other times invited to testify about their message. The apostle Paul faced this many times, even **flogged** by the Jews five times (2 Cor 11:24) (the other apostles were flogged as well - Acts 5:40). Despite the difficulties that awaited them, Christians were/are to be tactical, **shrewd as snakes and as innocent as doves**.

- We *are* to be **shrewd** (*wise* ESV, NET) like **snakes** - known for their cunning intellect. They know when & where to set up to catch their prey. They know how to read the signs that it's time to get away.

✦ Jesus was **shrewd** when asked about whether Jews should pay taxes to Caesar (Go read about it - Mt. 22:15-22).

- **Doves** are known for their purity & innocence, never bringing harm to anyone. Believers are to follow the example of Jesus as "holy, blameless, pure" (Heb 7:26), not returning evil for evil (1 Pet 2:23; Rm 12:17; 1 Cor 4:12-13).

✓ We might be **sheep among wolves**, but **we need to be smart sheep** - tactical, wise, pure, & innocent, as we carry the gospel.

While the Gospel would first go to Jews, Jesus would command His Jewish disciples to take the Gospel to **Gentiles**...people like you and me! Followers of Jesus spilt their sweat, time/talent/treasure, and even their blood...to get the gospel to us!

- ② Aren't you **GRATEFUL** for their sacrifice!? Are WE **WILLING** to do the same for others? Jesus has not called us to a life of comfort, but **a life of investment in eternal matters**.

Counting the Cost means Following Jesus & Facing Persecution to Get the Gospel to Others.

Why would we do that? We believe the Gospel message: God-Man-Sin-Jesus-Judgment. The first generation Christians went through the tough times because of the eternal hope that awaited them!

A Promise Attached to Persecution

Matthew 10:19-20 (NIV) But when they arrest you, do not worry about what to say or how to say it. **At that time you will be given what to say**, for it will not be you speaking, but **the Spirit of your Father speaking through you**.

This doesn't mean Christians shouldn't prepare to share their faith and just rely on God's help. Disciples of Jesus were trained by JESUS in how to minister and speak to others.

- ✓ We should prepare to share & pray for God's help.

¹ John B. Polhill, Acts, vol. 26, The New American Commentary (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1992), 309.

Be Prepared to Share

1 Peter 3:15 (NIV) But in your hearts revere Christ as Lord. **Always be prepared to give an answer** to everyone who asks you to **give the reason for the hope that you have**. But do this with gentleness and respect,

› Don't you hear the practice of being **wise as snakes**, but **harmless as doves** in what Peter writes?

- Believers aren't to have **APATHY**, but neither should believers have **ANXIETY (worry)** about sharing with others, because the Holy **Spirit** will **speaking through** us!

✦ Read about Peter & John, brought before the very men who led the Sanhedrin to put Jesus to death (Acts 4:8-12).

The SPIRIT won't leave you on your own; He speaks through believers who stand for Jesus!

✓ This is one of the greatest moments in life...when God gives you insight & answers; when you KNOW that He is WITH you!

✗ If you never share the Gospel,

1. You might not face persecution, but you also won't experience the privilege of being filled by God's Spirit.
2. You will never know the joy of helping others come to Jesus.
3. You are disobeying your King's command to take the Gospel to others.

Counting the Cost means Following Jesus & Facing Persecution to Get the Gospel to Others.



1. Turn from sin and Follow Jesus.
2. Read Matthew 10 this week. Write down the insights you gain & questions you have. Share with another this week.
3. Ask God for & take the opportunities to SERVE others & SHARE the Gospel with them.

heretoserveyou

Have questions and need some help? ...real soon...how about now? Please **call** or **text** us soon!

- * Contact **Jackie** (850-673-1582), **Christy** (850-673-9764), **Caleb** (864-315-8015), or another follower of Jesus soon!
- * Or call our **deacons & wives**: Alan & Christy Androski (850-464-1428), Steve & Debbie Bass (850-673-7952), Freddy & Joyce Howard (850-973-0047), Tim & Joni Hughey (850-464-1156), Mark & Dot Mancil (850-253-5405), Boss & Amelia Mulkey (850-464-6717), or Tom & Martha Waddail (850-973-0011).

discussionquestions

Take some time to discuss these questions with your family, friends, or group.

1. **Read Matthew 10:16-17**. Why is the Gospel of Jesus so divisive in our culture & what dangers do we face for sharing the Gospel with others?
2. Today's BIG TRUTH: **Counting the Cost means Following Jesus & Facing Persecution to Get the Gospel to Others**. What would Jesus say to the person who *claims Jesus* but isn't willing to follow Jesus nor share the Gospel with others?
3. Have you ever faced persecution for serving/sharing Jesus? If so, how did that persecution impact you? How does the persecution we face compare to what the first followers of Jesus faced?
4. What does it mean to be "as shrewd as snakes and as innocent as doves"?
5. **Read Matthew 10:19-20 & 1 Peter 3:15**. What encouragement does this give you in sharing the Gospel with others? Why must we not give in to apathy (e.g. "I don't have to prepare to share. I'll just let God work through me.") or anxiety (worrying about how we will do or how others respond)?
6. Share about a time that you sensed God using you to serve others and share the Gospel.
7. What challenged or encouraged you most from today's teaching? What does God want YOU to do with what we studied today?
8. Share prayer needs and pray for one another.