

Not a Casual Faith: Matthew 10:34-39

Matthew 10: 34 “Do not suppose that I have come to bring peace to the earth. I did not come to bring peace, but a sword. 35 For I have come to turn “‘a man against his father, a daughter against her mother, a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law—36 a man’s enemies will be the members of his own household.’ 37 “Anyone who loves their father or mother more than me is not worthy of me; anyone who loves their son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me. 38 Whoever does not take up their cross and follow me is not worthy of me. 39 Whoever finds their life will lose it, and whoever loses their life for my sake will find it.

Evil is everywhere, and we have tolerated it. This is a call for us to fight back. If you have a casual approach to your faith, something is wrong. If you get more excited about a cool car or a football game (etc.) than your faith, then something is wrong. Where do you get your peace or joy? Other things are not bad in and of themselves, but it is about priorities.

Align to nothing more than God, being a child of God is what it is all about. Give credit to God for what He is doing in our life, and in others lives around us! They point us to God. Do we want God to give us the money, or show us we do not need it? Change the person who offended us, or change our hearts?

2 Timothy 3:1-5 But mark this: There will be terrible times in the last days. 2 People will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boastful, proud, abusive, disobedient to their parents, ungrateful, unholy, 3 without love, unforgiving, slanderous, without self-control, brutal, not lovers of the good, 4 treacherous, rash, conceited, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God— 5 having a form of godliness but denying its power. Have nothing to do with such people.

Pray against these things. Our passage in Matthew is a call to this. In Matthew, Jesus is bringing a faith based covenant versus a rule based covenant. And, there are many people who have been living in act based faith- and now, it is changing. We can see the different reactions as we read through the scriptures.

Ephesians 2:14-18 14 For he himself is our peace, who has made the two groups one and has destroyed the barrier, the dividing wall of hostility, 15 by setting aside in his flesh the law with its commands and regulations. His purpose was to create in himself one new humanity out of the two, thus making peace, 16 and in one body to reconcile both of them to God through the cross, by which he put to death their hostility. 17 He came and preached peace to you who were far away and peace to those who were near. 18 For through him we both have access to the Father by one Spirit.

Not everyone will accept this faith based covenant— we don’t add faith to works based covenant- it is faith alone in Christ Jesus that will save us.

Matthew 10:29-33 29 Are not two sparrows sold for a penny? Yet not one of them will fall to the ground outside your Father’s care. 30 And even the very hairs of your head are all numbered. 31 So don’t be afraid; you are worth more than many sparrows. 32 “Whoever acknowledges me before others, I will also acknowledge before my Father in heaven. 33 But whoever disowns me before others, I will disown before my Father in heaven.

If something is keeping us from our faith, it must go. We should be in direct conflict with things in our culture that are not of God, that are not drawing us closer to God, that are in fact pulling us away from God. Priorities. We may in fact need some pruning in our life. We need to rely upon God more than ourselves. It hurts to see people turning away from God.

Matthew 10:38 Whoever finds their life will lose it, and whoever loses their life for my sake will find it.

Our faith should not be a casual thing in our life, it needs to be our life.

Luke 7:36-50 36 When one of the Pharisees invited Jesus to have dinner with him, he went to the Pharisee's house and reclined at the table. 37 A woman in that town who lived a sinful life learned that Jesus was eating at the Pharisee's house, so she came there with an alabaster jar of perfume. 38 As she stood behind him at his feet weeping, she began to wet his feet with her tears. Then she wiped them with her hair, kissed them and poured perfume on them. 39 When the Pharisee who had invited him saw this, he said to himself, "If this man were a prophet, he would know who is touching him and what kind of woman she is—that she is a sinner." 40 Jesus answered him, "Simon, I have something to tell you." "Tell me, teacher," he said. 41 "Two people owed money to a certain moneylender. One owed him five hundred denarii,[a] and the other fifty. 42 Neither of them had the money to pay him back, so he forgave the debts of both. Now which of them will love him more?" 43 Simon replied, "I suppose the one who had the bigger debt forgiven." "You have judged correctly," Jesus said. 44 Then he turned toward the woman and said to Simon, "Do you see this woman? I came into your house. You did not give me any water for my feet, but she wet my feet with her tears and wiped them with her hair. 45 You did not give me a kiss, but this woman, from the time I entered, has not stopped kissing my feet. 46 You did not put oil on my head, but she has poured perfume on my feet. 47 Therefore, I tell you, her many sins have been forgiven—as her great love has shown. But whoever has been forgiven little loves little." 48 Then Jesus said to her, "Your sins are forgiven." 49 The other guests began to say among themselves, "Who is this who even forgives sins?" 50 Jesus said to the woman, "Your faith has saved you; go in peace."

This woman was going against the cultural norms, she knew who Jesus was (and this was before he died on the cross!). Everything we have, everything we need is found in our relationship with Christ, in knowing who He is and in acceptance of the free gift of salvation. This is not a casual faith, it requires us to be all-in. He died because He loves us. And He wants our loyalty not simply because we owe it to Him. Christ desires our sacrifice to have the same motivation as His—LOVE. Resolve today to follow Christ no matter what the cost is. And may you resolve to follow Him day after day because you love Him.

Questions:

1. When was the last time you had a conversation that centered around Jesus? When was the last time you had the opportunity to “acknowledge” Jesus to others? What holds us back from openly and boldly proclaiming Jesus?
2. Why should you love God more than your own family or close relationships? In what kind of cases would you have to make a choice between the two? Have you experienced conflict or division in your relationships because of the gospel? Explain. What are some ways in which we might be tempted to be more loyal to our family and close friends than we are to Christ? What can we do to overcome that?
3. What does it mean to take up your cross day to day? Thinking of those that failed to take up the cross and follow Jesus, or are in danger of doing that, what did they miss? How would you counsel someone who was prioritizing an earthly relationship over Jesus to make the right choice and endure the sacrifice that might require?
4. Define “find your life.” Define “loses their life.” What are some common distractions for you, how do you handle them/keep them in check (or fail to do so)? How are your actions in life showing this concept (lose your life to find your life) being lived out? How can your actions prove you are a follower of Jesus? How can your actions prove you are not “serious” about your faith?