

# The Hard Truth of Following Jesus Christ



**Introduction:** It had been one month since Siti decided to leave Islam to follow Jesus. She kept it a secret from her Muslim Malay family, knowing they would be angry if they found out. The moment had come for her to confess her faith in Christ and face whatever her family would do to her.

“No, Father, I am sorry, but I am not a Muslim anymore,” she said with her head bowed, afraid to look him in the eye. “I have become a Christian. I believe in Jesus now.”

The next thing she knew, pain shot through her jaw and she fell to the floor. Her father was yelling at her, but she couldn’t hear him over the ringing in her ears. He grabbed her by the arm and forced her into her room, locking the door behind him.

“You will not be a Christian!” he yelled as the lock clicked. “We will put you on the right path again!”

In the weeks and months that followed, Siti's life was turned upside down. Her family reported her to the religious police. She was dragged to place after place in attempts to get her to recant her decision to become a Christian.

Her family even took her to the most powerful religious medium to make her come back to Islam. She was hit with a white cloth in an attempt to beat the demons out of her. The medium made her take ritual baths to cleanse her of evil. He gave her no food and tried to make her drink urine. However, no matter what the medium did, he could not make her renounce Jesus.

"In all my life, these methods have worked," the medium told her. "But why won't this work on you?"

"Jesus lives in me," Siti answered. "You can kill my body, but my soul will go to God."

After many tries, the medium gave up, and Siti's parents had no other plan. They wouldn't allow her to leave home and planned to keep her there until she agreed to return to Islam. Siti knew that her life could not continue this way.

One night before going to sleep she prayed for God to show her how to escape her family. As she slept that night, Siti claims Jesus visited her in a dream, showing her the way out of her house.

She woke up early the next morning before anyone else. She decided to act quickly and follow the way she was shown in her dream. As she went through her house, no one stirred. She opened the front door, looked once behind her, and ran as fast as she could through her neighborhood and escaped her family.

Siti has had no contact with her family since that day.<sup>1</sup>

**Following Jesus Christ is FREE, but it will cost you.** For Siti, it cost her family. It brought about division with the very people she loved. For you and me, it too may cost us. Following Jesus Christ may bring about a division between the people we hold near and dear to us. Children may turn against their parents. Parents may turn against their children. Our worst enemies may become those of our own household.

Let's get into our text and see what Jesus said about all of this.

## I. **Why did Jesus Christ come? – 10:34**

<sup>34</sup> *“Do not think that I came to bring peace on earth. I did not come to bring peace but a sword.*

There is a lot to unpack in this verse. Let's carefully walk through it together. Jesus said...

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<sup>1</sup> Harper McKay, When Following Jesus Costs You Your Family, Radical.net

*A. Do not think that I came to bring peace on earth.*

But isn't Jesus the peacemaker? Absolutely! (Isaiah 9:6; Romans 5:1). However, I ask you, is there peace on earth today? The answer we would all give is a resounding, No! But will there be peace on earth someday? Yes!

So, what does it mean that Jesus did not come to bring peace to earth? It means that He came to revolutionize society and culture (not something society or culture particularly likes). His message would challenge everyday life. His words would cause people's minds to be enlightened, and the result was that they would break with the path that everyone else was walking on. They would choose a much narrower path – the path of following Jesus Christ. The path that led to eternal life, and the path that would cause division among family, religion, and even government.

Jesus came to upset the status quo.

Next, Jesus said...

*B. I did not come to bring peace but a sword.*

What is a sword used for? It is a weapon of protection. It is a weapon of warfare. It is a weapon to right wrongs.

In the parallel passage in Luke 12:51, Jesus said,

*Do you suppose that I came to give peace on earth? I tell you, not at all, but rather division.*

A sword divides.

Are you aware that the Bible is called: **The Sword of the Spirit** (Ephesians 6:17). In Hebrews 4:12, we read about the power of God's Word to divide,

*For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.*

Is it possible that the "sword" Jesus spoke of here is His Word or the revolutionary message He taught? Jesus' teaching has brought about a lot of division through the ages. And even today, it still causes people to be divided.

Charles Spurgeon wrote, "Truth provokes opposition, purity excites enmity, and righteousness arises all the forces of wrong."

Jesus' message was different than what the people had been hearing from the religious Pharisees. This is why over and over throughout the gospel accounts we read of people saying,

*"We have never heard anything like this."*

You see, Jesus' message transforms lives. And when lives are transformed some people don't like it. And they will do all within their earthly power to fight against Christ's teachings.

## **II. What did Jesus Christ cause? – 10:35-36**

*<sup>35</sup> 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'; <sup>36</sup> and 'a man's enemies will be those of his own household.'*

Following Jesus Christ causes family splits! It's true. It happens every day somewhere around the globe. See the diagram below:

### **Those who follow Jesus / Those who will not follow Jesus**

Here is what Jesus said...

#### **A. Family would be set against family.**

In 1976 when I was saved (by faith received Jesus Christ as my Savior), I went home and told my parents about my decision to receive Jesus Christ into my life. My stepfather, Bill said to me, "I'm just glad that you are not a Mormon. Jesus might be good for you, but don't share that stuff with me." He never asked me anything about my walk with Jesus Christ after that initial conversation with him. He wanted nothing to do with Jesus Christ I was following.

I started this chapter by sharing with you the story of Siti coming to faith in Jesus Christ. Are you aware that when a Muslim comes to faith in Jesus Christ, their families view them as if they died? They want nothing to do with them. They see them as apostates of Islam. This same thing happens to a Hindu who comes to faith in Jesus Christ. Following Jesus Christ may cost you your family.

Jesus also taught...

A. A man's enemies will be those of his own household.

There is a dear lady in the church who has an unsaved husband. He doesn't like that his wife attends church, reads her Bible, or attends a weekly ladies' Bible study. He doesn't want the name of Jesus mentioned in his house.

I have heard of people leaving their spouses because they began to follow Jesus Christ.

Years ago, I witnessed a man who went from being a slug in God's Kingdom to soaring in God's Kingdom and his wife didn't like the changes that were taking place in his life (even though she prayed for them). He was spiritually outgrowing his wife. His growth in Christ caused division in their marriage. She was thinking about leaving him.

Jesus said that this could happen – that a man's enemies could be his own household.

**One other thought here** – if you stand for biblical truth, for a Christian worldview you can be assured that you will bring division within your family. People do not like truth today, and most people know nothing of a biblical worldview. Talk about what the Bible teaches about creation, morality, righteousness, purity, and life, and just see how well they are received by family, friends, or society. Speak forth a biblical worldview when it comes to marriage and morality in our culture, and you'll find out how popular your message is. Use a social platform and share a biblical worldview and you will be CANCELLED!

Next, we want to see...

### **III. What did Jesus Christ ask? – 10:37-39**

*<sup>37</sup> 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. <sup>38</sup> And he who does not take his cross and follow after Me is not worthy of Me. <sup>39</sup> He who finds his life will lose it, and he who loses his life for My sake will find it.*

What is it that Jesus Christ is asking from His followers in these verses? I see three things He is asking from all those who follow Him. They are:

1. Jesus Christ asks us to give up – 10:37



*<sup>37</sup> 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.*

Christ must have first place above our family. If you can't put Him first, then you are not worthy of Him. **Get this** – if you put Jesus Christ first place in your life, He gives you back all things. This is what so many people don't understand.

*Mark 10:28–31 - <sup>28</sup> Then Peter began to say to Him, “See, we have left all and followed You.” <sup>29</sup> So Jesus answered and said, “Assuredly, I say to you, there is no one who has left house or brothers or sisters or father or mother or wife or children or lands, for My sake and the gospel’s, <sup>30</sup> who shall not receive a hundredfold now in this time—houses and brothers and sisters and mothers and children and lands, with persecutions—and in the age to come, eternal life. <sup>31</sup> But many who are first will be last, and the last first.”*

Are you surrendered to Jesus Christ? Does He have first place in your life? (see Colossians 1:18). Even above your immediate family?

## 2. Jesus Christ asks us to take up – 10:38

*<sup>38</sup> And he who does not take his cross and follow after Me is not worthy of Me.*

So, the second thing Jesus asks of His followers is that they take up their cross. In biblical days condemned criminals would carry their cross to the place of their death. To take up the cross means **that we must be willing to die**. It doesn't say we will die; it says we must take up the cross. The cross may lead to our death, but it may also just testify that we are willing to pay the ultimate price as well.

Dr. Warren Wiersbe wrote, "To carry the cross" does not mean to wear a pin on our lapel or put a sticker on our automobile. It means to confess Christ and obey Him despite shame and suffering. It means to die to self daily. If the Lord went to a cross for us, the least we can do is carry a cross for Him."<sup>2</sup>

Will you take up the cross and follow Jesus Christ?

### 3. Jesus Christ asks us to offer up – 10:39

*<sup>39</sup> He who finds his life will lose it, and he who loses his life for My sake will find it.*

The third thing that Jesus Christ asks of us is to offer up our entire life to His service.

The hymn writer E.A. Hoffman penned,

*Is your all on the altar of sacrifice laid?  
Your heart does the Spirit control?*

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<sup>2</sup> Wiersbe, W. W. (1996). [The Bible exposition commentary](#) (Vol. 1, p. 39). Victor Books.

*You can only be blest,  
And have peace and sweet rest,  
As you yield Him your body and soul.*

We are to lose our lives to truly find them. Life makes more sense when it is lived for Jesus Christ and for all that is eternal.

Jesus said,

*<sup>26</sup> For what profit is it to a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul? (Matthew 16:26)*

The apostle Paul wrote in Romans 12:1,

*I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service.*

You and I will never truly experience life as God intended until we lose our lives completely in following Jesus Christ alone. I wonder if we will ever get this.

**Conclusion:** And there you have it, **The Hard Truth of Following Jesus Christ.** Here are the following takeaways from this section of Scripture.

1. Christ did not come to bring peace on earth, but a sword. He came to disrupt cultural thought and practice.

2. God's Word is the sword of the Spirit. It cuts deeply, and it changes mindsets.
3. Family members may separate from you because you decided to follow Jesus Christ. This division can hurt deeply.
4. We must choose Jesus Christ above all - spouse, children, parents. Jesus must have first place in our lives.
5. Some enemies may even come from our very own household.
6. Jesus asks us to give up our life, to carry our cross, and to offer up our entire life for His service.