

Last week we began our new series dealing with Hard Sayings found within the Bible. Today we will continue in this vein with the focus paralleling the statement from our passage of text last week, **“This is a hard saying; who can listen to it?”** There are many hard sayings through the New Testament that Christ Himself taught but more often than not, we don't want the hard teachings of Jesus.

As I stated last week, we desire a fun-loving Jesus that would never offend, demand anything of us or dare to correct us. However, within the Holy Writ, Jesus taught Hard Things and if we are Followers of Christ then we must know, embrace, and submit to these hard things. And our text for today is no different, what Christ stated in Matthew 10 is a hard statement to make!

It would seem that this passage of text has perhaps 3 distinct parts contained within it and we are going to break those down together...

1. Why is the Prince of Peace stating that He did not Come to Bring Peace but Rather a Sword?

- a. **“³⁴“Do not think that I have come to bring peace to the earth. I have not come to bring peace, but a sword. ³⁵ For I have come to set a man against his father, and a daughter against her mother,**

and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law.³⁶ And a person's enemies will be those of his own household.”

- b. This is truly a Hard Saying of Christ! Do not think that I have come to bring peace to the earth. I have not come to bring peace, but a sword. Strong words indeed! And in light of this text, how do we balance this with the fact that He, Jesus, is the Prince of Peace?
- c. It would seem that this hard saying is contradictory to bible prophecy and much less to His eternal character. Or is it? Could the sword that He brings be predicated upon the outcome of our decision to follow Christ and thus in turn forsaking the relationships with those that we are closest to?
- d. This is the reason why Jesus stated in verse 36... a person's enemies will be those of his own household! The challenge of the faith is not found when enemies despise us but when those we love the most are willing to turn on us because of our faith! It is easy to serve Jesus when our loved ones celebrate our faith but its crushing when we have to choose Christ over our family members.
- e. I recently stated a challenge from this pulpit just a few short weeks ago challenging the culture around us that demands that we sever our faith in Christ for the sake of the relationship with said person! And I state emphatically again...

- f. If someone demands you diminish your faith and disown it based upon the threat of its them or Jesus, friends let them walk! Jesus made it clear that our greatest enemies may be those of our own household but my encouragement to us all is cling to Christ and wash your hands of the others!
- g. Following Jesus is hard! Nothing is easy about this walk of faith! Therefore stand firm even when it's your own family who are against your faith in Christ! He warned us that it would happen and so be it! I'd Rather Have Jesus!

2. The Challenge of the Text comes when We have to Prioritize Christ above all Others!

- a. ³⁶ And a person's enemies will be those of his own household.
³⁷ Whoever loves father or mother more than me is not worthy of me, and whoever loves son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me.”
- b. Church, when we think that the previous texts are hard enough, it would seem that Christ doubles down on His teaching by asking us a hard question! “Do you love your parents more than me? Do you love your children more than me?”

- c. Far too often, we focus so much on balance in life that we fail to understand that when it comes to the scales of life versus Christ; the scales should always be totally in His favor and not our own.
- d. If we were to take an even closer look at this text, I would dare to state that perhaps the principle is more pragmatic than emotional. Simply put, who holds more sway over you? Your relationships with other versus your relationship with Christ. Does Christ and His Teachings have more influence over you than your family or friends?
- e. Are you willing to sacrifice Biblical integrity for the sake of perpetuating a relationship with someone else? Again, I'd rather have Jesus than a relationship that demands of me to sacrifice my relationship with Christ for the sake of someone else...
- f. Church, when we choose to follow Jesus, there is no turning back!

3. When We Choose Jesus, There Is No Turning Back!

- a. ³⁸ And whoever does not take his cross and follow me is not worthy of me. ³⁹ Whoever finds his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life for my sake will find it.”

- b. Friends, one of the greatest mistakes a Christian can make is to be deceived into thinking that backsliding is an option! If we were to ask ourselves an honest question, it should be the following..., “What is there to back slide to?” Why would we ever entertain the thought of walking away from Christ?
- c. Have we forgot who we were without Christ! Friends, I may have been born again and delivered from who I was before Christ but I have not forgotten who I used to be! Friends, when we choose Jesus, there is no turning back!
- d. And my challenge to us all today, including myself, is where is your Cross and are you on the path? Have you taken up your cross and are you following Christ?
- e. The finding of our lives is found in His Cross! If we are willing to lose our lives for His sake then we shall truly find a life worth living!

I have decided to follow Jesus; I have decided to follow Jesus;
I have decided to follow Jesus; no turning back, no turning back.

Though none go with me, I still will follow;
though none go with me, I still will follow;
though none go with me, I still will follow;
no turning back, no turning back.

The world behind me, the cross before me;
the world behind me, the cross before me,
the world behind me, the cross before me;
no turning back, no turning back.