

Matthew 10:34-42: 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. 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. 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. ⁴⁰ Whoever receives you receives me, and whoever receives me receives him who sent me. ⁴¹ The one who receives a prophet because he is a prophet will receive a prophet's reward, and the one who receives a righteous person because he is a righteous person will receive a righteous person's reward. ⁴² And whoever gives one of these little ones even a cup of cold water because he is a disciple, truly, I say to you, he will by no means lose his reward.

Intro: We've been exploring the instructions Jesus gave to His twelve Apostles as He prepared them to be sent out on their first mission to spread the Gospel of the Kingdom. Last week, Jesus told them how they would suffer and be persecuted for His name sake, but He encouraged them to be faithful, fear not, trust in God, and He promised them that He will acknowledge them before God the Father for their faithful service. Fear not! - 3 times.

1. Jesus Did Not Come To Bring Peace But Division

Matthew 10:34-36: 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.

a. Jesus is the Son of God, come down from heaven: Jesus has come to earth: John 6:38, 42: For I have come down from heaven, not to do my own will but the will of him who sent me . . . ⁴² They said, "Is not this Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? How does he now say, 'I have come down from heaven!'"

b. That Jesus did not come to bring peace is a shocking statement: Isaiah 9:6: For to us a child is born, to us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder, and his name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

Luke 1:78-79: [Zechariah] because of the tender mercy of our God, whereby the sunrise shall visit us from on high to give light to those who sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace.

Luke 2:14: Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among those with whom he is pleased!

John 14:27: Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you.

John 16:33: I have said these things to you, that in me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation. But take heart; I have overcome the world.

Rom. 5:1: Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.

c. Jesus brings a sword of division: Swords cut things in two – they divide. And they divide those things which are closest together – those things that are one and meant to be one: **Hebrews 4:12:** For the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and of spirit, of joints and of marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart.

V. 35-36: 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.

Daniel Doriani: When he “came” to the earth, Jesus initiated spiritual warfare. The peace Jesus brings is deeper than the absence of strife. He initiates combat with our enemy. He assaults the strongholds of sin. That assault eventually brings peace, but first it brings conflict. Jesus’ war against evil elicits hostility from evildoers. They oppose Jesus, sometimes passionately. Conflict is therefore, inevitable, even within families.

Muslim examples; Jewish examples; Nominal Christian examples: child grows up in “Christian” home, goes off to college and really gets saved, parents think the child has gotten involved in some kind of cult! Boyfriend/Girlfriend

2. Jesus Must Be Your First Love Above All Other Loves

Matthew 10:37: 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.

a. True believers in Jesus will love Him first & foremost, even more than family. Christ must be first above all!

Jesus (Luke 14:26-27): If anyone comes to me and does not hate his own father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters, yes, and even his own life, he cannot be my disciple. Whoever does not bear his own cross and come after me cannot be my disciple.

In this passage, Jesus demands absolute, undivided love, commitment, and devotion without rival. The love we are to have for Jesus should make all other loves in our lives seem like hatred. Only if we have this kind of love for Christ will we be able to love the lesser goods in our lives (like our families) as they should be loved. Only by trusting, loving, and adoring Jesus most of all can we even begin to love our neighbors as ourselves, love our wives as Christ loves the church, love our fathers and mothers biblically, and love our children in a way that pleases God.

What does loving Jesus more than anything look like? Trust-Delight/Joy-Obedience-Prayer-Word-Witness-Church
Rob Green: couples should be participating in [Sunday morning services] forty-eight out of fifty-two weeks a year (two weeks of vacation and two weeks being sick)

b. This demand shows Jesus is God: D. A. Carson: the saying is either that of the Messiah or a maniac.

c. What does it mean to be worthy of Jesus: To truly receive, believe, & follow Jesus as a true disciple.

d. Beware of idols: These words of Jesus are a warning to beware of idolizing the good gifts from God in our lives: **Tim Keller:** We think that idols are bad things, but that is almost never the case. The greater the good, the more likely we are to expect that it can satisfy our deepest needs and hopes. Anything can serve as a counterfeit god, especially the very best things in life . . . What is an idol? It is anything more important to you than God, anything that absorbs your heart and imagination more than God, anything you seek to give you what only God can give. A counterfeit god is anything so central and essential to your life that, should you lose it, your life would feel hardly worth living . . . It can be family and children, or career and making money, or achievement and critical acclaim, or saving face and social standing. It can be a romantic relationship, peer approval, competence and skill, secure and comfortable circumstances, your beauty or your brains, a great political or social cause, your morality and virtue, or even success in the Christian ministry.

3. You Must Take Up Your Cross And Follow Jesus

Matthew 10:38: And whoever does not take his cross and follow me is not worthy of me.

We can easily forget what the cross is (it's been made a nice, clean religious symbol; put it on jewelry; speak of it as a trial "my next door neighbor is my cross to bear") What was the cross in Jesus' day? It was the most gruesome, painful, tortuous way of executing the most evil criminals. They wanted cruel and unusual punishment! It's like saying take up your electric chair, your gas chamber, your lethal injection (but worse – like a curse word!)

Theologian: When Christ calls a man, he bids him come and die.

Spurgeon: You cannot be Christ's servant if you are not willing to follow Him, cross and all. What do you crave? A crown? Then it must be a crown of thorns if you are to be like Him. Do you want to be lifted up? So you shall, but it will be upon a cross.

4. You Must Lose Your Life To Find It

Matthew 10:39: Whoever finds his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life for my sake will find it.

If you have your best life now, you will lose your life forever in hell.

Luke 12:16-21: And he told them a parable, saying, "The land of a rich man produced plentifully, ¹⁷ and he thought to himself, 'What shall I do, for I have nowhere to store my crops?' ¹⁸ And he said, 'I will do this: I will tear down my barns and build larger ones, and there I will store all my grain and my goods. ¹⁹ And I will say to my soul, Soul, you have ample goods laid up for many years; relax, eat, drink, be merry.' ²⁰ But God said to him, 'Fool! This night your soul is required of you, and the things you have prepared, whose will they be?' ²¹ So is the one who lays up treasure for himself and is not rich toward God."

If you deny yourself, trust Jesus, and make sacrifices for Jesus now (possibly even your physical life!), He will reward you with abundant life (living for Him and being satisfied in Him) now and eternal life in the age to come where there will be fullness of joy and pleasures forevermore!

Mark 10:28-30: Peter began to say to him, "See, we have left everything and followed you." ²⁹ Jesus said, "Truly, I say to you, there is no one who has left house or brothers or sisters or mother or father or children or lands, for my sake and for the gospel, ³⁰ who will 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.

Daniel Doriani: Some people exert every effort to "find" life – to preserve and prolong natural life however they can. By contrast, Jesus commends those who are slightly careless for his sake . . . Those who live for self die twice and may never even live once. Those who die to self, die once and live twice, now and forever.

5. Receiving Jesus' Apostles Is To Receive Jesus Himself And To Receive Jesus Is To Receive The Father

Matthew 10:40: Whoever receives you receives me, and whoever receives me receives him who sent me.

a. Jesus identifies His apostles (His people) with Himself: Matthew 25:35-40: For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, ³⁶ I was naked and you clothed me, I was sick and you visited me, I was in prison and you came to me.' ³⁷ Then the righteous will answer him, saying, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you drink? ³⁸ And when did we see you a stranger and welcome you, or naked and clothe you? ³⁹ And when did we see you sick or in prison and visit you?' ⁴⁰ And the King will answer them, 'Truly, I say to you, as you did it to one of the least of these my brothers, you did it to me.'; **Acts 9:4:** Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me?

b. Jesus identifies Himself with His Father Who sent Him: John 14:9: Whoever has seen me has seen the Father; **John 10:30:** I and the Father are one; **1 John 5:12:** Whoever has the Son has life; whoever does not have the Son of God does not have life; **1 John 2:23:** No one who denies the Son has the Father. Whoever confesses the Son has the Father also.

Commentator: Those who receive Jesus apostles (& you!) into their house receive God Himself into their house!

6. You Will Be Rewarded For Receiving Any Of Christ's Followers, From The Greatest To The Least

Matthew 10:41-42: The one who receives a prophet because he is a prophet will receive a prophet's reward, and the one who receives a righteous person because he is a righteous person will receive a righteous person's reward. And whoever gives one of these little ones even a cup of cold water because he is a disciple, truly, I say to you, he will by no means lose his reward.

a. If you receive a prophet (teaches truth about Jesus) or a righteous person (lives the truth of Jesus), you will receive the very same reward of that prophet and righteous person: To receive is to listen to, to agree with, to support (hospitality, financially), to approve of, and to partner in ministry with for the glory of God.

Your presence here (members); Giving; Supporting missionaries: The reward: God; Joy In Him

b. V. 42: And whoever gives one of these little ones even a cup of cold water because he is a disciple, truly, I say to you, he will by no means lose his reward.

If you help the least of Christ's disciples in the least way because he/she is a disciple of Jesus, you will be rewarded: Your smallest good deeds to the weakest, youngest, smallest followers of Jesus are greatly pleasing in God's sight!

- **Matthew 25:32-40:** Before him will be gathered all the nations, and he will separate people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. ³³ And he will place the sheep on his right, but the goats on the left. ³⁴ Then the King will say to those on his right, 'Come, you who are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. ³⁵ For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, ³⁶ I was naked and you clothed me, I was sick and you visited me, I was in prison and you came to me.' ³⁷ Then the righteous will answer him, saying, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you drink? ³⁸ And when did we see you a stranger and welcome you, or naked and clothe you? ³⁹ And when did we see you sick or in prison and visit you?' ⁴⁰ And the King will answer them, 'Truly, I say to you, as you did it to one of the least of these my brothers, you did it to me.'

- **Galatians 6:10:** So then, as we have opportunity, let us do good to everyone, and especially to those who are of the household of faith.

Daniel Doriani: The Father sends the Son & the Son sends his apostles. To "receive" a disciple is to hear his message & support it, perhaps by giving the messenger food & a bed so he can continue his ministry. To receive an apostle in this way is to receive Jesus himself & God himself. But Jesus continues down a line to people who are ever less prominent: To receive an apostle is to receive Christ; To receive a prophet is to receive Christ; To receive a righteous man is to receive Christ; To receive a little one, the smallest member of the kingdom, is to receive Christ. It is easy to see why one who receives the twelve disciples receives Christ. He sent them directly as his apostles, with his message & power. But the next points are a marvel. In the New Testament era, prophets rank below the twelve apostles. They represented God to be sure, but the Twelve were the foundational witnesses to Christ. To be a righteous man is also a great thing, even if the righteous rank below apostles & prophets. Yet Jesus says that those who receive the apostle, the prophet, & the righteous all gain the same reward from God. Indeed, anyone who helps any of these people gets the same reward they do, because they are partners in God's work. Furthermore, if anyone even helps a little one, the youngest, weakest believer, he will not miss God's reward. God will notice & reward even a cup of cold water given to his children, for his cause. Now to give a cup of cold water is to perform the smallest act of kindness. It is "a small service to a small person." It is smaller than a meal or a bed. It costs nothing & takes no time. Yet God promises to reward even the smallest act to the smallest person.

Daniel Doriani: One day, when a fellow named Mike was a freshman in high school, he saw a classmate named Kyle walking home from school, carrying all his books. He thought to himself, "Why would anyone bring home all his books on a Friday? He must be some nerd." Moments later, Mike saw a group of kids running toward Kyle. They ran into him and tripped him, knocking all his books out of his arms. He landed in the dirt and his glasses landed in the grass ten feet away. When the boy looked up, there was a terrible sadness in his eyes. Moved to pity, Mike jogged over to Kyle, handed him his glasses, and said, "Those guys are jerks. They should get a life." Kyle looked at Mike, and simply said, "Thanks!" as a smile of gratitude spread over his face. Mike initiated a conversation: "Where do you live?" Nearby. "Why haven't I seen you before?" I just transferred in from another school. "Would you like to play a little football with my friends this weekend?" Sure. Kyle, Mike, and his buddies soon became friends. In fact, over the high school years, Kyle and Mike became best friends. When they were seniors, Kyle was class valedictorian, but far from a nerd. He was good-looking and everyone's friend. In his speech, Kyle said, "Graduation is a time to thank those who helped you make it through those tough years." Mike then listened in shock as Kyle told the story of the first day they met. Kyle had planned to take his own life that weekend. He had been carrying all his books home so his mother would not have to clean out his locker. A gasp went through the crowd as this handsome, popular boy described his darkest moment. Kyle looked hard at Mike and smiled. "Thankfully, my friend saved me from doing the unspeakable."

- On the cross, peace was not brought to Jesus, but a sword: **Zechariah 13:7**: “Awake, O sword, against my shepherd” . . . declares the LORD of hosts. “Strike the shepherd, and the sheep will be scattered”
- Jesus’ own household thought He was crazy: **Mark 3:21**: And when his family heard it, they went out to seize him, for they were saying, "He is out of his mind."
- Jesus is the only One Who has ever lived Who loved the Father perfectly and supremely!
- Jesus is the only One Who took up the cross of God’s infinite damnation, so that we might never face it!
- Jesus lost His life on that cross, and found it in the resurrection!
- On the cross, Jesus received no reward (no cup of cold water – I thirst!) except the reward of the wicked: God’s full fury toward sin!

Klaas Schilder: But the forsaking of God is also positive. God is directly sending the torments of hell against Christ . . . It is God who looses the devils against Him . . . The Spirit of Christ, as it battles against the forces of hell for three hours, sees the devils rising up against Him, & as He sees it, God is taking the role of the supervisor in the arena, & it is God who releases the lions, the bulls & goats & cattle of Bashan, & it is God who releases the dogs (Psalm 22) against the great martyr with an agonizing calmness. It is God who lifts the doors of the cages . . . Just as the martyrs in the arena saw the man who opened the doors of the cages, & maintained the supervision from that point on, so the Saviour saw God in His arena . . . He released the Dragon . . . the son, the shepherd is being destroyed. Listen to the summons of the Lord of heaven: sword, awake thou against my shepherd.

Wilhelmus à Brakel: Christ did indeed suffer eternal damnation, for eternal damnation, death, and pain consist in total separation from God, in the total manifestation of divine wrath, and all of this for such a duration until the punishment upon sin was perfectly and satisfactorily born.

Christ Jesus Came To Pierce, Divide
 And Challenge Peace That’s Thin And Lied
 When “Christ Is All!” Families Collide
 Christ Must Be First By Margin Wide
 We Love Him Most, In Him Abide
 And Follow Him, Come Now Decide
 Take Up Your Cross, He’ll Be Your Guide
 The Spirit Leads, Cast Sin Aside
 More Pleasures Pure God Will Provide
 Receive Him Now, In Christ Confide
 Give Little Ones True Love Applied
 Great Love To Christ Has Been Denied
 Friends Would Run And Foes Deride
 They Mocked And Spit And Pierced His Side
 For Christ Has Come And Lived And Died
 He Bore The Wrath Of God And Cried
 Then Rose Alive And Death Defied
 To Save All Sinners Found Worldwide
 Christ Alone Is Qualified
 By Faith Flee To Him Rest And Hide
 In His Righteousness Reside
 Lose Your Life And Die To Pride
 We Are His Pure And Spotless Bride
 For He’s Our Joy Multiplied!