

Today we are taking Matthew 10:34-39 Part One. Next Sunday will be Part Two. We are in Matthew's second message in his gospel. This one is entitled The Sermon on Discipleship.

A *disciple* is someone who is *under the discipline of Christ*. Jesus only called people to become His disciple. He did not call people to become Christians, or to become church members, or even to become a disciple of a church, but to be a disciple of Himself. And so we are learning about discipleship. And I think that you will be very surprised, if not shocked, at some of the things that Jesus has to say to those that He is calling to be His disciples. You will understand why it is easier in our day to go and join a church and exercise your religious beliefs and doctrines, than it is to follow Jesus Christ. Easier to join a church system than it is to follow Christ. The church does not make the limitations and demands on us that Jesus does so it easier for us to be religious.

In chapter 10 we saw in verses 1-4 that the Lord from out of the disciples He called twelve to be the apostles. And in verses 5-15 He commissioned these twelve apostles to go out with the commission to announce that the kingdom of heaven has come. And He gave them authority to perform the signs of the Messiah: to heal every disease and every sickness.

But in verses 16-23 we saw The Conditions of the Twelve Apostles. That Jesus told the disciples in verse 16, He says, "Look, I am sending you out as sheep in the midst of wolves." The opposite of what is normal. Wolves come in to get sheep. But Jesus is sending the sheep out, purposely out in the midst of the wolves. And He says, "The wolves are out there waiting for you to go and I'm commissioning you to go. They are going to deliver you to the religious councils, and they are going to beat you. They are going to bring you before the Roman government, the kings, and the governors. They are going to deliver you over. Brother is going to deliver brother to death and the father is going to deliver his child and his children. And the children are going to rise up against their parents and have them put to death." All because they followed Jesus as the Messiah.

I have an excerpt here. I have been waiting two weeks to read it. It does not come in at the study and message it does not come in at this time; but I am going to read it anyway because it is burning a hole in my pocket.

Richard Wurmbrand who is president of Tortured for Christ. He suffered in a communist prison for his faith in Jesus Christ. He says to us in the Western world, "A man really does not believe what he recites in his creed," that is not what you believe, "but only the things he's willing to die for." How do you like that one? If you are not willing to die for your relationship with Christ in which you believe, then it is not real. It is just a creed that we recite in church.

Jesus says to the apostles, "They are going to bring you before the councils. Your own family members are going to deliver you up and have you put to death because of your faith that Jesus Christ is the promised coming Messiah."

Then we saw last week in verses 24 to 33, The Characteristics of Discipleship. Jesus said, "A disciple is not above the teacher nor is a slave above his Lord." In other words, just as

the world has treated Jesus so it will treat me if I follow Jesus. So my response to that personally is, "What's wrong with me? Why do I have it better than Jesus did? Why does the world treat me better? Why do my friends and family treat me better than it treated Jesus?" We will read on and we will find out.

We found out in verses 26 to 31 that the great problem with becoming like our Teacher is fear. We fear how people are going to respond to us. We fear consequences, that if we make a decision to follow Christ and be obedient to Him, we fear what the response will be.

But here is the key. I want you, if you have your study guide, I want you to key on verses 32 and 33 from last week. The Confession of Discipleship. I want you to see how this fits in with the teaching of Jesus. Jesus says, **Therefore everyone who will confess in Me before men, I Myself will also confess to be in him before My Father, who is in Heaven. But whoever should deny Me before men, I Myself also will deny him before My Father, which is in heaven.** Let me expand on this as we move into the text because everything is foundational on this confession.

When Jesus said the word *confess*, He did not mean *recognize*. He did not mean *acknowledge Jesus*, "I confess Jesus and I confess what He did for me." That is not what He means. It means *to identify with*. To confess Jesus Christ is to identify with Him. To be in Him in what I am doing. My decision-making. My life. If people want to know, "Why do you do what you do? Why are you making the decisions that you are?" It is because I am in Christ and I am with Him and I confess that my decisions are in response to Christ.

**But whoever should deny Me.** It does not mean to deny what Jesus did or deny that Jesus existed. The Greek word means *to reject Him*.

Now, in case you do not see what is coming; is that Jesus is saying, "It is not your doctrine or your creed that you are going to answer to when you stand before the Lord on Judgment Day." It is not whether you believe the right things or not. It is whether you confess to be in Jesus and walking with Him in your life; or you are rejecting Him in order to make decisions to do something else with somebody else. It is relational. It is not religion. So that when I stand before Him it is not, "Well, Lord, I believed in You and I believed what You did for me on the cross." He is going to say, "That is all well and good, but you didn't confess me before men. You feared what people would think. You feared what was going to happen to you. You feared the consequences. So you rejected identifying with Me and you compromised and did things your way and went your own way."

Our text today in verses 34 to 39 is probably one of the most revealing spiritual awakening texts in the Bible. Because this is **The Cost of Discipleship**. Did you know it is going to cost you something? My problem in the day in which we live is that *Easy Believe-ism* is peddled in the church in order to get people into the church.

They say, "Just believe that Jesus died for your sins on the cross. Do you believe that?"

"Yes, I do."

"Well, then you are saved. Come join the church."

No. What Jesus did for us on the cross, He paid the penalty for our sins, He suffered the punishment for our sins, so that we could receive Christ and be saved. He purchased our salvation for us. So that it could be a gift, He paid for it on the cross. Free gift. But you see, when Christ comes in, He comes in to take over. I am now in Him and He is now in me. Do you see why back in verse 32 He said, "You confess to be in me, I will confess to be in you. You reject Me, I will reject you when you stand before Me." This is relational, not doctrinal.

I know people in the past that have known the Lord much, much better than I and they could not even get their doctrine straight; but they had a close relationship with Jesus Christ. Personal. Walking with Him. Following Him. Seeking Him humbly and in brokenness on a daily basis. It put me to shame. But I could tell them what that Greek word was. They did not even know Greek; they knew Christ.

That's why back in Matthew chapter 7 Jesus said, "Not everybody who calls me, 'Lord, Lord,' is going to get into the kingdom of heaven; because you are going to call me, 'Lord,' and I am going to turn to you and say, 'I never knew you. Oh yes, I saw you in church. I saw your doctrinal beliefs. But I never knew you.'" It is personal. It is relational.

You see, our culture has come in and has brought in a humanitarian approach to spiritual things. Love your neighbor is going out and through human effort and humanitarian means doing good for people in the human. When it is really spiritual, it is not humanitarian. It is good to do well for people but that is not what the Bible is talking about. We do not especially like to hurt people's feelings. If I have to obey Jesus Christ and hurt somebody's feelings, a God of love certainly would not want that to happen. And yet, if you read the Gospels, Jesus hurt a lot of people's feelings and made a lot of people angry. In fact, the disciples came to Jesus one day and said, "Do not You know that You made the religious leaders very upset with the things that You said?" He says, "Leave them alone. That which is not planted of My Father must be rooted up." That is pretty harsh. If it is not the truth, then it has got to be rooted up. "But You offended them!" The whole point of Jesus is causing people to come into contact with truth and reality in Himself. We do not understand that the things of the Lord are spiritual not human or humanitarian based. That is why we misunderstand the Scriptures. The church of today has become more humanitarian based, more human based. Instead of, *deny yourself*; [it is] *come to church and exercise yourself*. Because I can tell you this morning the truth of the gospel of Jesus Christ will not go over well here in America if people knew what the Bible said. Just the couple of verses we are going to take today America will not receive that.

So this morning our focus is on verses 34 and 35 and 36. It is The Concept of Discipleship. You see our perception of the concept of discipleship is all wrong. So this morning our focus is on the perception of Christ's ministry. I want us to hear straight from the words of Jesus who He is and what He says about what it means to follow Him. I have had people in the past say to me, "I do not accept this. The Jesus that I know would not make me do

that and so over in my church we don't even talk about these pieces of Scripture." That person has to stand before Christ one day and have Jesus say, "Either you identified with Me or you didn't. You rejected Me. Out of your own imagination you created your own Jesus that fit you in what you think is right and found a church to house it."

Look at verse 34. All English translations make it a command but is not a command; it is in the subjunctive mood, which shows that there is a possibility that people can think differently. But Jesus said this, **You should not think that I came to send peace upon the earth. I did not come to send peace, but I came with a sword.** Wow. How many messages do you hear today about peace? Even in the church, "We've got to bring peace." Jesus said, "I did not come to bring peace upon the earth, I came with a sword." Look at verse 35, **For I came to divide** (the word *variance* in the King James is the word *division*). **I came to divide a man against his father, and a daughter against her mother, and a bride against her mother-in-law. And the enemies of a person will be those of his own household.** It does not sound too peaceful to me.

And just to read further to get a taste for next week, look at verse 37, **The one loving father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me.** I read this to you because of some of the hard things that we are going to quote here in just a moment. It is the phrase *more than me*. He did not say you cannot love your family, love your friends. Jesus says, "The one loving mother or father more than me," literally in the Greek text it is *above Me*. So when it comes to choice, the love for Christ must have priority over the closest ones to us. **The one loving son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me.** Hard for parents to put Christ ahead of their children. **And the one who does not take up his cross and follow after Me is not worthy of Me. The one finding** (literally *preserving*) **his life is going to lose it. And the one who has lost his life on account of Me he is going to find it.**

I counted several times in the Gospels where Jesus gave this exact same message when the crowds began to follow Him. This is the message He gave them. You would think He would pick tithing or church membership or salvation. But He told them what salvation was going to mean. "Salvation is going to mean you are going to surrender your life to me. I will be not only your Savior, but I am going to be your Lord. Nobody else. Nothing else." And whoever you are closest to, the Lord has to take priority over them. Period. There is a reason for it. This is not religion. This is not legalism. This is not the Lord saying, "You can't go be with these people." That is not what He is saying. This is relational. Let's get into it.

**I came not to send peace but a sword.** Look at verse 35. **For I came to divide a man against his father, and a daughter against her mother, and a bride against her mother-in-law. And the enemies of the man would be the ones his household.** The reason why Jesus is saying these very hard things is because all of life is looked at as being from a spiritual basis, not a religious human basis. In the human it hurts. In the human this is all hard. But you have to understand that Jesus sees in the spirit realm.

There are only two kinds of people in the world. People who are born again that know Jesus Christ, that to belong to Him. And the people who are unsaved. Those are the only two

kinds of people in the world. Two spiritual families. Those that belong to Christ and those who do not belong to Christ.

And what Jesus is saying is that if you have a family of five and one from out of that five receives Jesus Christ and he's born-again; then this one person has the Spirit of Christ dwelling in them and he is of a different spirit than the other four. The two do not go together, spiritually. In order for that one to fit in with the four, the one has to compromise with Christ and reject Christ in order to fit in. See that is what He is talking about. Identification. When these four come over to this one and say, "What are you doing?" And he confesses Christ, "I have been born of the Spirit of God. I belong to Jesus Christ now. I'm following Him." The other four do not understand that. The other four say, "Well, it is okay for you to be religious." You know that many nonbelievers will accept our religious platform. "You can go to church and have your religious beliefs, just don't live it. I mean do not be a fanatic. Do not make it be 24 hours a day seven days a week. That is a little fanatical." So they say to the one, "It is okay. It is okay to miss church. It is okay miss Bible study and you can go with us for a few days. Or you can go do things with us. It is just religion. You can have your religious beliefs. We don't care."

But when you actually walk with Christ. And again, it is not legalism. It is not that, "Well you guys are not Christians, so I can't do anything with you." That is legalism. You understand that for a believer, a born-again believer, it is making decisions to follow a living Christ who lives inside. Not principles and rules and regulations, but a relationship. He now lives inside of me. He is alive. He is real. I belong to Him. He has taken over. I am not my own anymore.

I always bring up the example of military. We do not have many military people in here. But if you have ever joined the military, you know what I am talking about. As soon as you sign on the line that you have joined, you do not own yourself anymore. You are on base, doing exactly what they tell you to do, when they tell you to do it; and if you do not, you get put in jail. "Hey, how about Christmas time? I would love to go home and be with my family." They look at you and just laugh. "Really? Seniority has choice and since you are the new guy on the block you are staying here on base for Christmas. How do you like that?" You have no choice. They own you. You cannot quit. You cannot walk up and say,

"You know that contract I signed?"

"Yeah."

"I'm giving my thirty-day notice."

No. They own you for the duration of the contract. You have to do exactly what they tell you to do. It is in that context that I came to know Christ. Because once I received Christ I was told, "Now you are a soldier for Christ. You are in His army now. You are not your own. You march to the beat of a different drummer."

We understand it is spiritual. In Ephesians 6:12 Paul says that our wrestling in life is not against flesh and blood but against religious powers in the spirit realm. It is not people. If I come across someone who does not know Christ, they have not been born again, my beef and my struggle is not with them as people, it is the spiritual influence over them as people.

Secondly, about separation. This is a text that you should probably know and probably reread and study for yourself. II Corinthians 6:14-18. Paul says, **Do not be differently yoked.** That is how it literally reads. **Do not be differently yoked together with unbelievers.** Then he lists five questions:

**(1) For what fellowship has righteousness with unrighteousness?**

There is no fellowship there, spiritually.

**(2) And what communion has light with darkness?**

Light with darkness? There is nothing there spiritually. It is opposite.

**(3) What agreement has Christ with Belial?**

Belial, the only place it is found in the New Testament, this word, and it means *the opposite of what Christ is*. Christ is the good. Belial is the evil. What agreement does Christ have with evil? There is no agreement there. How is it that the nonbelievers agree with me? There has got to be something wrong. What am I compromising here?

**(4) Or what part has he that believes with an infidel?**

**(5) What agreement has the temple of God with idols?**

**For you are the temple of the living God as God has said, "I will dwell in them and walk in them and I will be their God and they shall be my people. (It is relational.) Wherefore,"** He says, **"Come out from among them and be separate," says the Lord, "And do not touch the unclean thing and I will receive you. And I will be a father to you and you will be my sons and daughters," says the Lord Almighty.** We will be family. Family belonging to Christ.

So He says, "Be separate." Now here is the difference between religion and relationship. Being separate, again, does not mean, "You are a nonbeliever so I can't interact with you and I can't be around you." That is not what it means. It is not legalism. You see, I now belong to Christ. If I were to come to you - this is hypothetical - if I were to come to you and you would ask me to do something with you and I felt like I sought the Lord and the Lord wanted me to do something different; it is not that I would come to you and say, "You are a nonbeliever and I can't do things with you." That is not what it is saying. What it is saying is *confessing Christ*. "Well, I appreciate the offer, but the Lord wants me to do something else. The Lord wants me to follow Him to do something else." Personal. Relational. It is confessing Him. It is seeking the Lord about what He wants me to do and doing what He wants me to do and realizing that I'm going to have to go to people who are under the influence of a different spirit and explain to them, "I am over here," and this is relational. Explain the relationship. Confess the relationship

and obedience to Christ to them. They still will not understand. They are still going to say, "You can miss church. No big deal."

Now let me explain something to you personal that I have explained before about relationship. When we gather together here on Sunday mornings, for me it is not church. Those of you that know me well you know that I am not a religious person. I participate in some religious things, activities over the years, but I am not a religious person at all. Jesus saved me outside of religion, as a personal relationship. And then when I got back to the United States and visited churches I was shocked. What is this?! I left worse off than when I came in. For me, personally - this is a personal testimony to you - Sunday mornings for me is my time to meet with Jesus Christ and His Spirit ministering to me through His Word. It is personal.

So that, for example, it would be like Jesus putting an ad in the paper - He would not do that but hypothetically, Lord, forgive me for paying for an ad for You - that He is going to meet at Waller Park at 11 o'clock with all of His followers. Just Jesus. We are going to sit around on the grass and He's going to share and minister to us. That is personal. That is not church. But then all of a sudden Aunt Agnes, our famous Aunt Agnes, she calls up and she goes, "It is such such a beautiful day on this Sunday morning, let's go the beach. Oh, you can miss church." No. You do not understand, it is not church to me. You are asking me to skip Jesus. You are asking me to skip the appointed time that He has given to me where I gather with His people and His Spirit takes His Word and ministers to me and to my family. You are asking me to skip that. You are not asking me to skip church. For me that is what it would be. I could skip church with the best of them.

In fact Paul, he told the church in Corinth, he says, "You do not gather together for the better but for the worse." So if you skip church in Corinth you would be better off than if you went. It is relational. We meet in a church setting. And for many over the years that have come here, it is church for them. That is what it is. It is just church. I went to church. Heard a message. Had some donuts. Bill took the one I wanted. It is not about church. It is about identifying with and following Jesus Christ. Period. And Jesus said, "Be separate and come out from among them and have a relationship with Me. Identify with Me. Follow Me in front of people and confess Me before them." Do you think that they are going to understand? This is my time to go be with the Lord. This is my time to be with Jesus. This is my time to be with God's people. This is my time to be in the Word. This is an appointed time. That is it. That is my relationship with Jesus Christ. And people are going to put pressure. People are going to say, "Why do you have to do that all the time? Just be religious. Don't be a fanatic."

In Matthew 12:46-50 Jesus was sitting inside of a house teaching in the living room, his disciples. And His mother and brothers and sisters - now in case that shocks you, in Matthew chapter 13 it tells us that Jesus had half brothers and sisters. Mary and Joseph had a relationship after Jesus was born. It tells us their names. So Jesus is sitting in the living room teaching His disciples and His mother and brothers and sisters came in. They could not get in because of the crowd, so they sent a messenger in to say, "Tell Him His mother and his brothers and sisters are waiting to see Him outside." So the messenger brings the message and Jesus, He stays seated. He stretches out His hand to His disciples. He says, "Do you see these disciples? These are my

brothers and sisters and my mother." **For whoever shall do the will of my father which is in heaven the same is my brother and my sister and my mother.** Jesus says, "This is my family." It is spiritual. I have a physical family. I have responsibilities. I have love for them. But the priority is that I belong to the family of Christ. He has called me out and has separated me. Do you see why Jesus said in verses 32 and 33, "If you confess Me before men that you are with Me (you identify with Me), I will confess you when you get up here to heaven. But while you are there on the earth, if you reject Me, I will reject you when you come here. I don't care what your doctrine is"?

Verse 36, **And the man's foes** (literally his *enemies*) **will be those of his own household.** The word *enemy* in Greek means *somebody who is hostile*. So you can understand that, right? If you are in a family of five and you receive Jesus Christ; you surrender to Christ, you are born of the Spirit of God, and a family member becomes hostile towards you. Now all of a sudden you know who the enemy is, right? That is only part of it. Hostility does not have to be anger or violence. Hostility can come in the form of friendliness. Listen to what I am saying. Your enemy in Christ could be your best friend. The one who accepts the fact that you are a Christian, that you have Christian values, and Christian doctrines, and you have a Christian religion. They will accept that. But in the human that person is your BFF. Understanding everything that we studied so far but they have a spiritual influence that is going to pull you away from the things of Christ. That is why it is not religion it is relational. It is spiritual influence.

Satan will not always come in the form of aggressive hostility. He will come in the form of friendliness and kindness and happiness. You just love to be with these people. They just do not know the Lord. That is right. They are your enemies. And they will be used by Satan to pull you away from the things of the Lord. Not from your doctrine. Not from your beliefs. Those things will still be intact. You can always listen to the sermon online. No big deal. But that influence - just to be with them and to do things with them, and to enjoy things with them, pulls you away from the spiritual things of Christ. That is what Jesus is talking about. *Be separate and come out from among them.* Seek what the Lord wants. And most of the time we know what the Lord wants, but I would rather go over there and do something else with somebody else. Again, my religion is intact, my relationship is not.

The Lord would have me to seek Him and whatever my decision or whatever my life is based on, it is based on my confession. As difficult as it seems and I know I am hurting your feelings, and I know I am disappointing you, and I know my family tells me, "What's wrong with you? You are different. You don't do things with the family like you used to." Well, it is not that I cannot legalistically. It is just that I have a different life now. I have a Lord. He is not just my Savior. He is my Lord. And it gives me a chance to share with people what it means to be a Christian. It is not religious. It is relational. And you will get the feedback, "Well, if that is what it is, I don't want it!" Because if you cannot be with family, you know skip the Christian things every once in a while, and go be with family, what good is that? People get their feelings hurt. Especially when you use legalism.



That is why Jesus said these things about discipleship. Everybody who follows Jesus Christ is going to come across these situations. And Jesus said, "When you come across those situations you must identify with Me, and follow Me, not them. And if you reject Me, I will reject you." That is hard.

But do you understand the reason why Jesus put it this way? He is not trying to bring hurt among human beings. He knows that when He comes with a sword to divide people - when a person receives Jesus Christ and is born of His Spirit there becomes a divide, a spiritual separation. And Jesus is saying, "You can't go back. They have a different spirit. And Satan will use them to draw you over, to get you to compromise." Why? Because you fear the consequences and you fear people's response if you obey the Lord. So, it is just easier to lapse back into a religious approach to life and not have to go through the hardships of identifying with Him and being obedient to Him and getting the feedback.

Couple this with the message I gave you a couple weeks ago, this is what it means to be a testimony for Jesus Christ. Not the things that you gained but the things that you suffer. Let me read the quote from Richard Wurmbrand again. "A man really does not believe what he recites in his creed, but only the things he is willing to die for." After you grow in Christ you realize that Jesus died for me on the cross that He might purchase me and own me as His own. And what does He ask me to do? Romans 12:1, now that I belong to Him to present my body as a living sacrifice for Him. I want people to see my decision to respond to and be obedient to Christ. I want them to get upset about that. I want them to see their need for Christ. I want them to see that they are walking in rebellion to Christ. That is why they are putting all the pressure on me; it is because I surrendered. I want them to know and I want them to see that their eternal soul - their soul out in eternity - is dependent upon how they respond to Christ. Not religion. If they continue in their own way they will die in their sins.

I do not present myself as being better than other people. I present myself as saying, "Look, I am just like you. I have just decided to surrender and give up and receive Christ and the forgiveness for my sins and for Him to come in and be my personal Lord. Be my God, walk with me and me with Him. And I pray someday that you will see that relationship that you too will want Him. Not my religion. That you will want Christ." But my witness to people are the things that I suffer and the things that I sacrifice for because they are going to be part of the sacrifice. I have to tell them, "I love you. I care about you. You are the person I have the most fun with." Even Jesus in the Gospel of Luke, here is another thing that Jesus said, "Unless you hate your mother and father, wife, husband, son or daughter, brother, sister, you can't be My disciple unless you hate them." What? In the Greek it is a word of comparison. It does not mean you go out and start hating people. It means the Lord is the love of my life and is my top priority [so] that it seems like I hate them; because I don't really compromise with them anymore and I don't do the things that they want me to do anymore. So they come to me and they say, "You must hate me. I am your daughter. I am your son. I am your wife. I am your father. I am your mother. And you give Jesus more priority than me. You must hate me."

"Well, it might seem that way, but no, I don't hate you. It is just that my priority is Jesus Christ. And I pray that God's Spirit would help you see that for you because He's not your priority. And

one day you are going to stand in front of Him. But as for me and my household, as for me and my life, I will serve the Lord. I will suffer for it in relationships, in opportunities, in circumstances, in situations."

That is my testimony. You have to either be crazy or it is worth dying for. Next week Part Two.

Let's close with prayer.