

The Hallmark of Discipleship

By John MacArthur

John MacArthur:

It's hard when you try to discern uh, just how to minister to a situation like this. I confess it would be easier if I had uh, two or three sessions, then I could recover from the first one and maybe build on it. But uh I spent some time in the last couple of weeks thinking and just asking the Lord to give me some direction. And a couple of the staff men that I work with at our church came to me and said, "We uh feel you ought to share with the students and folks at Biola what you shared with us from the 10th chapter of Matthew. And so I am commissioned, as it were, by these men. And uh that's exactly what I want to do. So take your Bible, if you will. And let's look at Matthew, chapter 10. I really believe that this may be the greatest section of scripture on the significance of discipleship. In the tenth chapter of Matthew, our Lord is sending out His 12 disciples. He's instructing them, and though their first effort will be short term and they'll come back, lick their wounds, to be sent out again after the Lord returns to heaven, this is a very important time. And He gives them basic lessons about discipleship. And there's a certain serious tone to all of this, and that sort of allows me to say what's on my heart. And I think that may sort of act as a foundation for all that we say.

I sense that in Christianity, in our particular time and place in history, there's a lack of seriousness about the things of God. By that, I don't mean that there's no place for laughter, there's no place for fun, there's no place for humor, because that's not the case. But I sense a certain lack of seriousness, a lack of seriousness particularly in regard to the Word of God. It's treated with a certain amount of flippancy or a certain amount of indifference, a certain amount

of lack of integrity. And I think in this passage, we are really called to a sense of um, soberness about the whole idea of being a disciple of Jesus Christ, about the whole idea of representing Him. And I'm assuming if you're in a place like this, that your goal in life, above and beyond whatever particular profession you may enter, is indeed to follow Jesus Christ, to represent Him, whether it's in the secular business field, as Bruce was talking about it, or whether it's in the ministry, in a church, or whether it's in another school teaching or whatever, the goal is to represent Jesus Christ as one who follows Him. And because this passage so very directly relates to that, I trust that the Spirit of God will re-firm uh, firm up again in your mind, some of the things that you already know as we look at verses 24 to 42, and we're gonna have to move a little rapidly for me to cover all those verses.

I believe the Lord here gives the basic instruction for the life of discipleship, the life that really counts. In fact, I like to call this passage the hallmarks of discipleship. A hallmark is simply a stamp of genuineness. These are the things that mark the real disciples. And just a couple of things as we approach the text, it's a, it's an essential text. And one of the reasons that I know that is because it contains the Lord's favorite teaching. If, in fact, the Lord were here speaking today and it wasn't me, and I would certainly be happy if it was Him, but if He were here today to speak, I don't doubt that He might speak to you on this very passage. In fact, He might teach you this very lesson. This is among the things that He held dearest to His heart in communicating to His people. The reason we know that is because all of the things that He says in this section are repeated elsewhere in the Gospels. You find bits and pieces of what what He says here in many different places, many different contexts. In fact, it appears in such unique spots and in other places to the extent that some people have thus concluded that Matthew didn't really record a

single message given by the Lord to His disciples, but rather Matthew was collecting data from all kinds of places and bringing it together.

That is to question the integrity of Matthew, I believe, and the scripture, and also to take away from the Lord the prerogative every good teacher has, and that is to take certain things that become favorite ways to communicate truth and use them again and again. And I believe that's what He does here. He collects then all the key elements regarding the area of discipleship, pulls them all together so that we'll understand what it really means to be a disciple. And I want to break it down for you into a little outline that you can kind of hang your thoughts on as we progress through. But let's look at verse 24 and start there. "The disciple is not above his teacher, nor the servant above his lord." Now, I want you to note that though He's speaking to the twelve, He begins in general terms. And this allows us to see the text is going beyond just the twelve. We can't lock this into some dispensational identity. The terms He uses here are general: the disciple, the servant, very general terms. And by the way, in this text, He uses the word "whosoever" three times, and He uses the phrase "he that" nine times. And so I see this as a broad call to the significant elements of discipleship.

It directs itself initially at the 12 disciples, it telescopes beyond them to all those who name the name of Christ. It begins with one mission, it telescopes to all missions. It begins in one time, it telescopes to all times until Jesus returns to establish His kingdom. Now, let me add also another sort of a background thought. The substantive background to this text is hostility. The thing that's behind it is the hostility that is coming upon the disciples and the Lord from the world around them. And so it also assumes that, it assumes a, a kind of hostile environment as the gospel goes

forth in the world, that we shouldn't be surprised at that, since Paul told Timothy that all that would live godly in this present age will suffer persecution. Now look at verse 24 again, and He starts with an axiom. An axiom is a self-evident truth that needs no proof. And it's simply, "The disciple is not above his teacher nor the servant above his lord." That is a self-evident statement. Disciples are not likely to get nearer to the truth than their teachers do. By the way, the word disciple "mathitís" means learner. A learner is not above the one who teaches him. If he was, he wouldn't go there to get teaching.

The assumption is axiomatic. The same is true of a master and slave. The slave is under the master, that's by very definition of terms. And so the axiom is simply this, that the disciple is not above his teacher. The servant of the Lord is not above the Lord he serves. Now verse twenty-five re-grips that same truth, in another way. "It is enough," literally, it must be sufficient, or we should expect, or we shouldn't expect anything but, "the disciple to be like his teacher and the servant like his lord." Now this is a setup, folks, a real setup. And where He's leading us is, that whatever happened to Jesus is what we ought to expect to happen to whom? To us. He's setting us up for that. It is enough, it is sufficient. In other words, we've got to think this way and no other way, that we're not going to go beyond our teacher. We're not going to go beyond our master. It is sufficient to be like him. Now, that's a marvelous thought, when you see it in the context, and of course we as Christians know that we are seeking to be like Jesus Christ. But I don't think that it's that so much that He has in mind. It isn't that we are to be like Christ in terms of character, in terms of virtue, in terms of holiness, in terms of righteousness and so forth. It is that we are to be like Him in terms of how the world reacts to us.

In other words, we shouldn't expect the world to treat us any differently than it treated Him. The punch line then comes in verse twenty-five, in the middle of the verse. "If they have called the master of the house, 'Beelzebub,' how much more shall they call them of his household?" That's the punch line. In other words, Jesus is calling these men into His service, and that's His initial beginning. Here's how the call comes out. You now are going to follow Me. You're going to be My disciples. Earlier in chapter 10, He said, "You're going to have the power to cast out demons. You're gonna have the power to do miracles." He gave them some basic instruction about what to take with them, and how to operate and so forth when they came to a place that received them, bless it, when it didn't, shake the dust and get out. Some basic instruction. Now, He says, "Here's the substance of your commission. They're going to treat you just the way they treat Me." And it's very clear to them by now how He has been treated. The context, again, is persecution, hostility, and death. And that is the call that comes to the disciple. It is a call to persecution. It is a call to suffering.

Now, they had called the Lord 'Beelzebub,' kind of an interesting term, basically a name for Satan. It originated with the lord of the dwelling from the Philistines. You can see it back in Second Kings chapter one. Uh, Beel is a form of Baal, and that's its derivation. It's kind of interesting to, Beelzebub and Baalzebul are close and very often um they got transposed. So sometimes you see Baalzebul, Zebub has the idea of the Lord of the dwellings, Ebul has the idea of dung. And so um, the Philistine God was often mocked as being called the Lord of Dung. But these terms came to be monikers for Satan. And so He's simply saying they have called the master Satan. What do you think they're gonna call you? Do you think you're going to get any better treatment than He did? And I think you remember the passage in John 15:8-21 where Jesus

says, "If they've hated Me, they've hated you, you know that, a servant is not above his lord."

And then he goes into chapter 16 and says, "The day is going to come when they're going to throw you out of the synagogue, going on synagogue. You--they're going to take your life and think they do God's service." This is just kind of basic.

By the way, the uh, the phrase there, just as a footnote, in verse twenty-five, "them of his household," basically a Greek term that had to do with the official staff used of government officials. So if this is what they did to the Lord, this is what they're going to do to His staff. So when you approach the whole process of discipleship, there's a very sobering reality that you're stepping into a buzz saw in a way. That you need to anticipate a certain amount of hostility. It's very important to know that so you're not shocked when it comes. The world is not out there waiting eagerly for the confrontive message of the gospel of Jesus Christ. And any circumvention of that kind of confrontation causes the gospel to pay a price it can, well, not afford to pay. In fact, uh Philippians 3:10 says that Paul's great pleasure and great anticipation and great joy was to enter into the Fellowship of the Lord's what? Suffering. And so that is the basic affirmation of discipleship. That you are entering into hostility. In other words, you are in a conflict with the system. You step into the heat of that conflict.

Now, if you can affirm that that's your heart desire and you've counted the cost, and you are a disciple, and you will follow the Lord, and you will seek not to be treated better than your Lord, not to be treated better than your Teacher, but willingly and joyfully, and find it sufficient to be like Him in treatment, and enjoy the fellowship of His suffering. And as Paul said, "Bear in your body the marks of Christ," fill up in your body the afflictions of Christ. If you're willing to do

that, then there are five things that are going to mark your life. Five hallmarks of a disciple, a true disciple. First of all, a disciple fears not the world. In spite of all of that, he fears not the world. Certainly this was true of our Lord. He did not fear, and that's immediately what He says. Look at verse 26. "Fear them not." Verse 28. "Fear them not." Verse 31. "Fear not." No matter what the hostility is, no matter what the world brings to bear, no matter the pressure, maybe you're on a mission field while you're countering a, a culture that is violently hostile to the gospel of Jesus Christ. And maybe you're in a university setting where you're countering a philosophy and a social lifestyle bent that is violently opposed to the truth of God's Word.

Maybe you're um, maybe you're in a business, and you find that people all around you despise the lifestyle that you advocate and that you live. Maybe you're on an athletic team in a professional sport. And because you live a life devoted to Jesus Christ, you wind up alienating everybody and turning them against you. Because you act as a living, intimate rebuke of their evil lifestyle. Whatever the hostility and wherever it comes from, this first wonderful message is "Fear not," and it comes three times. Because there are three reasons not to fear. Three reasons why the disciple fears not the world. Reason number one is vindication. Vindication. I love this, verse 26, "Fear them not, therefore, for there is nothing covered that shall not be revealed, and hidden that shall not be known." Now here is a favorite phrase of our Lord. He uses it on several occasions. And by the way, He use it to make several different points. But the immediate context connects it with the persecutors of verse twenty-five, the "therefore" links us. When you are being persecuted, don't fear because there is nothing covered that shall not be revealed and hidden, that shall not be known.

The idea is this. The world may look down on you. The world may oppress you. The world may put a low value on you. The world may esteem you as something to be rejected. But the truth is going to come out. The reality is going to come out. No matter what your enemies do, they will ultimately be judged and you will ultimately be vindicated. Your enemies, no matter what they do to you, no matter how they persecute you, no matter how hostile they might be to you, cannot prevent your ultimate vindication, and they cannot prevent their ultimate vengeance. They can't. The Lord is going to reveal the truth about everybody, ultimately. And that's a marvelous reason not to fear, because God is keeping the records. One day, what has been concealed in the hypocrisy of the religionists who blaspheme God and who fight against Him will be revealed, and judgment will take place. And one day, what has been concealed from the world, the honor, the beauty, the dignity, the character, the quality, the virtue of the saints who faithfully serve God, will be openly revealed and great glory will be given to them.

That's why we don't fear the hostility of the world. That's why we don't mitigate the message. That's why we don't lower the standard of the gospel presentation, because we're not trying to avoid the hostility. We don't compromise the message, we willingly preach the message boldly because we know the flack will come, and in the end, we'll be vindicated and God will make the ultimate determination. When John Calvin was banished from Geneva, ungrateful Geneva by the way, after giving them the truth of God, he said this, "Most assuredly, if I had merely served man, this would have been a poor recompense. But it is my happiness that I have served Him who never fails to reward His servants to the full extent of His promise." End quote. Listen. Seek your vindication at the hands of God, and you'll never compromise the message. Seek it at the hands of men and you will compromise it. The preacher stays pure, the disciple stays pure, the

church stays pure, when it seeks the approval of God. And when it can wait patiently for the promised reward, and in the meantime, endure anything.

This is what Paul had in his heart when he said, "The sufferings of this world are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed." Right? We have to have a heavenly perspective. No matter what the world brings to bear on us, we don't fear that because in the end there is vindication. Secondly, there's another fear not here, and I like this one. I call it veneration. Veneration. Look at verse 27. "What I tell you in darkness, that speak in light. And what you hear in the ear, that proclaim upon the housetops, and fear not them who kill the body but are not able to kill the soul, but rather fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell." This is just a marvelous statement. Look what it says in verse 27. Great statement. "What I tell you in darkness, speak in light. What you hear in the ear, proclaim on the housetop." This is a great truth. Listen. Here's what proclamation is all about. In the private place, the quiet place, the secret place, the Lord speaks. And He speaks in the heart. And what we hear in the secret place, we shout from the housetop. Right? That's-that's all he's saying here.

By the way, in those days when you wanted to make a public announcement, you went up on housetop. Didn't have any P.A. systems. Roofs were flat, they were like patios are today, surrounded by a short wall very often, provided an elevated position. If you had something to say, you got on your roof and yelled. Didn't have any glass windows. So whether they wanted to hear it or not, they did. No TV or radio blaring. The worst could possibly be was a loud conversation or the cry of a baby, or the noise of animals. And so that's how you proclaimed. And so the Lord is saying, look, as my disciple, you don't fear anything. What I whisper to you

in secret, the profound realities of divine truth, you broadcast. Where's your housetop? Well, I have to ask myself that because I tend to be broadcasting all the time in the confined walls of my own church. And all the people going down the street outside haven't got a clue what I'm saying, I've-I've thought about putting loudspeakers on the outside, but I don't know whether the city would be too happy about it. I might have a few accidents on Rosco Boulevard, come to think of it. But where's your housetop?

We found a housetop through uh, radio. We-we uh have some Sunset Boulevard Street teams that go down there and it's really incredible what the Lord does when-when you get out there in the street and start doing things that seem so uncultured. Jesus says, "What I tell you in secret, you shout from the housetop." Don't hold it back. Give him the message. And then in verse twenty-eight, "And fear not those who kill the body." Boy. You mean, that's what we can assume is going to happen? It's a real possibility. You know, Erasmus said one time, and I certainly agree with his words, he was asked to preach at Oxford long ago and he said, "How am I to warm the coldness of others when I am shivering myself?" You have nothing to say unless you've been in the quiet place. You have nothing to shout from the housetop unless you've been in intimacy with the Lord Himself. There is no ministry apart from a deep devotional life. There is nothing to say that isn't out of the freshness of the Word of God. But once you've gotten it there, take it.

And may I warn you that light is, the light of the gospel is light--like light to sore eyes? Men try to fight it off, but we have to turn it on brighter and brighter. And we don't fear them who kill the body. Who's that? Enemies. Hostile people. We preach, whatever the cost. Now may be in our

society, that isn't going to happen very often. But if you know anything about the rest of the world, you know it happens a lot. They say a million people gave their lives in the revolution in China when the communists took over. They say perhaps four million Christians were interred in the catacombs in Rome. Fifty-million Christians may have died for their faith in the dark ages. Thousands unnumbered have died in Africa in revolutions. It's happened. Could happen again. Isn't so much that it has to, it's just that we need to be willing to be that aggressive. And so He says, "Look, as you go out to represent Me, don't fear the ones who kill the body, because they can't kill the soul. They can't get the real you." That's a key truth. Well, how can you get over this fear? The end of verse 28, "Fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell." You know who that is? That's God. It's not Satan.

It's God. It's God who created hell for the devil and his angels, it's God who sends men to hell. Satan is a victim there just like everybody else who will be there. God is the one to fear, God is the one to be worshipped. God is the one to be venerated. You understand? And the point here is that you're not going to fear the world when you fear God more. You see? And there is a positive aspect to that, fear is a healthy sense of respect. But there's also a negative aspect. Fearing God, and we talk about the positive a lot, let me see if I can talk about the negative just to give you some balance. When we talk about fearing God, we talk about the awesomeness of God, and that's wonderful. We talk about His positive goodness, and uh we don't like to think about it as a terror. And yet it is a terror. There is a certain holy terror. I-I always think of Manola, who came home one day and said to his wife, "We'll die. We've seen the Lord." I mean, he assumed that when you see God, you're dead. It's just a very traumatizing thing. And it was true, there had

been some people who, in the presence of God, had died. In fact, God Himself said, "No man shall see Me and live."

There needs to be a healthy fear, a sense of being exposed to the holiness of God. And I believe God has endeavored throughout revelatory history to put that fear in men. Back in the book of Genesis, the Bible says um, "In the day you eat, you'll die." Right? And God basically said, "There's only one rule, so you violate it, and you're going to die." And they did, and God was gracious and they didn't die. And He—there was a spiritual separation, but God spared them and graciously allowed them to live. And He's been doing that for a long time with people who are in this world. The Bible says, "The wages of sin is death, the soul that sinneth, it shall die." Um, when a person sins, really at that very moment, they deserve to die. But God is gracious. People look at the Old Testament, and they say, "Well, how could God kill all those Chaldeans and how could God kill all those people who are in the land of Canaan? And how could God kill uh 40 little kids with a bear? Because they said, 'hey, Baldy!' To the prophet. And how could God kill uh Nadab and Abihu the day of their ordination because they got a little tipsy with a little wine, they were so happy about what they were doing, and goofed off with the incense, and zappo. I mean, how can God do that?"

And that isn't even the question. The question is not 'why did they die?' The question is 'why did anybody else live?' That's the question. God is gracious to everybody, but once in a while, He has to give an illustration of what everybody deserves. It's why, in Luke 13, when the people said uh, "Well, those guys are walking down the street and a tower fell on them and killed them all, 17 people died, were they worse sinners than anybody else?" And Jesus said, "You better shape

up or the same thing might happen to you." That's a strange answer. But that's the whole point. There needs to be a fear of God. When Peter saw the Lord on the shore, he said, "Depart from me, for I'm a sinful man." Go away. I can't stand it. Sinner in the presence of Holy God. How did he get the concept that Jesus was holy God? He just controlled the fish and sent them all to his boat. He knew who He was. It's like the disciples in the boat the night they were crossing the sea and uh, they were afraid it says. And then Jesus stopped the storm and they were more afraid. What's worse than having a storm outside your boat, is having God in your boat, obviously.

[Audience laughs]

John MacArthur:

So there's a sense of, sense of the awesomeness of God. A sense of reverence about who He is and His holiness. And I think that's one of the great things that we need to get a hold of. I believe that there can be in the Church of Jesus Christ, and among God's people, a new holy boldness to proclaim the gospel without equivocating in the mushy, sentimental, evangelistic methods that I see going on today, that emasculate the gospel. The confrontive, bold, dynamic presentation of the gospel says, "I am willing to be treated like my lord was treated, because I will be vindicated in the end and because I venerate God, the One who controls the souls of men, more than I do those who can hurt the bodies of men." There's a third reason not to fear. There's a tombstone in Westminster Abbey, while you're thinking with me to the third point, that says, "He feared men so little because he feared God so much." That's the idea. The third one is valuation. Let's call it valuation. Valuation.

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This is the third reason why we don't fear, verse twenty nine, "Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing? And one of them should not fall on the ground without your Father. The very hairs of your head are all numbered. Fear not, therefore, you're of more value than many sparrows."

That's very interesting text. Very interesting. What's He saying? Well, sparrows are sold for a farthing. A sparrow, by the way, was like an hors d'oeuvres They killed them and roasted them. Little, you know, luncheonette type things.

[Audience laughs]

John MacArthur:

Two for-two for an assarion. Cheap little deals. One sixteenth of a denarius, five for two cents. I mean, they were two for a penny, or you through a fifth one in for two cents. Cheapies, you know? Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing? And one of them shall not fall on the ground without your Father--do you notice it doesn't say "one of them shall not die"? I read one uh Greek professor who said that the word means "hops." He not only knows when sparrows die, He knows when they hop.

[Audience laughs]

John MacArthur:

That's a lot of hops to keep records of.

[John MacArthur laughs]

John MacArthur:

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If the Father's in control of the hops of the sparrows. And then verse 30, "the very hairs of your head are all numbered." It's easier in some cases than others, surely.

[Audience laughs]

John MacArthur:

But the average, in case you're interested is, 140,000 hairs per head. That's the average. Some of you are fowling up the average. But it's all right. And then He says in verse 31, "Fear not, therefore, you're worth more than five for two cents." Do you get the point? You can go out there and throw your life on the line in the presentation of Jesus Christ because God values you.

Announcer:

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John MacArthur:

For you're worth more than five for two cents. Do you get the point? You can go out there and throw your life on the line in the presentation of Jesus Christ because God values you. That's right. God values you. So how much does God value me? I'll tell you how much He values you. You go a little later in the book of Matthew, the 18th chapter, and you find the Father pictured as a shepherd. And it says in verses 12 to 14 of that chapter. What does the Shepherd do when one of the ninety-nine, one of the hundred sheep wanders away? What does He do? He leaves the ninety-nine and goes after that one lost sheep, doesn't He? And He brings that one lost sheep back and He rejoices more over the one lost sheep having been found than the 99 who never

went anywhere. How valuable are you? So valuable that the Father would pursue you and leave the rest. That's how valuable you are. In that same passage, He talks about the fact that if a brother goes into sin, we need to go after that brother. And it says the purpose of all discipline, the purpose of all of that kind of activity, is so that you can gain your brother. And He uses a commercial word. There is a value on that individual. He is a treasure to you, and he is lost as a treasure. And so you pursue that treasure as the father pursues that lost lamb.

Listen, you're of great value to God. And He's not going to put you out in the heat of the battle and leave you there. And you can know He's there to defend you because of the value He places upon you. That's what the Lord was trying to say in the Sermon on the Mount when He said, "Look. Consider the lilies of the field. Consider the, the little birds. I mean, if God takes care of the grass, you think He's going to clothe you?" Oh, ye of what? Little faith. The Lord is going to take care of you, He puts a very high price tag on you. So I can abandon my life, see, I can abandon my life to the cause of Christ, whatever it costs me. And I don't have any fear about that because I'm in His care. He's got me sheltered in His own love. Let's go to a second mark of a disciple. The first one, he fears not the world. And Jesus gave three reasons. Second, he favors the Lord. It's not just a negative, it's also a positive, verse 32, and the key is "therefore" again, "Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before My Father, who's in heaven. Whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before My Father who's in heaven."

Listen to me. The true disciple is willing to go out and confess Christ is Lord, whatever the cost. And if he's not willing to do that, he's doesn't belong to the Lord. The true disciple is willing to

do that. In view of God's promise, a vindication, in view of God's power, and God's protection, there's nothing more reasonable than to fearlessly go out and confess Jesus Christ as Lord before men. I believe that that's more than saying things. I believe that confession is a life pattern. I believe we are affirming the saving Lordship of Jesus Christ unashamedly before men in the way we live. You see, the phrase there "before men" literally means "in front of," it emphasizes the public character of our confession. I mean, we're to be out there in the world living a life that represents Jesus Christ. That's such a wonderful, wonderful mark of genuineness for the believer. In First Timothy 6:12, "Fight the good fight of faith. Lay hold on eternal life, unto which thou art also called and has professed a good profession before many witnesses."

It wouldn't seem that we would need to remind ourselves anymore that there's no need to be ashamed of Jesus Christ. But sometimes we are. Persecution always reveals the true possessors, doesn't it? The true confessors. Sometimes I pray for persecution to come upon our people. My own life. If in doing that, God can purify the confession. And what the New Testament, I believe, says over and over again, and I wish we had time to develop this, but what I think it says over and over again is that a public confession of the Lordship of Christ is the proof of salvation. And I don't mean by that that you just one time in your life said you were saved. I think it has to be evidenced at more points than that. In Romans ten it says, "If we confess with our mouths, Jesus is Lord." I think that's not just necessarily one time and never again, I think that becomes a pattern of living where one affirms Jesus as Lord. Now it says in verse 32, if we do that, He'll confess us before His Father, who's in heaven. He'll affirm the reality of our discipleship. On the other hand, if we deny Him before men, He will deny that He knows us. Sobering words.

Always reminds me of Matthew chapter seven, where the people come and they say in verses 21 to 23. "Lord, Lord, you know, have we not done these things, and cast out demons, and done many wonderful works, and prophesied, and all of that, and we've done it in Your name. Here we are in heaven. We're ready to come in. Could you open the door?" And He says, Go away. I never knew you." Right? You know what it says, it's always shaken me to the core, is it says "Many shall say to Me." Many. This isn't just a few stragglers. This is many. Well, if you trace back in the chapter, you find many in the same chapter in another place. In chapter seven verses 13 and 14, it says there's a narrow gate and a narrow way, and there's a broad gate and a broad way. And i-it says that--and the narrow gate, and the narrow way, few there be that find it. And then the broad gate and the broad way, many there be that go in there at. And the same many that go in the gate in 7:14 are the same many that get to the end of the road in 7:21, and the same many say, "Lord, Lord." And He says, "I don't know you."

You see the illusion of the broad gate is, it doesn't say "road to hell." It says "road to heaven." But it doesn't get there. It's the road of the Pharisees in the context. It's the road of the legalists. It's the road where you don't have a narrow gate. You don't have to drop the garbage of your life. You can go on with all the stuff you want. You can lollygag from side to side. There are no restrictions. There are no rules, there are no standards. Just as long as you're on the religious road, only when you get to the end, you're going to get turned away from heaven, as Bunyon said, "The entrance to hell is from the portals of heaven." And those are the same many that wind up there. And they may be shocked to hear from Him that they did deny Him. It wasn't that then there, they might have said, "Well, I-I-there was a time when I believed, or when I did this, or when I did that." The point is, if a life of denial exists, no matter what the claims may be, if on

God's terms that life is a life of denial, then there's no confession before the Father. Now, that's a text that we could develop further. But let's go on. A true disciple is marked as one who fears not the world and favors the Lord.

Thirdly, and this I think is important for us, it may come to this in your life. May have already. Thirdly, a disciple forsakes the family. Now nobody believes more in the family than I do. The Bible is very strong on the family. But if you'll notice verse 34, I think maybe it'll help you to kind of broaden your perspective on this. "Think not that I am come to send peace on Earth. I came not to send peace, but a sword. For I am come to set a man at variance against his father and the daughter against her mother and daughter in law, against her mother in law. And a man's foes shall be they of his own household. He that loveth father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me. And he, that loveth son or daughter more than Me, is not worthy of Me." Now, the very fact that some people will confess Christ, and boldly go out and proclaim Christ, and pay the price of discipleship, is to indicate that there will cause a division in the family. In fact, Martin Luther said "If our gospel is received in peace, it must not be the gospel." It is divisive. And even the rabbis, the Talmudic teaching of the rabbis, indicates that they assumed that one who was true to God and one who followed the Messiah would find himself cutting off his relationships with his family.

And so the text is simply saying that there are going to be tremendous prices to pay. Now, if you want to hit a person as close as you can get to their, to their needs in life, you hit him at the intimate point of their relationships. And that's family. That's family. Verse 34, the first two words I think are interesting, "Think not." Because this is the way most people think, the Lord

just came to make peace, keep everybody happy, everything peaceful. He says don't think that. Don't think I came to bring peace. I came to divide, and I came to divide at the point of m-of nearest intimacy, right in the family. It says "to set at variance," literally means "to cut asunder" in verse 35. So the Lord offers a warfare to us, and I think it is so important to understand that we're back in the same motif we've been in in the whole text. This is a battle and the warfare may come to the very most intimate degree, as we are at war with our own family. Doesn't mean we don't love them, doesn't mean we don't reach out to them, doesn't mean we don't fulfil our responsibilities to them. But it does mean there will be hostility.

And if it comes to that, a true disciple is willing to pay the price and make the break. And if you love father or mother more than Me, then you're not worthy of Me. And if you love son or daughter more than Me, you're not worthy of Me. Jesus, I think, illustrated this elsewhere in Luke nine when He talked about the call of the disciple, and He said, "No, I got to go home and take care of my family." And Jesus said, "That isn't how it's gonna be." There's a willingness to separate. In other words, when a person comes to Jesus Christ, if salvation is genuine, his family, though they may be against it, cannot withhold from him the salvation he seeks. Nothing can. He will confess Christ, no matter what it costs, even in the family. Now that takes us to a fourth principle. And I want you to see it in verse 38, and then we'll pull all of this together as we get to the last part. The fourth thing that I see, first the disciple fears not the world, favors the Lord, forsakes the family, now follows the call.

Verse 38. This is uh, another favorite teaching of Jesus, it appears, in several places. "He that taketh not his cross, followeth after Me, is not worthy of Me. He that findeth his life shall lose it.

He that loseth his life for My sake shall find it. And we're back in that same seemingly depressing reality about death, and crucifixion, and losing your life. You see, these are always the terms of discipleship, always. That the-the bottom line, commodity, and discipleship, mark this somewhere, self-abandonment, self-sacrifice, always. Now, I've heard all kinds of mystical things about verse 38, "He that taketh not his cross and followeth after Me is not worthy of Me." And so far I've heard about, you need to crucify yourself. Put yourself on the cross of Calvary, it's over. May I suggest you that there's no Calvary in verse 38? That when Jesus is talking to the disciples, they haven't got a clue about the Cross of Calvary? They don't know anything about that. They're not-they're not posts cross. They're not trying to identify themselves with some [unintelligible] approach, as has been done. What they're seeing in the cross is simply death.

Avarus, the Roman general had in recent times crucified two thousand Jews and stuck the crosses all on the roads of Galilee. They knew what it was to be crucified. And he's saying, "If you're not willing to suffer the severest kind of death and still follow Me, than you're not worthy of Me." This is a high price, isn't it? You see, when you come to Jesus Christ, you come on His terms. What are His terms? You are willing to be rebuked by the world that He was rebuked by. You are willing to suffer as He suffered. You are willing to confess Him before men, no matter what the price is, You are willing to cut the cord with your family, no matter how intimate and and how tied to them you are, and you are willing to die. Boy the conditions are elevated. This is no mystical call to a Christian to self-crucifixion. This is a call to discipleship that puts the ultimate price tag on discipleship. Crucifixion was a symbol of slow, painful, torturous death. This, by the way, this phrasing, or this little statement, in verse 38 appears five times in the

Gospels, and is simply to be understood as death. Shameful, embarrassing, painful, excruciating death. And that's what He's calling for with a disciple.

And I think as we look at our own hearts, we can see very often how far we are from the ideal. To take the cross and follow Jesus Christ means to be so devoted to abandonment to Him, that even death is not too high a price. And I suppose I have to confess to you that I feel inadequate at this point. I uh, would like to think I would die for Christ, wouldn't you? Would like to think you'd die for Christ, too? But when you look at it from this vantage point, you can think of all the things that could happen to you, you could wonder whether you would. Except that if you belong to Him, I believe He provides for you the Spirit of grace and glory that first Peter 4 talks about, so that you have what you need when you need it, not before. Right? So if you have a hard time protecting or projecting yourself into some death, it's simply because you don't have the grace now to deal with what would come in that event. If God took you to that, He'd provide. But another base-base to check yourself on is, how bold are you right now when your life isn't threatened? For the proclamation of Jesus Christ?

We want to be all the disciple that God wants us to be. And if you're busy trying to, verse thirty-nine, find your life--what does that mean? Secure your physical safety, secure your physical safety, basically. If you're going to deny Christ under pressure, or persecution, or come to terms with the world at the expense of your faith and your Christian testimony, you're going to lose it. And I think here He is again simply qualifying what a true disciple is. Now, this is-a this is a difficult passage to understand unless you understand it is basically a call to true salvation. Truly, to be saved is to come on these terms, a willingness to suffer, a willingness to confess Christ at

any price, a willingness to cut the cord with those you love, a willingness to die, a willingness to abandon your life for the sake of Christ. I believe those are the true heart attitudes of one who comes to Christ. And then after we come to Christ, and sometimes we cool off, we're back needing to rejuvenate those original attitudes of heart that drew us to the Savior in the first place. So the text not only is a call of salvation, but it's a recall, in a sense, of those saved who have forgotten the commitment they made when they came.

Self-preservation is abandoned. We give up ourselves. I guess that's why I have no respect for the self-esteem cults, very antithesis of everything discipleship signifies. Florence Nightingale at 30 years of age, wrote in her diary, "I am 30 years of age, the age at which Christ began his mission. Now no more childish things. No more vain things. Now, Lord, let me think only of Thy will." And years later, near the end of our illustrious heroic life, she was asked her life's secret. She replied in these words, "Well, I can only give one explanation, and that is I have kept nothing back from God." Great statement. Jim Elliot said, "I seek not a long life, but a full life." Jonathan Edwards said this, "I claim no right to myself, to this will, to these affections that are in me. Neither do I have any right to this body or its members. No right to this tongue, to these hands and feet and ears and eyes. I have given myself clear away and not retained anything of my own. I have been to God this morning and told Him I have given myself wholly to Him. I have given every power so that for the future I claim no right to myself in any respect. I have expressly promised Him, for by his grace, I will not fail.

I take Him as my whole portion and felicity, looking upon nothing else as any part of my happiness. His law is the constant rule of my obedience. I will fight with all my might against the

world, the flesh, the devil to the end of my life. I will adhere to the faith of the Gospel, however hazardous and difficult the profession and practice of it may be. I receive the blessed Spirit as my teacher, sanctifier, and only comforter, and cherish all admonitions to enlighten, purify, confirm, comfort, and assist me. I pray God, for the sake of others, to look upon this as a self-dedication and receive me as His own. Henceforth, I am not to act in any respect as my own. I shall act as my own if I ever make use of any of my powers to do anything that is not to the glory of God or fail to make the glorifying of Him my whole and entire business. If I murmur in the least that affliction, if I am in any way uncharitable, if I revenge my own case, if I do anything purely to please myself or omit anything because it is a denial, if I trust to myself, if I take praise for any good which Christ does by me, or if I am in any way proud, I shall act as my own and not God's, but I purpose to be absolutely His."

And you know who Jonathan Edward was. People like that leave a lasting impression. A last point in the text. It's been negative in a way up to here. That's what discipleship is basically, it's a warfare. But there's a fifth point. I love this. One of the hallmarks of discipleship, we could put it to keep it in our alliterative form, fosters rewards. He fears not the world, favors the Lord, forsakes the family, follows the call, fosters rewards. This is so wonderful. And we don't have time to fully develop it. Let me just read 40 to 42. "He that receiveth, you receiveth Me. And he that receiveth Me, receive with Him that sent me." That's another one of Jesus' favorite sayings. "He that receives a prophet in the name of a prophet shall receive a prophet's reward. He that receives a righteous man, the name of a righteous man will receive a righteous man's reward. And whosoever shall give to drink unto one of these little ones a cup of cold water, only in the name of a disciple, verily, I say unto you, he shall in no way lose his reward."

You know what that says? It says that the way people respond to you is the way they respond to Jesus Christ. Verse 40. "He that receives you," and what do we mean receive? Accept you, your message, hears you, gives you an audience, believes what you're saying. "The one who receives you is receiving Me. And the one who sent Me, the Father." Well, that's a marvelous thing, isn't it? We're an actual ambassador for Christ and God, and when we go out to confront the world, although there is hostility, there is that element out there that's going to respond. There are those people who have been chosen in Him before the foundation of the world. There are the much people in every city that He wants to reach. And as we touch their lives, and they receive us, by receiving us, they are receiving Christ, and they are receiving God. What an infinitely holy calling that is. How marvelous. Further, when they receive the prophet, that's us proclaiming, they will share the prophet's reward. When they receive the righteous man, that's our character, prophet is our ministry, righteous is our character, when they receive us in ministry and character, they will receive a like reward with us.

And so we become then the source of other people's eternal reward. Isn't that marvelous? And when they treat just the least of us with kindness because we are a disciple of Jesus Christ, they will be eternally rewarded. Listen. Dear friends, this is so exciting. You, as a Christian, as a disciple of Jesus Christ, become the avenue for someone else's glorious, eternal destiny. What a holy calling. What a holy calling. That makes the price worth it, doesn't it? I mean, would you be willing to suffer if you could change someone's eternal destiny? If you could bring a message to them that in receiving, they receive Christ? If you could preach to them as a prophet and in receiving what you preach, they would receive the same reward as the one who preached it? That

you could go to them as one who is righteous and as they received you as a righteous one, and the receiving again implies their full-hearted acceptance of the message, they would share in your righteous reward? That the one who receives the simplest, smallest, most insignificant Christian as one who follows Jesus Christ shall share in that reward. We become then the source of men's eternal blessedness. Persecuted, yes. Privileged, oh yes. Oh, yes.

Teddy Roosevelt said, "There's never yet been a man who led a life of ease who was worth remembering." Let's bow in prayer. Father, we've enjoyed the fellowship with You and Your Word this morning, and this time of Bible study hasn't really been a sermon, but a time to sit at the feet of the teacher. Jesus, our teacher. Not to think our thoughts, but to hear His thoughts. Now we know what He wants from His disciples. And we know that when we came to Jesus Christ, we came wholeheartedly. We came running from our sin. We came saying I'll do anything to receive the gift. We came willing to affirm Him as Lord. And maybe along the way, we've forgotten both the price and the privilege. Help us to get back the things that we may have lost along the way. I pray for these dear people, faculty, students, friends, guests. That each may embrace the high and holy privilege of being like His teacher and say it is sufficient to be both persecuted as He was, and privileged as He was, to lead people to eternal reward. No price too high for that. Be glorified Father, in and through us today and through all this conference. May Your Spirit control not only the word that goes forth--

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