

## Matthew 10b

**What point is Jesus making by His illustration (vv. 24-25)?** In Jesus's illustration, the disciples were the students; He was their Teacher. They were the servants; He was their Master. They were members of the household; He was the Master of the house. Discipleship means following the Teacher, not being superior to Him. The servant should not expect to be treated better than his Master. If men call the Master of the house "Beelzebub" (the name used by the Jews for Satan), they will hurl even greater insults at the members of His household. Discipleship involves sharing the Master's rejection.<sup>1</sup>

**How does Jesus address their potential fears (vv. 26-31)?** Three times the Lord told His followers not to be afraid (vv. 26, 28, 31).

**vv. 26-27 First,** Jesus' disciples could have confidence that the truth *would* prevail despite the danger of persecution. Up until now the gospel had been relatively concealed and His teachings had been comparatively hidden. But soon the disciples must boldly proclaim the Christian message which up to this point had been told to them in secret, that is privately.<sup>2</sup>

If persecution or the threat of persecution makes us draw back from speaking and preaching God's word, then in some measure, Satan has won a victory. The threat of persecution may not have succeeded in harming them, but could result in holding back the work of the Word of God.

The message of Jesus was gloriously *public*. It was not for a secret few and was not to be hidden in any way. There isn't one message for the inner circle and another for those on the outside. Those on the outside may not understand the message, but they can hear it and it is not to be hidden from them.

**v. 28 Secondly,** the disciples should not fear the murderous rage of men. The worst that men can do is to kill the body. Physical death is not the supreme tragedy for the Christian. To die is to be with Christ and thus, far better. It is deliverance from sin, sorrow, sickness, suffering, and death; and it is translation into eternal glory. So the worst men can do is the best thing that can happen to the child of God.

The disciples should not fear men but should have a reverential fear of Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell. This is the greatest loss—eternal separation from God, from Christ and from hope. Spiritual death is the loss that cannot be measured and the doom that should be avoided at all cost.<sup>3</sup>

"There is no cure for the fear of man like the fear of God." (Spurgeon)

**vv. 29-31 Thirdly,** in the midst of fiery trials, the disciples could be confident of God's care. The Lord Jesus teaches this from the example of the ubiquitous sparrow. Two of these insignificant birds were sold for a copper coin. Yet not one of them dies outside the Father's will, without His knowledge or His presence. As someone has said, "God attends the funeral of every sparrow."

The same God who takes a personal interest in the tiny sparrow keeps an accurate count of the hairs of the head of each of His children. A strand of hair is of considerably less value than a sparrow. This shows the love and care and sovereign rule of the Father.....His people are of more value to Him than many sparrows, so why should they fear?<sup>4</sup>

**What promises does Jesus make (vv. 32-33)?** The apostles were instructed not to fear. Instead they were encouraged to faithfully confess/acknowledge Jesus before men. This would result in the Lord's acknowledging His servants before His Father; but failure to confess Him would result in His denial of them. Of the original 12 Apostles, only one, Judas Iscariot, fell into the latter category.<sup>5</sup>

To deny Christ in this sense means to refuse to recognize His claims over one's life. Those whose lives say, in effect, "I never knew You" will hear Him say at last, "I never knew you." The Lord is not referring to a

temporary denial of Him under pressure, as in Peter's case, but to that kind of denial that is habitual and final.<sup>6</sup>

Disciples of Jesus must acknowledge Him publicly. One cannot fulfill the basic requirements of being a disciple privately (cf. 5:13-16). Everyone Jesus called He called publicly. There is really no such thing as a "secret" Christian. Confessing Jesus means acknowledging Him faithfully in spite of pressure to do otherwise.

**How did Jesus clarify His mission (vv. 34-37)?** Jesus said He had come at this time not ... to bring peace to the earth ... but a sword which divides and severs. As a result of His visit to earth, some children would be set against parents and a man's enemies might be those within his own household. This is because some who follow Christ are hated by their family members. This may be part of the cost of discipleship, for love of family should not be greater than love for the Lord.<sup>7</sup>

**What compelling guidance does Jesus give in vv. 38-39?** There is something even more apt to rob Christ of His rightful place than family—that is, the love of one's own life. So Jesus added, "*And anyone who does not take his cross and follow Me is not worthy of Me.*" The cross, of course, was a means of execution. To take the cross and follow Christ means to live in such devoted abandonment to Him that even death itself is not too high a price to pay.<sup>8</sup>

When a person took a cross in Jesus' day, it was for one reason: to die. The ancient Roman cross did not negotiate, did not compromise, and did not make deals. There was no looking back when you took up your cross, and your only hope was in *resurrection* life.

Love of Christ must overmaster the instinct of self-preservation. "*Whoever finds his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life for My sake will find it.*" The temptation is to hug one's life by trying to avoid the pain and loss of a life of total commitment. But this is the greatest waste of a life—to spend it in the gratification of self. The greatest use of a life is to spend it in the service of Christ.<sup>9</sup>

**How do you receive a reward for hospitality (vv. 40-42)?** By receiving Christ's disciple which would be tantamount to receiving Christ Himself, and to receive Him was the same as receiving the Father who sent Him, since the one sent represents the sender. To receive an ambassador, who stands in the place of the government that commissions him, is to enjoy diplomatic relations with his country.<sup>10</sup>

The Jews regarded the reward of the prophet as the greatest; because, while kings and priests ministered in the name of the Lord, the prophet came from the Lord to instruct both priest and king.

**"Anyone who receives a righteous man because he is a righteous man will receive a righteous man's reward."** Those who judge others by physical attractiveness or material affluence fail to realize that true moral worth is often cloaked in very humble guise. The way a man treats the most homespun disciple is the way he treats the Lord Himself.<sup>11</sup>

No act of kindness for one of Jesus' disciples will pass without God's reward. Even seemingly insignificant works of kindness (a cup of cold water) performed for God's people are meaningful in God's eyes.

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<sup>1</sup> William MacDonald, *Believer's Bible Commentary: Old and New Testaments*, ed. Arthur Farstad (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1995), 1240.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, 1241.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>5</sup> Louis A. Barbieri Jr., "Matthew," *The Bible Knowledge Commentary*: J. F. Walvoord and R. B. Zuck, vol. 1 (Victor Books, 1985), 43.

<sup>6</sup> William MacDonald, *Believer's Bible Commentary: Old and New Testaments*, ed. Arthur Farstad (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1995), 1241.

<sup>7</sup> Louis A. Barbieri Jr., "Matthew," *The Bible Knowledge Commentary*: J. F. Walvoord and R. B. Zuck, vol. 1 (Victor Books, 1985), 43.

<sup>8</sup> William MacDonald, *Believer's Bible Commentary: Old and New Testaments*, ed. Arthur Farstad (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1995), 1241.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, 1242.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*