

# The Gospel of Matthew

**Title:** The Marks of A True Disciple - Part 1

**Text:** Matthew 10:24-33

**Introduction/Aim:** Jesus outlines the marks of a true disciple. As we know Matthew 28:19-20 so well, we often miss the central point of that text, it's to make disciples, "Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations." As we saw last week, the focus of the church is to make disciples, "And He gave some as apostles, and some as prophets, and some as evangelists, and some as pastors and teachers, for the equipping of the saints for the work of service, to the building up of the body of Christ" (Ephesians 4:11-12). It is true, we want all to come hear the gospel as we preach, but the focus of the church is to make disciples by the preaching and teaching of God's word.

Being a disciple requires commitment to the teacher. We see this in John 6 when many of the disciples stopped following him because of the truth he was teaching. Today, many for a time, will follow. But when the truth gets in the way of their thinking, they revert. In Matthew 10:5-15, Jesus explains the mission they would do. Special, temporal powers were granted to the disciples. In vs. 16-23, he explains the hard road they would encounter. And in vs. 24-42, he unfolds the true meaning of discipleship. The church has to stop telling followers misaligned ideas about true Christianity.

## POINT 1 - THE TRUE MEANING OF DISCIPLESHIP (VS. 24-25)

This verse is often referred to as an "axiomatic" which means "self-evident or unquestionable." It's an important side note, that "servant" and "slave" are the same Greek word. In the literal definition it means "to give himself up." The illustration of Beelzebu, which was the original name of the Canaanite pagan deity, and is called "lord of the flies." The point is if people called him Satan, they would call the disciples the same thing. And they already accused him of such in Matthew 9:34. Jesus repeated this warning that they would be treated as their teacher is. John 15:18-19, "If the world hates you, you know that it has hated Me before it hated you. If you were of the world, the world would love its own; but because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, because of this the world hates you."

## POINT 2 - THE TRUE DISCIPLE DOES NOT FEAR MAN (VS. 26-28)

Remember Jesus was sending them as sheep into the midst of wolves. Proverbs 29:25, "The fear of man brings a snare, but he who trusts in the Lord will be exalted." Human nature wants to avoid conflicts. Christians shouldn't fear speaking the truth. Holding a biblical worldview of marriage, family, sexuality, gender and morality isn't going to set well with the common culture. The church has softened it's view to appear more acceptable. Don't do that. Don't fear what the world says about your beliefs which are rooted in the word of God. 1 John 2:15-16, "Do not love the world nor the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the boastful pride of life, is not from the Father, but is from the world."

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**2A** - Don't be afraid because we look forward to eternity, hope and God will vindicate us. In other words, don't fear what man can do, we aren't looking for accolades here. Vs. 26 reveals the world's wickedness will be revealed for what it is. Don't be concerned with what the world says about the return of the Lord, or salvation by faith alone in Christ alone. A true follower of Christ will affirm Luke 8:16, "Now no one after lighting a lamp covers it over with a container, or puts it under a bed; but he puts it on a lamp stand, so that those who come in may see the light."

Application: we are to not worry about what the world thinks of Scripture, God will bring all to light soon enough. 1 Corinthians 4:5, "Therefore do not go on passing judgment before the time, but wait until the Lord comes who will both bring to light the things hidden in the darkness and disclose the motives of men's hearts; and then each man's praise will come to him from God."

**2B** - Proclaim the truth. The analogy of vs. 27 is there are no secrets in Christianity. No secret handshakes, no concealed lodge meetings or secret handbooks, it's public, it's out in the open. What is figuratively told in darkness, bring out in the daylight, and what is figuratively whispered shout it from the hilltops.

In Jesus' day shouting from the "housetop" was done for public and personal announcements. It could be heard for a long ways off. The disciples were to speak in the light, and shout the gospel from the housetop, not literal for the most part. Maybe they did. The world will be offended at the truth. Human nature doesn't like to be told they are sinners. The command is to tell the truth, don't hide or cover it up. When given the chance to speak the truth of God's word, we must do so.

**2C** - Don't fear these men. A Christians shouldn't fear what man can do. Man can limit, hinder, persecute and jail a Christian, but he can't take his soul. **NOTE:** There may be a price to pay for speaking God's truth. It may not be in the form of persecution as in some non-Christian friendly countries. But it may be tried as hate speech.

Fear - this is not a frightful type fear. It is a reverential fear. A fear of honor and awe. A fear of not being obedient to God. Reverence of God is his sovereign power is to be at the forefront of every Christian.

Destroy - does not mean to annihilate. There will be a resurrection of the dead, all the dead, 1 Corinthians 15:42, "So also is the resurrection of the dead. It is sown a perishable body, it is raised an imperishable body." The meaning of destroy here does not mean extinction, but one of great loss or ruin.

Our main fear is that of God, not doing his will, not speaking his word. A true disciple values his soul more than his body. Many have sacrificed their bodies for the sake of the gospel, yet their soul is in the presence of the Lord! It was Jim Elliot who said of his mission trips to south America, "He is no fool who gives up what he cannot keep to gain what he cannot lose."

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### POINT 3 - YOU ARE VALUED, KEPT BY GOD (VS. 29-31)

We are not orphans. We are not men whom God has just let go and see what happens. The illustration of the sparrows was common to the disciples. A cent was the smallest coin in circulation at the time. One such cent would buy two sparrows. And roasted sparrow was served as cheap finger foods of the day. It was the utmost of insignificance, yet not one will fall to the ground apart from your Father. The word for fall is “hop” which means the sparrow cannot even hop without the notice of the Father.

Another example is the very hairs of your head. He knows that. Every single one. It is said that the average number of hairs on the human head is 140,000. Every grain of sand, He knows. Every hair on your head, He knows. Every trial, He knows.

### POINT 4 - THE CONFESSION OF A TRUE DISCIPLE (VS. 32-33)

Confess means to “affirm or agree with.” It’s not just to recognize a truth, but you are to identify with it. Even the demons believe and tremble, cf. James 2:19. A true follower of Christ, in the moment of trial, will give praise to God. William Tyndall, while tied to the stake to be burned alive, said, “Lord open the eyes of the King of England.”

Men in our text is universal as to all who follow Christ truly. A true Christian is willing to openly identify with Christ. He does this in a calm environment or a hostile crowd. A true believers behavior will give evidence of who he belongs too. John dealt with this as false teachers were making noise, 1 John 4:15, “Whoever confesses that Jesus is the Son of God, God abides in him, and he in God.” Again, the idea of confession is “affirm”.

Into the church at Pergamum the Lord says, “I know where you dwell, where Satan’s throne is; and you hold fast My name, and did not deny My faith even in the days of Antipas, My witness, My faithful one, who was killed among you, where Satan dwells” (Revelation 2:13). It is Pauls testimony to Timothy about faithfulness which affirms whom he confessed, 2 Timothy 4:5-7, “For I am already being poured out as a drink offering, and the time of my departure has come. I have fought the good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith.” Thus we can affirm Matthew 10:22, “but it is the one who has endured to the end who will be saved.”

On the other side of this coin, Demas who has been a servant with Paul, but when persecution came, he bolted. 2 Timothy 4:10, “for Demas, having loved this present world, has deserted me and gone to Thessalonica.” May I be so blunt today and say, many will make some sort of profession, and as long as it’s smooth and acceptable they will stay. And this makes all of us uncomfortable, and no one is asking for trials, but hard times are a test of faith. The church will sport large crowds in times of ease, but when the world turns against it, the fair weather friends are no where to be found.

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Hear me out, every believer has lapses of doubt. This is the heart of 1 John 1:9, “**If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.**” Obviously one of the clearest examples is of Peter, and Jesus told him he would do it. Yet, Peter was ashamed of his denial. Matthew 26:75, “**And Peter remembered the word which Jesus had said, Before a rooster crows, you will deny Me three times. And he went out and wept bitterly.**”

One of the primary reasons Paul wrote to Timothy was because he was showing signs of weakness. 2 Timothy 1:8, “**Therefore do not be ashamed of the testimony of our Lord.**” But there is a negative and sobering side of this, whoever denies me, I will deny. The repeated theme in Matthew is just this, “**For I say to you that unless your righteousness surpasses *that* of the scribes and Pharisees, you will not enter the kingdom of heaven.**” Jesus gives clear terms in Matthew 7:13-14, “**Enter through the narrow gate; for the gate is wide and the way is broad that leads to destruction, and there are many who enter through it. For the gate is small and the way is narrow that leads to life, and there are few who find it.**”

It’s not just a moment of doubt or fear, this is a clear behavioral action of saying you don’t know the Lord by the way you act, talk and live. The text is referring to those who “claim” to be Christian but in action and deed truly aren’t. The sheep are those who identify with Christ, but not only that, they obey, live and give evidence of who they are. Matthew 7:24-27, “**Therefore everyone who hears these words of Mine and acts on them, may be compared to a wise man who built his house on the rock. And the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and slammed against that house; and *yet* it did not fall, for it had been founded on the rock. Everyone who hears these words of Mine and does not act on them, will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand. The rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and slammed against that house; and it fell—and great was its fall.**” The key to this text is the words “and acts on them” or “does not act on them.”