

Real Christianity Part B

Series: Real Christianity

Text: Matthew 10:37-39

Introduction: Let's review a few points before we get to our text today. Jesus is sending out His disciples in the midst of wolves, and those wolves are men who will bring them before governors, courts, kings and scourge them in the synagogues. They will be hated by all because of Jesus. And when in one city they persecute you, leave and go to another and preach the gospel.

In vs. 24-36 we see again a description of what may happen to those disciples. Yet, our Lord gives them instructions on not to fear. Fear is a correct response to something scary. Fear serves as an alarm bell that can save your life. On the other hand this type of fear can cause troubles as the bleak or unknown future. But Godly fear is healthy. Jesus says concerning our greatest fear is in vs. 28. Man cannot take your eternal soul. Don't fear what men can do, one must fear not being obedient to a Holy God. He says the very hairs of your head are numbered. And He instructs them to not to deny Him, and that violence will be brought about because of the truth. In vs. 36 **"A man's enemies will be the members of his household."** Cf. Luke 14:25-33

Post modernism in the culture has crept heavily into the church, establishing the fact of being a Christian as a hip, cool way to be wealthy. Remember post modernism teaches there is no foundation for truth, resulting in whatever is relative or whatever works, then that's truth. Note, when Jesus says He came to set a man against his father, mother against daughter and so forth (vs. 35), it was not Jesus nor the gospel truth bringing contention and persecution, it was the opposition to the truth.

Your Devotion To Follow God, The Possibility Of Family Denial - Vs. 37

Matthew Henry quotes *"Whatever we part with for this pearl of price, we may comfort ourselves with this persuasion, that it is well worth what we give for it."* For many Christians in the world, and at the time of Jesus, believing in Christ meant total family abandonment. In places like India, one who becomes a Christian is often outcast because they have abandoned Hinduism. Families never speak to them again or even worse, they persecute them. Let's go back to vs. 21 and see what the truth of the gospel will do to families who hold to other religions or something else. It will become so vile that even families will martyr their own. And vs. 22 affirms this, **"You will be hated by all because of My Name."**

We are commanded to honor our parents. Children are commanded to obey their parents. And being a follower of Christ does not deny that. However, when opposition arises, and threats begin to come if you follow Christ, you must love Christ more than your parents, children, brothers or sisters. We don't really understand the complexity of this here in the USA. But what we do see often is "professing Christians" love the world, stuff, thier own selves and other things more than Christ. It's evident in the doctrinal state of many churches. Instead we have church splits over

Real Christianity Part B

songs, Bible versions, opinions not doctrinal truths, whether or not someone shook my hand or whatever. Many consider this suffering. They want a Christianity that fits their life and a God that is like them. They want to be popular, have a hip podcast, have a blue check mark on Twitter. In fact, in America many Christians consider being a Christian as if they are doing God a favor. 2 Timothy 4:10 *"For Demas, having loved this present world, has deserted me and gone to Thessalonica."* Too many Christians today love things more than they love God. The point Jesus is making in this text is not that you must hate your family, but your love for God and devotion to Him must exceed that love.

You Must Take Up Your Cross - Vs. 38

Here again is a subject that most of us don't really grasp. Many today were crosses as jewelry. That would have been considered extreme hideous in ancient times. To the disciples the mention of a cross would invoke a picture of a violent, degrading death. They understood that to take up the cross means abandoning myself to the lordship of Christ if it means I pay with my life. This is a symbol of painful, tortuous death – the most excruciating death man has ever invented is crucifixion. It's slow, and the slumping of the body on the wounds that are created by the nails not only causes excruciating pain at the point of the wound, but eventually suffocates the internal organs.

This is a far different message that we would see today. In fact, according to the historical account of the time, there was an attempt at an insurrection of the Romans by the Jews. The Roman General Varus was appalled that he supposedly crucified over 2,000 Jews and made them carry their own cross. This was fresh in the mind of the disciples.

I know we have often said today that we have a cross to bear. Whatever that situation may be it's hardly the illustration of gruesome death that likely awaited the disciples and followed of Jesus of the time. The cross is about self denial. The cross is about an illustration of death to sin. And the message of Jesus to the disciples was being a follower of Him meant you were carrying your own cross.

Losing Your Self - Vs. 39

The most difficult sin to destroy or kill in our lives is pride. Jesus is saying to His disciples if you put yourself and your interests above the gospel message you cannot be a disciple. Pride is a result of thinking you are in the forefront. Pride puts you in the front of ministry. For example, Paul writing from prison said in Philippians 1:21 *"For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain."* Furthermore, Jesus said in Luke 9:23 *"And He was saying to them all, If anyone wishes to come after Me, he must deny himself, and take up his cross daily and follow Me."*

Real Christianity Part B

Here's an interesting statistic to consider, studies have shown the three main reasons behind a trim are (1) They have a disregard for the needs or feelings of others (2) They have no respect for the person or property of others (3) They do not care for the rights of others. Truthfully, this sounds a lot like Christians today the way they treat others and behave. When we look to how to behave and deny ourselves and serve others first, we look to Jesus on how to do this.

- He said that He did not come to do His own will, but the will of the Father who sent Him
- He said that the works that He did, the words that He spoke were not His but His Fathers
- He was rich, yet for our sakes He became poor, that we through His poverty might know the riches of God

In the context of our passage, denying yourself is in light of the cross. Because the cross was the ultimate sacrifice. Let's ask the question what is meant by finding your life you lose it and losing your life you find it?

- That which you do for yourself will burn as wood, hay, and stubble in His fires that will test our works. 1 Corinthians 3:12-13 "Now if any man builds on the foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw, each man's work will become evident; for the day will show it because it is to be revealed with fire, and the fire itself will test the quality of each man's work."
- That which you amass for yourself, you will never be able to take with you. In the parable of the man with great possessions, he said he would just build bigger barns, but Luke 12:20 says, "But God said to him, Fool! This night your soul is required of you, and the things you have prepared, whose will they be?"
- You have only one life, and it will soon be past, and only what's done for Christ will last. Question, what are you doing for Christ that requires some sacrifice on your part? What is it that you are doing, that means you have to put aside your pride and pleasure to serve the Lord? Many think it's the elders job in the church to do all the ground work, while they sit back and enjoy the abundance of the fruit.