

Matthew 10:32-42

Boldly Live for Christ

Section 1: 32-33

³² “Therefore, everyone who will acknowledge me before others, I will also acknowledge him before my Father in heaven. ³³ But whoever denies me before others, I will also deny him before my Father in heaven.

These two verses remind me of teenagers. One of my favorite parts of being a student minister was the multiple opportunities I had to embarrass teenagers. And FYI, it’s not that hard to do. It can be as simple as being seen with them in public. Now being a parent of teenagers, it is funny to see how FAST they move getting out of the car and into the school. And if I really want to see them squirm, I act like I’m going to hug them in public.

For many Christians in the 1st century acknowledging Christ before others meant imprisonment, beatings or even death. Today, it seems too many Christians are embarrassed to be associated with Jesus. Jesus is pretty straight forward about His expectations for His followers. Be open and proud about being disciples of Jesus. It’s easy to “keep our faith to ourselves.” We have a long list of excuses, yes excuses, to justify our desire to keep from boldly living out for God’s glory. But it’s time to stop living for this world and to start living for the world to come.

Application

As believers we need to openly and boldly live for Christ. How do we build up our faith in such a way we are openly and boldly claiming Christ? Start simple, start at church. Talk about Jesus with other Christians. This is an easy first step and as you get more comfortable talking about Jesus with other believers, you can begin speaking of Jesus to unbelievers.

Discussion Questions

- ❖ When was the last time you had a conversation that centered around Jesus?
- ❖ When was the last time you had the opportunity to “acknowledge” Jesus to others?
- ❖ What holds us back from openly and boldly proclaiming Jesus?
- ❖ How can your actions prove you are a follow of Jesus? How can your actions prove you are not “serious” about your faith?

Section 2: 34-39

³⁴ Don’t assume that I came to bring peace on the earth. I did not come to bring peace, but a sword. ³⁵ For I came to turn a man against his father, a daughter against her mother, a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law; ³⁶ and a man’s enemies will be the members of his household. ³⁷ The one who loves a father or mother more than me is not worthy of me; the one who loves a son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me. ³⁸ And whoever doesn’t take up his cross and follow me is not worthy of me. ³⁹ Anyone who finds his life will lose it, and anyone who loses his life because of me will find it.

Conflict is unavoidable, especially if you desire to live for God’s glory. Conflict can come from many different places and people. Even from where we least expect it. In verses 35-36, Jesus explains to us that we should expect conflict even within our own family. As a husband and father, I cannot image members of my family becoming my enemies.

There are many things that we can end up loving more than God. Here Jesus addresses the family. Our greatest love is not a human relationship, it’s our relationship with our heavenly Father. Now, this doesn’t mean we shouldn’t highly value family. Scripture clearly teaches that we are to love, provide, care for and value our families, BUT God should always be our first love.

Jesus makes His point pretty clear in verses 38-39. Jesus is never to be second place. And sadly, there are many times He isn't even that high up on our priority list. We need to take being a Christian seriously. Being a Christian isn't a hobby or something we just do at church on Sundays. Being a Christian is a lifestyle commitment.

Application

Priorities say a lot about us, specifically what we value. Our relationship with God should be our top priority, over family, work, sports, hobbies, food, sleep, money and even safety. But keep in mind that we that our relationship with God is not to be used as an excuse to avoid or slack on our responsibilities. The primary way to put God first is to do all things for God's glory; work, family, school, hobbies, etc. Our relationship with God should strengthened our resolve to do all things for God's glory.

Discussion Questions

- ❖ Why does living for Jesus cause conflict?
- ❖ Why is it important to keep God as your most important relationship?
- ❖ How committed should we be to being a Christian?
- ❖ What are some common things that distract us or pull us away from being faithful Christians?
- ❖ How can we help each other be more faithful?

Section 3:40-42

⁴⁰ "The one who welcomes you welcomes me, and the one who welcomes me welcomes him who sent me. ⁴¹ Anyone who welcomes a prophet because he is a prophet will receive a prophet's reward. And anyone who welcomes a righteous person because he's righteous will receive a righteous person's reward. ⁴² And whoever gives even a cup of cold water to one of these little ones because he is a disciple, truly I tell you, he will never lose his reward."

For a Christian, love is expected. Loving others is the minimum. Far too often we set the "bar" way to low. How is it that we have gotten to a point where showing love and living for Christ on a consistent daily basis is being a "super Christian"? Simply put, love for the world. One of the primary reasons that people reject God or the people of God today, is their love for the world. It is easy to slip into a life that is more focused on this temporary world rather than focused on living for God's glory.

How do we glorify God according to verses 40-42? Welcome fellow believers. Is it that simple? Yes. Well, sort of. What does it mean to "welcome" fellow believers? It means that we love, serve, support, provide, build up and proclaim God alongside one another. Jesus says in verse 42 that the reward for caring for a fellow disciple will never be lost. It's incredible to think that glorifying God together as a faith community is a joy that will last eternity.

Application

We as a faith family should always be looking for ways to encourage, love, serve, help and build up one another. John 13:35 reminds us of how we are to love another:

³⁵ By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another. (CSB)

And how do we love another other? We can start by reading 1 Corinthians 13. In this passage we learn that love is an action verb. Love is about how we commit to treat one another rather than just an emotional experience.

Discussion Questions

- ❖ How are your actions proving you love others?
- ❖ Why is it important to invest in eternal things rather than temporary things?