

THE CHRIST-CENTERED LIFE

Ancient Instructions for Modern Times

Matthew 10:24-39

INTRODUCTION: WELCOME - I hope and pray that that you had little or no damage as a result of Tropical Storm Fred.

These are challenging days in which to live.

- I say that in reference to COVID, but not just COVID.
- It is a difficult time to be in business whether you are an owner or a manager, trying to navigate transgender discrimination mandates while trying to protect employees. Just ask Hobby Lobby which has been fined \$220,000 for telling a natural born male who identifies as a transgender female that he must use a unisex bathroom rather than the ladies' room with natural born females.
- It is tough being an employee in these work places, sometimes not knowing what you are supposed to do according to either man's law or God's.
- It is a hard time to be a parent, trying to raise your children with Christian values when those children are exposed to so many conflicting value systems and loyalties.
- It is a tough time to be a student when even a serious student who really wants to master the basics so that as they mature they can make their own decisions about philosophies and lifestyles, yet even as students they are bombarded with conflicting persuasion about the way they ought to think and act.

Who can dispute that these are challenging days?

But for those of us who follow the Lord Jesus, for those of us who have committed ourselves to Him to live the Christ-Centered life,

Jesus did not leave us without instruction.

- In fact, the Lord gave His disciples specific instruction in how to follow Him while living in a world whose ways are so totally contrary to the ways of God.
- One such passage is in Matthew, chapter 10.
- Those instructions will be our text today.

- Jesus spoke them to His disciples who lived in the midst of a world governed by very pagan, very wicked Rome.
- These words are nearly 2,000 years old, yet they speak very clearly and very powerfully to 2021, the modern day in which all of us live.

Listen and follow either in your own printed Bible, on your device, or on the screen.

Matthew 10:24–39 NKJV 24 “A disciple is not above *his* teacher, nor a servant above his master. 25 It is enough for a disciple that he be like his teacher, and a servant like his master. If they have called the master of the house Beelzebub, how much more *will they call* those of his household!

26 Therefore do not fear them. For there is nothing covered that will not be revealed, and hidden that will not be known. 27 “Whatever I tell you in the dark, speak in the light; and what you hear in the ear, preach on the housetops. 28 And do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. But rather fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.

29 Are not two sparrows sold for a copper coin? And not one of them falls to the ground apart from your Father’s will. 30 But the very hairs of your head are all numbered. 31 Do not fear therefore; you are of more value than many sparrows.

32 “Therefore whoever confesses Me before men, him I will also confess before My Father who is in heaven. 33 But whoever denies Me before men, him I will also deny before My Father who is in heaven.

34 “Do not think that I came to bring peace on earth. I did not come to bring peace but a sword. 35 For I have come to ‘*set a man against his father, a daughter against her mother, and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law*’; 36 and ‘*a man’s enemies will be those of his own household.*’ 37 He who loves father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me. And he who loves son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me.

38 And he who does not take his cross and follow after Me is not worthy of Me. 39 He who finds his life will lose it, and he who loses his life for My sake will find it.

Walk with me through this passage.

Matthew 10:24–25 NKJV 24 “A disciple is not above *his* teacher, nor a servant above his master. 25 It is enough for a disciple that he be like his teacher, and a servant like his master. If they have called the master of the house Beelzebub, how much more *will they call* those of his household!

Our teacher, our master, is Jesus.

Our goal is to be like Him.

The point our Lord is making is that His disciples, those who follow Him, should not expect to be treated better than Jesus was.

- Many people rejected Jesus, so we should not be surprised when we are rejected and excluded.
- Jesus' closest friends turned away from Him and betrayed Him.
 - Peter did, although he repented and returned to following Jesus.
 - All of the disciples abandoned their Lord when His enemies took Him to the cross, except for John. All the others ran away!
 - Like Peter, they returned after Jesus arose. They came back embarrassed and repentant.
 - But Judas never came back, and he sold Jesus out to His enemies.
 - So folks, listen! We ought not be surprised when people, even our friends, turn their backs on us.
- We should not be surprised when they lie about us and say bad things about us.
 - They called Jesus Beelzebub, which was the name of a false god among the Philistines, in reality a demon pretending to be God.
 - Jesus is saying, "If they called me Beelzebub, they will say even worse about you!"

So, Jesus said,

Matthew 10:26–28 NKJV 26 Therefore do not fear them. For there is nothing covered that will not be revealed, and hidden that will not be known. 27 "Whatever I tell you in the dark, speak in the light; and what you hear in the ear, preach on the housetops. 28 And do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. But rather fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.

Jesus is saying, "Don't worry about what they are doing to you."

- The truth will ultimately be revealed. Isn't that a wonderful thought!
- What they have done from hiding will be made known.
- **You, just do two things:**
 - Speak in the light – **Speak God's Word!**
 - (Thy Word is a lamp unto my feet and a light unto my path.)

- Speak openly, for all to hear.
- **Fear God, not people!**
 - Reverence God.
 - He is the ultimate judge.
 - He is the one who determines the final outcomes.
 - And, no matter what anybody else thinks, God loves His children!

Matthew 10:29–31 NKJV 29 Are not two sparrows sold for a copper coin? And not one of them falls to the ground apart from your Father's will. 30 But the very hairs of your head are all numbered. 31 Do not fear therefore; you are of more value than many sparrows.

The copper coin Jesus was talking about was worth about what a laborer could make in a half an hour, so between \$5 to \$8 in our money.

People sold sparrows as poor man's chicken for the equivalent of \$2 or \$3.

Jesus says, "You are worth so much more than that to your Heavenly Father!

You are worth so much that God even knows how many hairs you have on your head."

- For some of you, that is a lot!
- For some of you that is an ever changing number.
- And some of you are thinking, well it's not very many for you, Bro. Mike.
- But you only say that because you don't see as God sees!
- I have hundreds of little gray hairs around the perimeter of my head that I shave off every morning. And I have these tiny little fine, baby like hairs that grow on the top of my head, and are so fine that they evade the razor daily sometimes until they are over an inch long. I can't even see them in a mirror unless the light catches them just right!
- But God loves me so much, that He even knows about the hairs I myself cannot see or count. He knows every one.
- And if you are His child, He loves and cares for you that much also!
- So quit worrying about your popularity with people.
- Be concerned about your popularity with God! Reverence Him! Fear Him!

And then Jesus says to His followers, laboring to be disciples in the midst of a wicked world, ...

Matthew 10:32–33 NKJV 32 “Therefore whoever confesses Me before men, him I will also confess before My Father who is in heaven. 33 But whoever denies Me before men, him I will also deny before My Father who is in heaven.

Do not hide your identity in Christ!

- **Do not hide your trust in Him to avoid attack.**
- **Do not hide that Jesus is your Lord in order to gain popularity.**

A GENUINE Christian does not deny Christ.

But whoever denies Me before men, him I will also deny before My Father who is in heaven.

And then Jesus speaks words many do not understand.

Matthew 10:34–37 NKJV 34 “Do not think that I came to bring peace on earth. I did not come to bring peace but a sword. 35 For I have come to ‘*set a man against his father, a daughter against her mother, and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law*’; 36 and ‘*a man’s enemies will be those of his own household.*’ 37 He who loves father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me. And he who loves son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me.

Jesus is not negating the fifth commandment, “Honor your father and your mother ...”

At another place and time, Jesus specifically affirmed this commandment and rebuked those who disregarded it.

Jesus is acknowledging realities and clarifying priorities.

- It is sometimes the sad reality that those who should be closest to you, like your father or mother, your son or your daughter, are the very ones who reject Christ and choose to worship the gods of this world.
- When one family member trusts and follows Jesus, and another family member refuses to trust and follow Jesus, there is an alienation that occurs between them.
- That is the actual meaning of the words translated “set a man against.”
- When a man follows Christ, but his dad will not, they can be alienated from each other because of conflicting loyalties and values.

- It does not mean that the Christian should not give respect or honor to an unbelieving parent.
- It gives the Christian no right to mistreat an unbelieving relative.
- Jesus told us to even love our enemies.
- But Jesus is clarifying where our loyalty and allegiance must lie if we are genuinely Christ followers.
- We must be like Joshua who said, “As for me, I will serve the Lord.”
- Jesus cuts us no slack to be less than fully loyal and obedient, even if our family and all of those closest to us in this world are not.

When we trust Christ, we are declaring Him Lord, the Master of our lives. He becomes number one to us!

Matthew 10:38–39 NKJV 38 And he who does not take his cross and follow after Me is not worthy of Me. 39 He who finds his life will lose it, and he who loses his life for My sake will find it.

And the proof of that, even if we have no conflict in our family because of Christ, is whether or not we obey God and do the will of the Father.

The cross was the will of the Father for Jesus, His Son.

John 3:16 NKJV For **God** so loved the world that He **gave His only begotten Son**, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.

Our cross that we are each to take up is to obey God, to obey our Lord, and be what He has called us to be and do what He has called us to do.

Luke 6:46 NKJV “But why do you call Me ‘Lord, Lord,’ and not do the things which I say?”

CONCLUSION: Have you trusted Him as the Lord of your life? Have you received Him as your Master? Are you walking in obedience as a faithful follower of Jesus Christ?