

Characteristics of Committed Disciples

📖 Matthew 10:32-42

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📅 April 29, 2015

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We're in Matt 10, the Discourse on Kingdom Missions. Everything in Matthew's Gospel relates to the King and His kingdom program as it relates to Israel. Many people who have a non-dispensational view of Scripture struggle with the mission being exclusively to the house of Israel. But Jesus flatly states in 10:5, "Do not go in the way of the Gentiles, and do not enter any city of the Samaritans; but rather go to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. And as you go, preach, saying, 'The kingdom of heaven is at hand.'" The kingdom of the heavens is the kingdom program covenanted to Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, the twelve tribes, David and the Messiah. Those are the six direct recipients of the covenant promises that will find their fulfillment in the land. It's this kingdom that was being offered to the nation Israel. If they received Jesus as their King then the covenanted kingdom would come.

What's happening in this section of Matthew is laid out in 9:35, Jesus has been going around the Galilee teaching, proclaiming the nearness of the kingdom and doing all kinds of miracles to authenticate that He is the King and could bring in the kingdom. However, He observed that the people were in a state of disarray and oppression and yet in 9:37-38 the harvest was already ready to be gleaned. So we are to understand that time was running out. "The harvest was plentiful, but the workers were few." The nation is heading toward a climax with the kingdom offer and what the mission discourse is all about in Matt 10 is the urgency of the Messiah in expanding His mission through some of His disciples. In 10:1 He summons twelve of His disciples and gives them authority to do the same miracles He could do in order to authenticate them and their message as being from the King. These twelve disciples thereby became His apostles. In 10:5-23 Jesus instructs His apostles. The instructions begin with their going to Israel prior to Jesus' crucifixion but stretch all the way to the time when the Son of Man comes in His kingdom. The best way to interpret these instructions is in terms of the OT Messianic sequence of events. In this sequence the Messiah would come, be rejected, crucified and raised. Then a time of trouble would come on the earth, after which the Messiah would return, rescue Israel from the time of trouble and establish the kingdom. In that light there are two missions to Israel. From our vantage point today the first mission is related in 10:5-15 and describes the past mission to Israel that was ultimately rejected and resulted in the crucifixion of the Messiah and consequent postponement of the kingdom. The second mission is related in 10:16-23 and describes a future mission to Israel that will ultimately be accepted and result in the coming of the

Son of Man in His kingdom. Those who carry the message of the Son of Man's soon arrival in His kingdom will be persecuted unto death because the anti-Messiah will not allow anyone aligned with the Son of Man to live. This will occur during the great tribulation, the most harrowing time in history.

In 10:24-31 Jesus is primarily exhorting His disciples in that time not to fear in the face of the difficulty. In 10:24-25 He reminds them of a proverbial saying, "A disciple is not above his teacher, nor a slave above his master. It is enough for the disciple that he become like his teacher, and the slave like his master." In other words, Jesus was not asking His disciples to be something more than He was. It would be enough for them to be like Him. In time He would be persecuted unto death. If they became like Him they too would likely be persecuted to death. As Jesus points out, if they had called Him "Beelzebul," willfully identifying Him as the head of the house of Satan then His disciples would be identified as Satan's workers. In 10:26 the injunction "do not fear them" may seem strange but He they should be assured that "nothing concealed will not be revealed, or hidden that will not be known." This statement is difficult and could be taken one of two ways. It could mean that any evil their persecutors would bring against them would ultimately be made known or it could mean that any attempt to avoid being identified with Him would only come to light sooner or later so they might as well not deny their identification with Him. The latter view is probably better. In 10:27 He says, "What I tell you in the darkness, speak in the light;" in other words, He's imploring them to take what He taught them in private and speak it publicly, and further, "what you hear whispered in your ear, proclaim upon the housetops;" in other words, what He teaches them personally they should proclaim it to large audiences. Housetops were large flat surfaces and therefore common places from which to address a large public audience. However, to make such public addresses would openly identify them to their persecutors. But in 10:28 again He says, "Do not fear." This time He adds, "those who kill the body but are unable to kill the soul; but rather fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell." In order to not shrink back from their identification with Jesus they should recall that those who oppose them are not as strong as the One who supports them. In 10:29 they should also recall how much God cares for them, "Are not two sparrows sold for a cent? And yet not one of them will fall to the ground apart from your Father." It seems reasonable that if God takes note of each sparrow when it dies then He cares for His beloved disciples far more. In 10:30 His care for them is so great that He keeps count of all the hairs on their head continually. The conclusion in 10:31 is clear; "do not fear." Despite the fact that this future time of great tribulation will be the most fearful time in history, especially for those Jews who believe in the Messiahship of Jesus, they should nevertheless have courage and boldness to identify with Him in the face of the opposition. Even if they are killed for their identification God will protect their soul and raise their body to dwell with Him in the kingdom. The mental attitude described here is the mental attitude of a committed disciple; one who has committed himself to unswerving loyalty to the Messiah and courage in the face of opposition.

This identification with the Messiah in difficult times sets the context for the sayings that come in 10:32-39. The **therefore** in verse 32 signals a conclusion. **Therefore everyone who confesses Me before men, I will also confess him before My Father who is in heaven. But whoever denies Me before men, I will also deny him**

before My Father who is in heaven. Now this is the type of passage that is commonly used by people in a number of erroneous ways. First, Lordship Salvation teaches that if someone professes to believe in Christ but is put in a pressure situation to confess Christ and they deny Him then they were never saved to begin with. A variant of this view is the idea that if you don't walk an aisle and publicly confess Jesus as Lord then you're not really saved. So the Lordship view says that public confession is either a test of genuine faith or a requirement in addition to faith. Second, Arminianism teaches that if a person is a genuine believer in Christ but they are put in a pressure situation to confess Christ and they deny Him then they will lose their salvation. So Lordship argues that you thought you had it but never had it and Arminianism that you had it but you lost it. Both of these interpretations are totally inconsistent with the rest of Scripture and have no support from the context.¹ What is the context? The context is committed discipleship. Constable reminds us saying, "Remember that the terms "believer" and "disciple" are not synonymous." There are three kinds of disciples in the NT. One is curious and he is not a believer, two is convinced and he is a believer and three is committed and he is a believer who has been challenged to follow Christ and has accepted that challenge. Part of accepting the challenge to follow Christ was committing to confess Him before men and not deny the master. This instruction is directed toward those who were committed disciples. **Confess** is the Greek word *ομολογῶ* and means "to acknowledge association with." **Deny** is *αρνεομαι* and means the opposite, "to deny association with, either verbally or non-verbally."² In other words, if a committed disciple was put in a situation where acknowledging association with Christ might result in persecution he has the choice of acknowledging Him or not. Peter faced this situation both before and after the cross. Before the cross, when Jesus was on trial, in John 18:17 "the slave-girl...said to Peter, "You are not also one of this man's disciples, are you?" And "He said, "I am not." He denied Him. Many argue that he denied him not thrice but twice thrice or even thrice thrice when you look at the contexts. But after the cross, when Peter and John were taken before the Sanhedrin for healing a blind man in the name of Jesus, in Acts 4:10-12 they say, "let it be known to all of you and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus Christ the Nazarene, whom you crucified...by this name this man stands here before you in good health...And there is salvation in no one else; for there is no other name under heaven that has been given among men by which we must be saved." He confessed Him. So a committed disciple may have many opportunities during his life to either confess or deny Him. Therefore what Jesus promises to do in verse 32 to those who confess Him and in verse 33 to those who deny Him is not a once for all final evaluation of a disciple's life but is a periodic acknowledgement that is part of His intercessory ministry. On one hand, He says in verse 32 that the **one who confesses Him before men...I will confess him before My Father who is in heaven.** This means that when the committed disciple is in a pressure situation like Peter and he acknowledges association with Him then Jesus at that time will personally acknowledge that act of courage before the **Father...in heaven.** It will thereby accrue to the rewards account of that believer. He will store up treasure in heaven. On the other hand, He says in verse 33 that the **one who denies Him before men...I will also deny him before My Father who is in heaven.** This means that when the committed disciple is in a pressure situation like Peter and he does not acknowledge association with Him then Jesus at that time does not acknowledge that believer before His Father...in heaven. In other words, an

opportunity to accrue rewards has been lost. He does not store up rewards in heaven. Since **deny** means a denial of association either verbally or non-verbally it is not necessary to conclude that Jesus is going to verbally slay you before the Father in heaven. More probably it simply means you will not be personally acknowledged before the Father on that occasion and therefore an opportunity to accrue rewards was lost. Furthermore, it is vital to understand that a committed disciple will have many opportunities to confess or deny Him, just as Peter, and that a disciple's life may be composed of some confessions and some denials. What is in view is not a final evaluation but individual situations which accrue or do not accrue toward rewards at the final evaluation. Nehemiah taught us this very thing when he prayed that his loyal deeds for the Temple and its services would not be forgotten on that day (cf Neh 13:14). Verse 42 shows that certainly they will not be forgotten.

In 10:34 Jesus makes clear that His mission to earth will result in many opportunities to confess or deny Him. He says, **Do not think that I came to bring peace on the earth; I did not come to bring peace, but a sword.** The **sword** is a weapon of war and stands in contrast to **peace**.³ Jesus' self-description of the purpose of His coming to earth as not **to bring peace**, but war, does not fit with most people's caricature of Jesus as a meek and mild peace loving hippie. Some think Jesus came **to bring peace** on earth because of the angel's announcement to the shepherds memorialized in the hymn that says "peace on earth, good will toward men." However, Luke 2:14 actually says, "peace on earth among men with whom He is well-pleased." Those who accept Him are those with whom He is well-pleased. Jesus came to divide men on the basis of their acceptance or rejection of His own person. Since not all will accept Him then He ultimately came to divide men. Others may wonder how such a statement meshes with Jesus' earlier statement in the Discourse on the Mount when He said, "Blessed are the peacemakers." If Jesus came to bring war then how is it that He fails to meet His own requirement to be a peacemaker? However, the terms of peace are acceptance of His person. A person can have peace with God now if He accepts Jesus (cf Rom 5:1). It is those who carry this message of peace with God who are peacemakers. As Isaiah said, "How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news" (Isa 52:7; Rom 10:14). It is those who reject these terms of peace that ultimately force Him to bring war upon the earth to divide humanity. In other words, peaceful negotiations are presently in process. Jesus' terms are acceptance of His own person. For those who reject these terms ultimately there is war. That war ultimately looks to Armageddon. After that war Jesus will bring peace in the kingdom. People may or may not like His terms but He is the authority. Men must either bow the knee now or be forced into submission later (cf Phil 2:10). It is better to make peace now rather than suffer bloodshed later. Therefore, it's quite possible that His statement looks past His First Coming to the time of His Second Coming. Glasscock says, "The "sword" was symbolic of the conflict and even violence that would characterize the hostility between Christ's kingdom and the world's kingdom."⁴ When Christ's kingdom begins to break into history (cf Rev 11:15-17) then conflict and violence will increase to unprecedented scale and those aligned with the world's kingdom will be destroyed cf (Rev 11:18). In short, peace is coming, but only after peaceful negotiations have been exhausted and war has come.

In 10:35 He gives explanation of the division. It's an explanation because he begins with the word **For** which is *γάρ*, a word of explanation. **For I came to SET A MAN AGAINST HIS FATHER, AND A DAUGHTER AGAINST HER MOTHER, AND A DAUGHTER-IN-LAW AGAINST HER MOTHER-IN-LAW; ³⁶and A MAN'S ENEMIES WILL BE THE MEMBERS OF HIS HOUSEHOLD.** This is a quote from the OT. Where does it come from? Micah 7:6. What is Micah 7:6 teaching? Micah was living in the days of King Manasseh. Manasseh was Hezekiah's son. Hezekiah was a good king, he issued in all kinds of positive reforms and brought the people into right relation with God. But Manasseh, what did he do? He unreformed everything his father reformed. What were the consequences? Ruptured human relationships. What's the argument? If you don't have a right relationship with God what happens to your relationships with men? They collapse; they go right down the toilet bowl. People want peace. Every other car has a bumper sticker crying for world peace. People want to get along but why can't they get along? Because they haven't got right with God first. The vertical relationship has to come before the horizontal can come. And so here you see people within the same family divided against one another, **A MAN AGAINST HIS FATHER.** Why? Because one is right with God and the other is not right with God. And the same is true for all the other relationships listed, **A DAUGHTER AGAINST HER MOTHER... A DAUGHTER-IN-LAW AGAINST HER MOTHER-IN-LAW.** That one's not too hard to see but the point is clear; Jesus Christ is a point of division. The division is over acceptance or rejection of His person. And that division has to finally come to a war. Why does it have to come to a war? Because at some point if you're ever going to get to the peace you've got to get rid of the evil. Ultimately you can talk and talk and talk but the heart of man is desperately wicked and not everyone is going to accept the terms. The terms are believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and be saved or else. And once those terms have been on the table long enough then that's it, the end of the day of grace will come and the Day of Judgment will ensue. So Jesus' disciples shouldn't think that He came to bring peace, He came to divide, even within the family, the third divine institution, on the basis of a family members acceptance or rejection of Him. And that will lead to all kinds of opportunities to either confess Him or deny Him, especially among the Jews where the Messiahship of Jesus is a very controversial subject.

Now in verse 37 He makes another controversial statement related to a committed disciple. **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.** The Greek word **loves** is *φιλεω*, not *αγαπαω*. *αγαπαω* love is dedication love or loyalty but *φιλεω* love is affectionate love or emotive. Jesus is saying that if one's affections are greater for his **father** or **mother** or a **son** or **daughter** than they are for Him then that disciple **is not worthy of** Him. The parallel in Luke 14:26 puts it in a way that many Gentile readers don't understand. Luke says, "If anyone comes to Me, and does not hate his own father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters, yes, and even his own life, he cannot be My disciple." "Hate?" people say, "I thought we were supposed to love our father and mother and wife and children. How can you tell me I have to hate them?" The way Matthew put it clarifies that Jesus was using a figure of speech. By love and hate Jesus means relatively speaking or by comparison. In other words, one's affection for Christ must take precedence over affection for anyone else. Affections can be a strong factor in

motivating us in a direction. Our affections for Christ should be so great that by comparison we hate our family members. This does not mean we are to hate our family members. We are to love them. But if we must choose to allow our affections to motivate us in one direction or the other we should always allow our affections for Christ to control the direction we go. An example would be the man in Matt 8:21. Here it says one "of the disciples said to Him, "Lord, permit me first to go and bury my father." But Jesus said to him, "Follow Me, and allow the dead to bury their own dead." That may sound harsh but Jesus is simply saying that the man's affections for Him must be greater than those for his father. If the man was not willing to allow his affections for Christ to override his affections for his father then he was not worthy of Him.

The word **worthy** is *αξιος* and means "to reach a standard." Someone who has greater affection for a family member does not reach Christ's standard for what is required to be His committed disciple. The NT states repeatedly that the cost of being a committed disciple is very high and that one should carefully count the cost before entering into committed discipleship. A committed disciple will have to make decisions his family will not understand. This is why you should not enter into committed discipleship hastily but count the cost.

In 10:38 Jesus lays down another statement of the kind of loyalty that is demanded of a committed disciple. **And he who does not take his cross and follow after Me is not worthy of Me.** Glasscock says, "This is perhaps one of the most abused verses in the New Testament. Every petty ailment, every disappointment, and every frustration of life is considered a cross to bear. Those who so cheaply apply this verse demonstrate their failure to understand the horror of the cross." The Romans commonly hung criminals who dared to disobey the law on crosses. These crosses littered the sides of roads as a warning not to disobey. "The word" crucifixion "was unmentionable in polite Roman society (Cicero, Pro Rabirio 16); even when one was being condemned to death" on a cross "the sentence used an archaic formula which served as a sort of euphemism: *arbori infelici suspendito*, 'hang him on the unlucky tree' (Cicero, *ibid.* 13)." Gundry likens it to the execution chair or a gas chamber. That is about as close a comparison as one can make today. Still crucifixion is far more horrifying since the death process took days. The meaning of **take** one's **cross** has nothing to do with individual sufferings but dying to self, dying to the desires of your sin nature. Paul said later, "I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live" (Gal 2:20). That is what it means to take up one's cross. It means to put one's self interests to death; to put Christ's interests ahead of one's own. If one is not willing to do that Jesus says he is not worthy of Me. That is to say, he is not reaching the standard that I require to be a committed disciple. Again, the cost of being a committed disciple is extremely high and one should carefully calculate the cost before becoming His disciple. If you choose to be you should understand that will not be understood by the world.

In 10:39 we have another seemingly radical statement, **He who has found his life will lose it, and he who has lost his life for My sake will find it.** It sounds paradoxical but He's giving the key to finding the meaning of life. It grows out of the previous verse. **He who has found his life will lose it.** The word **found** contrasts with **lose**. The word **lose** is *απολλυμι*, a common word for "ruin or destroy." He's saying he would ruin his life. The word

found is the opposite, it means “to preserve.” He’s saying that he who preserves his life will end up ruining it. In the context, the committed disciple who tries to preserve his life by not confessing Him in a time of difficulty, will end up ruining his life. In other words, his life will end up being worthless and meaningless. To understand the true sense I would translate this, “He who preserves his life will waste it...” The point is he will not have anything to show for his life in the end. It will have been a worthless life.

However, **he who has lost his life for My sake will find it.** Again, the word lost means “to ruin or destroy” and the word **find** means “to preserve.” His point is that the committed disciple who dies to self and lives for Christ will preserve his life. His life will end up being valuable and meaningful. To understand the true sense I would translate this last expression, “and he who has let go of his life for My sake will preserve it.” He will have much to show for his life in the end. It will be a valuable life.

The value is then stated in vv 40-42 in terms of rewards to be issued when the disciples life is given a final evaluation. In other words, if committed discipleship seems like a very hard row to hoe then one should remember that it will be well worth it in the end. The returns will not be skimpy but extremely lavish. Abundant rewards are the result of a committed disciple denying self and living for Christ. Constable says, “This entire section (vv. 26–39) contrasts the present with the future. For the 12 Apostles their present ministry, self-denial, and consequent persecution involved identifying themselves publicly as Jesus’ disciples. It involved calling on the Jews to repent for the kingdom was at hand because the King had arrived.”⁵ Hagner says, “But this is only half the story, for the rewards are beyond calculation.”⁶

In 10:40 Jesus says, **He who receives you receives Me, and he who receives Me receives Him who sent Me.** If Jesus has been talking about a far future mission then as He closes He seems to come back to the more immediate mission to that generation. Earlier in 10:9-14 he spoke of those who received them in their house and city versus those who did not receive them. They were not to pronounce blessings of peace on those who did not receive them and they were to shake the dust off their feet as they left town. This response was authorized because a rejection of their message was a rejection of them and a rejection of them was a rejection of the one who sent them. Here again we see the chain of receptions. If one received an apostle then that one also received Jesus who sent the apostle and if one received Jesus then that one also received the Father who sent Jesus. To receive them would have been to receive their message. The message was that the kingdom of heaven is at hand. Even today the one who receives the apostolic writings as captured in the NT canon is receiving Jesus and the one who is receiving Jesus is receiving the Father who sent Jesus. On the other side, one cannot accept Jesus and reject the apostolic writings as captured in the NT canon. The apostles, Jesus and the Father are all linked to one another such that acceptance or rejection of one is acceptance or rejection of all. This is the same thing John teaches us about fellowship in 1 John 1:3-4 when he says, “...what we have seen and heard we proclaim to you also, so that you too may have fellowship with us; and indeed our fellowship is with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ. These things we write, so that our joy may be made complete.” In other words, to be in agreement

with the apostolic writings is to be in fellowship with the apostles and to be in agreement with the apostles is to be in fellowship with Christ and to be in agreement with Christ is to be in fellowship with the Father. These are all inextricably bound to one another such that acceptance or rejection of one is acceptance or rejection of all. One cannot have fellowship with God apart from the apostolic writings!

In 10:41 he sets out the application. **He who receives a prophet in the name of a prophet shall receive a prophet's reward; and he who receives a righteous man in the name of a righteous man shall receive a righteous man's reward.** The point again is that reception of one is reception of the other. A **prophet** is one who speaks on behalf of another. If one received a prophet of God they would receive **a prophet's reward** because by receiving the prophet of God they were receiving God. "The parallel expression "a righteous man" is not a second category but is repetitious analogy to emphasize that anyone sent from God carries blessings to those who receive him because he is from God."

In 10:42 Jesus adds, **And whoever in the name of a disciple gives to one of these little ones even a cup of cold water to drink, truly I say to you, he shall not lose his reward.** In the context the **little ones** must be the lost sheep of the house of Israel referred to earlier in 10:6. In Matt 25 the sheep and goats judgment after the Tribulation, Jesus uses the same analogy with giving a cup of water to one of His brothers. He says there, "Truly I say to you, to the extent that you did it to one of these brothers of Mine, even the least of them, you did it to Me." Who are Jesus' brothers? His brothers are the Jewish people. During that time all the nations will turn against Israel, just as 10:22 stated, "You will be hated by all because of My name." Therefore giving a cup of cold water to one of the lost sheep of the house of Israel in that time is just like giving a cup of cold water to Jesus. Of course, the good work is not limited to giving a cup of cold water but extends to giving aid of any kind to the most hated people on earth at that time, Jewish believers. It is impossible to consider that a Gentile during that time would risk helping the Jews if he was not a believer. Jesus is saying that those who risk their lives to help them in that time will **not lose** their **reward**.

One must remember that the dangers of helping Jewish believers during that time will be even greater than those during the Nazi Holocaust. If anyone was caught helping the Jews during that time their destiny was in all likelihood the same as the Jews, concentration camps and extermination. Yet many Gentiles took the risk and helped Jews escape Nazi Germany territories. The Holocaust Museum in Israel called Yad Vashem has recorded and published many stories of Gentiles who risked their lives to rescue Jews during the Holocaust. These Gentiles are termed by Jews today, "The Righteous among the Nations." I have a 600 page book documenting many of their stories. From this verse what we can say is that the final book by that title is not yet available for us to read but will be written in heaven during that time. In it you will find the stories of those future committed disciples who will risk their lives to help Jewish believers during the greatest holocaust of all times, not Nazi Germany but all Nations which will become Nazi, a phenomena we see developing at breakneck speed. **Truly**, Jesus says, these **shall not lose** their **reward**. The promise of reward is motivation for disciples to live a life of

self-denial and not seek to preserve their own life but to live for Christ. Self-denial turns out to be the only route to a meaningful life.

In summary, in 10:32 Jesus teaches that those committed disciples who acknowledge Him before men during intense times of persecution He will personally acknowledge before His Father in heaven. They will have stored up treasure in heaven to be given at the final evaluation of the disciple. In 10:33, those committed disciples who do not acknowledge Him before men when under pressure He will not personally acknowledge. They will have missed an opportunity to store up rewards in heaven. In 10:34 they will have many opportunities to confess or deny Him because He came not to bring peace on earth but war. Acceptance or rejection of His person is the dividing line. In the future, the day of opportunity to accept or reject Him will come to a close and warfare will ensue, cleansing the earth of all who reject Him. 10:35 explains by quoting the situation in the days of Micah, family divisions existed *en masse* because one was right with God and the other was not. In the same way in the future some Jews will be right with God and others will not. This will cause division and enmity. In 10:37 the committed disciple should remember where His ultimate affection lies. Only the one whose affection for Christ is greater than his affection for his own family members reaches Christ's standard of a committed disciple. In 10:38 He explains that the one who does not deny himself and follow after Christ does not reach His standard of a committed disciple. In 10:39 the one who does not deny himself but tries to preserve his life will waste it and the one who lets go of his life by self-denial and lives for Christ will preserve it. His life will be meaningful and valuable. In 10:40 the one who received the apostle's message was receiving the apostle and Jesus who sent the apostle and the Father who sent Jesus. Therefore in 10:41, the one who received them would receive a similar reward. In 10:42, whoever provided aid for the lost sheep of the house of Israel in that time, whoever put their life at such great risk, truly that one will not lose his reward. The dangers of committed discipleship are high but the rewards are even higher.

While these things directly relate to the future time when Jewish believers are being eliminated from planet earth there are principles that apply to those who seek to be committed disciples today in the Church Age. First, have you counted the cost? Being a committed disciple is costly. In some nations more than others. Many are in prison or executed around the world for their identification with Christ. Our country thus far has enjoyed friendship toward Christianity but those times are changing. Hate crimes legislation is on the table, and if the downward spiral continues, will be passed. Freedom of speech will be illegal. Then our commitment to Christ or the State will be on the table and Christian men and women will be separated from Christian boys and girls. Count the cost now and decide what you will do then. Second, are you going to be a vehicle of bringing peace on the earth? A peacemaker is one who brings the good news of Christ so that men can have peace with God through faith in Christ! The good news is the sword that divides men. Third, are your affections more for family or for Christ? According to Jesus in order to meet His standard of committed discipleship this cannot even be a contest. Your affection for Him must far outweigh your affection for your family. Fourth, are you practicing self-denial or self-preservation? Self-denial is dangerous but it is the standard of a committed disciple. Yet the one

who practices self-denial will ultimately preserve his life because it will be evaluated by God as valuable. Fifth, do you keep rewards as a prospect in your field of vision? Rewards are a proper motivation to live for Christ. They are a function of God's justice. When you acknowledge His Son before men in a threatening situation He takes note of it. You will be rewarded as will all those who receive the message you carry.

¹ Ed Glasscock, *Matthew*, p 236.

² Cf BDAG, p 132.

³ The particular sword in view is the *μαχαίρα*; a short, one-edged, straight sword or dagger. Xenophon suggested it as the weapon of choice for cavalry since cutting rather than thrusting is the natural motion of a rider on horseback. It was capable of dividing men in half.

⁴ Ed Glasscock, *Matthew*, p 237.

⁵ Tom Constable, *Tom Constable's Expository Notes on the Bible* (Galaxie Software, 2003), Mt 10:37.

⁶ Tom Constable, *Tom Constable's Expository Notes on the Bible* (Galaxie Software, 2003), Mt 10:37.