

A Costly Road

Introduction: There are some that claim to preach the gospel today who tell people that if you believe in Jesus everything in your life will be great. He will make you healthy and wealthy and you will not have any problems. One well known preacher put it, “He will change your mistakes into miracles.” Is that really what the Savior and His apostles taught? Does everything just go great after a person becomes a Christian? The Bible knows nothing of such a Christianity. Yes, God blesses His people in many ways. However, Jesus did not teach that our lives would be without difficulty.

Mt. 10:34-39

I. Jesus' Declaration v. 34

II. Jesus' Explanation vv. 35, 36

III. Jesus' Application vv. 37-39

Context: Jesus has been talking about discipleship. He said it is better to fear God than men (Mt. 10:28). He has also said that whoever confesses Him before men He will confess before the Father and whoever denies Him, He will deny before the father (Mt. 10:32, 33). He now comes to show us the cost of following Him

I. Jesus' Declaration v. 34

Does the reading of this verse somewhat jolt you or even surprise you? It does me a little bit. It is not exactly what I would expect Jesus to say. It almost seems

contrary to other things He has taught. “Do not think I came to bring peace on the earth, I did not come to bring peace but a sword.”

Jesus begins, “Do not think.” He wants to correct some wrong thinking that existed then or would come about later. Some wrong thinking about His ministry.

A. What Jesus **did not** come to do. He did not come to bring peace

This sounds contrary to much of what Scripture says about the Savior. Let's look at a couple of references.

-Jesus was called the Prince of Peace by Isaiah in (Isa. 9:6)

-The angels declared peace on earth at His birth- (Lk. 2:13, 14)

-Jesus Himself said that He would give His disciples peace- (Jn. 14:27)

-Those who trust in Christ are at peace with God- (Rom. 5:1)

B. What Jesus **did** come to. He came to bring a sword.

The word means sword, war or violent death. It is used in three different ways in Scripture.

It can mean to divide or pit one against another. (Gen. 3:24). The sword divided the garden from the rest of mankind and creation.

It can also mean to damage or harm someone. (Ps. 57:4; Prov. 12:18). Our words don't physically kill someone but can cause great harm.

It can mean to destroy or kill someone. (Jer 18:21). The sword here leaves people without their family members.

Which of these is Jesus intending to communicate? (Lk. 12:51)-He is using it to illustrate division. He has come to bring division among some. Among whom? Among families.

II. Jesus' Explanation vv. 35, 36

A. The Consequence of Jesus' Coming v. 35

1. Save some in families and not others-What is Jesus saying? He is saying that not every member of every Christian family becomes a Christian. Some will believe the truth, and some will not.

God is sovereign in salvation. (Jn. 3:3-8; Hendriksen says, "**The wind does as it pleases. So does the Spirit. Its operation is sovereign, incomprehensible and mysterious.**") (Rom. 9:18-22) Remember Esau and Jacob. He has mercy on whom He desires and hardens whom He desires.

2. Pit family members against one another- "I will set a man against his father..." The sword Jesus spoke of talks of division in families. Not only will some believe and others not, but there will be division within them.

Note: William Hendriksen observes that Jesus says here that it will be the children turned against their parents

B. The Cost of Jesus' Coming v. 36

The members of a man's household will be his enemies-Not only are they pitted against one another, but they become his enemies. Those who should love each other as members of the same family become enemies as a result of the gospel.

Application: Not all children in Christian families will be converted. Some of our children will be saved and some will reject the gospel. Sometimes it is evident as our children become older. Other times they make a profession of faith and cast it off later.

Jesus is correcting the error that thinks He has come to bring peace to our families. It is an error that infects almost all parts of Christianity. An error that practically denies election. Children of Christian parents often will not all be converted.

No matter how well we teach our children some will not be converted.

Unconverted older children in a Christian family is not necessarily a sign of negligent parenting.

-Parents of older unconverted children should not blame themselves for their children's rejection of the gospel. Children make their own choices. Prov.

20:11. (**Newheiser p. 158**). We do not control the salvation of our children, God does.

We should not look down on or think poorly of brethren whose children are not converted. It is being judgmental to look at someone's children and blame the parents for their spiritual state unless we know for certain they were negligent.

Should we give up on trying to train and influence our children for the gospel since God is the one who saves? No. Absolutely not.

-We are responsible to train our children in the instruction and discipline of the Lord. (Deut. 6:6-9; Eph. 6:4).

-God does often make effectual that teaching to the saving of some of our children.

Objections:

1. What about Proverbs 22:6? If we train our children properly won't they become Christians?

Solomon is not giving an absolute law but a general principle (**Newheiser pp. 157, 158**)

If this were an absolute statement or a promise what has happened to all the children who were taught God's word? (i.e. Cain, Esau, children of the puritans, etc.)

2. What about Jesus welcoming the children to Himself? (Mk. 10:13-16)

Jesus is not saying that all children of Christian parents are converted, but the gospel is for children as well as adults. Remember in that day children were looked down on and not highly cherished, thus the disciples' response.

Jesus is saying that to enter God's Kingdom, we must receive it like a child who trusts His parents.

III. Jesus' Application vv. 37-39

A. Jesus must be more important to us even than our families if we are to be His people. V.37. We must not back down from the truth because our children do not agree with it.

B. We must be willing to endure the persecution and pain and sorrow including from our own children to be able to follow Christ. V.38. (2 Tim. 3:12). It is not easy to do. It reminds us of the need of the Spirit's strength to help us.

C. We must be willing to give up everything in this life including our family to follow Jesus. V. 39.

How do we know when we are making our children more important than Christ? When we fail to leave the results of our teaching in God's hands.

Additional Lessons

1. A reminder that the cost of following Jesus is high.

It may cost us our spouse, our children, our friends, our jobs or our material possessions. Jesus did not promise us a life of health, wealth and peace.

2. It is an unusual blessing when all the children in a family are converted.

3. Warning to the unconverted

The cost of not following Jesus is higher than the cost of following Him. (Mk. 8:36, 37; Mt. 13:41-43).