

Sermon Outline

“A Cost Analysis of Following Jesus,” Matthew: The Life and Words of Jesus, Part 43 – Matthew 10:34-39 – Ben Wikner – March 24, 2013

Introduction

1. Up until this point in the gospel of Matthew the prospect of following Jesus appears to be all reward and excitement with minimal cost. In Matthew 10, however, Jesus presents the sobering reality of the cost of discipleship. In 10:16-33 Jesus explains that following him involves persecution. In 10:34-39 he tells us that following him involves separation.
2. To follow Jesus means to be all in. Jesus tells us, as one commentator put it, “following me is to sign away all rights to a quiet life of self-determination.”

Following Jesus Comes with Separation

1. Jesus came to bring peace between God and people through his life, death, and resurrection. But in this passage Jesus explains that he also came to bring a sword. Meaning that he has come to separate those who follow him from those who don't.
2. A disciple of Jesus must love his master more than anyone or anything else (Luke 14:26). To follow Christ means that he sits on the throne of our lives. It doesn't mean perfection, it means commitment.

Following Jesus Comes with Sacrifice

1. Following Jesus will cost us our families – if not practically, in priority. It will also mean that we lose our lives. He tells us to take up our cross and follow him. The cross was a symbol of death and oppression. In the words of Deitrich Bonhoeffer, “when Christ calls a man, he bids him come and die.”
2. For us in American, it may not be physical death. But the call is still the same; to die to ourselves, to our agenda, our self-preservation and worldly ambition. Consider prince Jonathan from 1 Samuel who willingly gave up his future prospects to align himself with the Lord's anointed (1 Samuel 18:1-4).

Following Jesus Comes with Reward

1. Following Jesus is better than everything else, better than anything this world has to offer. As the Apostle Paul puts it, “I count everything as loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus as my Lord.” (Phil 3:8). There's no such thing as pointless sacrifice in God's kingdom. On the contrary, the Lord rewards those who seek him (Heb 11:6).

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2. First and foremost, our reward, as followers of Jesus is Jesus himself and in him, the love and favor of the Father – we enter into a relationship with the God Almighty, now – on this earth – and forever in eternity. This is awesome.

Conclusion

1. All of this is only possible because of the cross bore for us. He died for us so that we don't have to die for our sins. He lives so that we might live – gloriously and eternally with him.

Fellowship Starters

1. Take time as a Care Group to read Matthew 10:34-39.
2. This passage reminds us that following Jesus involves separation and sacrifice. How has this impacted your view of what it means to follow Christ in your own life?
3. According to 10:37, why would anyone abandon family ties in order to align themselves with Christ?
4. Are there specific acts of obedience that the Lord is calling you to through this message?