Grace to You :: *Unleashing God's Truth, One Verse at a Time*

The Hallmarks of Discipleship, Part 2
Scripture: Matthew 10:32-33
Code: 2283

Let's turn together in our Bibles to the 10th chapter of Matthew's Gospel, Matthew chapter 10. We desire this morning to continue our study in this marvelous section of Scripture that deals with true discipleship. And this morning for our lesson we're going to be examining verses 24 through 82. Last time we were in Matthew chapter 10 we really went through verse 31, I want to just review that briefly as a setting for verses 32 and then on to verse SS this morning. It's difficult to cover much more than a couple of verses in this passage because of the tremendous weight and nature of the sayings of our Lord.

Follow along as I begin reading in verse 24,

The disciple is not above his teacher, nor the servant above his lord. It is enough for the disciple that he be like his teacher, and the servant like his lord. If they have called the master of the house Beelzebub, how much more shall they call them of his household? Fear them not' therefore; for there is nothing covered that shall not be revealed; and hidden, that shall not be known. What I tell you in darkness, that speak in light; and what ye hear in the ear, that proclaim upon the housetops.

And fear not them who kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul; but rather fear him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.

Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing? And one of them shall not fall on the ground without your Father. And the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Fear not, therefore; ye are of more value than many sparrows. Whosoever, therefore shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father, who is in heaven. But whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father, who is in heaven. We can stop right there.

The following record is taken from a book written by Festo Kivengere, who is a leading evangelical minister in Uganda, and in this book he describes basically the history of the church in Uganda. and particularly in the section I d like to read to you he talks about the first martyrs in that nation's history. In the year 1885, he writes, three Christian boys shed their blood for Christ in Uganda. The king had ordered the arrest of these boys in an effort to stamp out Christianity. The oldest was fifteen and the youngest was eleven year old Yusufu. They held fast their faith and staked their lives on it.

Though people were weeping and their parents were pleading with them.

At the place of execution the boys sent a message to the king, quote, "Tell his majesty that he has put our bodies in the fire but (he wo)

we won't be long in the fire, soon we shall be with Jesus which is much better. But ask him to repent and change his mind or he will land in a place of eternal fire." End quote. They sang a song which is now well loved in Uganda, as known as the martyr's song. One verse says, O that I had wings like the angels, I would fly away and be with Jesus. It is reported also that little Yusufu said, please don't cut off my arms, I will not struggle in the fire that takes me to Jesus.

Forty adults came to Jesus the day the boys died, this was a new kind of life which fire and torture could not control. We now have a memorial near Kampala where these youngsters are remembered as the first Christian martyrs of Uganda. By 1887 the end of the first decade of the church hundreds had died, there were martyrs out of every village that had believers. They were only beginners, they knew little theology and some could barely read but they had fallen in love with Jesus Christ, life had taken on a completely new meaning, .

the value of living and living eternally had been discovered, they were not hugging their lives but ready to give them up for Jesus.

During these dangerous days there was an immediate and steady increase in the number of those embracing Christ.

Now that is just a little slice of the history of the church in one place at one time. But that kind of story goes on and on and on.

Little boys, little girls, men, women, old folks, people throughout the history of the church who have been unashamed of Jesus Christ, who have been willing to confess Him, as verse 32 says before men. No matter how hostile those men might have been. No matter if the cost was their own life, and that says our Lord marks a true disciple. Not necessarily educated in theology, maybe not a Christian very long, but nonetheless willing to confess Christ before men at any cost. That marks a true disciple. On the other hand, says our Lord in verse SS, one who denies Christ before men, marks one who will also be denied before God, a false disciple.

Now what is the Lord saying to us in these two verses? How does this really relate to us? What does it mean to confess and be confessed, to deny and be denied? people, this is the basic message that needs to be preached in every place where Jesus Christ is named, this is a message that calls so called Christians to selfexamination. It is a message that says look at yourself' in your life and confrontation with the world, are you confessing or you...are you denying? For your eternal destiny

depends on that.

Let's back up and see if we can't understand the context in which our Lord speaks. In verses 24 to 42 you have one great section on discipleship. And I told you before that this is really the summation of all of our Lord's teaching on the subject, the greatest single section on discipleship in all of the Bible. It sums up everything the Lord wants to say, as it were about discipleship, and He has a marvelous masterful way of summation, it's all right here. I also told you that this is some of the favorite teaching of our Lord, teaching which He repeats in many other places and many other times. Little pieces and bits of this teaching are here and there all over the gospel record, sometimes with a little different nuance of meaning and application. but this is the heart and soul of His instruction on discipleship.

Now let me set the context for you even broader than just this particular message beginning in verse 24. The 10th chapter in total is our Lord's preparation and sending of the twelve, and so it is in the context of the training of the twelve that He gives this general teaching about discipleship. He starts out for example in chapter 10 with just the twelve, and then the chapter begins to telescope, and it telescopes outward until finally it embraces all men in all times, in all places who will name the name of Jesus Christ. It starts with the twelve and even names them. But it begins to move outward, and I think the key is verse 2S, the end of the verse mentions, "till the Son of man be come." In other words it talks about the second coming, and that is the key to seeing this instruction as pressing all the way through all time until Jesus comes again. Some of what He says in the first 2S verses is explicitly to the twelve, some of it begins to reach beyond them, some of it is explicitly for that time and that place, and some of it begins to reach beyond, but by the time you hit verse 24 it is a full-orbed general instruction on the matter of being a genuine disciple. He uses general terms such as, the disciple, or the servant, or whosoever, or he that, and He says, he that, he that, he that over and over, it could be any he, any whosoever, anyone who calls himself a servant or a follower, a disciple of Jesus Christ.

And so in a sense then we're looking at something that was for them and for us, what a marvelous thing that the Lord should have such a clear word on discipleship that it embraces all people in all time and all places. This is the genius of Scripture, it knows no limitation as to date, it touches us as profoundly as it touched them in their own lifetime.

Now basically speaking it is written to a disciple, verse 24, and a servant of the Lord. That would be anyone who follows Jesus Christ.

Anyone who lines up to go after Jesus Christ. Anyone who decides that he wants to belong to Christ. Now having said that, it is important that we learn the marks of a disciple so we can tell the true from the false, right? And what are they? Well the hallmark is in verse 24 and 28. "The disciple is not above his teacher, the servant is not above his lord. It is enough," in other words it is sufficient, "for the disciple that he be like his teacher, and the servant like his lord." And you remember we talked

about Luke 8:40 where it says, and when a disciple is fully matured he will be like his teacher.

The goal then of a true disciple is Christ likeness, that's the basic hallmark. First John 2:0, "If we say we abide in him then we ought to walk as he walked." In other words if you say you are a Christian it ought to be manifest in the way you live, right? And if it isn't then you're not very convincing, and you may not be a Christian at all.

This is the message of the Scripture, I'm absolutely appalled at how many people miss this message. But the Scripture is inevitably saying, you say you follow Christ then show me your Christ likeness. Is His character manifest in you? It has to be if you're genuine, it has to be. For you are in the process of becoming like your Lord, it doesn't mean that there aren't some lapses, oh there are. There are times when we fail but there is a flow and a pattern of Christ likeness, there.

So the first thing is that we are called to be like Him, that is the meaning of discipleship. So when somebody comes along and says as J.p. Murray of Trinity College Dublin once said, "I am a Christian but inoffensively so." What do you mean by that? Well I mean that I don't want it to interfere with anything. Then that's not what Christianity is. There is this basic Biblical principle that if you follow Jesus Christ, you will be becoming more and more like Him.

And if you re not then you may not be a Christian at all. It's also possible that you might be a wayward disobedient Christian, and this might be just a seasonal thing for you. But there's also the possibility you're not even in the kingdom.

Second element of this first hallmark, to be like Christ is to be treated like Christ was treated. Look at verse 25, the second half, and if they called the master of the house Beelzebub or Satan, you shouldn't be surprised ii they call you evil names as well. In other words, it they say that your leader, the worthy one, the highest one, the glorious one is Satan, ii they don't have any compunction about saying that about a perfect person, you think they re going to have any compunctions about condemning you as an imperfect one? And if they call your leader Satan, don't you think they're going to identify you who are less than he is with the same system? They're going to blast you as they blasted him. So we see two things that mark a disciple, one, he is like Christ, two, he inevitably will...

treat...be treated as Christ was treated. Now that's the heart of the text. Jesus is sending out the twelve and He basically...He says to them, the world is hostile. Go back to verse 18, "I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves." Verse 17, "Beware of men; they will scourge you. They will bring you before their kings and their governors." "They will deliver you up." Verse 10. Verse 21, your own family will kill you or deliver you to be killed. Verse 22, "You will be hated." Verse 2S, "You will be persecuted." "But the disciple is not above his lord." That is your goal is to be like Him and in being like Him you will inevitably be treated like He was treated.

May I hasten to add that the more Christ like you become the more of a problem you become. It may be manifest in your family as we see down in verse 84 when we'll get to that, He came to bring a sword to set a man against his father and a daughter against her mother etc, etc. "And a man's foes may be they of his own household."

It may be in your job, in your school, in your neighborhood, in your relationships, inevitably the more Christ like you become the more you become an irritant to the system. So a genuine mark of a disciple is that he is like Christ so much so that he tends to be treated like Jesus Christ was treated, and that simply means beloved that you cannot survive living the way the world expects people to live. And it you do there is no genuineness there. So discipleship involves an identification with Christ in His person and His rejection. I think Paul summed it up so wonderfully in, in Philippians S he said, "That I may know him," first, "the power of his resurrection." That was the positive identification, wasn't it? That I may know the fullness of His power, His person, His life, and the fellowship of His what?

Sufferings, that was the negative part of it, "being made conformable unto his death." I want to be identified with His power and His person, and I know I will be identified also with His pain and His suffering. That s how it is for a true disciple. We are like the Lord and we are to be treated like the Lord was treated.

All right now that puts us in the middle of a hostile environment.

And I really think that we need to understand this and the tendency for us is to try to make things comfortable and make things easy and, and soothe over the waters and never be confrontive and never be bold and soforth. And that is really not what the Lord wants, that is the picture of an untrue disciple. Frankly I feel that we go back Matthew, you know where Jesus said, "The way is narrow, and the gate is narrow, and few there be that (what? that) find it." There are very few people He says in effect that are genuinely saved, there are masses of people identifying with the movement but you can pick out the truly saved because they are confronting their world, and they are being treated as their Master was treated. Not necessarily constantly, prolifically and totally but there are times of persecution, times of confrontation, and they respond as a genuine disciple.

Now there are five marks of a true disciple. The Lord then goes on to give these in the section all the way to verse 42. Now we're not going to be able to cover all of those in one lesson, maybe we'll cover them in five lessons, I'm not sure. I've already done the whole chapter, I just have trouble getting it all out, and I really don't know till I get up here where I'm going to end. Some of you are aware of that. Number one we said, a true disciple fears not the world. A true disciple...this is the one we talked about in our last discussion, fears not the world. Verse 28 to Si. Now He says you're going to be in a

hostile environment, you're going to be in a difficult place. I believe there were times in, in America years back when we were so Christian in our orientation that this was somewhat lessened and mitigated, but I think it s going to become more and more a problem.

I received a letter last week that told me...it was written by The American Civil Liberties Union, and it came...I don't know why I got it, I think somebody passed it on to me, I'm not on their mailing list by any stretch of the imagination. But I received this letter and what it said in there was, watch out for the Christians, they are deadly. If they had their way homosexuals and abortionists would all be killed, and it went on for like five pages warning people about Christians, and about people with morality. So the battlelines are being drawn. And it may be that the protectiveness that we've known in our Christian society here is lost in our post Christian society, and we may see a little more of the kind of heat. And by the way, may I confess to you? That I, I've been here twelve and a half years and secretly, at least for the last six or seven, down deep inside I have wished for all out persecution on the church. You say, what in the world are you wishing that for? Now I want you to know I have not prayed that yet, that is not a prayer request the Lord is listening, He knows. That is not a prayer request. But there's something in me that wishes that, you know why? Because the heat would blow away the chaff, and then we'd know what we really had, and we could mark out the ones that weren't saved and go after them. And we could find out who's really committed, it would all clear, see? As I say, I haven't quite come to a request yet, time will tell. But we see that the mark of a true disciple is that he doesn't fear the world. And He gives three reasons, and He encourages them to show their genuineness in this way, in verse 28 He says, fear not, in verse 28 He says, fear not, and in verse 31 He says, fear not. And you remember what we went over? He says don't be afraid, first of all because of vindication.

Someday the truth will be revealed, verse 28. Someday what is hidden will be made manifest. In other words God's going to overturn all the inequities and He's going to vindicate the righteous. Don't be afraid of the world, the world will be condemned and you will be glorified, you will be lifted up, you will be honored, you will be exalted. If you just have an eternal perspective, see? The true disciple has come out of this world, his affections are not of the world, he is transcending the world, he is a new creation, he's living in the heavenlies, his citizenship is there and he has an eternal perspective and he's not afraid of the world because he knows ultimately it'll be overturned and he'll be vindicated. He lives for eternity's value.

Secondly, is what I called veneration in verse 2? He says, "What I tell you in (in) darkness, speak in light; what you hear in the ear, proclaim upon the housetops. And don't fear them" that is men "who can only kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul;" or the real part of man, "but fear him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell." And that is just a comparative title for God, don't fear men, fear God. And I'll tell you something, if you truly fear God you don't fear men. What can men do to you? They can only kill the body at the worst and God is the one who controls eternity and the soul of

men. In other words what He's saying is instead of fearing men, fear God. And it comes down to that, doesn't it? Let's say you're in a situation where you know you ought to speak for Christ, you know you ought to stand up for Christ, you know you ought to say something for Christ, there's something going on that isn't right and you know you ought to confront it. Maybe it's at your job or in your classroom or whatever, and you know you ought to do what's right and so the fear of God says, I must speak for God, the fear of men says, shut up, don't make a fool of yourself. And it comes right down to that, and you can determine by how you reacted whether you fear men more or God more. But a true disciple fears God, because he knows the worst that men could do is with the body and God is the one who controls eternal souls.

And then the third thing, He says is we don't fear the world because we know in the end God values us more than anything. Two sparrows, He even knows though they're worth a penny every time one of them hops or dies, the hair of your head, He's got it all labeled and numbered.

Now if He cares about sparrows, don't you think He cares about you?

So on the one hand we don't fear because of promise. On the other hand we don't fear because of power. On the other hand we don't fear because of protection. God cares. And so the first mark of a true disciple is he doesn't fear the world, he'll stand up and boldly speak, he'll be confronted with the evil system and He'll confess Christ.

Now, let's go to the second one, verse S2 and S3. I call this a true disciple favors the Lord. Fears not the world and favors the Lord. In other words when it comes down to the decision he'll favor the Lord. Verse S2, just one word, "therefore." "Whosoever, therefore."

What do you mean, therefore? Well it's all built on the previous passage that's why I had to go over it. If you know that you have the promise of God for vindication, if you know you have the power of God, and that He is the one you truly venerate and fear, if you know you have the protection of God therefore you would be willing before men to confess Jesus Christ without fear, right? So He says, where..."Whosoever, therefore, shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father, who is in heaven." You mean you have to confess before men to be a true Christian? Sure, because in order to be a true Christian you have to believe one, that in the end God will gain the victory and lift up His people. And you believe that God has a greater power than men, and you believe that God is a Father who cares for His children, and if you believe that then you're going to be willing to confess Christ. That's just basic. If you've got the right doctrine of God, you're going to be anxious to confess Jesus as your Lord, and get in on that blessedness. And so in view of God's promise and power and protection, what could be more reasonable for a disciple of Christ than to fearlessly confess Jesus before men no matter how hostile they might be. Any shame would be overcome by eternal glory. Paul says, "I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ because I know it's

the power of God unto salvation." I'm not ashamed of it because I know its power. He was not ashamed also because he knew God would protect him. I mean after all he'd been stoned one time and God raised him from the dead. If God didn't want him dead he wouldn't be dead. And so there's the real heart of discipleship.

Now I want to look at verses 32 and 33 and it's a very simple word that I want to share with you this morning, and I didn't even plan to do this and in the first service I found myself doing it for fortyfive minutes and so I just figured the Lord was in it. Now if I can remember what I said I'll say it again. The real heart of discipleship is to be committed to being like Jesus Christ, and to being like Jesus Christ means to be being treated as He was treated and that means having to face a hostile world and to face it fearlessly, and in the midst of it to be willing to confess before men, Jesus as your Lord, and have the confidence that He'll do the same before the Father.

Now verse 82, confess. What does that mean? That means to affirm, to acknowledge,to agree. The idea is a verbal statement of identification, faith, confidence' trust, belief in Jesus as your Lord, and subsequent life that follows that confession. You confess before men. You can confess with your mouth, as Romans 10, and you confess with your life as you live out that confession. God will protect His own, God will care for His own, God is the ultimate judge of the earth and so we have no excuse for shrinking from our duty through the fear of men.

This goes for times of persecution as well as good times. Whether you're standing in front of a, an agreeing group and confessing the Lord, whether you're standing in front of a neutral group or whether you're standing in front of an utterly hostile group, a true Christian confesses. Now look at verse S2, here's the key, "Whosoever, therefore, shall confess me" here it comes, "before men." In front of men literally it says. Standing up in front of men. This emphasizes the public character of the confession, and it cannot be reduced in any way. You cannot be saved genuinely unless you are one who does this. If someone is not willing to do this, if you think you're some secret Christian and nobody knows you've missed it folks. Romans 10, "If thou shalt confess with thy mouth Jesus as Lord, having believed in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be (what?) saved. For with the mouth confession is made unto salvation."

It says. As well as with the heart, where there is faith. There must be this verification. Now this is not a work of man, this is a work of God. Some people say, that's work's righteousness if you have to confess, if you have to do anything. Listen, that's what the Bible says. The Bible says it's all of God, and the Bible says you must confess with your mouth, therefore confessing with your mouse...mouth must be the work of God. And so it's going to cost us something to be a Christian, it must be public, it must be genuine, and its genuineness is marked by our willingness to confess, to affirm and acknowledge that we belong to Christ no matter how hostile the elements around us.

In First John 4:15, "Whosoever" just listen to it, "shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwells in him, and he in God." How do you know a true Christian? Well he's one who confesses Jesus as the Son of God. How does he confess? With his mouth and with his life. he makes that confession. That s the mark of a true disciple. Sometimes people say, well so and so you know once walked the aisle or once did this or did that but now their life gives no evidence. Then they are not a genuine disciple, for this is the mark, this is the mark. In Revelation 2:lS He says to the church at Pergamus, "I know thy works, where thou dwellest, you dwell where Satan's throne is; and you hold fast my name, and have not denied my faith, even in those days in which Antipas was my faithful martyr, who was slain among you."

He says, you have named My name and you have never denied My faith even in the midst of persecution when somebody died. And that's the point, that s how you tell a true believer, the hallmark of genuineness. You see a kind of a converse illustration, Second Timothy, I'll just mention this to you but Paul says, "I'm now ready to be offered, the time of my departure is at hand. I've fought a good fight, finished the course, kept the faith;" talking about the warfare and the struggle and all, and he says in verse 10, "That Demas has forsaken me, having loved this present world." Here was a guy who identified with Paul, followed along, said he was a disciple, but when it got tough and the heat was on he was gone. True disciples confess the Lord in the face of any hostility at all. This is a good place for us to examine ourselves, you know we say to ourselves, boy I, I'm...find myself ashamed often to speak of Christ in my family or here and there, I wonder what I'd do in the middle of a persecution.

Well that's a good point, maybe you'd better examine your heart, see if you're really genuine. Now may I hasten to add that there are lapses in all of our lives as Christians where we fail to live up to the standard, right? I mean that's what forgiveness is all about, if the Lord said, all right if you're a genuine disciple this is how it'll be, and you were always that way you'd be perfect. There will be lapses, can you think of one classic individual who was a true disciple but lapsed into denying his Lord? Of course. peter. He denied his Lord, but you know what his reaction was? Ha. he went out and what? "Wept bitterly." His heart was broken, because he knew the standard and he was broken when he failed to live up to it. Then there was Timothy, imagine Timothy the protege of Paul, the finest that he ever discipled, the man who was to take over, the pastor who followed him into the church at Ephesus, this incredible young man with all the talents and the gifts that God could ever give a young .

man, and Paul writes to him in Second Timothy chapter 1 verse S and says, Timothy, stop being ashamed of our Lord. How would you like to have to hear that from the one who discipled you? Stop being ashamed of our Lord, and of me, His prisoner. Timothy had a lapse.

Peter had a lapse. I've had them, you've had them. But still there's a turning around, and Timothy

turned around and peter wept bitterly and he turned around. A true disciple confesses. As it says in Philippians 2:11, "Confess with thy mouth Jesus as Lord, to the glory of God." That is the mark of a genuine Christian, a willingness to speak no matter how hostile the environment might be. Now, you look at your life and you're the only one that can really tell. I don't know you well enough, cause I don't know what goes on inside. That is all of you, some of you I know. But you need to ask yourself the question and it s a fair question as Paul said to the Corinthians, "Let a man examine himself." Take inventory. Are you willing to stand up and confess Jesus Christ? If you will, look at the end of verse S2, "He will confess you before the Father, who is in heaven."

What does that mean? That means He will say to God on the day of judgment, this one belongs to Me. He will affirm His loyalty to you as you have affirmed your loyalty to Him. Now this is the way our Lord is looking at true discipleship, and I really think in many ways this, itself was the first of many pointed message that...messages that should have pierced deeply into the heart of one named Judas Iscariot, for he was the false among the true. But the Lord says, that's the one I will confess before my Father in heaven. You can tell a true Christian because they're willing to confess Christ, oh there'll be lapses, times when they fail but the pattern of their life will be a willingness and a desire to be more like Christ and if need be to be treated even as He was treated. And that kind of a person the Lord will confess before the Father. I just ...I mean I can hardly imagine the wonder of someday standing before God, and having the Lord Jesus Christ say, this one belongs to Me. What an incredible thought, what a marvelous promise. It's kind of a double loyalty.

When we are loyal enough to Jesus Christ to speak His name in the midst of any situation He will speak our name in the Father's presence.

Archaeologists have found a lot of interesting information in their studies. Some of what they have found out of the Roman Empire is I think especially interesting because it fits of course Biblical data in the New Testament. There was a governor in the province of Bithynia by the name of Pliny, I've mentioned his name in the past, and Trajan was the Roman emperor at the time of Pliny ruling in Bithynia or sort of leading Bithynia under the emperor. Now on one occasion Pliny wrote a letter to Trajan and he was trying to explain to Trajan some of the problems he was having with Christians in his in his little ah, province. Some anonymous informers had come to Pliny and told him there were Christians among the populous and so he decided that he would try to sort of stamp them out and so he called for all Christians to immediately abandon Christ, revoke Christ, reject Christ, and worship the gods of Rome and most specifically the emperor himself, and in those days to worship the emperor you drank wine and you offered incense and you did a whole big pagan thing to the emperor to show you worshiped him. And in the letter he wrote and told Trajan that he had tried this, he was trying to get in good with him I guess, and he had tried all of these things and tried them and he confronted the Christians and he closed by saying this, "None of these acts, those who are really Christians can be compelled to do."

Isn't that interesting? From a pagan. If they're real Christians, he said, they, they won't do this. And of course they went through all kinds of torture. You say, but I can't imagine that, I mean I shut up when somebody comes around that's not a Christian in a, in a good environment, what would I ever do in that environment? That's a fair question and I think there's a certain amount of God given grace for those kinds of times. But you see that's where we're right back to that narrow gate, there are a lot less real Christians than we think.

Now let's look at the other side of it, verse 33, "But whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father, who is in heaven." That's the converse side, that's the other side.

Now this could speak of open rejecters, people who deny Christ flagrantly, openly, who have nothing to do with Him, who don't identify with Him, who despise Him, who hate Him. people who blaspheme His name. My son told me the other night that he was down with some friends and they were walking down the street and a little fella was on a corner preaching Christ. And he was...he said, dad, Matt said to me, dad, he was right on, I mean he...his message was right, you know and he'd stand in the wings and make sure it was according to Hoyle, you know? And so he listened to him for awhile and he said, he was right on and the message was right. And he said a bunch of people came up and thought they were real smart and they got up within about three inches of his face and just cursed him, and said all kinds of obscenities about Jesus, right in his face. And they mocked, he said it was awful, it was just awful. So h...he and the one he was with walked up apparently and put themselves between the two, kind of taking a, sort of a stand for the Lord in defense of this fella. But he said I couldn't believe the obscenities they said in the name of Jesus. Now on the one hand there are those kinds of people who will deny Jesus that way. but I don't think they're really the primary issue in verse SS. I think the primary issue in verse S3 ...and that little story would have been how the other man who was .

preaching reacted. If he was a genuine disciple of Jesus Christ that intimidation would not have affected him negatively, it probably would have made him more bold than ever, and that's in fact what Matt told me happened. If he had been a false disciple he probably would have clammed up and run. In fact he probably wouldn't have been there to begin with. But verse SS is talking about someone in the sphere of Christianity, someone in the surroundings of discipleship, someone who follows, outwardly. Who goes along, but when it comes to the test, he denies the Lord. You could deny the Lord by silence, did you know that? You could deny the Lord by just not saying anything.

You know, the secret Christian. people sometimes say to me you know I...I'm a Christian. Well, isn't that wonderful, are you reaching the folks around you? Oh, they don't know. They don't know? No, they don't know. One of these days I...If, if they don't know then maybe you're not a Christian at all. You could deny Him by absolute silence, just don't say anything. You could also deny Him by your

actions, just live the way everybody else lives and you're denying Christ. You can deny Him by your words, you can just sort of, ah no, well I'm you know. Saying the things they say, talking the way they talk. You can deny Christ a lot of ways, short of someday facing a firing squad and denying Him. But that kind of a denial it says in verse 38 will be repaid by a denial on an eternal level when the Lord denies before the Father in heaven. Notice in verse S2, "I will confess," in verse SS, "I will deny," and the future tense verb points to the final judgment. And I think maybe what you're going to see here are people who are going to come up and say, Lord, it's us. We did this in Your name, we did that in Your name and this other thing in Your name, and He'll say, "Depart from me, I never (what? I never)

knew you." He will deny that He even knows them, why? Because their life was a denial of Him. What is it you say, and what is it you do that affirms your confession of Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior?

Very important. As I've said before you know, the gnawing anxiety of the heart of the pastor, the shepherd is that there is someone in the midst of the sheep who isn't real and wakes up in eternal damnation.

Fearful thought. And the Lord had that in His heart all the time. I think everyday of the Lord's sojourn with His disciples He was deeply drawn to the situation of Judas. And I think Judas is the classic of this, he was going along pretending to belong but when it got tough he got out, and got some money. And in effect said, He's not the Messiah, I gotta buy my way out of this deal. He didn't just run he tried to take as much as he could with him. But on judgment day ohh, what a day, fearful, fearful thing.

Look with me and we'll just kind of wrap it up at this point in Matthew 25, verse 84. Here's a kind of a picture of the judgment and how it might be, this of course is the judgment of the sheep and goats at the end of the tribulation, the judgment of the nations.

The Lord comes and sets the sheep on His right hand, those are the ones who love Him and know Him and the goats on the left, those are the ones who don't know Him. Verse S4, "The King said to those on the right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world." In other words He says, these are Mine, come and inherit your kingdom. They were the ones that confessed Him, that's right, they were the ones that confessed the Lordship of Christ. How did they do that? Oh they did it by their mouth, Romans 10. They did it before men, Matthew 10.

But look else how they did it, "For I was hungry, and you gave me food; I was thirsty, and you gave me drink; I was a stranger, and you took me in; I was naked, and you clothed me; I was sick, and you visited me; I was in prison, and you came unto me. And then shall the righteous answer him, saying, Lord, when did we see thee hungry.

and feed thee; or thirsty, and give thee drink? And when did we see thee a stranger, and take thee in; and naked, and clothed thee? And when saw we thee sick, or in prison, and came unto thee? And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as you've done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, you've done it unto me." What is this saying? It is saying this, listen now beloved, you confess Christ with your mouth, that's the public affirmation of your faith, you confess Christ before men. No matter how hostile they might be, and that shows your genuineness. And here you confess Christ by your actions, by so living in the world that you manifest to His people His own heart of affection, do you see that?

And love. And if you have not that love how can you say God dwells in you, says John. In other words you will confess Christ by feeding someone who's hungry and giving someone food when they need it, by quenching the thirst of one who's hurting, by giving a home to a stranger, clothes to someone naked' by visiting the sick and calling on the prisoners. Why? How does this fit? This is a manifestation that you're like Christ, isn't it? Because that's how He would respond.

Do you confess Christ with your mouth? Do you confess Christ before men, no matter how hostile they are? And then do you confess Christ in your lifestyle by reaching out as He reached out? By loving as He loved, by caring as He cared? You remember I told you earlier in chapter 10 that the credentials, the credentials of a true disciple are not only the power of God but the compassion of God. And if you ..ii the hallmark of a Christian is to be like Christ then you ought to manifest Christ likeness in your relationships. You know I guess I worry about people who say they're Christians, but I don't see Christ, I don't see attitudes and actions and words that radiate Christ, and I wonder. Well maybe they poke around the church a little bit, but that isn't the issue. Maybe they can come and sit and kind of survive the service, leave. Or maybe they can look at the world dying, going to hell around them and they don't have any concern, they just don't seem to care they're indifferent. And I guess I ask myself they're not like Christ. Christ could see a crowd and all He could do was weep over it, Christ could see an injustice and He wanted to make it right, Christ saw somebody hungry He wanted to feed him, He saw somebody thirsty wanted to give him water, saw somebody who was sick and wanted to touch that individual. I mean...and I certainly am the first one to admit that I'm not all I ought to be but I see a progression in my life for which I thank God. I can take spiritual inventory and say that's not John MacArthur loving that way that's gotta be Christ in me. That's the mark. So I ask you to look at your life. There's a cost, that's open confession, and if you're willing to do it then He'll confess you before the Father. He'll say, that one's Mine, that's real, that's genuine. And if by your life and your lip you deny Him then He'll deny you. Now I'm just telling you what it says, the way it says it. The inventory belongs to you. You say, well I look at my life and I fall so short, I see those lapses, what is your response to those lapses? Do you weep bitterly? Is there a certain brokenness, do you ask His forgiveness, do you say that's not what I want to be and do you move on? That's the are...that s the attitude and the heart of a believer. Do you don't...if you don't even know the lapses are going on then

you're in real trouble.

Well there is more marks of a Christian than that, and we'll look at the next one next week, and you know what it is? Sometimes a true disciple also not only fears not the world and favors the Lord but forsakes his own family.

I talked to a lady this week and she said, since I became a Christian my father will not speak to me. That's just part of what happens, and we'll get into that next time.

Thank You our Lord for showing us again this morning what is it that marks true discipleship, it's been a simple message and we know it's from You because it wasn't what was really planned. And so we accept the fact that You said this to us, that You spoke through this pulpit. God we know that it's so easy to just slide along and never really get into selfexamination, oh God may there be no one here who will perish under the illusion that they are genuine, bring whatever .

needs to be brought into their life to force the issue of examination, that there might be no confusion and no deception from that prince of deceivers.

And Father those of us who are true disciples we, we react so to those times when we fail. We are ashamed sometimes. And we do not confess You as openly and boldly as we should in circumstances when we are given opportunity, and Lord those things break our hearts.

Help us to renew the commitment to be unashamed, to get an eternal perspective that says someday You're going to reward the righteous, that says Your power is greater than all and Your protection is in our behalf, what would we fear. May we be willing to confess with our lips before men and with the way we live that we are like Jesus Christ. For we're committed to Him as our Lord, wanting to be like Him. willing to be treated as He was treated if need be.

God raise up out of this congregation thousands of people who are true, that we might touch this city and this world we live in, for Your glory and the advance of Your kingdom.

Father bring those that You would have to come and do the work that You would do in every heart. Help us to be genuine, real disciples. Thank You for meeting every need that is brought to You, for Christ's sake. Amen.

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