THE COST OF COMMITMENT

(What It Costs to be a Committed Christian)
Matthew 10:34-42
10/5/2017

INTRODUCTION:

***Consider the cost of being a committed disciple.**

I. Some will <u>RESIST</u> you
Because of your commitment to Christ (v. 34-36)

II. Some will <u>TEST</u> you
Because of your commitment to Christ (v. 37-39)

Three tests you must be willing to face:

A. The test of <u>love</u> (v. 37)

B. The test of <u>loyalty</u> (v. 38)

C. The test of <u>life</u> (v. 39)

III. Some will <u>RECEIVE</u> you
Because of your commitment to Christ (v. 40-42)

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How much does it cost to be a Christian? Nothing. . . and everything.

Becoming a Christian costs you nothing! Salvation is free! (Rev. 22:17) Eternal life is a gift! (Rom. 6:23) The inheritance of Heaven is all of grace (Eph. 2:8-9; I Pet. 1). Jesus paid it all! He did the work! He endured the cross (Heb. 12:2)!

Becoming saved costs you nothing, but it cost our Heavenly Father His Only Begotten Son!

Being a Christian costs you everything! Whereas entrance into God's family does not cost you a thing, once in God's family there is a price to pay as long as we live on this sin-cursed earth.

You see, Heaven charges no admission fee, but the world charges a high departure fee when you leave its philosophies, ambitions, morals, etc., after being born again.

There is no charge for God's offer of Paradise (no price could match its worth); however, all those who have accepted God's are not appreciated by those who have rejected His offer . . . and that's where the trouble comes from.

A preacher once titled his sermon: *"Heaven & Hell on Earth"* His points were:

I. For the unsaved, this is the closest to Heaven they will ever experience.

II. For the saved, this is the closest to Hell that we will ever experience.

ILLUS: The Parables of the Builder and the King (Luke 14:28-32)

***Consider the cost of being a committed disciple.**

I. Some will <u>RESIST</u> you
Because of your commitment to Christ (v. 34-36)

V. 34

"To send" - Does not describe purpose but <u>result</u>. In other words, Christ did not come with the motive or intention of bringing conflict, but He knew that conflict would be the inevitable result of His coming.

Jesus does bring peace to the hearts of His people (Jn. 14:27); but unfortunately, His peace cannot extend to those who are at war with Him.

Christ's mission in His first coming to the earth was <u>not</u> merely to make peace between man and man or nation and nation.

There cannot be true, lasting peace in human relationships until there is peace with God. As long as people are at odds with God, they will be at odds with others.

Although at Christ's first coming peace was not achieved, at His second coming peace will be realized. SEE: Isaiah 2:1-4. Why will peace finally come?

1. The Prince of Peace will rule the earth (Is. 9:6; Rev. 20:4-6)
2. Satan will be bound (Rev. 20:1-3)
3. The earth will be full of the knowledge of the Lord (Is. 11:9)

"A sword" - speaks of conflict and war; not started by Christ or His children, but by the enemies of Christ.

The unsaved, humanistic, Antichrist, anti-Bible world has throughout history opposed God's people. We should not be shocked by such antagonism, because Jesus said it would be this way (Jn. 16:33; cp. I Pet. 4:12).

Satan is the chief <u>instigator</u> of trouble! He stirs things up! He stirs up the heathen to

oppose righteousness (Acts 19:23-34). He uses man's wicked and deceitful heart (Jer. 17:9) to rebel against anything connected with Jesus Christ. He is busy energizing those who are spiritually blind (II Cor. 4:4) as he works out his diabolical plans in the *"children of disobedience."* (Eph. 2:2)

People are offended when you leave "their religion." They are grieved when your allegiance shifts from them to Jesus. They are agitated when your righteousness becomes a rebuke to their unrighteousness. They are annoyed when your light exposes their darkness! They are upset when blessings flow upon you and not on them. They are perplexed when they observe your confidence and hope, while they grope in lostness and confusion.

Face it, folks, the world has never been a friend to Christ!

The world's philosophies. . .ideologies. . .motives and methods (ambitions and ethics). . .moral standards. . . are totally different than God's!

Such different world views produce conflict. Such opposing world views produce friction, and friction causes heat, and heat causes fire!

V. 35

"Variance" **-**to split up; to sever; to cut into two parts; hostility on the part of the unsaved will set him against the saved; the result being division, disunity, and separation.

God teaches that believers should strive to be at peace with all men. But you cannot force them to be at peace with you (Rom. 12:18; Heb. 12:14). Not peace at all costs!

"There is a difference between the 'offense of the cross' (Gal. 5:11) and offensive Christians." (Wiersbe, p. 39)

Usually, those who will have the greatest reaction against you will be those who are

the closest to you!

Son - Father
Daughter - Mother
Daughter-in-law - Mother-in-law

In the Last Days, iniquity will abound so much that the love of many will wax cold (Mt. 24:12); people will be without natural affection (I Tim. 3:3). Family members will actually betray family members (Mt. 10:21).

ILLUS: Pastor Jordan's rejection by his family

ILLUS: MacArthur, p. 231

This tragic disloyalty and abandonment of natural affection is not something new. Even in the Prophet Micah's day, he said: *"For the son dishonoreth the father, the daughter riseth up against her mother, the daughter in law against her mother in law; a man's enemies are the men of his own house."* (Micah 7:6)

V. 36
"Foes" = enemies

To have your own family turn on you has to be the most terrible feeling of betrayal. Yet at the same time, such family antagonism will be the greatest test of your faith and test of your devotion to Christ. When such domestic turmoil occurs, you will have a choice: family or Christ. Where will your loyalty be placed?

II. Some will <u>TEST</u> you

Because of your commitment to Christ (v. 37-39)

Three tests you must be willing to face:

A. The test of love (v. 37)

Don't interpret v. 37 out of its preceding context. The point is this: when the "chips are down" and you have a choice to make--family or Christ--the one you love the most will determine whom you side with. Sometimes in life people have to make this hard choice.

"Not worthy of Me" - Christ, being your Savior, Lord, and God is worthy of your total allegiance, loyalty and devotion.

--He is to be our "*first love*"

Rev. 2:4 - *"Nevertheless I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love."*

--Loving Him foremost is the greatest commandment.

Mark 12:30 - *"And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength,; this is the first commandment."*

Our love for Jesus should be so paramount, so great, so supreme, that our love for even family (by comparison) would seem like "hatred."

SEE: Luke 14:25-27

Devotion to loved ones must take second place to your devotion to Christ.

The only way a believer can escape conflict is to deny Christ (either by word, action, or silence) and compromise his beliefs and testimony (Wiersbe, p. 39).

B. The test of loyalty (v. 38)

"To *'carry the cross'* does not mean to wear a pin on our lapel or put a sticker on our automobile. It means to confess Christ and obey Him in spite of shame and suffering." (Wiersbe, p. 39).

The "cross" was a well-known symbol of shame and death in Roman days.

The cross was a symbol of shame - because all who died on them were considered a *"curse"* (Gal. 3:13).

For many, cross bearing means to bear shame and rejection for Christ's sake (Heb. 12:2).

The cross was a symbol of death. - A cross was a cruel, painful instrument of death.

We all have to make a choice in life: Do we live for self and thereby miss out on following Jesus 100%? Or do we die to self and follow Him 100%?

To *"die to self"* means that I am willing to:

--forsake my selfish ambition, to follow His
--abandon my desires, to seek His
--leave my ideas, to embrace His
--depart from my pleasures to please Him

This cross bearing is a daily decision Luke 9:23 - *"And he said to them all, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me."*

Paul said, *"I die daily"* (I Cor. 15:31).

C. The test of life (v. 39)

The Christian life is full of paradoxes.

--The way up is down (Luke 14:11 - *"For whosoever exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted"*)

--The way to save your life is to lose it (Lk. 9:24 - *"For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: but whosoever shall lose his life for My sake, the same shall save it."*)

--Greatness is servitude (Mk. 10:44 - *"And whosoever of you will be the chiefest, shall be servant of all."*)

--The way to find life is to lose it

One who "finds" something implies that he has been "looking" for it. One who is spending his life looking for happiness, pleasure, worldly fulfillment, will perhaps temporarily "find it" only to soon lose it!

However, one who abandons his selfish pursuit of the happy, pleasurable, and fulfilling life for the sake of Jesus Christ, will find it!

Real "life" is not found by those who seek it, but is the reward to those who life for Christ. Happiness is stumbled along by those whose pursuit is the goal of pleasing Christ! (ILLUS: Ron Hamilton's new song - "Happiness came looking for me, when I started giving happiness to others. . .")

Those who vainly pursue happiness for happiness' sake find that it eludes them at every turn, and when they finally do grasp it, it is like a big pretty bubble that bursts in their hands.

Prov. 13:7 - *"There is that maketh himself rich, yet hath nothing: there is that maketh himself poor, yet hath great riches."*

"He is no fool who gives that which he cannot keep, to gain that which he cannot lose" (Missionary Jim Elliot)

III. Some will RECEIVE you

Because of your commitment to Christ (v. 40-42)

V. 40

Although most will reject your testimony, message, what you stand for, etc. - many will accept!

It's good to know that our labors are never in vain! (I Cor. 15:58) God always has His remnant who will welcome us and what we believe in.

When someone receives a man or woman of God, this shows that they also welcome Jesus Christ!

One of the greatest evidences of true salvation is the comradery or common bond you will have with other believers after being saved.

Because of our oneness with Christ, anyone who embraces us embraces Him. And because of Christ's oneness with the Father, anyone who embraces Jesus embraces God the Father.

You represent Christ to the world. You are an ambassador for Christ (II Cor. 5:20).

If the ambassador of the U.S. went to a foreign country and was rejected, they did not merely reject him, but the country he was representing.

For someone to reject you is to reject the One you represent. If they accept you, they accept the One you represent.

NOTE: David's ambassadors were shamefully treated by the Ammonites (II Sam. 10:4). Such rejection showed their rejection of David (10:6ff)

Anything you do for a believer, you do for Christ (Mt. 25:40), and anything you do against a believer, you do against Christ (Acts 9:4).

V. 41

"A prophet in the <u>name</u> of a prophet" - is a prophet who has the <u>title</u> "a prophet of Jesus Christ."

In other words, whoever receives a prophet because he is a prophet of Christ will receive the same type of reward that God will give to prophets.

Whoever receives (welcomes) a righteous man of God will receive the same type of reward the righteous man will receive.

What Jesus is saying is this: If you support, assist, help My man, you support Me; and if you support Me, I will reward you.

All of us will one day be awarded (I Cor. 3; II Cor. 5) for what we did while on earth. Whatever you do for someone who belongs to Jesus, you do for Him,a nd He will compensate you accordingly.

Rewards are not just for those in full-time Christian service (EX: pastor, missionary, evangelist, etc.). Rewards are for anyone who assists those in full-time Christian service! And not rewards of inferior quality either! The <u>same</u> reward!

V. 42

"Little" - not young child, but a man of small "rank"

Whereas in verse 41, Jesus described the "great" men of God (prophet and righteous men), now in verse 42 He describes a "little" man of God.

In other words, whatever you do for event he most seemingly insignificant member of the Body of Christ, you do for Him and He will be sure to reward you!

Mt. 25:40 - *"And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I saw unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto Me."*

"In the name of a disciple" - refers to the "little" one who claims to be a disciple of Christ.

All (no matter how great or small) who name the name of Christ are His disciples.

"In no wise" - a double negative, giving the phrase the powerful meaning of "no possible way he will lose his reward."

The rewards far outweigh the temporary affliction we have to endure and overcome! (Rom. 8).

CONCLUSION:

You need to be willing to pay the price of resistance, rejection, family disruption, opposition.