

Matthew 20-05-31b

I really appreciate Dan and Anne-Lynn and Lori bringing us such wonderful selections each time we meet. And sometimes I recognize the tune and I can remember the words, but I don't always remember the titles. But that one is especially significant to our study, as always, there's such a great interaction between our music and our studies, and it will be worth it all when we see Jesus.

Our trials will seem so small when we see Christ. One look at his dear face, all sorrow will erase, when we have run the race, when we see Christ. And we have a race to run, we have challenges, there are hills, there's rough parts of the path, but this is something Jesus is talking about in our passage in Matthew chapter 10.

And as you look at verses 38 and 39, in particular, it is a requirement for uncompromising loyalty. People want to be loyal, but compromise. This is equivalent to an open marriage.

Yes, I love you and we're married and we share a house and file married jointly for taxes. But I also want to fool around and have my cake and eat it too or whatever. And I'm committed to you, but I also want to occasionally commit to other things and other people.

It's not the biblical model. It's not God's will. It's not something God will bless.

And we're going to see Jesus tell us the result of trying to do that, trying to make everything work. I want to be loyal to Christ and to the father, but I don't want there to be a division or a schism. Jesus said, do you think Jesus wanted to come and divide, you know, in an ideal world? Wouldn't he just restore the garden of Eden? The problem is you can't because, and you're going to see it in the millennial kingdom.

We will see it in the millennial kingdom. It is going to start out as the peaceable kingdom. How does that kingdom end? Gog Magog, Satan released, and there's enough people who are anti-God that they're going to surround the camp of the saints and they're going to have to be destroyed by fire from God.

And they've been living in peace, tolerated under the rule of the rod of iron for 10 centuries. They've seen the benefits. They've seen Jesus Christ in person.

This is not a matter of faith. That's why the sheep and goats judgment doesn't say anything about what you believe. It's not a matter of what you believe.

It is what you do because faith is things not seen and things that are only hoped for. Faith is not an issue in the millennial kingdom. People will make a simple choice.

People say, oh, but you know, if there was only, if people only understood what's on the

line, if they could just see God more clearly, if they could see Jesus more clearly, if they could see things the way I see them, they would be persuaded just like I am wrong. No, not true. There are people who are going to be face-to-face with the Lord Jesus Christ in the kingdom age for 10 centuries.

They are going to see the benefits of his government. They're going to see his justice and his wisdom, just as it was observable in the first advent. In the first advent, they crucified the Lord Jesus.

In the second advent and the kingdom, it is the enemies who are going to be destroyed. God's going to release Satan, keeps him around on ice for 10 centuries, lets him out of the bottomless pit to be the leader and be the person that these people are really looking for. And they're going to say, all right, now, now we've got what we're after.

And they are going to oppose God. They're going to shake their fist in his face, having full observation. There is no lack of knowledge.

It's rejection, simple rejection. And honestly, that is true in all cases. And in all ages, when God, the Holy Spirit comes and makes the issue of sin, righteousness, and judgment clear to unbelievers, and they push that away, it wouldn't matter if they were standing in the throne room of God and the angel Gabriel explained it to them, they would still push it away.

They find fault with God. They want to follow Satan and say, I will be like the most high. I can run things.

I have a better plan. I have a better idea. And it's irrational.

It is hubris. It is simple reaction and rebellion. And it is a choice.

And God would never allow a faulty choice based on lack of information to determine someone's eternal fate. Everybody has all the information required and no additional information will change their minds. People choose what they choose.

And this is true at the salvation point. It is also true for believers who like the Israelites coming out of Egypt under the blood of the Passover lamb. Are they Israel? Are they God's people? And did all but two of them, including Moses and Aaron drop in the wilderness short of the goal? Yes, they did.

The blood of the Passover lamb under which they are delivered and released from Egypt to make their choices in the wilderness represents salvation. It's talked about in the book of Hebrews. But what do you choose after you're delivered? And if you make bad choices, you're going to fall in this life and you're going to have none of those blessings and rewards and opportunities in the eternal future.

Just look at the Israelites who dropped in the wilderness. Look at Paul in Hebrews, in my opinion, arguing from the example of those people in the first few chapters of Hebrews, there remains a rest for the people of God. Don't follow that example of.

Prioritizing other things and falling. One of those examples, as I said in the first session, is back here in Deuteronomy chapter 33 in the blessing on Levi. We understand the Urim and Thummim be with your holy one.

Let your Urim and Thummim be with your holy one. How many Levites carry the Urim and Thummim? Just one. Who was the first Levite to have the breastplate of the high priest and carry the Urim and Thummim? What's his name? Moses' brother, older brother.

What's his name? Aaron, right? Aaron. Aaron is who is spoken of here. Let your, remember Moses is still alive and Aaron is either still alive or has only recently died.

Aaron, Aaron, pre-deceased Moses. And this is some of Moses' last words, but he's talking about Aaron and those who will follow Aaron's footsteps. Let your Thummim and your Urim be with your holy one, your sanctified one, your chosen and set apart one, whom you tested at Massah and with whom you contended at the waters of Meribah.

Massah, Meribah. This is actually two names for the same place. Its original name was Massah.

It's at or near Kadesh Barnea, but it was named Meribah. Remember Meribah means contention. It means quarrel.

And he says, let your Urim and Thummim be with the one you tested at Massah and at Meribah. I will tell you proactively and ahead of time here that this test was not passed. This test was a failure.

Aaron got an F on this test. Aaron did not pass the test at Massah slash Meribah. Now, if you remember, there were two occasions where water needed to come from the rock and God gave two different kinds of instruction.

And what happened the second time? If you turn back to Exodus chapter 32, we'll review this very quickly. Exodus chapter 32. All of this is in light of what Jesus says about division of families in the name of Christ for the cause of Christ, because of his coming to bring division.

Exodus chapter 32. What do you see at the heading there? If your Bible has headings, what's in Exodus 32? It's the golden calf, right? People saw that Moses delayed coming down from the mountain. The people gathered together to Aaron and said, make us gods that shall go before us.

As for this Moses, the man who brought us up out of the land of Egypt, we do not know what has become of him. He's been gone too long. In these latter days of the church, I think that the imminent appearance of the Lord Jesus Christ to take us to himself, to judge us and potentially to either station us in the heavenly kingdom of the father and to present us before his father and confess us before God, the father versus stationing us in the darkness, which is outside looking at the distant glow of the new Jerusalem over the horizon from whatever far away wilderness we may inhabit.

That decision is often done in the light of a failure to appreciate just how near the return of the Lord Jesus is. Why do these people do the golden calf? What's the cause here? The precipitate cause. Moses delays his return.

What did Peter warn against? In the latter days, people are going to say, where's the promise of his coming? And it isn't a reality. It isn't a priority. Now we've talked about some things that seem to indicate that we're potentially in a very short-term situation here and that the actual return of the Lord Jesus is imminent, but do not kid yourself.

It's always imminent. You've heard me emphasize this over and over and over again. The rapture is going to occur as soon as you take your last breath, experience your last heartbeat, the last wiggle in your EEG ceases.

That's the rapture. None of us are going to be here. Even the youngest ones listening to the sound of my voice.

If you're 15 years old, the Lord Jesus is coming back for you sometime in the next 60 or 70 years, 80 if you're particularly long-lived, but sometime in the next few years, those of us that are in early middle age, middle age, late middle age, early elderly, middle elderly, elderly, elderly, the Lord Jesus is as close as the end of your life. That's the rapture for the vast majority of people in the church age. You don't have much time, 70 years.

If by strength you reach 80, that's a lifespan. The return of the Lord Jesus is no more than a few years away at most. And that's what we should consider.

It should be real. How real is the face of the Lord Jesus Christ, the judgment seat of Christ, the opportunities to be found faithful and be awarded proximity and opportunity and the privilege of serving and reflecting His glory for all eternity based on the decisions that we make now. If that's not real, if you've got something else you think is more important, there's a person, there's a place, there's a thing, there's an objective, there's a situation and, oh, I think this situation will satisfy me, make me happy.

This is what the secular world stacks up in Maslow's hierarchy of needs. First of all, I want my basic physical needs met and I move up. And at the top, I just feel like I'm hitting on all eight cylinders.

I'm self-actualized. I'm just on top of the world. I'm completely satisfied at peace and happy.

If you pursue that, it is ashes in the mouth. It's all the same as the very first sin. When Eve looked at the fruit of the tree and saw that it was desirable and she took it, the thing that she wanted was exactly what she lost.

Jesus is going to talk about that in our context. You've seen it already. He who saves his life will lose it.

He who loses his life, i.e., disregards the priorities of his life for my sake, will find it. It's counterintuitive. Well, if I want that, I should pursue it.

This has been the Disney motif forever. Follow your dream, climb every mountain, ford every stream, follow every rainbow. Follow every rainbow.

Do you realize how stupid that is? If you follow every rainbow, you're never going to find your dream because the rainbow keeps moving. There's no pot of gold at the end of the rainbow. Every leprechaun knows that.

Listen to the words of the song. Follow every rainbow until you find your dream. That's an endless, fruitless pursuit.

Even the nuns in the nunnery know that when they're singing to Julie Andrews. Follow every rainbow. It's nuts.

That's a stupid way to live your life. If you lose your life for the sake of Christ, that's when you find what you're looking for. It is self-denial.

It is taking up your cross, prioritizing the things that count. Trust God for the rest. Your Heavenly Father knows what you have need of before you ask Him.

He knows the desires of your heart. There's nothing God would rather do than bless us, but He can't bless anybody that doesn't have their heart right and doesn't have their head right. God cannot bless us when we don't appreciate the blessings.

He could not take the Israelites into the land of Canaan because they didn't have the capacity to appreciate it or exploit it or reflect God's glory in it. Neither do you and neither do I. Put God first and trust Him. All these things.

Seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness. Put that first. All these things will be added to you.

I don't know how. I don't know why. It seems counterintuitive to cut off relationships, to set aside goals and values that the world considers important.

I'm going to set that aside. I'm going to pursue what Scripture tells me is God's will, plan, and purpose, and I will trust God for the rest. You remember the hymn that distills Paul's thought when he says, I know whom I have believed.

I know not when my Lord may come at night or noonday fair, or if I will walk the veil with Him, the veil of the shadow of death, veil, that's V-A-L-E, valley, or meet Him in the air. But I know whom I have believed, and I'm persuaded that He is able to keep what I have committed to Him against that day. That's what I know.

There's many things I don't know. That's a wonderful hymn. There's a lot of things I don't know.

If I prioritize Christ, there are going to be sacrifices. There are going to be losses along the way. There is going to be division.

That is not my fault. If this person over here had my same dedication and was following biblical exhortations and encouragements and injunctions to be faithful, there would be no schism. Faithful believers don't split.

There is the spirit of unity and the bond of peace. Paul says, pursue as far as it is your responsibility. Pursue peace with all to the extent that it's up to you.

Pursue peace. But there are people who will not be peaceful because they do not share those priorities. They do not accept those values.

Believer or unbeliever, they're going to drop away. Friendships will grow stale. Family relationships will be ever more distant.

It's not your choice to separate from them, but your choice to be committed to Christ is going to make that division clear. The division is already there. People who do not prioritize the Lord Jesus Christ, who do not pursue faith and obedience, who don't love God the Father enough to try to please Him, who don't consider His values and His righteousness important, don't kid yourself.

They're already separate, and you're just trying to ignore it. It's like saying, well, I think this cancerous lump in my body is actually kind of attractive. No, it's not.

It's deadly. And it grew there sort of of its own accord. People don't raise their hand and say, you know, I think I'd like a tumor on my kidney, or I think I'd like a real malignancy right here in my body.

We don't choose that. It comes up of its own accord. But when it does, you know, many times we have to separate from that thing or it will kill us.

And it's got to be excised. There needs to be a division. And Jesus said, I've come to make those divisions.

Who is faithful and who is not? If somebody is not faithful, they have already divided that the separation is a done deal. You have to respect it and recognize that it's a part of the plan and purpose of God. And, you know, if you've made some overtures yourself and maybe others with you, remember the whole thing about if a brother has ought against you, how does that start? If a brother has ought against you, they've separated.

They've got a difference. You can go to them. You can take a few more and go with them.

And Jesus says, if after a couple of attempts, both individually and in concert with others, they still have ought against you and what you stand for and the Christ you serve, even a tax collector, that doesn't mean go, you know, Molotov cocktail their house or create a riot. How should Israel people in Israel have treated tax collectors? Distance. I have nothing to do with you.

You don't, you're not hostile. You're not antagonistic, but nor do you cultivate relationship with someone who has manifestly chosen a different path. You cannot do it and be worthy of Christ.

You can't. You might as well just ask for a virus. You might as well just ask for a tumor.

You just might ask for some fatal condition. And you're inviting that into your life instead of letting Christ separate it and divide it away. And if you pursue Christ, the things that he can add will be added without violating people's, uh, volition.

But here we are in, in the golden calf. And in verse seven, you know, this story, they rose up and offered burnt offerings to this calf and Aaron made it. Aaron said in verse two, break off your golden earrings, which are in the ears of your wives, your sons, and your daughters, and bring them to me.

Notice this is a family contribution. The men are going to collect the jewelry from their wives, sons, and daughters. All the people broke off their golden earrings in their ears and brought them to Aaron.

He took it and fashioned it, made the molded calf and said, this is your God of Israel that brought you out of the land of Egypt. Aaron saw it and he built an altar before it, made a proclamation and said, tomorrow is a feast of the Lord. Aaron did this, right? So he and Joshua come back down and come near the camp.

And look at verse 25. When Moses saw that the people were unrestrained for Aaron had not restrained them to their shame among their enemies. This word for restraint literally means they are naked.

This is the shame of nakedness. This is weakness. This is exposing that which shouldn't be visible.

They're unrestrained. Literally they're naked. Then verse 26 of Exodus 32, Moses stood in the entrance of the camp and said, whoever is on the Lord's side, come to me.

And all the sons of Levi gathered themselves together to him. And he said to them, thus says the Lord God of Israel. Remember the blessing on Levi that we read in Deuteronomy 33, eight and nine.

This is part of where that comes from. Moses stood and said, whoever's on the Lord's side, come. The sons of Levi are the ones that step forward and join Moses.

And he said to them, thus says the Lord God of Israel. This is Exodus 32, 27. Write it down.

Thus says the Lord God of Israel. Let every man put his sword on his side. He's talking to the Levites.

Put your sword on, go in and out from entrance to entrance throughout the camp and let every man kill his brother, every man, his companion, and every man, his neighbor. These are the brothers, companions and neighbors of the Levites. So the sons of Levi did according to the word of Moses and about 3000 men of the people fell that day.

Now pay attention. Do you notice anything about these instructions? Let every man kill his brother, his companion and his neighbor. And he's talking to the Levites.

Do you remember the layout of the camp of Israel? Remember how it lays out in the shape of a cross? There are tribes to the North, tribes to the East, tribes to the South, tribes to the West. Where are the Levites? They're in the center, right? And so if the Levites are going to kill brothers, companions, and neighbors, they're not going down the rank and file of these tribes to the ends of the cross. They're not going all the way North, all the way South, all the way West.

Where are they going? The immediate vicinity of the camp of the Levites. If there are any Levitical brothers that did not step up with Moses, they get the sword. The neighbors and the companions in that immediate vicinity, they are clearing a quarantine area.

They're making a demilitarized zone. They're putting a buffer between the holy camp, the house of God, the camp of the Levites. In the center, there is a ring of death around it, purging out those who by contact would contaminate.

That's what this is for. Why only 3,000? There are potentially a couple of million people in the camp. Why these 3,000? For whatever reason, they have chosen to or are near the camp of the Levites.

The Levites are to kill anyone who is not with them in that vicinity. It sanctifies the area around the holy center of the camp and the place where the Levites do their function.

They do so.

The Levites are faithful to carry out this instruction. Now, the other passage we want to look at is the Meribah and the second giving of water from the rock. If you go to Exodus 17, flip back a few pages, the people are contending with Moses in verse 2, Exodus 17, 2, give us water that we may drink.

Moses says, why do you contend with me? Why do you tempt the Lord? The people thirsted for water, complained against Moses. Why have you brought us up out of Egypt to kill us and our children with thirst? Moses cries out, what shall I do with this people? They're almost ready to stone me. Lord said, go before the people, take with you some of the elders, take your rod with which you struck the river.

I will stand before you on the rock in Horeb and you shall strike the rock and water will come out of it that the people may drink. Moses did so in the sight of the elders of Israel. And he called the name of that place Massah and Meribah because of the contention of the children of Israel.

And because they tested the Lord saying, is the Lord among us or not? Now turn over to Numbers chapter 20. This is context for our Deuteronomy passage. Numbers chapter 20, the children of Israel came to the wilderness of Zin in the first month and the people stayed in Kadesh.

This is the same place. It's the same rock. They're back.

Remember the wilderness of Zin. This is how you get to Sinai, how you get to Sinai. So they've been looping through the wilderness.

This is much later. Children of Israel come back to the wilderness. They're at Kadesh.

This is Massah. This is Meribah, same place, same rock. Miriam died, was buried there.

There was no water for the congregation. They gathered together against Moses and Aaron. The people contended with Moses and spoke saying, if only we had died when our brethren died before the Lord, why have you brought us up to the wilderness that we and our animals should die here? Why have you made us come up out of Egypt? Why, why, why? It's all Moses' fault.

So verse six, Moses and Aaron go from the presence of the assembly to the door of the tabernacle and meeting. They fall on their faces. The glory of the Lord appeared to them.

Lord spoke to Moses saying, take the rod. You and your brother, Aaron, gather the congregation together. Notice the first time it was Moses.

Now it's Moses and Aaron. It was Moses and the elders the first time. Now it's Aaron because in the meantime, Aaron's been sanctified and he represents the people as

priest.

So Moses took the rod and in verse eight, God says, speak to the rock before their eyes and it will yield its water. Speak to the rock. It will yield its water.

This rock yielded water once before when it was struck. It's the same rock, but God specifically says, speak to the rock and it will yield its water. Thus you shall bring water for them out of the rock and give drink to the congregation and their animals.

Moses took the rod from before the Lord. As he commanded him, Moses and Aaron gathered the assembly together before the rock. And he said to them, here now, you rebels, must we bring water for you out of this rock? Moses lifted his hand and struck the rock twice with his rod and water came out abundantly in the congregation and the animals drank.

You get the idea that maybe when he struck it the first time, water didn't come out. Why would you strike it again? And instead of recognizing, Oh wait, God didn't say strike it. He said, speak to it.

He does no speaking. And you're familiar with the Christological representation here. Christ died once for sin.

Now for the healing water, the water of life, that which sustains us, invigorates us and gives us eternal life, living water. It's a matter of speaking and appealing to him. He's already been stricken.

He doesn't need to be stricken again. And this is covered in Hebrews chapter nine and 10. You don't have to keep on repeating the sacrifices like they did in the old Testament.

Christ appeared once for salvation. So the speaking was an important picture and we notice it even more because of Moses' failure to observe it. We might've been less sensitive to the difference.

God even wove his failure together for good in that sense. But God says in verse 12 to him and Aaron, because you did not believe me to hallow me in the eyes of the children of Israel, therefore you shall not bring this assembly into the land which I have given them. This was the water of Meribah because the children of Israel contended with the Lord and he was hallowed among them.

So now when you go back to Deuteronomy chapter 33, you will remember that in the instance of the golden calf, who was the leader? Who made the golden calf? Who built an altar in front of it? What's his name? Aaron. Aaron, the chief Levite did this, right? Who participated with Moses in striking the rock when it was supposed to be spoken to? Aaron. This is two massive failures on Aaron's part.

Aaron's the older brother here. He could have said, Moses, weren't we just in front of the Lord and didn't he say speak? But even after Moses strikes it the first time, Aaron doesn't say anything. Notice the condemnation of Aaron in failing to speak when he should have spoken, in failing to instruct, correct, and rebuke.

This is the function of the Levites. They are supposed to teach God's statutes and ways. Aaron is the prototypical Levite for this and he says nothing.

His responsibility is to teach even his own brother to be fearless in representing the word of God and he says nothing. Silence can be consent, right? We have that as a policy in the artillery. You hear a call for fire come in, you have the power to stop it, but you check the map, you check all the parameters and you say that mission is good to go.

You don't have to speak up and say, I have approved this mission any more than you say, I have approved this message on a political ad. Silence is consent. It's my job as the fire direction officer for the battalion to monitor all calls for fire and if I don't stop it, it goes.

I have the responsibility to speak up and end that mission or I'm responsible for it. My silence is consent. Aaron's silence here is consent and he is held accountable for it by God.

So you go back now to Deuteronomy chapter 33 and this prophetic pronouncement by Moses makes more sense. This is 33, eight and nine in particular. Urim and Thummim, this identifies Aaron and it says whom you tested at Massah and with whom you contended at the waters of Meribah.

This is God having a bone to pick. The people had a contention with the Lord and with Moses and Aaron, but God had a contention with Moses and Aaron for failing to be obedient in the sight of all Israel. And notice the U there is capital and that's correct.

Moses is talking to God when he says, let your Thummim and your Urim, your guidance be with your sanctified one, your spiritual leadership, the one you tested at Massah and with whom you contended at the waters of Meribah. Now I've said this before and it's a wonderful thing as an English major to get to make this point. There are singulars and plurals throughout this Levitical pronouncement.

Pay attention to the singular and plural. It matters. Your holy one is singular.

The one you tested at Massah and with whom you contended at the waters of Meribah. This is a singular man. This is Aaron or the one who stands in Aaron's place, who says of his father and mother, notice still singular.

He says to his father and mother, I have not seen them, nor did he acknowledge his brothers or know his own children. Now, is this a good thing or a bad thing? People will

cite this verse and say, you know, Jesus said, if you love father and mother or brothers more than me and the division and all that, and so that this is a good thing, they quote this with approval. This Levite is doing the right thing by disregarding his brothers, his children.

But notice who is it that has observed God's word and kept God's covenant, the singular or the plural. In the context, the singular is Aaron or the one who stands in Aaron's place and the plural are the children, right? And the family. Father, mother, brothers, and children.

That's the plurality, right? And he singular says, I haven't seen them. He doesn't acknowledge his brothers. He doesn't know his own children.

They, the father and mother, the brothers and the children have observed your word and kept your covenant. Do you remember the golden calf? Did Aaron pick up a sword and do anything? Aaron is at fault. Aaron made the calf and built the altar and led the people in this false worship.

Who stepped over with Moses when he says who is on the Lord's side? Aaron's brothers and Aaron's sons and the other Levites, his brothers, the Levites did the right thing. Aaron did the wrong thing. And it is Aaron who is held accountable for separating from his father and mother.

You remember, you know, traditionally Amram and Yoshebel, Jochebed, the parents that trained Moses and Miriam and Aaron and in a time of great slavery and hardship and devastation in the land of Egypt, they were faithful parents and his mother putting him in the bull rushes is what enabled God to use him as a leader. Faithful parents, faithful brothers, faithful children. Aaron is the culprit and it is Aaron who failed to stick with his father and mother, failed to stick with his brothers.

He says, I haven't seen my parents. I don't acknowledge my brothers and I don't know his own children. You get the idea that when Aaron started doing this, these faithful Levites that immediately step up with Moses, there's the implication here that they resisted and that they came to Aaron and said, what are you doing? And Aaron says, look, I'm the leader here.

I've got this. And he disregarded the godly counsel of his brothers and even his own sons who knew better. You know, the sons of Aaron are going to be the next senior priests and high priest.

It is Aaron here who said of his father and mother, I've not seen them. He doesn't acknowledge his brothers, doesn't know his children. They have observed your word and kept your covenant.

They, the sons and the brothers will teach Jacob your judgments and Israel your law.

They will put incense before you and a whole burnt sacrifice on your altar. Bless his substance, Lord, and accept the work of his hands.

Strike the loins of those who rise against him and of those who hate him that they rise not again. But this is almost, this is going back to, if you understand your chiasmic structure of Levi, he said. And so now you're back to Levi.

And the singular here is Levi, not the immediate. Levi never bore the ornament. That's Aaron.

So there's a truth here. And if someone appeals to this passage as support for what Jesus is saying, it's true, but not the way you would think. And if you have a position of leadership and responsibility, and there are faithful believers around you who keep covenant, who burn incense, who guard the word of God, it is responsibility to listen to them.

And people who don't are going to come under the same judgment that Aaron did. Aaron did not enter into inheritance any more than Moses did. Even Moses didn't inherit the land, didn't go in.

He doesn't get there until the Mount of Transfiguration. Then he's finally in. Why? Failure to stay with and be unified with the godly.

So back now to our passage, and we're almost out of time for this morning. But Jesus says in verse 37 of Matthew 10, he who loves father or mother more than me is not worthy of me. He who loves son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me.

It cuts both ways. If you've got father and mother or son or daughter or brothers who are dedicated to the Lord and you don't stay with them, it's on you. It's Aaron's fault for not staying with his faithful brothers.

Whichever side you are on, it is dedication to the Lord that defines where you stand. You can't love father and mother more than God, nor if you've got godly family, can you separate from them on your own behest and not suffer the consequences? Verse 38, he who does not take his cross and follow after me is not worthy of me. And people say, well, this is Matthew editing after the resurrection.

So on, how would he know that Jesus was going to die on the cross and so on? But the cross was a symbol of self-denial. You, you carry your own cross and crucifixions didn't start with the Lord Jesus. Crucifixions were an almost daily occurrence under Roman harsh law.

And Jesus could appeal to that example and say, you know, there is oppression and there is hardship. There is trial. There is execution.

In many cases, unfairly, we're going to make an example out of this guy, but you have to be willing rather than compromise to take up your cross and follow after. Otherwise we're not worthy. And in verse 39, as we've seen, he who finds his life will lose it.

The more you try to pursue a unity that cannot survive, the more you try to pursue relationships that don't have a foundation in Christ, the further away they're going to get. And the more it's going to cost, the more we prioritize the Lord Jesus, we are going to have those relationships that count. He who finds his life will lose it.

He who loses his life for my sake will find it. Well, this final section, verses 40 through 42 are the blessing on those who support people who might be at the point of the spear or the forefront of a mission or a ministry or a cause for Christ, whether they are suffering for Christ, whether they are communicating for Christ and the unity of purpose and the unity of attitude produces unity of reward. Not everybody can be on the front line.

But God says, if you are as dedicated as those people that are actually, you know, on the cutting edge, you get the same reward they get because it's your attitude that counts. It's your commitment that counts. It's your obedience and your faith that counts.

Your particular assigned task isn't what determines your level of reward. Oh, if I was an evangelist and brought vast souls to Christ, then my reward would be great. You can support somebody like that and your reward is just as great.

If you think Billy Graham is in line for many stars in his crown and you fully support Billy Graham, whatever Billy Graham's reward is, is your reward. You don't have to be the doer. You be the similarly committed, similarly faithful.

He that is faithful in that which is least gets just as great a reward as he that is faithful in much. And whether God assigns you something small or something large, it is your level of faith, commitment, obedience, and confidence in God. Not pursuing our own agenda, looking for what God has first.

That comes first, no matter what it costs me. It may be very small. It can be in a very limited arena.

And you say, well, that's, you're going to be surprised at the judgment seat, at the rewards that some people will get who are completely nameless, obscure, unknown. And their avenue, their arena of service and function seems so invisible and so minor. But they did that.

They took their three talents and worked those three talents just as much as the guy that had five. And their reward is going to be just as great. So don't think that your circumstances are a You remember the workers that went to the field at the end of the day, and they got the same denarius as the ones that have been working all day long.

If you do your work well and faithfully, and you're a good and faithful servant, that's what he's talking about here. He who receives a profit in the name of a profit gets a profit's reward. All you did was give him some water and, you know, wash his clothes and give him a meal and send him on his way.

You're rewarded right along with the profit. You are considered the same. It's a wonderful blessing and it's a reminder.

Don't consider yourself to be living in a time of small things. You're living in a time of big things and whatever you are faithful in, whatever you are dedicated to in the name of Christ gets as great a reward as anybody that you might consider to be visible or on the front lines. It's not what you do.

It's why you do it. It's how you do it. It is your level of dedication.

God sees it. God measures it and God honors it and rewards it. Confess me before men.

I will confess you before my father in heaven. Deny me before men. I will deny you before my father.

And I don't want to find out what that's like. If I'm invisible as a believer, if my commitment, if my dedication to high priority things doesn't matter, then I'm not going to matter to the Lord Jesus in the presentation to the father. I'm not going to matter in the future of the kingdom.

Our level of concern for him is going to be his level of concern for us in the eternal future. Something to think about. Well, we'll pick up here right at the end of chapter 10 and move into chapter 11 next time.

Let's close here in a word of prayer. Father, we thank you for the time that remains to us in this life. We hear the call to change our minds and in whatever areas of our life we are being faithful.

We pray that the light will shine and we can see that we need to continue and expand in those areas where we do need change of mind, where we need correction and rebuke and instruction in the ways of righteousness. May we be ready. May the Holy Spirit impress truths on our hearts in a way that causes us to change and invest whatever time remains to us for the cause of Christ so that we may be found worthy, faithful, and enter into those opportunities in the eternal future that will be so important in the kingdoms to come.

We pray these things in Jesus name. Amen.