

Matthew 20-06-07a

Greetings, welcome to the Sunday morning services at Grace & Truth Bible Church. This is the 7th of June, 2020, and we're continuing our study in the Gospel of Matthew, moving into a fresh chapter this morning, chapter 11. The famous question posed to the Lord Jesus by John the Baptist, are you the coming one or do we wait for another? We've had a lot of focus here recently, even in our own church on the coming one, and he can't come too soon for me, just speaking personally, but it's a very interesting question.

There are very interesting circumstances surrounding it, and we're going to finish the last few verses of chapter 10 and move into chapter 11 this morning. Let's take a moment as we prepare for the study of God's word to honor the Lord Jesus by going to his father in prayer and asking his blessing upon us, the ministry of his spirit and the power of his word is of course our spiritually necessary food and drink and enablement. And without those, we're basically wasting our time.

So let's go to the Lord in prayer and then we'll begin. Father, we are grateful for our redemption. You are our strength and our redeemer.

We thank you that we are not called to pursue the plan and purpose that you have laid before us in our own strength. You have not only supplied the purpose, the mission and the goal, but you've also enabled us with the presence of your Holy Spirit and the power of the truth contained in your word. We pray this morning, as we look at this portion of it together, that the Holy Spirit will minister it to our hearts, help us to understand it, to see that it is pertinent to ourselves in our particular situations and given our opportunities and our challenges, that we will find that strength and find that endurance that comes directly from you so that as we represent the Lord Jesus Christ on this earth, we can reflect his glory and yours, we can fulfill your purpose and walk in those good works that you have ordained for us and be ever more prepared for that soon coming day when the Lord Jesus comes to take us to himself and when we are qualified to present us before your throne.

We pray these things in Jesus' name, amen. Well, this is a very interesting section of the Gospel of Matthew. You will remember that Jesus, in sending out the 12, two by two, has charged them and we have the second great teaching section in the Gospel of Matthew.

You remember the first great teaching section back in chapter five, six, and seven. This would be your traditionally labeled Sermon on the Mount or Teaching on the Hill, as I prefer to call it, just to be perverse. But that was the first great teaching section.

You can flip back a few pages in your red letter edition and see that, and mine is heavily annotated. Then you come now to chapter 10 and you notice that this is our charge to the disciples followed by this teaching that begins by addressing them and their specific mission, what they should do as they go forth to preach the gospel of the kingdom. Then

as that plane accelerates down the runway, it lifts off and we begin to see the predicted situation of the witnesses for the Lord Jesus in the 70th week, which from the perspective of the age of Israel is only a couple of years away, right? If you subtract the church age out, Jesus is preaching into the last seven years of the age and so it's pertinent.

And just as all the rest of the Old Testament teaching is, we look at it and it is pertinent for us in terms of interpretation and application. We too will face hardship, opposition, rejection, difficulty. The servant is not greater than his master, a disciple is not above his teacher.

And that's true in any age. And we should be prepared to be shut out, ostracized, dismissed, thought of in critical terms for our ideas, for our ethics, for our morals, for our political judgments that are rooted and based on that foundation. And you can expect to be vilified.

You can expect to be shouted down and pushed out of public discourse, which is a mild form of persecution compared to that which has been suffered in other generations and has suffered in other parts of the world even today. There are many places on this earth where you can easily die for your Christian faith. Pay attention to what's going on in Africa.

The news has been so saturated with the ingrown myopic looking at things in our country that developments in the Middle East with Turkey and with Greece and with other nations there, Syria and Egypt and Saudi Arabia and Yemen and Qatar and the rest of those, people have lost sight of the fact that the rest of the world is still moving on and puzzle pieces are still being put in place. You cannot get through the thick gravy of MSM coverage of the subjective naval gazing in this country and get to meaningful news unless you go to foreign news sources. And I would encourage you if you're interested in the forward movement of the situation elsewhere in the world, you can find those sources and try to keep track.

If as far as current events in this country, there was a very excellent summary given yesterday. If you can find a recording of Jesse Waters on Water's World on Fox, he gave about a 14 minute summary and analysis Saturday, June 6th. And if you can find that, you will know exactly what I think.

I couldn't say it any better than he said it. I'm not interested in covering that stuff in Bible class, but if you wanna know what I think about current events, dig that up. Water's World for June the 6th, it's about 14 minutes long.

That will tell you exactly what I think. And I think it matches in my personal opinion, a biblical worldview. Moving on now, let's go to Matthew chapter 10.

And at the end of this section, which does lift off and address future times of great hardship for those who represent Christ. Remember the witnesses, whether it is the, they always talk about the 144,000 witnesses in the tribulation. It never calls them witnesses in scripture.

It calls them servants of God that are sealed. The 12,000 from each, they're servants. Now, part of that service may involve witnessing, but there are two witnesses that are going to operate at the beginning of that period.

But this guidance in confessing Christ before men, you look at verse 32 of Matthew chapter 10. Therefore, whoever confesses me before men, him I will also confess before my father who is in heaven. This is one of those universal truths that applies in any age.

From the time of Christ forward, if you confess the Lord Jesus Christ, whether in the church age, in the tribulation period, or in the millennial kingdom, those individuals are going to be acknowledged in the same fashion by the Lord Jesus to his father. And this is more than just Jesus saying, father, here is, fill in a name. Being presented before the father comes with a concomitant amount of recognition, opportunity, responsibility, avenues and potentials for service.

This is not a formality. It's not a quick experience. Being presented to the father is a high honor that has strings attached in the positive sense.

So this is something we desire. If you want to vindicate the work of the Lord Jesus Christ in saving your soul and rescuing from a lost and hopeless condition, these are the kind of people we want to be. We want to be those who represent and confess the Lord Jesus Christ without shame, without fear, not being intimidated, not being suppressed, and also not being stupid and claiming his name and ending up being sort of a false professor.

You claim his name, but you're an enemy of the cross and you've fallen from grace. This is the professing church. And in some cases, they're not even believers.

In many cases, they're not even believers. Professing Christ, falsely representing him, and this is the scarlet harlot that we're looking at on Thursday nights. We confess the Lord Jesus genuinely in a balanced and biblical way.

And there is a great honor and reward associated with that. Whoever denies me before men, and this can be without a word. In the same way that a wife can win her husband without a word, you can either confess or deny the Lord Jesus without a word.

What is the impression you leave in your area of influence? In your bursting radius as an artillery shell, what kind of effect are you having? If you're having a negative effect when it comes to the cause of Christ, it doesn't matter what you say. Your actions speak even louder than your words. And there is a legitimate expression.

There is a legitimate facet of our lives that is our witness. You can't fake it. You can't hypocrite it.

You can't put on a show. But the genuine way that we live, the faith that we practice day by day by day is a witness to those around us. And it either confesses or denies the Lord Jesus.

Don't think that you can sit this one out. Your daily life is your witness. A good man once wrote that in the words of a song, your life will be your witness.

And it's exactly right. Your life is your witness. Does it confess Christ or does it deny Christ? That's what he's talking about here.

Verse 34, we talked about this, that it is divisive because the issue of Christ demands a response. Some people respond, others react. But there is no neutral ground.

There is no demilitarized zone. You are either for him or you are against him. And there is that issue.

And free will will exercise itself. People will choose. And it's not like you've got this bomb you're carrying around that is either going to go off positive or go off negative.

And you're just kind of a hapless victim. You were born with a volition that was going to go negative, or you're born with a decider that's going to be positive toward God. This is integral to us.

Your volition is not a box. It's you. It is intrinsic.

It is an expression of every molecule of your spiritual molecule of your being. And the expression is not something that we really can't help. It's genetic, it's environmental, it's this, it's that.

This particular expression of our soul is independent of genetics. It is independent of experience. If you want to point to any experience, any upbringing, any childhood, any shock, any trauma, any childhood primal scream difficulty that anybody ever had, and say, that's the reason I can't accept God.

I had a bad father. He calls himself the father. So I can't accept a father in heaven because I had a bad father on earth, for example.

Nonsense. For everybody that says that, I can show you five that had a similar or worse condition and have chosen God. There is nothing that befalls anybody that hasn't befallen somebody else who made the other decision.

Your heredity, your environment does not dictate your response to God. It is you. It's not something, it's not an uncontrollable little black box.

It's you, you decide, you choose. And if you recognize God and you want relationship with God, you want deliverance and rescue from corruption, from a lost, hopeless, fallen, terminus type condition. It has a terminal end.

It's a terminal cancer within us. In terms of eternal life, you don't have it. It's a dead end.

And God offers life and offers relationship and offers purpose and meaning and cleansing and fulfillment and blessing and reward. So many wonderful things, you think anybody would just be nuts to not accept it. Well, the greatest creature that God ever created with more talent, more beauty, more wisdom, more opportunity, more honor, the highest job you can have in heaven, guardian of the throne room of God, given everything, freely chose from within himself to fall.

And that's Satan. You can't blame a lack of exposure to the gospel. Well, if God would only reveal a little bit more about how great heaven is or how awful condemnation and judgment is, people would choose him.

No, they won't. They won't. So when Jesus says, "I have come to set a man against his father, "a daughter against her mother, "and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law, "and a man's enemies will be those of his own household." The issue of Christ forces a choice.

God, the Holy Spirit convicts the world of sin, righteousness, and judgment. And those things are connected to Christ and connected to Satan. And we'll see that when we come to it in John.

It connects to something we're going to see in the future here in Matthew. He who loves father or mother more than me is not worthy of me. Now, I've talked before in the romantic sense about love.

You can be a young person in your teenage years, your early twenties or whatever, and you meet a wonderful person. They have every positive attribute, strong, growing, healthy believer, talented, attractive, personable. If she's a woman, she's demure and has poise and grace and all of these wonderful things.

And there is not a flaw, there's not an imperfection, there's not any significant difficulty, but a guy doesn't fall in love with her. Same thing with a guy. Give him all the positive attributes of a paperback hero on the cover with his shirt ripped halfway down or whatever.

And he's just the most attractive thing ever. And he's manly and got integrity and self-sacrificial and a silent hero and all, endures all kinds of things. But the woman just doesn't fall for him.

The chemistry is not there. The spiritual connection, more accurately, is not there.

Everybody doesn't fall for everybody just because they're a really nice person and a really great and growing believer.

You can't decide to love someone. Love in the emotional sense is some physical chemistry and some spiritual connection. And when it comes to man, woman, future is marriage type of love.

Family love is different. But there is still an element of chemistry. Women are predisposed chemically to love their babies and babies are predisposed chemically to cling to their mothers.

And they recognize the blob vision that is their face very early on, recognize their voice because they have been programmed to those frequencies in the womb and so on. There's a lot of physical things that go into familial love, especially parent-child love. However, love in the Bible is largely policy.

What do you practice? It is not the emotions that you cannot control. You can't control emotions much of the time. Emotions are going to emote.

And all you can do is try to subjugate them and subdue them. If you feel sorrow, you are going to feel sorrow. And it has to be controlled.

This is why one of the fruits of the spirit is self-control. Why would you need self-control? If you were spiritually mature, would your feelings always just be great? And you'd be perfect equanimity at all times and balanced and you wouldn't be too happy and you wouldn't be too sad. And our emotions just run the gamut.

Sometimes it's even chemical. Sometimes it's fatigue. Sometimes it's stress.

Sometimes it's physical suffering. Sometimes it's the challenge of overwhelming circumstances. And emotions are going to emote.

They just go off. They can't think. Emotions are not a part of our reason.

Look around at the past couple of weeks in the country. You've got people who are not reasoning, they're emoting. And emotions can't think and emotions can do stupid things.

Many times emotions are legitimate. Bible says, weep with those who weep, rejoice with those who rejoice. When the shepherd finds the 100th sheep that strayed, he brought back and there's rejoicing in heaven over one sinner who repents.

Joy is a wonderful thing. Sorrow, Jesus wept more than once in scripture. Nothing wrong with emotions, but they have to be under the authority of reason.

They have to be reigned in. They have to be controlled. Nothing wrong with having them, but they can't get out of hand and take the steering wheel.

I was driving along the other day, and as this happened to everybody, this squirrel ran out in the middle of the road and then couldn't make up his mind. Should he continue or go back? And he's just cycling between left, right, left, right, left, right, and I'm getting closer all the time. Well, your emotions say, swerve, don't hit the squirrel.

My mentality says, we ain't running out of squirrels and I can't afford to run my truck into the ditch at this speed. And so, although I had the impulse to swerve, I forced myself to keep going. Happily, the squirrel made a decision and moved.

And when I looked in the rear view mirror, there wasn't a little brown splat in the road. So he survived. I'm not saying that has happened every time, but it's a quick example that your instinct, your impulse, your emotion is, oh, don't hurt the little animal.

That's fine. That's a good impulse. But the smart part of your brain, your higher intellect has to say, do I want to risk my truck, oncoming traffic, damage, insurance claims, fender repair, knocking my wheels out of line and all the rest of it for a squirrel? I got to commit the squirrel to God and keep on my path, right? But it's a decision.

You overcome emotion with reason. The happenings in this country would be greatly different if we had the Christianity in our culture that would teach that and cause it to be expressed. There are a lot of ways to make your opinions known and to seek good kinds of change.

Burning things down in a criminal fashion is not one of them. And when you watch the people who are doing that, it's animalistic. It is emotion without reason.

So Jesus says here, 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. Your emotions for your parents and your children and others in your periphery are what they are.

This is not talking about emotional love. This is talking about policy love. Jacob have I loved, Esau have I hated is policy.

I will prioritize when it comes into conflict. As long as there's no conflict, I can love God and I can love one another. What if it comes into conflict? What if I have to make a choice and in loving one another, I am going to disrespect or dishonor God.

When it comes to a conflict and comes to a choice between them, what choice are you going to make? Are you going to stay in a dead church, for example, for the sake of your family and miss out on the spiritual food that is necessary for you to honor God, to serve God, to please God, to lay hold of righteousness by faith because well, my whole family is over in this church and so I've got to go there. I'll be an encouragement to them and we rationalize it. And it is at the expense of our relationship with God.

You might find a way to do both. Maybe you can go fellowship and attend in a church

where you don't get fed and you can get a supplement another way. I'm just using this as an example.

It's difficult to think of an example where it comes into conflict, but in Jesus' day, in Jesus' words, it does. And if you, when it comes to a choice between the Lord Jesus Christ, representing Him, serving Him, following Him, and your immediate family, which do you choose? Are you going to compromise? Are you going to have a life that is a bad witness by refusing to separate when separation is necessary? Refusing to stand up for an issue when that issue needs to be represented? Who do you love more, your family or your Lord? What happens to your life's witness if you make the wrong choice? What if God is using your commitment to the Lord to convict and to convert? And yet, because you refuse to maintain it, God has to use someone else to get that message across or some other circumstance to get that message across because you didn't heed the words of the Lord here. If you love close family more than you love the Lord Jesus, meaning you compromise your service and your witness to the Lord Jesus.

This is right after he says, "'Confess me before men,' right? That's the context. This is your witness before men, your lifestyle before men, how you are observed. And if you're unwilling to be true and faithful and cling to whatsoever things are pure, noble, lovely, of good report, and you don't represent those things as the body of Christ on this earth, the legitimate question, what would Jesus do here? We're not worthy of him.

And not being worthy is a bad thing. He who does not take up his cross and follow after me." And the cross, people say, oh, this is an anachronism. This is Matthew writing after Jesus was crucified and putting the cross back into Jesus' words.

No, Jesus said, he who does not take up his cross. Why would he say that? Because it was a vivid picture of a painful obedience. The Romans say, carry this thing to the hill and we're going to kill you.

And you do it. You take up the cross and you follow the path, even if it leads to personal pain, ultimately personal death. That's what a cross is.

It is a path of suffering, terminating in death. But if we're not willing to do that, thankfully, we very seldom have to make that choice. But when that choice needs to be made, and it's a painful choice and it's a hard choice, there could be the death of a relationship.

There could be the death of an opportunity. There could be the death of an association. There could be the death of interaction with other people.

Are you willing to take up the cross or not? If you're not, you are not worthy of the Lord Jesus Christ. Do you really want to sit in eternity in the darkness, which is outside? Because you wouldn't stick with the Lord Jesus in this life. He cannot stick with you in the

next.

And you're going to be viewing the glow of the lamb on the throne over the horizon, waiting for a truck full of healing leaves in the kingdom of the father. Now notice in verse 40 through 42, he who receives you receives me, and he who receives me receives him who sent me. This is really important for chapter 11.

This is transitional contextual help for us to understand the question of John the Baptist coming up in chapter 11. He who receives you receives me. He who receives me receives him who sent me.

Now, can somebody be a rejecter of Christ and a lover of you? Not if you are fully representing Christ. Receiving Christ, if they receive you, they're receiving Christ, why? Because you are synonymous with Christ. Jesus said, if you've seen me, you've seen the father.

If you accept me, if you receive me, you're receiving the father. Well, we are Christ on this earth for the purpose of witness and communication. So how can someone receive us and not receive Christ? There's some sort of disconnect.

If we represent Christ, someone who rejects Christ ought to be rejecting us, right? There's no way to soft pedal this. This is what Jesus said. Those who receive you receive me.

Well, it works the other way. Those who receive me receive you. But it's, and it goes straight to the father.

It's an unbroken line to God the father. If someone rejects God the father and rejects the Lord Jesus Christ, but thinks you're a great friend, there's something wrong with you. We are not representing the father and the son.

If people think we're great, but they've got no use for the son and for the father, we should all be of the same fabric. We should represent the same values, the same truths, the same light, the same opportunity, the same salvation, the same righteousness, the same hope for the future. It should be clear, undiluted, unbroken connection.

And if people who've got no use for God find us to be perfectly acceptable, well, it's not hard to see where the problem is. Not a problem with God and not a problem with Christ. It's a problem with those who have been charged to represent Christ in this earth.

And if society thinks we're great, if people think we're great, who have no use for God, we need to go do a gut check. As I said last week, there is something wrong. He who receives a prophet in the name of a prophet shall receive a prophet's reward.

He who receives a righteous man in the name of a righteous man shall receive a

righteous man's reward. There's been a lot of talk in my youth about how great it is to be a pastor or an evangelist or a missionary. And that's kind of an upper crust layer in Christian faith and service.

And those people are gonna have stars in their crown. Look at all of the people that came to Christ. Look at all the people who grew in grace and knowledge or whatever because a guy was a good teacher, faithfully represented the truth of God and so on.

And well, wouldn't it be wonderful to have one of those gifts and have those opportunities for reward and service and reflecting God's glory and all the rest of that, to be a blessing to other people and so on. Here's your passage. It doesn't matter what your gift is.

You may have nothing but the gift of prayer support. You may have nothing but the gift of that widow that gave the two mites, had a whole life of quiet faithfulness and service. She had one 15 seconds of fame that she had prepared for her whole life.

The Lord Jesus noted her. The Lord Jesus is going to present her to his father. And we just have that glimpse, that quick example of her faithfulness.

But it's in eternal scripture. It has blessed hundreds of billions of lives with insight and understanding as an illustration that the Lord Jesus himself used. That woman had no inkling.

She probably didn't even know that Jesus mentioned her. He didn't go flag her down and say, woman, great is your faith. You're going to have a seat next to me at the table.

And she dropped in her two mites and went home. She probably had no idea that the Lord Jesus had taken note and spoken of her to his disciples. Two mites.

You have something to say about those two mites a little bit further down, but don't think that your faithfulness is unremarkable or is not recorded and remembered in God's sight. He who receives a prophet in the name of a prophet gets a prophet's reward. If you listen, as all of us have done, to faithful teachers of the word of God in the past, whatever reward they are going to get for all of that work they did and all the tapes they made and the books they published or whatever else they did, if you received that and benefited from it and thanked God for it and asked God's blessing on them and so on, your reward is exactly the same as theirs.

This is the Lord Jesus talking. I'm not making this up. If you are on the receiving end of a great ministry and you appreciate it and thank God for it and pray for its continued fruitfulness, you get the same reward as whoever's doing the work.

Remember the thing that was said, I forget who said it, that they also serve who only stand and wait, that you've got soldiers in the field, but there's other people back there

supporting them with prayer, with work on the home front, industry going without. They had rationing and so on in World War II to help the guys on the front. Those people had an equal part in the victory and share in the spoils.

David made that decision. Remember when he split his forces, half stayed back to guard the gear, the other half went forward and won the victory. And when they brought back the spoils, there were some who said, well, only the fighters should share in the spoils.

David said, no, everybody shares equally. These people were just as important who were in the rear with the gear, literally doing a guard duty and support and preventing us from being flanked and so on, just as important. If you receive a prophet in the name of a prophet, meaning the reason you're receiving him is not that he's charismatic or he's handsome or he's really appealing or he tells funny stories.

You receive the prophet in the name of a prophet for his prophetic function. He's doing a good job as a prophet. And you support that and you benefit from it and you pray God's blessing on it.

You get the same reward as the prophet himself. That's Jesus talking. He who receives a righteous man in the name of a righteous man shall receive a righteous man's reward.

Notice there is a connection between the righteous and there is a disconnection up in verse 35 and 36 with righteousness and unrighteousness. There is a sword that should and will divide righteous and unrighteous. There should be a division.

There should be a separation. There should be a distinction. Prophetic function and those who receive the prophetic ministry are together.

The righteous receive each other and are rewarded together. Righteousness clings to righteousness. Birds of that feather flock together.

Birds of a different feather, the sword divides, even if there are very close connections on some other basis, fellow employee, fellow student, neighbor, family member, whatever it may be. And we have to recognize that these separations are necessary for God's plan to function. Whoever gives, verse 42, one of these little ones, only a cup of cold water in the name of a disciple, i.e., you're doing it in the name of Christ for the cause of Christ because you are a believer and this is the right thing to do, to look out for even a minor need, just a refreshment for another believer.

And you put yourself out. You go get, in these days, it wasn't a matter of turning on the tap. What did you have to do to get someone a cup of cool water? Why is it cold water? Notice water's not even there.

It's a cup of cold water is implied. Why is it cold water? Why didn't you just say a cup of water? Water that's already been drawn and been sitting out isn't cold. They didn't have

ice in those days and it's a warm climate.

Where does the cold water come from? If you're going to give a cup of cold, you've got to do like the woman in John four and draw it from the cool depths of the well. You've got to put yourself out. You've got to do a little work.

You've got to take some time. You've got to set aside your busy day and your planned agenda. You spot somebody who needs a cup of cold and you put yourself out.

We do this all the time when there's an emergency and somebody, there's a health issue. There's a bereavement. There's a challenge where things are out of the ordinary and we pitch in, we put ourselves out.

We set aside the normal schedule and we do, now you can be an unbeliever and do that or you can be a believer and do that. The actions may look the same, but notice in the name of a disciple, my motivation is I want to honor the Lord Jesus Christ. My life is my witness and I'm guided by scripture in so doing.

I'm not just doing it because, well, that's what a nice person would do and I don't want somebody to think that I'm laying out or I'm uncharitable or I'm selfish. So I'll do it for appearances sake in the name of a disciple. You don't care if anybody knows it.

You don't care if anybody finds out, who left the tray of food there. It's done in the name of a follower of Jesus Christ because you are worthy of him. Well, that brings us to chapter 11 now and we'll take this convenient opportunity to go to our break.

And when we return, we're going to see this very interesting episode of interaction. We've only seen Jesus and John the Baptist communicate with each other one previous time and that was at the baptism. Now we're going to see communication between them again, communication of a different form.

One was personal. The other is across a distance and it is not without significance. So let's pause here and take our break.

And when we return, we'll start chapter 11.