

## Did Jesus Really Say That?

### Peace and Sword

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We're beginning a new sermon series today and for the next few times I speak with you, we will be taking a look at some of the more "controversial" statements that Jesus made during his time of ministry. I want to encourage you to take some this week to take one of the Gospels – Matthew for example, and we read through it to discover for yourself how often Jesus said things that were controversial among the people he ministered to, spent time with, and especially among the religious leaders, during his 3 short years of public ministry.

But for today we're going to take a look at one of those statements found in Matthew 10:34-39 and we're going to pull out some truths of what Jesus was saying in this passage. Turn with me if you would to Matthew 10:34-39 and if you don't have a bible with you, there is one in your row and I want to encourage you to follow along on page

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### Read Matthew 10:34-39

#### Pray

Let me give you some context to what is happening here in this passage.

- Earlier in Chapter 4 we find that Jesus was pulling together His team of disciples and then we know that between Chapter 4 and Chapter 10, Jesus spent an incredible amount of time with the disciples in order to train them, and to mentor them, and in order to fully disciple them as his followers so that they could then go out and do the work that God had in store for them.
- And so in the beginning of Chapter 10, we find here that the disciples were finally ready and Jesus was now sending them out and he had some last minute coaching and instructions for them.
- He wanted them to make sure they were doing two primary things: 1. preaching about how the "Kingdom of God was near", and 2. that they would do many good and helpful things....healing people. Casting out demons, serving and ministering to people who they came in contact with.
- And then we find in 10:16-32, where Jesus begins to talk to them about some of the difficulties, challenges, the realities, and the costs of following Him. And he was straight forward with them, letting them know that following Him was not going to be easy!!! And he clarified that right up front when he said in vs. 16" I am sending you out like sheep among wolves!" and it's going to be a rough and tough road to follow!! There will be moments that you feel you cannot bear, that you want to give up, and there is the possibility that you might even lose your life if you follow me, but don't be afraid of these things.....I will be with you.
- And then we come upon our controversial passage in vs. 34 and he begins by using this phrase, "do not suppose.....". And what Jesus was doing here is that he was just reminding his disciples to make sure they were thinking differently about the task they were getting ready to go out and do and the life they were now entering! Jesus knew that not everybody was going to listen to truth and reason, and the message of Hope that the disciples would be sharing would not always be received well. And Jesus was telling his disciples here to not get the wrong idea.....it might not be an easy experience to follow him.
- Friends, listen.....this is a good teachable moment for us at this point.....as Americans, we tend to want the "easy Christianity" where only good stuff happens to us, and where God will give us what we want, and we'll experience all kinds of warm fuzzies because we're.....living for Him. But that's not all of what Jesus talks about in scripture!! If we are truly following Him, there will be both times of PRAISE (good times) and times of PERSECUTION (bad times). Paul tells Timothy in 2 Tim. 3:12 – that "everyone who wants to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted." We don't get a whole lot of persecution here in America at this point, but it's coming.....!!!! 1 Peter 4:12-16 – "<sup>12</sup> Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery trial when it comes upon you to test you, as though something strange were happening to you. <sup>13</sup> But rejoice insofar as you share Christ's sufferings, that you may also rejoice and be glad when his glory is revealed. <sup>14</sup> If you are insulted for the name of Christ, you are blessed, because the Spirit of glory<sup>[b]</sup> and of God rests upon you. <sup>15</sup> But let none of you suffer as a

murderer or a thief or an evildoer or as a meddler. <sup>16</sup> Yet if anyone suffers as a Christian, let him not be ashamed, but let him glorify God in that name." James 1:2-4 - <sup>2</sup> Consider it pure joy, my brothers and sisters, <sup>[a]</sup> whenever you face trials of many kinds, <sup>3</sup> because you know that the testing of your faith produces perseverance. <sup>4</sup> Let perseverance finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything."

- There are a number of interactions with people in scripture where Jesus had to speak about this cost of following him.....
  - Matthew 8:19. Then a certain scribe came and said to Him, "Teacher, I will follow You wherever You go." <sup>20</sup> And Jesus said to him, "Foxes have holes and birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay His head." <sup>21</sup> Then another of His disciples said to Him, "Lord, let me first go and bury my father." <sup>22</sup> But Jesus said to him, "Follow Me, and let the dead bury their own dead."
  - Rich Young Ruler – Mark 10 – What must I do to inherit eternal life? Keep the commandments – I've kept them all (he liked the easy Christianity) – and then Jesus said, give all that you have up, and then follow me and the text tells us that the RYR lowered his head and went away sad.....
  - Luke 14 - <sup>25</sup> Large crowds were traveling with Jesus, and turning to them he said: <sup>26</sup> "If anyone comes to me and does not hate father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters—yes, even their own life—such a person cannot be my disciple. <sup>27</sup> And whoever does not carry their cross and follow me cannot be my disciple."
  - John 6:60-66 - <sup>60</sup> On hearing Christ's message, many of his disciples said, "This is a hard teaching. Who can accept it?" <sup>61</sup> Aware that his disciples were grumbling about this, Jesus said to them, "Does this offend you? <sup>62</sup> Then what if you see the Son of Man ascend to where he was before! <sup>63</sup> The Spirit gives life; the flesh counts for nothing. The words I have spoken to you—they are full of the Spirit <sup>[a]</sup> and life. <sup>64</sup> Yet there are some of you who do not believe." For Jesus had known from the beginning which of them did not believe and who would betray him. <sup>65</sup> He went on to say, "This is why I told you that no one can come to me unless the Father has enabled them." <sup>66</sup> From this time many of his disciples turned back and no longer followed him."

And so we open up these few verses, and we realize that they are kind of hard-hitting when Jesus says that families are going to turn on each other, there's going to be chaos, there's going to be division, and it's not always going to be pretty and easy when we become Christ Followers. There is always a cost to following him.

And we have to ask ourselves what did really he mean as he shared these hard-hitting truths? I think there are 3 things he meant.

1. **I think Jesus was telling his disciples that Fully following Him produces peace with God but not with people.**  
v.34

Romans 5:1-2 – "Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we <sup>[a]</sup> have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ,....." It doesn't say anything about having peace with people

**III.** Christmas carols with phrases like this – "peace on earth, good will to men" – the song writers have misstated the passage!!! Luke 2:14 - "Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace to those on whom his favor rests." It's not about having peace on all of the earth and having good will among all people. The verse tells that "on earth, the PEACE that comes, is the PEACE that God gives to those who are in a relationship with Him." The ones who receive peace are the ones who receive favor from God and the peace is with God, not with men.

**III.** Perhaps you've heard this quote before? "Know God. Know Peace. No God. No Peace " Peace with God only comes when we know Christ in a personal way.

Now, let me mention this issue of the "sword" that is found here in this verse as well..... The word "SWORD" is often used as a metaphor for something that cuts or divides (Hebrew 4:12) <sup>12</sup> For the word of God is alive and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart."

Jesus uses this word here because he wanted to reiterate that he would cause division among people. If we look in this same story out of Luke's gospel, we find that Jesus says, He "came to create division" (Luke 12:49-53) – Listen to this version - <sup>49</sup> "I have come to bring fire on the earth, and how I wish it were already kindled! <sup>50</sup> But I have a baptism to undergo, and what constraint I am under until it is completed! <sup>51</sup> Do you think I came to bring peace on earth? No, I tell you, but division. <sup>52</sup> From now on there will be five in one family divided against each other, three against two and two against three. <sup>53</sup> They will be divided, father against son and son against father, mother against daughter and daughter against mother, mother-in-law against daughter-in-law and daughter-in-law against mother-in-law."

Along with talking about what Jesus meant in this passage, I think there are a couple of things that Jesus did not mean and let me give them to you briefly:

- Jesus was not telling us that we need to go on a crusade – and to wipe out everyone who doesn't believe the way we believe or gets in our way of living for Christ!! Throughout history we know that Christians went out on crusades and killed thousands and thousands of people in the name of Christ because they felt that if Christ was bringing a "sword" then they would too!! And that is not what Christ meant when he talked about bringing a sword – I wonder if sometimes we hurt our witness as Christians because we go on these crusades and campaigns & try to make it our job to battle.....and that's not what Christ has called us to do. Matthew 28 tells us to go out and make disciples among all the nations.....it doesn't tell us to go out and battle all the nations in the name of Christ.

- He also was not telling us to be obnoxious in sharing our faith. – I'm not sure that having an attitude and behaviors that go with it that belittle people who don't believe the way we do is very effective in reaching people with the good news of Christ. We know that the message of Jesus and the cross will always be offensive. Paul tells us in Galatians 5:11 that the message of Jesus is offensive. But it does not tell us in scripture that WE are to be offensive to people. Matthew 5:9 reminds us that "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God." When we're obnoxious, we tend to offend people and we need to be very careful with that.

***I think the 2<sup>nd</sup> thing Jesus is telling us is that***

2. **Fully following Jesus will often divide close relationships. vv. 35--36** - <sup>35</sup> For I have come to turn "a man against his father, a daughter against her mother, a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law — <sup>36</sup> a man's enemies will be the members of his own household."<sup>[c]</sup>

The word "Turn" here simply means "to turn against". There will be conflicts with the close relationships that we have if we are true followers of Christ. We don't want to think about that stuff, but it's true.....people will be divided.....

Now, verse 36 tells us that a man's enemies will be from his own household and the conflict will come because of Christ. But we will be the ones who will be faced with the battle because the conflict is directed at us....and we will have to endure the "sword" or the division.....

I'm always lead to the Ephesians 6 passage where Paul tells us that as Spirit-filled believers.....those who are fully following Christ will FACE SPIRITUAL BATTLES!!!!!!! I heard it said one time that "If you haven't met the devil head on, it means that you're probably going in the same direction!" And friends, we have to know that only the people who are serving Christ are attacked by satan!!

**III. PP** - Let me read this Ephesians 6 passage for you. (Underscore and highlight key points of this passage in your bible if you wish!!!) Ephesians 6:10-17 – <sup>10</sup> Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. <sup>11</sup> Put on the full armor of God, so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes. <sup>12</sup> For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms. <sup>13</sup> Therefore put on the full armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand (keep on standing!). <sup>14</sup> Stand firm then, with the belt of truth buckled around your waist, with the breastplate of righteousness in place, <sup>15</sup> and with your feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace. <sup>16</sup> In addition to all this, take up the shield of faith, with which you can

extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one. <sup>17</sup>Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.”

And third, I think What Jesus meant by saying this is that

### **3. Fully following Him will force a crisis of loyalty. vv. 37--- -39**

There are a couple of words that I think we should look at here in this passage

- a. Love – in vs 37 Jesus uses the word, LOVE here and there are 4 different meanings of the word love in scripture.

**Eros Love** - A word that was not actually used in the New Testament but was alluded to. It meant physical passion; its gratification and fulfillment. It is inferred in many scriptures and is the only kind of love that God restricts to a one-man, one-woman relationship within the bounds of marriage .

**Storge Love** - Storge is the natural bond between mother and infant, father, children, and kin.

**Agape Love** - Agape love is God's kind of love. It is seeking the welfare and betterment of another regardless of how we feel. Jesus displayed it when he went to the cross and died for you and me regardless of how He felt.

And then we have the use of the word love here in this passage which is “Phileo” and it means ‘to have an affection toward something or someone’. And the reason Jesus used this meaning here is because he knew that those things that have our affection, we give our loyalty to.

The one thing that generates this conflict and division is when a person something or someone more than they love Christ. It’s a question of where our loyalties rest. Are we loyal to Christ or are we loyal to everything and everybody else?

- b. The second word we should take a look at is the word “Worthy” – the phrase “you’re not worthy of me...” are strong words from Jesus. And it gives us a moment to pause and ask the question, “What makes us worthy?” Well, we know we don’t have to earn God’s love. He gives that to us freely. BUT, just because we received the free gift doesn’t mean that we’re worthy of that free gift.

And I think that what makes us WORTHY of Christ is choosing to live as a fully devoted, passionate, follower of his!!!

And we can do that by

- Standing firm in what we believe. For example, as true followers of Jesus, we believe that “Jesus is the only way to heaven”. Peter said in Acts 4:12 that - <sup>12</sup>Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to mankind by which we must be saved.” And friends I can tell you.....when I’ve shared that message here, not everybody has liked it.....and I could tell you a few stories of people that have left and that have been offended because I’ve shared the truth of scripture and they didn’t like it. But I’m telling you.....if we don’t stand firm in what we believe, we’ll fall for anything!!!!

- We can also do this by DOING SOMETHING!!! We are called to share the gospel with everybody and to serve people!!!! And I can’t put it any more simple, but if we are fully devoted, passionate followers of Christ, we will do what he tells us to do. (Matthew 28 and Acts 1:8)

- And then the last thing that I believe makes us worthy is by understanding that it's just simply who we are. We are his creation We are his children, we are his heirs, and He loves us!!!! He loves us with AGAPE type love!!!!!!

So, I ask each of us a question today: On a scale of 1-10, how are we doing as followers of Christ? Are we closer to living out the "easy Christianity" or are we moving toward living as a true follower of Christ?

**Prayer**