

MP2: “Called into conflict”**Pastor Matt Messner****January 14/15, 2012****Matthew 10:32-39****Eureka Faith Center**

Video:

Your mission, should you choose to accept it, is to go public with your identity.
You’ve kept your faith a secret for long enough.

Remember, as a follower of Jesus, a cross and conflict is part of the deal.

Going public will not win friends for you.

In fact, some of your friends and family will turn against you.

Remember this promise: whoever loses his life will find it.

This message will self destruct in three seconds

(3...2...1...black out and go back to theme song)

Introduction

I don’t know if I like this message. I’m supposed to be public with my faith and I can expect conflict? I might lose friends? I might lose the respect of some family members?

When I became a Christian I honestly thought it would be easy. I thought people would be as excited as I was about who Jesus is. I thought it was all about peace and joy and happiness. Instead, when people found out I had become a Christian, they looked at me with scared and

concerned expressions on their faces. “So you’re one of **them**?! What church did you say you attend? Foursquare? What is THAT?!”

Last week in our first lesson on “Mission Possible” we looked at Jesus invitation to the men who would become His disciples: “Come follow me and I will make you fishers of men.”

Today we are moving forward to a teaching where Jesus is being very specific and direct as He prepares them for their mission. (Background information) In doing so He warns them that they will encounter hatred and persecution. In His own words he says, “If they didn’t like me, they’re definitely not going to like you, but don’t be afraid.”

In Matthew 10 Jesus is speaking to “The 12”, but He intentionally uses the words “whoever” and “anyone” – so His teaching specifically applies to you and to me.

I. Matthew 10:32-33

³² “Whoever acknowledges me before men, I will also acknowledge him before my Father in heaven. ³³ But whoever disowns me before men, I will disown him before my Father in heaven.

To acknowledge Him before others means that you affirm your commitment to Him. It is to “declare one’s allegiance.”

Our Christianity may be personal, but it cannot be private.

How do we acknowledge Him? Perhaps the #1 example right now is Tim Tebow. How does he acknowledge Christ? Unashamedly. When he was in college...This past Sunday...316 yards...etc. etc.

<http://m.smh.com.au/sport/tim-tebow-the-evangelical-christian-footballer-who-is-gods-gift-to-sponsors-and-a-us-national-phenomenon-20120111-1pu6q.html>

<http://sports.yahoo.com/blogs/nfl-shutdown-corner/tebow-time-three-3-16-references-boffo-tv-172145772.html>

Is this how we’re supposed to do it? Take a knee before and after every sale? Tebow at the soccer game when your daughter scores a goal? Tebow on the bow of your fishing boat after you catch a fish?

No. That is what Tim Tebow does. But be inspired. Be challenged and be encouraged to

acknowledge Him. Be free to be yourself.

Acknowledging Him before others shouldn't be awkward. What is really awkward is denying Him. When Jesus shared these words I am sure He knew that Peter's denial was going to take place. There is grace and restoration and second chances for those who deny the Lord. Let's get comfortable in our own skin as disciples of Jesus!

He doesn't say to be obnoxious. He says "acknowledge".

For the disciples, the future of the world depended on their obedience to this command.

For some, this would become a life and death decision.

#1 Action that changes the world: Acknowledge Jesus.

II. Matthew 10:34-37

³⁴ *"Do not suppose that I have come to bring peace to the earth. I did not come to bring peace, but a sword. ³⁵ 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—*

³⁶ *a man's enemies will be the members of his own household.'*^[e]

³⁷ *"Anyone who loves his father or mother more than me is not worthy of me; anyone who loves his son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me;*

When I became a Christian, my parents thought I had joined a cult and for two years we had some painful conversations about Christianity. They were not going to be convinced and if a person doesn't "believe", our message is foolishness.

- The peace of Jesus is internal, not always external
 - Cross culturally this verse is literally fulfilled through life and death conflicts. (Hindus, Moslems, Orthodox Jews, Buddhists, etc.)
 - <http://www.persecution.org/2011/11/16/somali-christian-women-pay-high-price-to-follow-christ/>
 - How often is it a relative who introduces a person to drugs, or crime? Will they be happy to see us changing?
 - In our "safe"/"peaceful" worlds, be inspired by their stories and try to emulate their commitment level! If you don't have this kind of conflict, be thankful and enjoy your freedom.
 - Some have used this verse as a license to neglect their families. "I'm putting God first" says the man would rather be at church than at home. "God first" says that

workaholic pastor who hasn't taken his wife out to dinner for years. "God first" says the man who forces his son to miss the league championship because the game is on a Sunday morning. THAT kind of conflict is NOT what Jesus was talking about.

- Key words: "More than". We love. We love our enemies. The more we love Him the more we can love others. This actually gives us a greater love for others. (ex.)
- When we love something/someone else "more than" Him, and that someone has our allegiance, we are unworthy. It builds a wall between us and Him. Worthiness has to do with our loyalty to Him.

#2 ACTION THAT CHANGES THE WORLD: LOVE HIM MORE THAN _____.

III. Matthew 10:38

³⁸ *and anyone who does not take his cross and follow me is not worthy of me.*

This statement deserves a full sermon. Jesus made this statement on several occasions. We will focus on the meaning of this is a couple of weeks. For now I will just leave you with this thought: Where would one carry a cross? What is their destination and what have they decided? They are going towards a place of execution.

#3 ACTION THAT CHANGES THE WORLD: CARRY YOUR CROSS (Your luggage and compass for following)

IV. Matthew 10:39

³⁹ *Whoever finds his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life for my sake will find it.*

In 1976 an organization called Campus Crusade for Christ launched a campaign where they plastered up signs all over the United States which said "I Found It." They say that this message was seen by 85% of the people living in America. I was nine years old at the time, living in Coos Bay, and I remember seeing these signs all over the place. I had no idea what it meant.

But before you find it you have to lose it.

For the twelve he probably was including martyrdom in His thoughts as he spoke these words.

A person whose goal is to "find their life" is pursuing their dream. This is the one who is self seeking is looking for what will make them happy (at least what they think will make them happy). They strive to obtain that. They seek to win. They seek to fulfill the emptiness of their

heart by gaining more. They fill themselves up with money, adrenaline, drugs, philosophy. They are seeking. They grasp for their life and they may find it slipping through their fingers.
(Statistic in lieu of economic downturn 25% increase in suicides)

Jesus says lose your life. Then, you'll say Eureka. I found it. As you seek to find your life, lose your way – let Jesus lead you onto His path. Focus on Jesus. Follow Him. Let Him take you a new direction. Get lost by following Him and you'll find your way. I lost track of that old path and I am on a new one now. It is WAY better. "I found it" campaign. How about "I lost it"?

In The Message this verse is translated this way: "If your first concern is to look after yourself, you'll never find yourself. But if you forget about yourself and look to me, you'll find both yourself and me." -- The Message

#4 & #5 ACTIONS THAT CHANGES THE WORLD: LOSE YOUR WAY AND FIND HIS (EUREKA!)

Application and Conclusion

Make it practical – reviewing each point and summarizing and applying it to real life