

Matthew 10:34-39

## **Losing and Finding**

### **SI:**

Why this passage? It's only a little over a month since Christmas Day... The celebration of the coming of the Prince of Peace, Silent Night, Holy Night, All is Calm. And then January comes... all the disruption of the holiday break and then back to it... and on top of that, this year's political disruption... and here we read of Jesus and the disruption He makes in the lives of those who follow Him...

**Intro:** This is one of Jesus' more difficult sayings. Jesus often says things that lead us to say, "what?" What does He mean? Jesus is getting to the deepest motivations, the deepest questions of life: For what and for whom are you living? Where is your allegiance? When our allegiance is in Jesus, He promises and delivers more than we can imagine, more than anything that is earthly can give.

### **What Does Jesus Mean?**

Jesus using stark language. Vs 34-37 ARE ABOUT FAMILY, ABOUT ALLEGIANCE, ABOUT LOYALTY

What kind of peace did Jesus bring? He is the Prince of Peace. But His peace does not mean the absence of strife. The peace He came to bring is a peace with God, but not with the world. The Prince of Peace came to bring a sword, came to bring conflict. His coming would create division, the making of enemies, passionate hatred and division even in families.

Jesus questioning/examining our allegiance... Loyalty.

Why the calling out of **family** like this? Why war with the family? I thought family was one of God's greatest gifts for demonstrating community, for testing loyalty, for providing safety and security in human relationships... And it is...

The idol of family is not just a southern culture idol. "Mama-er-n-em" – A type of southern shorthand for what everybody knows > family is first and last.

But any of God's gifts becomes destructive if it becomes ultimate. See? B/c Family can so easily become a substitute for God, for Jesus, and the place Jesus is to have in our lives.

Family: They will stick with me no matter what. If everything fails, I can go home. Family is my safety net, my bottom. And therefore, family is really your god, your ultimate, what you truly rely upon. But what if that is taken away? What if a person's enemies are those of his own household? What then?

\*For Jesus, water is thicker than blood. Waters of baptism, the rite of initiation into the Kingdom. Jesus is a jealous God. He will have no competitors.

Jesus ... Jesus Himself knew the pressure of not pleasing His family, of not meeting societal expectations. Matt 12:46-50 --

While he was still speaking to the people, behold, <sup>k</sup>his mother and his <sup>l</sup>brother <sup>s</sup>tood outside, asking to speak to him.<sup>48</sup> But he replied to the man who told him, “Who is my mother, and who are my brothers?”<sup>49</sup> And stretching out his hand toward his disciples, he said, “Here are my mother and my brothers!”<sup>50</sup> For <sup>m</sup>whoever <sup>n</sup>does the will of my Father in heaven is my brother and sister and mother.”

The true cost of following Jesus, allegiance to Him. This is why Jesus is so stark, why He says what He says here...

**Vs 34-37 are about** loyalty, allegiance, commitment, VS 38-39 ARE ABOUT DYING TO SELF– THE CROSS OF CRUCIFIXION

**Taking up:** Jesus’ hearers would have seen this, the taking up of the cross beam and walking with a group of Roman soldiers to a crucifixion. Bearing the weight and shame of your own guilt. Walking to your death, carrying your own cross, your own tool of your own death. This is what I will die upon. This is what will cause my death.

Death of his flesh, death of that which was worthy of death. Jesus took upon Himself the penalty for sin. So a cross is representative here of whatever is going to be put to death. And each of us have something particularly in common and particularly unique.

**In common:** we all are sinners, we all have a general cross to bear, the cross of the sinful nature. The terrible brokenness in the world...

**Unique:** We all have something specific to us, unique to us. “his” cross. Your background, your experiences, your gifts, your calling, your circumstances. These are the crosses, these are the things that will cause the death of your sinful flesh!

**Take his cross:** Carson: taking up one’s cross means painfully dying to self, and therefore this is a pain that all Christians bear.

v. 38 – There are more hard words here: “not worthy of Me.” promises of rejection here, of one day hearing “depart from me, I never knew you.”

Several years ago, construction workers were laying a foundation for a building outside the city of Pompeii. They found the corpse of a woman who must have been fleeing from the eruption of Mt. Vesuvius in AD 79 but was caught in the rain of hot ashes. The woman's hands clutched jewels, which were preserved in excellent condition. She had the jewels, but death had stolen it all. That's the bottom line in life. Worldly treasure is not a wise investment because you can't take it with you.

**What are you grasping on to? What are you clutching with all your might b/c you think it will give you life?**

\*What Jesus wants for us in finding life: to be released from control! And this is all of us... we lean with all the weight of the generations of sinners before us, we lean towards self-control, towards trusting in ourselves to make our own lives work.

And Jesus promises that if you live your life like that, you will lose your life.

U2 song "Moment of Surrender"

"I've been in every black hole

At the altar of the dark star

My body's now a begging bowl

That's begging to get back, begging to get back

To my heart

To the rhythm of my soul

To the rhythm of my unconsciousness

To the rhythm that yearns

To be released from control" - The joy, the longing that you have to be released from control.

This is why it is so easy to get addicted to pain killers whether it's pornography or heroin... your body and your heart long to be released from control, the freedom that you are looking for is real, placed in you by the Freedom Fighter Warrior Jesus the Christ, and this is what He promises.

Of course it is not easy to get there! Of course there is the pain of death, of detoxing from sin done to you and sin you have done. But the promise of life is true and you are about to experience a taste of it through this meal set before us. Jesus gave Himself and unless you eat His flesh and drink His blood, you have no life in you. But if you do, if you do eat His flesh and drink His blood, then you have life, and it is life.

### **How Can We Do This?**

By acting on the promises: **Promises** (v. 39) – "Whoever loses his life for My sake will find it." You have Jesus and you have a community. Jesus speaking to His disciples who are all hearing this together. This chapter is all about Jesus instructing the Twelve.

Through Thanksgiving and Community  
(Practical)

**Thanksgiving for Crosses** > Who follows anybody willingly into death, or a pathway that you know is going to lead to death? But if you know it is the death of death, then you will. This is what following Him while carrying your cross means. But it is not meant to be a begrudging thing, a grueling thing, even a hesitancy...

ILLUS of friend who is going through a circumstantial crisis that is very hard on him. If I was him I would want to punch me right now. Thankful for this?? But just wait... it is suffering, it is a refining work of God in your life to bubble up what is ugly so that He can not only show you, but cut it off, like an ugly wart that keeps coming back but when it is frozen off, it's gone... A dying to self that can only come when you see what needs dying....

Ps 119:67 Before I was afflicted I went astray,  
but now I keep your word.

<sup>71</sup> It is *j*good for me that I was afflicted,  
that I might learn your statutes.

<sup>72</sup> *k*The law of your mouth is better to me  
than thousands of gold and silver pieces.

Ps 119:75 > I know, O LORD, that your rules are *p*righteous,  
and that in *q*faithfulness you have afflicted me.

<sup>76</sup> Let your steadfast love comfort me  
according to your promise to your servant.

God will eventually get you there. To the place of thanksgiving for the crosses you bear. It's His promise. It's His plan. The Cross before the Crown. This is what Jesus means by "follow me."

This is His way to lead us to life, by extracting the death from within us. He is removing, crucifying the death within us – self-protection modes, self-medicating, the false self, the ways we pretend that we are ok when we are not, the avoidance of vulnerability with God and with one another. Of course we are prone to do this! B/c the hurt is so strong and so deep. But not here! Not in God's church, b/c we are in this together. (community)

**Community:** The disciples are together, hearing this together, in it together as a community. You cannot survive on your own. Evil will take you out.

> Receive the cross, but not by yourself, in community with one another. Why you need a small group, men's group, women's group... These are gifts of community so that you are safe to say it is hard and others can bear the burden of your cross with you.

Are you open to hearing from your brothers and sisters about these things? So that we can protect each other from the lies of pride and independence and victimizing and excuse making and blame shifting?

Hey man, I hear you and I know that is hard, and I just want to ask you... are you taking responsibility for what's going on in your heart, your anger, your discontent, your fear... or are you blaming?

**Trans to Communion:** Remember, Jesus took the blame. He took up a cross-beam, our cross, the punishment that we deserve and walked to Calvary

**Communion:** He gave His life so that we could have life. That life is in allegiance to Him. That's what you are doing when you partake: You are receiving and you are ingesting Jesus' life. You are saying to yourself that **THIS is life.**

Come what may, **whatever cross** I must bear, it is worth it b/c Jesus went through the worst for me, to give me life. "For unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man, you can have no life in you..."

And you, we are doing this in community! No private communions! He is with us and we are with each other. Your flesh, my flesh pushes hard against this... I don't need anybody, I can do this on my own. That is just the lie of self-protection -- of being hurt by others.

But b/c of Christ's death for us, there is **always way more help** than there is hurt.

So fight off the darkness by partaking in faith >

**Bene: Jude 24-25**