

## “Worthy of Him Alone”

### **Scripture: Matthew 10:24-39**

Graphic: cross, roads, going out, persecution

Key Verse: 38 “...and anyone who does not take his cross and follow me is not worthy of me.”

Ask them to: Go out the open doors in ministry to others in spite of the difficulties and struggles that may hit close to home.

### **1) Introduction**

- a) Yawns...oxygen? Nervousness? Contagious?
- b) Some say the devil steals your souls when you yawn or the devil causes people to yawn...
- c) I think the only connection between yawning and the devil is that when the people of God get caught up talking about mission and not engaging in mission, the devil yawns...when we argue about mission and don't engage IN mission, the devil yawns...
- d) And the reason is b/c Satan knows that we aren't dangerous...that we won't be causing any trouble...that people will get along...and that the kingdom of God will not be getting any larger...
- e) The remedy for that, is to cause a some trouble by telling other people about Jesus and showing them mercy...
- f) Now last week...Sam preached, I think, about the need for a good foundation...in preparation for going out...Jesus is asking the disciples to prepare themselves b/c the harvest is plenty, but the workers are few.
- g) And then, in Matthew 10, Jesus sends out the disciples...(please open your Bibles to Matthew 10 – and let me encourage you to bring your Bible with you to worship each week)...Jesus sends out the disciples to preach the message that “the kingdom of God is near” and he commanded them to heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse those with leprosy, and drive out demons. Give these things freely...he's prepared them...
- h) Jesus was encouraging the 12 and their helpers in their mission...
- i) Nothing to yawn about here...good solid ministry in the name of Jesus...

- j) But then Jesus changes the subject just a little in Matthew 10:11-22...warning to them to be on guard for men who will oppose them...people who will reject them...people who may even try to kill them...b/c of the fact that they are ambassadors of Jesus Christ. He talks about family betraying family...friend betraying friend...
- k) Then he tells his disciples, “Men will hate you b/c of me, but he who stands firm to the end will be saved” HATE...that’s a pretty strong word...
- l) What happened to the foundation and the “being ready” and the equipping that went on...if we do that, and we’ll get hated for it, why not just give up b/c it’d be a lot easier to NOT ENGAGE in any form of conflict than to “stand firm” until the end.
- m) Apathy is one form of disease that plagues the church...**active hatred** is another. If I had to guess, the churches in America suffer from the former rather than the latter...we are apathetic rather than hated.
- n) And the devil would like nothing else than to spread more apathy around the church, b/c people don’t care...if we are engaging in our conflict and trying to right the wrongs and grow and make a difference, there’s a good chance that there will be some truth-telling that occurs from all sides, inside and outside the church...and the devil doesn’t do truth...only lies and deception.
- o) The devil doesn’t yawn when we engage in growth and challenge...only when we fail to engage at all...when we sit here and say one thing, and then don’t do what we say...
- p) And we’ve built the foundation, right? We’re ready for ministry, Jesus has warned us about the potential dangers that are out there...and now we’re ready to go, right?
- q) Our graduates have gotten ready and are on the verge of something new...something more. They think they are ready...we, as people of faith and reason, want to think that we’re ready...
- r) Well, according to Jesus, there’s more that he thinks we need to consider. There’s more about which we need to be honest in order to be effective in ministry. Simply knowing what to say, being good leaders, sharing our faith, and showing mercy is not enough. And the reason it’s not enough is b/c the people around us will disappoint us...the people around us will argue and fight...and the devil wants us to disengage...

- s) Jesus wants us to know more...he is our teacher...he wants us to be truly prepared for the road ahead...to be worthy of Him...

## 2) Scripture Matthew 10:24-39

- a) READ Matthew 10:24-39
- b) In order for us to be truly prepared to engage in ministry outside the walls of the church, Jesus is calling us to be honest...
- c) He's calling us to put our houses in order...by that I mean, let's make sure, Jesus says, that your priorities have been thought out, God-given, and rehearsed.
- d) In the midst of DOING ministry, things will get rough...and if we haven't put first things first, then we will stumble and become ineffective for the kingdom.
- e) Let's break down what Jesus is saying...
- f) In verse 24, Jesus tells us that the disciple is not above his or her teacher. Because **our** teacher is Jesus, we can't presume to know anything more than what Jesus and the Bible have taught us. Based on the authority of scripture, and the historic Christian faith, we prepare for ministry with those tools...those learning modes...we become like Jesus, if we allow ourselves to do that...
- g) And being prepared for that is critical b/c, in verse 25, a disciple is heir to the same kind of opposition the teacher receives. Now, this may seem harsh b/c we all know that Jesus had some pretty stiff opposition...mocked, scorned, beaten, falsely tried and convicted...hung on a cross to die...all for what he knew to be true, but others couldn't see.
- h) And so, the message here is, brace yourselves...and in verses 26-31, do not be afraid, not even for your life! (Verses 26-31). Don't be afraid of each other...don't be afraid of the devil...don't be afraid of failure or weariness...don't be afraid of rejection or hurt feelings...don't be afraid to die, even...there is only ONE we should fear...
- i) Be afraid, Jesus said, of the One who can destroy body and soul in hell. Destroying body and soul is a catch phrase for the judgment day when we will make an account before God of what we have done in this life. And

Jesus is saying to us, don't fear humans, fear God because He will be the one who judges each of us individually for our actions...

- j) Have we been faithful...have we baptized and taught...have we been merciful and loving...have we rejected the temptation to sow discord among us...have we gone out in Jesus' name to tell people about the Savior? It's not the people we meet that we should fear...but we must have that ultimate respect for God who holds all life and death in his hands...
- k) Those who acknowledge God on earth will be remembered in heaven (verses 32-33), Jesus tells us. We all have a testimony and we should use it. And those who don't acknowledge God, who make the devil yawn by avoiding the subject, will be disowned before God. That's really harsh, but God desires to be relating to Him and for us to bring others into relationship with Him...
- l) And it's also really hard...
- m) News of the kingdom of God will not be received everywhere with great joy. It may divide households (verses 35-36) and require that hard, but necessary choices be made (verses 37-38).
- n) The road Jesus is asking us to take, if we are to be called Christians, is the hard road...painful road...there will be plenty of times that we want to quit.
- o) But we have to persevere...and when we do, it's likely to get harder...
- p) In verses 37-39, Jesus really puts on the pressure for our priorities...anyone, he says, who loves his father or mother or sister or brother or son or daughter more than Him, is **NOT WORTHY OF HIM**.
- q) Anyone who does not take up his or her cross, is not worthy of Him.
- r) Now, Jesus isn't saying we should hate our families...he's not saying we have to suffer death in order to be a Christian...but what he is saying is that if we had to choose between family, money, comfort, ease, our own way...you name it...and Him...He comes first. In comparison to Jesus, it would appear that family and money and comfort are unimportant to us. Do people say that about you? In another gospel, this idea is turned around to say, if we don't hate those things, in comparison to the love we have for Jesus, then we are not worthy of Him.

- s) Allegiance to one's own safety, or to everyone getting along, or even to cherished family relationships cannot trump allegiance to Jesus Christ and his mission -- else, and he is quite clear about this here, we are not worthy of him.
- t) What will it take to be worthy? Why are we doing this? Is it for happiness or comfort or an easy life? If it was, I for one would be in a world of hurt and I'm sure you can all agree...
- u) In order to find true life...we must agree to lose it to him. No more exclusive attitudes...no more taking care of number one...but abandoning ourselves for the mission of Christ and our lives for him...

### 3) Conclusion

- a) We want this verse to be about someone else...for someone else...ministry is supposed to be fun and easy...we're Christians...but in reality, it isn't...
- b) Send someone else, Jesus, b/c it's hard. We want to be more apathetic than we want to serve him. We want to coast some in order to get by.
- c) B/c the mission is hard...the way is difficult...people will hate us and disappoint us...and fail to respond...or they will react instead of responding...they will say things that hurt and do things that seem mean...
- d) This warning of Jesus is intended for us who are doing ministry...
- e) Jesus was not here proposing at all that being affiliated with a church, in itself, will get us in trouble. (well, maybe this one ☺)
- f) These words are spoken to people Jesus is sending into mission in his name – out into the open, next door to 113 Court St. - not to comfortable seats in assembly halls on Sunday mornings.
- g) It is to those who do not simply accept the name of Christ, but actually follow him and go where he sends us that these words are spoken.
- h) And to that audience his basic word is "Expect opposition and conflict all over the place when you're actually doing my work. Expect it; don't run from it, don't whine about it, and don't be afraid of it. God's got your back, even if you get killed in the process. Just deal with it and stay on mission."
- i) Stay on mission...(say that with me, “stay on mission”)
- j) The devil is not laughing or yawning anymore...we are to be worthy of Him in all we do...and that might mean we have to change ourselves to let others in...to take risks and trust in God...to give more in faith...to talk about Him

to our family and friends...and spend time thanking Him for his mercy and gifts...

k) Be worthy of him in spite of the rough road...and be ready to do it again tomorrow and the next day...stay on mission...

l) Let's pray...