

Lesson 14: Review of Matthew 10:32-42: "What We Need To Know"

Jesus was never needy for followers. Therefore, in Matthew 10:32-42 His words became like a theological vise that would cause some to turn away from Him and some to draw nearer to Him. As He speaks to the crowd of followers we can feel the pressure mounting as He calls them (and us) to choose Him over self, peace, family, self-fulfillment and even our very lives! He would have you and me choose Him over all these things not as a sacrifice but in order to behold His supremacy in all things! Do you and I wish Him to have supremacy in all and over all things in our lives? If so, there are some things we need to know.

- First, we need to know what Jesus has done *in* us, *for* us and *to* us if He is to have supremacy in our confession (10:32-33).

Jesus brings a proposition to the people in 10:32. He calls them to acknowledge Him before all men with the promise that He has all-authority to acknowledge Him before His Father in heaven! What we miss in our translation is that the word *acknowledge* is better translated *confess*. There is a relational aspect to this word. Jesus is literally saying, "Whoever *confesses* [that he is in] Me before men, I will *confess* [that he is in] Me before My Father in heaven."

It is important to listen to what Jesus is saying. He is not calling you or me to conjure up a sense of relationship. He is saying that if we are in Him and He is in us we will be of those who freely acknowledge Him. True Christians are those who are "alive to God" (Rom. 6:11). If you have been born again then, confessing relationship with Him is as natural as a corn plant producing corn. If you have Christ in you then not only should you acknowledge Christ, but you *really* do want to acknowledge Christ. Will you by faith *confess* to someone that according to His grace you are in Christ and Christ is in you? Likewise, Jesus makes it clear that the person who "disowns" or, in other words consistently lives and speaks in such a way as to demonstrate that Christ means nothing to them, they will be "disowned".

Therefore, if Christ is to have supremacy in your confession of faith then having a thriving and growing knowledge Him, what He has done *in* you, *for* you, and *to* you is essential. You can know Him better through continuing your study of His Word!

- Second, we need to know Him personally, intimately and thoroughly if He is going to have supremacy over our earthly relationships (10:34-36).

According to these verses it is the people in our lives that we know best and that best know us that will be in conflict with us most over our *confession* of faith in Christ (v36). If we do not know Christ intimately, that is, if we neglect going deeper with Him, He will not, by virtue of our coolness to Him, have supremacy over our earthly relationships. Grow with Him! You and I have nothing to lose and Christ to gain! Don't let those in conflict with you manipulate you to be sorry for your confession! "We must rest on the fact that accountability for family divisions," writes Spiros Zodhiates, "falls on those who reject the Spirit of Christ within us." That is an apt word for those of you whose families reject the Christ of your confession!

- Third, we need to know the surpassing value of the life and power of Christ in us if He is to have supremacy over our own desires and even life itself (10:37-39).

In Ephesians 4 Paul instructs Christians on this very point. From 4:17-32 he helps them to remember that it is impossible to "learn Christ" (4:20) by indulging the sinful nature. He reminds them and us that the sinful nature is continually corrupted by "deceitful desires". But the obvious question remains, then, how do we move away from sinful patterns of behavior and instead live in the reality of Christ's supremacy over our felt needs and desires? The answer is consistent through the New Testament: we are to take up our cross and follow Jesus (Matthew 10:38). This means that we are to die to our *self* and our pre-occupation to our *self* (take up our cross) and live according to the Life and Power of Christ in and through us (follow Him). What do we have to lose? By faith I'm trading my sorrow and shame and guilt and death for love and joy and peace and life. I'm a dead end in and of myself. But in Christ is the fullness of God! This is a no-brainer! I'm reminded of the young missionary, Jim Elliot's answer to his critics before he left the U.S. for South America. He said, "He is no fool who gives what he cannot keep to gain what he cannot lose." He was killed shortly after landing on the river bank near the Auca tribe. Wow! Feast on that as you think today of Christ's supremacy over your very aspirations, desires and wants.

- Fourth, we need to know the value of humbly receiving and serving fellow Christians to demonstrate the supremacy of Christ to those we serve (10:40-42).

The last section is simple. The supremacy of Christ in our lives spills over to others best, according to 10:40-42, when we humbly serve others. Christ's supremacy is demonstrated when we humbly receive, without skepticism, good men and women of God who are gifted by Him, and when we serve even the child-like among us. After all, Christ Jesus condescended to seek and save us when we were dead in our sins! So, Christ's supremacy is revealed when we, by faith, take the form of a servant toward others!

Questions for Matthew 11:1-19 “Was Jesus An Underachiever?”

1. From the notes on page 1, **A)** what impressed and/or helped you? **B)** Explain “A”.

Introduction to Matthew 11:1-19: Have you ever been disappointed with God? Beginning here in Matthew 11 through Matthew 13 we find people generally disappointed with Jesus, in opposition to Jesus, or simply rejecting Jesus because He didn't meet their standard of expectation. In Matthew 11:1-19 we learn that even John the Baptist was struggling with his own disappointment with Jesus. Jesus handled the disappointment of the great John the Baptist, and of the crowd, and of His disciples by refocusing each group on who He was: God's Messiah, the Savior King.

2. Read Matthew 11:1-6. “Jesus Refocused John”. **A)** Read Matt. 14:3-4 for some background on John's imprisonment. Why was John in prison? **B)** What expectations do you think John may have had that Jesus wasn't fulfilling that prompted the question posed to Jesus in 11:3? **C)** What did John already know about himself and about Jesus? Read Matt. 3:3; Luke 1:13-14, 76-80; John 1:20, 29, 34 **D)** Why do you think John was struggling? **E)** How did Jesus preserve and refocus John's faith? Compare Matt. 11:5-6 with Isaiah 35:5-6 and Isaiah 61:1-2. **F)** How has the Bible been useful in preserving and refocusing you during the last 4 months?

3. Read Matthew 11:7-15. “Jesus Refocused the Crowd”. **A)** What did Jesus do in verses 7-10 to refocus the crowd? Why do you think this was necessary? **B)** Read 11:7-8. Jesus said that John was not a “reed swayed in the wind” and that he was not “dressed in fine clothes”. What was Jesus saying about John and his character? **C)** What made John's ministry unique compared to all the other prophets that came before? Give all the reasons you can detect from the following verses: Matt. 11:9-10 and 11:13-14 **D)** Read Malachi 3:1 and Malachi 4:5. **If** John is the “messenger” and “the Elijah”, **then** according to these Scriptures, who is Jesus? **E)** There is an implicit warning given in vv.10-14. What is it? **F)** How does v.15 effectively challenge the people who hear Jesus' words?

4. Read Matthew 11:16-19. “Jesus Refocused His Disciples”. **A)** I think Jesus turned to His disciples in vv.16-19 and commented on the crowd around them. Can you see any reason from these verses why I might think that? **B)** If the “people” are like children singing in the market place, then how does the ditty of v.17 describe their “feelings” or “acceptance” of John and Jesus? **C)** How do vv.18,19 further describe their “feelings” or “acceptance”? **D)** What do you think v.19 means?