

## **Matthew 10:24-39 - Bible Study Handout**

### **Big Idea**

Jesus prepares His disciples for the cost of following Him. They may be misunderstood, rejected, or divided from people they love, but they don't have to live afraid. The Father sees them, knows them, and values them. Discipleship may cost us comfort, approval, and control, but Jesus promises that the life surrendered to Him is the life truly found.

### **Context**

- Matthew 10 is Jesus' mission teaching to the Twelve.
- Earlier in the chapter, Jesus sends the disciples to proclaim that the kingdom of heaven has come near.
- Jesus warns them that mission will bring opposition, betrayal, and hardship.
- Matthew 10:24-39 explains that disciples share in the life and treatment of their Teacher.
- Jesus calls His followers to speak truth without fear.
- The Father's care reaches even to sparrows, so His people are never unseen.
- Jesus' words about family division show that loyalty to Him must come first.
- Taking up the cross means surrendering our lives fully to Christ.

### **Key Themes**

- Disciples share in the life of Jesus
- Faithfulness may bring opposition
- Fear doesn't get the final word
- God sees and values His people
- Confessing Christ matters
- Jesus brings true peace, not shallow peace
- Love for Christ orders every other love
- Life is found by surrendering it to Jesus

### **Passage Overview**

#### **Matthew 10:24-25 - Sharing the Teacher's Life**

- Jesus says a student isn't above the teacher and a servant isn't above the master.
- Disciples shouldn't be shocked when they're treated as Jesus was treated.
- If Jesus was slandered, His followers may be slandered too.
- Rejection doesn't mean failure. It may mean we're faithfully walking with Christ (France).

#### **Matthew 10:26-31 - Do Not Be Afraid**

- Jesus tells His disciples not to fear those who oppose them.
- What is hidden will be revealed, and God's truth won't stay buried forever.
- People can harm the body, but they don't hold final authority over the soul.
- Sparrows were inexpensive, yet not one falls outside the Father's care.
- If God sees the sparrow, He surely sees His children.
- The hairs of our heads are numbered. God's care is personal, detailed, and faithful (Keener).

#### **Matthew 10:32-33 - Confessing Christ**

- Jesus calls His followers to acknowledge Him before others.
- Confession is more than words. It's open allegiance to Jesus in how we live, speak, love, and choose.
- Denying Jesus is not the same as a moment of weakness. Peter stumbled and was restored. Jesus is warning against settled rejection of Him (France).

#### **Matthew 10:34-36 - When Peace Exposes Division**

- Jesus' words about bringing a sword don't call for violence.

- He means that loyalty to Him may divide even close relationships.
- Jesus brings true peace with God, but that peace can expose false peace built on fear, silence, or control.
- His words echo Micah 7:6, where family division shows a world in need of God's saving work (Davies and Allison).

### **Matthew 10:37-39 - The Cross and True Life**

- Jesus says love for Him must come before every other love.
- This doesn't make us love family less. It teaches us to love family rightly under Christ's lordship.
- Taking up the cross meant shame, suffering, and surrender in the Roman world.
- Jesus calls His followers to give up self-protected life and receive the life found in Him (Keener).

### **Important Observations**

- Jesus is honest about the cost of discipleship.
- Opposition doesn't mean God has left us.
- Fear is real, but it doesn't have to rule us.
- God's care is not vague. He knows His people personally.
- Confessing Christ means belonging to Him openly.
- Jesus doesn't call us to shallow peace or people-pleasing.
- Family matters, but Christ comes first.
- Losing life for Jesus' sake is the way to find true life.

### **Wesleyan Insights**

- Prevenient Grace: God's grace goes before us, awakening courage before we can create it ourselves (Collins).
- Sanctifying Grace: Jesus calls disciples beyond surface faith into deeper surrender and holy love.
- Practical Holiness: Confessing Christ is not only spoken. It's lived through mercy, courage, truth, and faithfulness.
- Holy Love: Loving Jesus first doesn't weaken love for others. It purifies and rightly orders it.
- Grace and Courage: We don't obey to earn God's love. We obey because God's love has already claimed us.

### **Life Application**

- We need to ask what fears shape our obedience.
- Some people stay silent because they don't want conflict, rejection, or misunderstanding.
- Jesus doesn't call us to be harsh, loud, or argumentative. He calls us to be faithful.
- When we feel unseen, the sparrow reminds us that the Father notices.
- Family expectations, public opinion, and personal comfort can become idols if they take Christ's place.
- The cross reminds us that discipleship is not casual interest. It's surrendered life.
- The life we try to protect at any cost can become small and fearful.
- The life given to Jesus becomes free, even when it's hard.

### **Apologetic Reflection**

- Jesus' honesty gives the Gospel moral weight. He doesn't hide the cost of following Him.
- The passage fits the first-century world of discipleship, Roman power, family loyalty, and public shame.
- The cross was already a brutal image before Christians saw it through the resurrection.

- Christianity doesn't deny suffering. It says God sees, knows, values, and holds His people in suffering.
- Jesus answers the human search for identity by teaching that life is not found in self-protection but in surrender to Him.

### **Details Worth Noticing**

- "Do not be afraid" is repeated because Jesus knows fear will be part of mission.
- Sparrows were cheap, but Jesus uses them to show the Father's detailed care.
- "The hairs of your head are all numbered" points to personal knowledge, not distant concern.
- Jesus' words about the sword describe division, not violence.
- Micah 7:6 stands behind the family language in this passage.
- "Take up your cross" would have sounded shocking before the crucifixion.
- Jesus doesn't ask for part of our loyalty. He asks for the whole life.

### **Reflection Questions**

1. What fears make it harder for people to confess Christ openly?
2. How does the image of the sparrow comfort you?
3. What's the difference between true peace and avoiding conflict?
4. Why must love for Christ come before every other love?
5. What might it look like to "take up your cross" in daily life?

### **Key Verse**

"Whoever finds their life will lose it, and whoever loses their life for my sake will find it." - Matthew 10:39

### **Cross References**

Micah 7:5-7 • Psalm 56:3-4 • Isaiah 51:7-8 • Luke 12:4-7 • John 15:18-21 • Romans 12:1-2 • Galatians 2:20 • 2 Timothy 1:7-8 • Hebrews 13:5-6 • 1 Peter 4:12-16

### **Takeaway**

Matthew 10:24-39 reminds us that following Jesus is not always easy, but it is always held in the Father's care. We don't have to live afraid. We can confess Christ with courage, love others rightly, carry the cross faithfully, and trust that the life surrendered to Jesus is the life truly found.

### **Works Cited**

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