

Family Bible Study

6/21/2026



Matthew 10:24-39

The Cost of Discipleship

Jesus said to the twelve disciples, ²⁴“A disciple is not above his teacher, nor a servant above his master. ²⁵It is enough for the disciple to be like his teacher, and the servant like his master. If they have called the master of the house Beelzebul, how much more will they malign those of his household.

²⁶“So have no fear of them, for nothing is covered that will not be revealed, or hidden that will not be known. ²⁷What I tell you in the dark, say in the light, and what you hear whispered, proclaim on the housetops.

²⁸And do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. Rather fear him who can destroy both soul and body in hell. ²⁹Are not two sparrows sold for a penny? And not one of them will fall to the ground apart from your Father. ³⁰But even the hairs of your head are all numbered.

³¹Fear not, therefore; you are of more value than many sparrows. ³²So everyone who acknowledges me before men, I also will acknowledge before my Father who is in heaven, ³³but whoever denies me before men, I also will deny before my Father who is in heaven.

³⁴“Do not think that I have come to bring peace to the earth. I have not come to bring peace, but a sword. ³⁵For I have come to set a man against his father, and a daughter against her mother, and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law. ³⁶And a person's enemies will be those of his own household. ³⁷Whoever loves father or mother more than me is not worthy of me, and whoever loves son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me.

³⁸And whoever does not take his cross and follow me is not worthy of me.

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

9. Why is there a danger that people might claim to followers of Jesus in private but deny him in public (v32)? What does it say about the power of social pressure? Where do you see pressure being put on people to think or say things today? How often do you see people stand up to public pressure?
10. What did Jesus mean when he said, “I have not come to bring peace, but a sword” (v34)? Is Jesus not the “Lord of peace”? Is his ministry not the “ministry of reconciliation” (2 Cor 5:18-19)? What is the “sword” that he wields? What is its purpose?
11. Jesus warns that following him may strain family relationships and loyalties, to say the least (v32-39). Why would we then risk such tensions?
12. The word Jesus uses here in v39 is the same as the word he uses in 28—*psyche*, which means “life, soul, identity,” essentially, that which makes us who we are. What do you think Jesus meant when he said, “Those who find their *psyche* will lose it, and those who lose their *psyche* for my sake will find it” (v39)?
13. How can we “lose our lives” for Jesus today? How do we “lose” our life *in* Jesus?
14. Following Jesus here sounds rather radical and totalizing. And yet for many in the church, and especially for those outside, Christianity is taken to be the protector of stability, order, and family values....nothing at all that would present a challenge or threat to the status quo. Is this perception wrong, or have we Christians lost something over the centuries, something important?
15. If you were Jesus’ disciples, and you’ve heard him give all these warnings (Matthew 10:16-39), do you think you would accept Jesus’ commission? What would attract you? What would frighten you? Which would win out?
16. Why do you suppose those who put together the lectionary, the schedule of Bible lessons each week, ended this lesson with v39? Read on to the end of the chapter. How would these next few verses change the tone of Jesus’ instructions?

Questions to Wonder with Kids

- In this passage, Jesus tells the twelve Disciples what to expect as if they follow him. Some people, he says, won't want to hear the Good News. They may even try to hurt them. I wonder why some people would be angry at or afraid of Jesus' message of grace...
- Jesus warns the disciples that people will even call them names. Have you ever had someone call you names and treat you badly? What happened? How did Jesus treat people who talked bad about him and his friends?
- Jesus says that the disciples that they don't have to be afraid. Why do you think the disciples were afraid?
- Jesus tells the disciples not to fear those who can hurt their bodies, but to beware those who can hurt their souls too. You can't see them, but souls are our inner self, what makes us *us*. How do you suppose someone can hurt our souls? How can God protect us from that?
- Jesus assures the disciples that God knows and loves us. He says that God knows everything that happens, even when a sparrow falls to the ground. He even knows the number of hairs on our heads! Isn't it amazing that God can keep track of that?
- Jesus says some pretty difficult things about families here, about how sometimes following him, being a Christian, can cause disagreements in families. I hope that never happens in your family. But as much as we love our moms and dads and brothers and sisters, Jesus wants us to love Him more, because He loves us even more than our families. Can you imagine Jesus loving you that much?
- Jesus asks his followers to "take up the cross" and to "lose their life for his sake". These are some big sounding, scary expectations. Most of the twelve disciples did end up dying for him as "martyrs," witnesses to Jesus. And many of his followers in history gave up their life for Jesus' sake. But not all of them, and today not many will. But "taking up the cross" and "losing your life for his sake" is not just about dying. It also means "dying to self," letting die our cravings to get things. We let God be in charge and we trust him to make sure things turn out the way they should. What things can you trust God to take care of? How can you trust God more?

Questions for Adults

1. In this passage, Jesus is giving further instructions to his disciples, in what seems to be a string of seemingly unconnected sayings. What, if anything, do these sayings have in common? If they are in fact a collection of sayings Matthew has compiled, what do you think was his reason for putting these particular sayings together?
2. In the verses before these, Jesus is warning his disciples about how they will be in danger for associating with him, that they can expect the same treatment he has received. Why were Jesus' followers persecuted? What was the cause of the anger and fear others had for the Jesus movement?
3. Beelzubul was an ancient Near Eastern god whose name meant "lord of the house." Do Jesus is making play on words in v25—Jesus is the Godly master of the house, but is accused of being the devilish Beelzebul. What was Jesus being accused of when he was called 'Beelzebul'? Have you ever been slandered, your motives questioned?
4. Who is it that the disciples are not to fear (v26)? Who *are* they to fear?
5. How are the body and the soul to be distinguished (v28)? What can kill the soul?
6. What is that will be "uncovered" (v26-27)? Who will uncover it? What are the disciples to proclaim?
7. Why does Jesus say "do not fear" so many times here, three times in six verses?
8. Jesus says that God knows everything that happens, even to sparrows, and that He knows and cares about us more than them—even knowing the number of hairs on our head (v30). Yet considering all the people throughout history who have died not just tragically, but unnecessarily, for no great purpose, without anyone noting their passage (e.g. in wars, accidents, catastrophes), why might non-believers have trouble "swallowing" this claim? What would you say to them?