

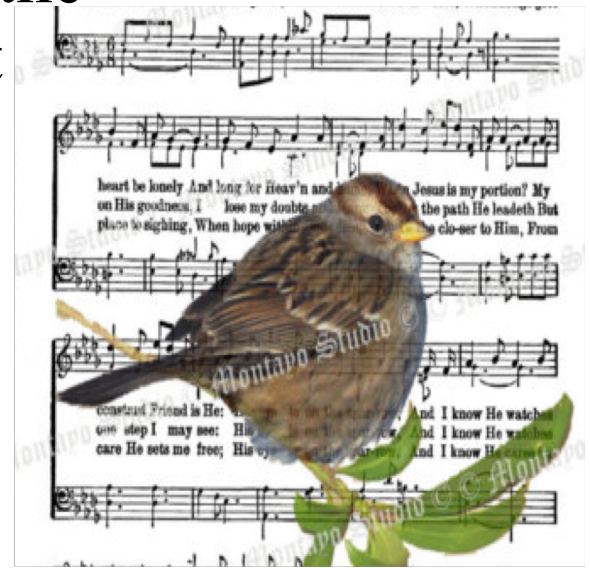
Gospel of Matthew

10:29-42

The Gospelor's War!



Everyone knows the phrase “His eye is on the sparrow”! It is an iconic saying that is part of our American tradition, and actually *a part of the culture*! As America dumbs down, of course, it will become less known, and eventually fade out of the collective consciousness. But for now it is still there, I think. It conveniently is interpreted in such a way as to play into the west’s Christian cult of self-importance! We read our own importance into everything! Through commercialism, we’ve been trained to do so. All the product commercials focus on how important our lives are and our needs as their selling point - therefore God must be as obsessed with me as everybody seems to be, and as I am about myself! It is a $2 + 2 = 5$ equation though! The two concepts do not *conflate*. Conflate means to mix together two different elements. But this is like trying to conflate oil and water!



I agree that God loves us. I am not calling that into question. But as I look at scripture and try to separate myself from our culture and my personal self-bias, and look at what is actually there - I see clearly that our life here on earth is ***not*** His focus. In the real context of the the Eternal One having experienced eternity, and in that context, our earthly life to Him is important only in its value to the mission! Otherwise our life here is worth not much except to ourselves!



God is entirely consistent in this! Even the life of His own Son on earth was forfeited for the mission! The Son's comfort was obviously not factored in or He would have come during our lifetime. It has never been so comfortable in human history! Everything here and now is configured for comfort, for ease, for more productivity with less effort and expense, *in some laboratory*. We have ergonomic furniture and ergonomic shoes cushioned with air or gel or memory foam. We have engines that do the heavy lifting, Computers and phone and internet that do our research, and electronics controlling amazing gadgets to aid us in our work, or to even DO our work!

If God was concerned with comfort in this life, He would have waited until now to have come! But He actually came during a very *uncomfortable* period in history. People did not know much about comfort and certainly were not focused on it. Even the rich then did not live in the comfort of our poor now. They didn't get 3 squares a day, and their diet was not balanced. They didn't have toothbrushes, deodorant, Band-Aids, sanitizer, antibiotics, dentistry, toilets and toilet paper. They had nothing in comparison!



God knows a lot better than we do that eternity is where real life awaits His people. They/we cannot grasp just how much better life will be there than life here on earth - even in the USA! Once there, not one of us will be pining for the old days! Not one of us will, like the Israelites, be whining about returning to Egypt! Through Jesus we know that God grieves our sufferings, but He knows better than to grieve our deaths. **Ps. 116:15** says “*Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of His saints*”

Vs. 29 – these verses are here to inform and remind us that God never takes His eyes off us! He may not be concerned with our creature comforts, but we are *never* out of sight or out of mind! My wife, Karen, even swears that God *IS* concerned with the little things of our lives, as she believes she has received His help on numerous occasions to find lost things after she has asked Him for help. I know a lot of Christians that believe this way, and I don't know for sure, so that's fine too.



I've even asked Him for help on occasion for things that are important only to me – but I don't remember having a strong intuition that He has helped me with them - even if my desire was fulfilled. I thank Him, but I don't know. So I'm being honest with you here, that there are certainly things like that where we just don't know for sure. ***What I do know***, however, is that God is concerned with His greater purposes here on earth and how we fit into that purpose. That is what I know for sure! When we ask for Him anything that we need to accomplish His will and His purposes, He will give it! He promised that, and I've experienced it numerous times! But we just always need to be more concerned with what He wants rather than what we want! That is what this “taking up of our cross” is referring to. Even Jesus, before going to the cross had to submit himself to the Father's will “*never-the-less, not my will by yours*”⁵

Vs. 32,33 –This goes along with what I am saying. We are not pampered children whose Heavenly Father dotes on our every need. We are children of God, yes, but ***grown*** children who are also servants of God, with an ultra-serious calling upon our lives! We have been given an appointment by the King! It is not an appointment that we can turn down – not if we want to be legitimately classified as being one of His people! That appointment is to be an ambassador of Christ (I spoke of this last week or the week before), a liaison between God and humanity to tell people, word of mouth, about the Gospel of Jesus – that the issues brought up in the Gospel are of a personal nature, not religious, and that these are issues that must be taken care of as quickly as possible! If we are unwilling to accept the mission and actually do it, then we are unwilling to “acknowledge” Christ as our God. Jesus said that if that is the case, the Father will not “acknowledge” us as His own child when we come before Him. This verse cannot be explained away. I’m not going to soften this. I don’t have the authority to do so. Our salvation seems to be very connected to our calling to acknowledge Christ before the people of this world!

**For I can do
everything
through Christ,
who gives me
strength.
Philippians 4:13**

Vs. 34 - 39 - THIS IS WAR!

Maybe you are a peace-loving person. You don't want to offend or upset anyone. Then you are in the wrong line. Better move over to the other line. It is a lot longer and moving faster. This line is the people who are enlisting! The people in this line will be called upon to do battle! We may not want to, but when called upon, we cough up our courage and go and do it anyway! Our feelings about this don't matter! We will be met with hostility most of the time, and that's hard, I know! But the most important thing is the fact that every once in a while someone will NOT be hostile. Every once in a while someone will actually listen, consider, ponder, and a few of those will then become a Christ-follower. You will have fulfilled your appointment! You are a good ambassador! You have obeyed God and acknowledged Jesus Christ before the people around you! Now He will acknowledge you before His throne!



Families will be ripped apart over the issue of Jesus! Friendships will be lost! You may lose your job over this! You may experience oppression from the government, or pressure and hate on social media. *Social media is like mob rule! It's actually scary! I swear that if they had the the means, the power, they would have no problem practicing intellectual genocide – real genocide - on anyone that does not think like they do! They are a huge group of intellectually inter-connected people on the net – a vast gaggle of vicious little trolls, each with their own clever yet hateful little witticisms and vulgarities to add to the weight of public opinion against Christ-followers – against you and I! And they seem to be inexhaustible! It is a like a religion to them - and they are the truly zealous priests of the culture, touting a new and twisted sense of righteousness!



So what happens if your son or daughter belongs to the vast gaggle of trolls that our culture/society possesses?! What if they have chosen sides and it is not yours? If you join them – if you choose them over Jesus and go over to their side because you do not want to lose them, Jesus says in vs. 37 that you are not worthy to be called a follower of His. The problem with joining a wayward child of yours is that you have not done them any favors. If their



thinking is diseased, it is your job as a parent to REFUSE to join them! That is the most loving parental action you can take! To join them in their error to preserve the relationship is to show a shocking disregard for your parental responsibilities – a terrible weakness – and they will suffer the worse for it in the long run (and most certainly, so will you). If your kids fall for the culture and its diabolical philosophies couched in mindless slogans and euphemisms, your job is to always choose Jesus! We don't choose our children to avoid losing them! We choose Jesus! When we choose Jesus, we have chosen to love our children! If we choose our children over Jesus, we have failed them miserably,.. fatally,, **AND we have identified ourselves as never having been a real follower of Christ!!** It's true! A real Christ-follower would never choose anyone or anything over Christ. A real Christ-follower would not even choose to save their own life if it meant that they had to deny Christ!

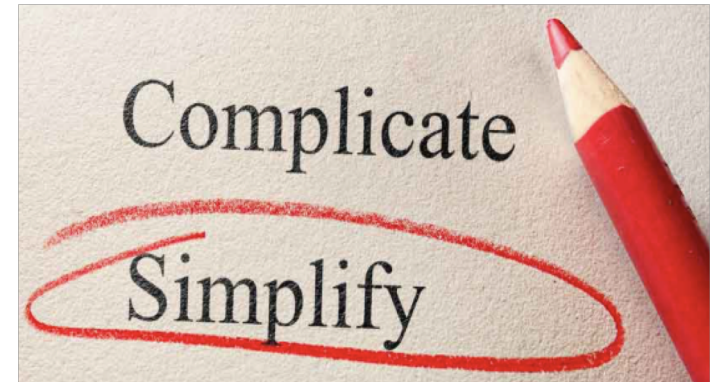


So what do you do if your child tells you that they are bringing their boyfriend or girlfriend home to meet you and that ***they*** will be using the spare bedroom. And when you tell them that they will NOT be sleeping together under YOUR roof, they tell you that you will not be invited to the wedding, that you will never see them

gain or your grandchildren! What will your decision be?

If your son tells you he wants to bring his boyfriend home, or your daughter tells you she want to bring her girlfriend home to meet the family and hang out with everyone at Christmas time, what are you going to say to him or her? You already know what they will do if you say “No – **you** are welcome, *but your boyfriend or girlfriend (husband or wife) is not, because what you are doing is wrong, no matter what the culture says, and I cannot condone it!*” You know if you take a firm stand that you will lose him or her – that they will choose their boyfriend or girlfriend, and reject you. Are you prepared to choose Christ and not try to rationalize, fudge, and compromise yourself to save the relationship?

Listen! I've said this before and I'll say it again. Being a Christ-follower will often make things more complicated – at least to begin with – and especially in the current moral climate! Choosing what you know God approves of certainly makes things much less complicated in the long run as God promises to make our crooked and uneven paths straight. Straightening crooked things is what He does and does so well. But, when a person first comes to Christ, there is much to untangle from, and that is extremely difficult and painful. And when a Christian is associated with family members and friends that do not follow Jesus, there is a lot of sorting out to do – again, difficult and painful! But we always are asking ourselves the question of how to live my life in the most loving and exemplary way?! Well, of course, the most loving thing is to stay true to Jesus and make our decisions based upon what is right according to His word! This is obedience!



Obedience, says Jesus, is what people who love Him do. It is who we are and we cannot separate ourselves from who we are in Jesus. It is our permanent identity which will follow us into eternity! The world may change around us, and we can and must change with it. But there are certain things that cannot and will not *ever* change for us. When something is wrong, it will remain wrong forever! When something is right, it will remain right forever! We have to choose the right thing, knowing this honors Christ and makes a straight path for us on our spiritual journey! Ultimately it is the most loving thing that we can do for our lost family and for the lost world around us! Initially, it may hurt as if a live coal from hell got into our head somehow and is rattling around in there, scorching our brain. But Jesus promises that this will be the norm for His followers, and that if we will but trust Him and obey, He will one day make it worth their while!



Vs. 40- 42 - People are not accepting or rejecting you
– they are accepting or rejecting Christ! This is our
war – the gospelers's war!

