

Matt 10:27-39

“Hard Sayings and Hard Choices”

Following my closing comments last Sunday, I wrestled with why it bothered me in that moment that someone may have walked out due to something I had said? Was it because of my past experiences with rejection linked to my preaching? I’ve certainly had a few. Or was it more personal, maybe ego? I won’t tell you what I concluded. You can’t share everything. But, I prayed, and my prayer landed me in our text of focus this morning. So, this morning I want to share three observations drawn Jesus’ words regarding hard sayings and hard choices.

First observation. The message entrusted to us is not ours it is Christ’s. V27 “Whatever I tell you in the dark, speak in the light; and what you hear in the ear, preach on the housetops.” Church, no amending God’s word, Christ’s gospel. No making it more palatable. No trying to convince others it is true, etc. We must give it just as God has given it to us in the Holy Word. And when we are faithful at doing this some will be offended. Make no mistake about it, God’s word offends, among many other things. And this cannot be avoided because of sin. We do not have to own how God’s word may make people feel. Furthermore, we do not have to own whether people listen or believe God’s word. We certainly desire that all listen and believe, but that is not up to us. That’s between them and God. The message entrusted to us belongs to God/Jesus Christ, so no changing it no matter how hard it may be. What is written we must proclaim.

Jeremiah 23:28-30 ^{“28} “Let these false prophets tell their dreams, but let my true messengers faithfully proclaim my every word.

There is a difference between straw and grain! ²⁹ Does not my word burn like fire?” says the Lord. “Is it not like a mighty hammer that smashes a rock to pieces? ³⁰ “Therefore,” says the Lord, “I am against these prophets who steal messages from each other and claim they are from me.”

Matt 10:14 ¹⁴ If any household or town refuses to welcome you or listen to your message, shake its dust from your feet as you leave.

Acts 20:26-28 “²⁶ I declare today that I have been faithful. If anyone suffers eternal death, it’s not my fault, ²⁷ for I didn’t shrink from declaring all that God wants you to know. ²⁸ “So guard yourselves and God’s people. Feed and shepherd God’s flock—his church, purchased with his own blood—over which the Holy Spirit has appointed you as leaders.

1 Cor 1:22-23 “It is foolish to the Jews, who ask for signs from heaven. And it is foolish to the Greeks, who seek human wisdom. So when we preach that Christ was crucified, the Jews are offended and the Gentiles say it’s all nonsense.”

Second observation. Don’t waiver in your profession of faith in Jesus as Lord, no matter what! V28-33 “²⁸ And do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. But rather fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell. ²⁹ Are not two sparrows sold for a copper coin? And not one of them falls to the ground apart from your Father’s will. ³⁰ But the very hairs of your head are all numbered. ³¹ Do not fear therefore; you are of more value than many sparrows. ³² “Therefore whoever confesses Me before men, him I will also confess before My Father who is in heaven. ³³ But whoever denies Me before men, him I will also deny before My Father who is in heaven.” The

most the world or anyone in it could do to us is kill us for our profession. Listen, I am not looking to die due to my faith, but I certainly hope if it came to that I would be like Stephen and the great martyrs of the faith who knew that bodily death was only momentary. This is the best the enemy can do, seek to scare us with something that is temporary. Church, let us take very seriously the warning from Jesus here. “And do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. But rather fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell”. Fear only leads to compromise. Do not waiver in your profession. Don’t shrink for anyone or any reason for what we may face in this world as result is temporary. But that which we are assured of in Christ Jesus is eternal. The world did not give it and the world or anyone in it cannot take it away.

Psalm 23:4-5 “Even when I walk through the darkest valley, I will not be afraid, for you are close beside me. Your rod and your staff protect and comfort me. You prepare a feast for me in the presence of my enemies.”

Rom 8:38-39 ³⁸“And I am convinced that nothing can ever separate us from God’s love. Neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither our fears for today nor our worries about tomorrow—not even the powers of hell can separate us from God’s love.³⁹ No power in the sky above or in the earth below—indeed, nothing in all creation will ever be able to separate us from the love of God that is revealed in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

Final observation. Standing for Jesus is sure to bring conflict.

V34-39 ³⁴“Do not think that I came to bring peace on earth. I did not come to bring peace but a sword.³⁵ For I have come

to 'set a man against his father, a daughter against her mother, and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law'; ³⁶ and 'a man's enemies *will be* those of his *own* household.' ³⁷ He who loves father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me. And he who loves son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me. ³⁸ And he who does not take his cross and follow after Me is not worthy of Me. ³⁹ He who finds his life will lose it, and he who loses his life for My sake will find it." Brothers and Sisters, we cannot fly under the radar as disciples of Jesus Christ. Your faith is not a private matter. Hard things will have to be said and hard choices will have to be made. And it may very well cost us. But that's okay, for as Paul has declared in. We have much to look forward to in the coming life and so we must not cling to temporal things, for if we do so we risk the eternal things.

Phil 1:21, "To live is Christ to die is gain"

1 Cor 2:9, "No eye has seen, no ear has heard, and no mind has imagined what God has prepared for those who love him".

Hard sayings and hard choices cannot be avoided if we are faithful to the word. In the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Amen.