

Text: Matthew 9-10

Section 1

1Getting into a boat, Jesus crossed over the sea and came to His own city. 2And they brought to Him a paralytic lying on a bed. Seeing their faith, Jesus said to the paralytic, "Take courage, son; your sins are forgiven." 3And some of the scribes said to themselves, "This fellow blasphemes." 4And Jesus knowing their thoughts said, "Why are you thinking evil in your hearts? 5"Which is easier, to say, 'Your sins are forgiven,' or to say, 'Get up, and walk'? 6"But so that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins"--then He said to the paralytic, "Get up, pick up your bed and go home." 7And he got up and went home. 8But when the crowds saw this, they were awestruck, and glorified God, who had given such authority to men. (Matthew 9:1-8)

Yes, Jesus forgave the sins of those that sought Him by faith. The scribes correctly viewed this as a claim to deity, and accused Him of blasphemy. Why would Jesus claim to be God? First of all, because He was and *is* God. Secondly, He did so to demonstrate that He was the promised Messiah. Isaiah's prophecy identifies the Messiah as the Incarnation of God Himself.

**6For a child will be born to us, a son will be given to us;
And the government will rest on His shoulders;
And His name will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God,
Eternal Father, Prince of Peace. (Isaiah 9:6)**

But why use this healing as an opportunity to assert deity? The paralytic came to Him with an immediate physical need. Why did He not simply heal him and continue on His way? The ultimate end of faith in Jesus Christ is spiritual healing—regeneration, justification, sanctification, SALVATION. If Jesus had only healed this man physically and left his spiritual need unaddressed, he would ultimately be worse off than he was before, since he would still be destined for Hell. Forgiveness of sin is necessary for entrance into the Kingdom of God—no sin is allowed there. We must be washed, we must be forgiven, we must be saved from sin through faith in Christ or we will be denied entrance into that glorious existence.

9Or do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived; neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor homosexuals, 10nor thieves, nor the covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers, will inherit the kingdom of God. 11Such were some of you; but you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and in the Spirit of our God. (1 Corinthians 6:9-11)

Section 2

9As Jesus went on from there, He saw a man called Matthew, sitting in the tax collector's booth; and He said to him, "Follow Me!" And he got up and followed Him. 10Then it happened that as Jesus was reclining at the table in the house, behold, many tax collectors and sinners came and were dining with Jesus and His disciples. 11When the Pharisees saw this, they said to His disciples, "Why is your Teacher eating with the tax collectors and sinners?" 12But when Jesus heard this, He said, "It is not those who are healthy who need a physician, but those who are sick. 13"But go and learn what this means: 'I DESIRE COMPASSION, AND NOT SACRIFICE,' for I did not come to call the righteous, but sinners." (Matthew 9:9-13)

As was the case with the first disciples that Jesus called, so was the case with Matthew. Jesus called, and Matthew left his crooked profession forever. We see no evidence of deliberation or reticence on his part: Matthew willingly left the riches and opulent lifestyle that his job surely generated in order to follow Jesus. This shows the great power of the call of God on a person's life: everyone that the Father has given to the Son will come to Him gladly and willingly. I pray that we all have and will have the same love for Him, forsaking all if necessary in order to gain eternal life.

44"No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him; and I will raise him up on the last day. (John 6:44)

37"All that the Father gives Me will come to Me, and the one who comes to Me I will certainly not cast out. (John 6:37)

Although I have referred to this parable often in my lessons, I must do so again. The Kingdom of God has no place for the self-righteous. Only those that recognize that they have no good in themselves and throw themselves entirely upon Christ's mercy will be saved.

9And He also told this parable to some people who trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and viewed others with contempt: 10"Two men went up into the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. 11"The Pharisee stood

and was praying this to himself: 'God, I thank You that I am not like other people: swindlers, unjust, adulterers, or even like this tax collector. 12'I fast twice a week; I pay tithes of all that I get.' 13'But the tax collector, standing some distance away, was even unwilling to lift up his eyes to heaven, but was beating his breast, saying, 'God, be merciful to me, the sinner!' 14'I tell you, this man went to his house justified rather than the other; for everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, but he who humbles himself will be exalted.' (Luke 18:9-14)

Section 3

14Then the disciples of John came to Him, asking, "Why do we and the Pharisees fast, but Your disciples do not fast?" 15And Jesus said to them, "The attendants of the bridegroom cannot mourn as long as the bridegroom is with them, can they? But the days will come when the bridegroom is taken away from them, and then they will fast. 16"But no one puts a patch of unshrunk cloth on an old garment; for the patch pulls away from the garment, and a worse tear results. 17"Nor do people put new wine into old wineskins; otherwise the wineskins burst, and the wine pours out and the wineskins are ruined; but they put new wine into fresh wineskins, and both are preserved." (Matthew 9:14-17)

What is this business about wine and wineskins? This is a metaphor representing the effect of Christ's message upon people. One cannot simply "add Jesus" to their former lifestyle and expect to be saved. This is the idea of putting new wine into old wineskins. As new wine ferments, it releases gases and expands, and an old, worn out skin will burst as a result. New wineskins are more pliable, and have the capacity to expand somewhat as the wine ferments. Those that think they can "add Christ" and continue in sin are deceiving themselves—eventually this faith proves to be fleeting and non-saving. Faith in Christ is only effectual when one has been changed by Him. The true believer, the one destined for Heaven, is a new person when He comes to Christ. While some sin is unfortunately still present in him, his life is marked by a continual turning away from sin and toward Christ.

17Therefore if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come. (2 Corinthians 5:17)

8"But for the cowardly and unbelieving and abominable and murderers and immoral persons and sorcerers and idolaters and all liars, their part will be in the lake that burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death." (Revelation 21:8)

Section 4

18While He was saying these things to them, a synagogue official came and bowed down before Him, and said, "My daughter has just died; but come and lay Your hand on her, and she will live." 19Jesus got up and began to follow him, and so did His disciples. 20And a woman who had been suffering from a hemorrhage for twelve years, came up behind Him and touched the fringe of His cloak; 21for she was saying to herself, "If I only touch His garment, I will get well." 22But Jesus turning and seeing her said, "Daughter, take courage; your faith has made you well." At once the woman was made well. 3When Jesus came into the official's house, and saw the flute-players and the crowd in noisy disorder, 24He said, "Leave; for the girl has not died, but is asleep." And they began laughing at Him. 25But when the crowd had been sent out, He entered and took her by the hand, and the girl got up. 26This news spread throughout all that land. 27As Jesus went on from there, two blind men followed Him, crying out, "Have mercy on us, Son of David!" 28When He entered the house, the blind men came up to Him, and Jesus said to them, "Do you believe that I am able to do this?" They said to Him, "Yes, Lord." 29Then He touched their eyes, saying, "It shall be done to you according to your faith." 30And their eyes were opened. And Jesus sternly warned them: "See that no one knows about this!" 31But they went out and spread the news about Him throughout all that land. (Matthew 9:18-31)

So this hemorrhaging woman came to Jesus seeking healing. In all likelihood, this "hemorrhage" was continuous menstruation, a condition that was not only debilitating, but also made her ceremonially unclean—this woman was unable to participate in corporate worship for twelve years! Thus, when Jesus healed her, He not only restored her physical health, but restored to her the privilege of offering worship to God.

25'Now if a woman has a discharge of her blood many days, not at the period of her menstrual impurity, or if she has a discharge beyond that period, all the days of her impure discharge she shall continue as though in her menstrual impurity; she is unclean. (Leviticus 15:25)

Jesus raised the dead and gave sight to the blind. Once again, He demonstrated not only His power and mercy, but also His office as Messiah. When John the Baptist had a "crisis of faith," if you will, Jesus reminded John of these things in order to reassure John that He was, indeed, Christ.

2Now when John, while imprisoned, heard of the works of Christ, he sent word by his disciples 3and said to Him, "Are You the Expected One, or shall we look for someone else?" 4Jesus answered and said to them, "Go and report to John what you hear and see: 5the BLIND RECEIVE SIGHT and the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, and the POOR HAVE THE GOSPEL PREACHED TO THEM. 6"And blessed is he who does not take offense at Me." (Matthew 11:2-6)

Jesus told the blind men, *"It shall be done to you according to your faith."* Please keep in mind that it is the Object of one's faith that makes it effective, not the strength or weakness of that faith. We don't have "faith in faith," but faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. The following story demonstrates Christ's love and mercy, in that He honored the plea of a man with weak faith not only for his son's healing, but also for greater faith.

14When they came back to the disciples, they saw a large crowd around them, and some scribes arguing with them.

15Immediately, when the entire crowd saw Him, they were amazed and began running up to greet Him. **16**And He asked them, "What are you discussing with them?" **17**And one of the crowd answered Him, Teacher, I brought You my son, possessed with a spirit which makes him mute; **18**and whenever it seizes him, it slams him to the ground and he foams at the mouth, and grinds his teeth and stiffens out. I told Your disciples to cast it out, and they could not do it." **19**And He answered them and said, "O unbelieving generation, how long shall I be with you? How long shall I put up with you? Bring him to Me!" **20**They brought the boy to Him. When he saw Him, immediately the spirit threw him into a convulsion, and falling to the ground, he began rolling around and foaming at the mouth. **21**And He asked his father, "How long has this been happening to him?" And he said, "From childhood. **22**"It has often thrown him both into the fire and into the water to destroy him. But if You can do anything, take pity on us and help us!" **23**And Jesus said to him, "If You can?" All things are possible to him who believes." **24**Immediately the boy's father cried out and said, "I do believe; help my unbelief." **25**When Jesus saw that a crowd was rapidly gathering, He rebuked the unclean spirit, saying to it, "You deaf and mute spirit, I command you, come out of him and do not enter him again." **26**After crying out and throwing him into terrible convulsions, it came out; and the boy became so much like a corpse that most of them said, "He is dead!" **27**But Jesus took him by the hand and raised him; and he got up. (Mark 9:14-27)

What a great comfort this story should be to us! When our faith is weak, remember this man and his story. Though his faith was weak, it was correctly placed (in Christ). More importantly, his prayer for greater faith was one that our Lord honored, and we can expect that He will do the same for us.

Section 5

*32*As they were going out, a mute, demon-possessed man was brought to Him. *33*After the demon was cast out, the mute man spoke; and the crowds were amazed, and were saying, "Nothing like this has ever been seen in Israel." *34*But the Pharisees were saying, "He casts out the demons by the ruler of the demons." *35*Jesus was going through all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues and proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every kind of disease and every kind of sickness. *36*Seeing the people, He felt compassion for them, because they were distressed and dispirited like sheep without a shepherd. *37*Then He said to His disciples, "The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few. *38*"Therefore beseech the Lord of the harvest to send out workers into His harvest." (Matthew 9:32-38)

Ladies and Gentlemen, there are lost people everywhere. Even in the "Bible Belt" they are all around us, I assure you. These people need to know about God and His love...and also about His wrath and His judgment. Not all will be saved, but some, even many will, if only someone will tell them about Jesus. You and I need to be that someone, to go out and work His fields, bringing in His harvest. After all, our Lord commanded it!

18And Jesus came up and spoke to them, saying, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. **19**"Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, **20**teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age." (Matthew 28:18-20)

Section 6

*1*Jesus summoned His twelve disciples and gave them authority over unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to heal every kind of disease and every kind of sickness. *2*Now the names of the twelve apostles are these: The first, Simon, who is called Peter, and Andrew his brother; and James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother; *3*Philip and Bartholomew; Thomas and Matthew the tax collector; James the son of Alphaeus, and Thaddaeus; *4*Simon the Zealot, and Judas Iscariot, the one who betrayed Him. *5*These twelve Jesus sent out after instructing them: "Do not go in the way of the Gentiles, and do not enter any city of the Samaritans; *6*but rather go to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. (Matthew 10:1-6)

Some may find Jesus' instruction to avoid visiting the Gentiles to be offensive, or even contradictory—did we not just discuss how Jesus' last words gave a command to **make disciples of all the nations**? Why, then, is He being particular to the Jews now? One reason may simply be pragmatic—Jesus did not want the apostles to take on too much during their first assignment alone. Another is that, while the Gospel is Good News to everyone, as God's chosen, covenant people the Jews were entitled to hear and believe first. After all, it is to the Jews that the promise of Messiah was given.

8For I say that Christ has become a servant to the circumcision on behalf of the truth of God to confirm the promises given to the fathers, (Romans 15:8)

Ultimately, though, everyone will stand before God one day and give an account of himself. Because all have sinned, both Jew and Gentile, all stand in need of a Savior if they are to have the sentence of eternal death commuted. While Paul repeatedly noted that the promises came first to the Jew and then to the Gentile, he also pointed out that all men have a responsibility to repent and believe.

9There will be tribulation and distress for every soul of man who does evil, of the Jew first and also of the Greek, 10but glory and honor and peace to everyone who does good, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. (Romans 2:9-10)

29"Being then the children of God, we ought not to think that the Divine Nature is like gold or silver or stone, an image formed by the art and thought of man. 30"Therefore having overlooked the times of ignorance, God is now declaring to men that all people everywhere should repent, 31because He has fixed a day in which He will judge the world in righteousness through a Man whom He has appointed, having furnished proof to all men by raising Him from the dead." (Acts 17:29-31)

Section 7

7"And as you go, preach, saying, 'The kingdom of heaven is at hand.' 8"Heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse the lepers, cast out demons. Freely you received, freely give. 9"Do not acquire gold, or silver, or copper for your money belts, 10or a bag for your journey, or even two coats, or sandals, or a staff; for the worker is worthy of his support. 11"And whatever city or village you enter, inquire who is worthy in it, and stay at his house until you leave that city. 12"As you enter the house, give it your greeting. 13"If the house is worthy, give it your blessing of peace. But if it is not worthy, take back your blessing of peace. 14"Whoever does not receive you, nor heed your words, as you go out of that house or that city, shake the dust off your feet. 15"Truly I say to you, it will be more tolerable for the land of Sodom and Gomorrah in the day of judgment than for that city. (Matthew 10:7-15)

Jesus gave the apostles authority and power to do the same types of works that He did, with the exception of forgiving sin. He also exhorted them to trust God for their provision, rather than taking time away from His work worrying about their physical needs. Likewise for us, while we are certainly allowed and commanded to provide for ourselves (Paul said that he that does not work should not eat), we are to acknowledge God as the Source of our provisions, and to trust that, if we are truly His servants, we will never suffer want of daily necessities.

31"Do not worry then, saying, 'What will we eat?' or 'What will we drink?' or 'What will we wear for clothing?' 32"For the Gentiles eagerly seek all these things; for your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. 33"But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be added to you. 34"So do not worry about tomorrow; for tomorrow will care for itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own. (Matthew 6:31-34)

Jesus told the apostles to *shake the dust off [their] feet* if the people of a city would not receive their Message. We are responsible for preaching the Word to all people—we are not responsible for saving them, as this power belongs only to God. Preach the Word, pray for the salvation of your hearers, and trust God with the results. When we share the Gospel with a person we have done our duty, whether or not he actually repents and believes. If we fail to share with someone, however, we bear some guilt, as one cannot accept a Word he has not heard.

14How then will they call on Him in whom they have not believed? How will they believe in Him whom they have not heard? And how will they hear without a preacher? (Romans 10:14)

God shared a similar concept with Ezekiel while he was prophesying to the Jews.

17"Son of man, I have appointed you a watchman to the house of Israel; whenever you hear a word from My mouth, warn them from Me. 18"When I say to the wicked, 'You will surely die,' and you do not warn him or speak out to warn the wicked from his wicked way that he may live, that wicked man shall die in his iniquity, but his blood I will require at your hand. 19"Yet if you have warned the wicked and he does not turn from his wickedness or from his wicked way, he shall die in his iniquity; but you have delivered yourself. (Ezekiel 3:17-19)

Jesus said that the Day of Judgment would be *more tolerable for Sodom and Gomorrah* than for those cities and people that heard the Gospel and did not believe. In the next chapter, He expounds on this even further.

20Then He began to denounce the cities in which most of His miracles were done, because they did not repent. 21"Woe to you, Chorazin! Woe to you, Bethsaida! For if the miracles had occurred in Tyre and Sidon which occurred in you, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes. 22"Nevertheless I say to you, it will be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon in the day of judgment than for you. 23"And you, Capernaum, will not be exalted to heaven, will you? You will descend to

Hades; for if the miracles had occurred in Sodom which occurred in you, it would have remained to this day. 24"Nevertheless I say to you that it will be more tolerable for the land of Sodom in the day of judgment, than for you." (Matthew 11:20-24)

This brings up an important question: if God knew the type of preaching and acts that would be necessary to bring these cities to repentance and forgiveness, why did He destroy them rather than send messengers to exhort them to repent? Is God unjust for not executing judgment rather than mercy? No. Remember, God is under no obligation to save anyone—justice demands that all be sent to Hell. It is only by undeserved mercy that any of us avoids eternal torment. That God saves some and not others does not make Him unjust, it only means that he exercises His prerogative to save whom He will.

14What shall we say then? There is no injustice with God, is there? May it never be! 15For He says to Moses, "I WILL HAVE MERCY ON WHOM I HAVE MERCY, AND I WILL HAVE COMPASSION ON WHOM I HAVE COMPASSION." 16So then it does not depend on the man who wills or the man who runs, but on God who has mercy. 17For the Scripture says to Pharaoh, "FOR THIS VERY PURPOSE I RAISED YOU UP, TO DEMONSTRATE MY POWER IN YOU, AND THAT MY NAME MIGHT BE PROCLAIMED THROUGHOUT THE WHOLE EARTH." 18So then He has mercy on whom He desires, and He hardens whom He desires. 19You will say to me then, "Why does He still find fault? For who resists His will?" 20On the contrary, who are you, O man, who answers back to God? The thing molded will not say to the molder, "Why did you make me like this," will it? 21Or does not the potter have a right over the clay, to make from the same lump one vessel for honorable use and another for common use? 22What if God, although willing to demonstrate His wrath and to make His power known, endured with much patience vessels of wrath prepared for destruction? 23And He did so to make known the riches of His glory upon vessels of mercy, which He prepared beforehand for glory, 24even us, whom He also called, not from among Jews only, but also from among Gentiles. (Romans 9:14-24)

We are commanded to preach the Gospel to all people, and know that all people have the responsibility to repent of sin and confess Christ, even though only some will repent and believe. We are to faithfully share the Good News, and trust Him to bring about the result that is in accordance with His Will.

Section 8

16"Behold, I send you out as sheep in the midst of wolves; so be shrewd as serpents and innocent as doves. 17"But beware of men, for they will hand you over to the courts and scourge you in their synagogues; 18and you will even be brought before governors and kings for My sake, as a testimony to them and to the Gentiles. 19"But when they hand you over, do not worry about how or what you are to say; for it will be given you in that hour what you are to say. 20"For it is not you who speak, but it is the Spirit of your Father who speaks in you. 21"Brother will betray brother to death, and a father his child; and children will rise up against parents and cause them to be put to death. 22"You will be hated by all because of My name, but it is the one who has endured to the end who will be saved. 23"But whenever they persecute you in one city, flee to the next; for truly I say to you, you will not finish going through the cities of Israel until the Son of Man comes. (Matthew 10:16-23)

Jesus said that His followers will be persecuted. If we are truly following Him, we are to expect rejection by the world, and even verbal and/or physical persecution. That unrighteous governments and authorities will do this is not surprising, but this will and does occur even at the hands of "religious" people, even those who claim to serve the God whose servants they are persecuting.

2"They will make you outcasts from the synagogue, but an hour is coming for everyone who kills you to think that he is offering service to God. 3"These things they will do because they have not known the Father or Me. 4"But these things I have spoken to you, so that when their hour comes, you may remember that I told you of them These things I did not say to you at the beginning, because I was with you. (John 16:2-4)

How can one that claims to serve God persecute His servants? Remember, the Gospel is not palatable to the natural man. By nature, we do not like to have our thoughts pointed out, we do not like to be told we are sinners, we do not like to be told that God is just and will send to Hell forever all people that do not repent and believe. As such, unregenerate people that want to maintain a show of religion will build churches and find teachers that will tell them what they want to hear. Ultimately, these are enemies of Christ and the Gospel, and persecutors of true believers.

3For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but wanting to have their ears tickled, they will accumulate for themselves teachers in accordance to their own desires, 4and will turn away their ears from the truth and will turn aside to myths. (2 Timothy 4:3-4)

When we are questioned and/or imprisoned for professing Christ, we are not to plan ahead or think about what we are to say, but are to trust in the Holy Spirit to give us the words to speak. God is not impressed with polished oration, scholarly acumen, or worldly wisdom—in fact, He explicitly chooses those things and people that the world deems base, foolish, and unworthy to be His instruments. While we must certainly be devoted students of the Word in order to know and serve Him better, ultimately He wants us to trust Him, simply, and to proclaim His Word, simply.

18For the word of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God.

19For it is written,

"I WILL DESTROY THE WISDOM OF THE WISE,

AND THE CLEVERNESS OF THE CLEVER I WILL SET ASIDE." **20**Where is the wise man? Where is the scribe?

Where is the debater of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world? **21**For since in the wisdom of God the world through its wisdom did not come to know God, God was well-pleased through the foolishness of the message preached to save those who believe. **22**For indeed Jews ask for signs and Greeks search for wisdom; **23**but we preach Christ crucified, to Jews a stumbling block and to Gentiles foolishness, **24**but to those who are the called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God. **25**Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men. **26**For consider your calling, brethren, that there were not many wise according to the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble; **27**but God has chosen the foolish things of the world to shame the wise, and God has chosen the weak things of the world to shame the things which are strong, **28**and the base things of the world and the despised God has chosen, the things that are not, so that He may nullify the things that are, **29**so that no man may boast before God. **30**But by His doing you are in Christ Jesus, who became to us wisdom from God, and righteousness and sanctification, and redemption, **31**so that, just as it is written, **"LET HIM WHO BOASTS, BOAST IN THE LORD."** (1 Corinthians 1:18-31)

Section 9

24"A disciple is not above his teacher, nor a slave above his master. *25*"It is enough for the disciple that he become like his teacher, and the slave like his master. If they have called the head of the house Beelzebul, how much more will they malign the members of his household! *26*"Therefore do not fear them, for there is nothing concealed that will not be revealed, or hidden that will not be known. *27*"What I tell you in the darkness, speak in the light; and what you hear whispered in your ear, proclaim upon the housetops. *28*"Do not fear those who kill the body but are unable to 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 cent? And yet not one of them will fall to the ground apart from your Father. *30*"But the very hairs of your head are all numbered. *31*"So do not fear; you are more valuable than many sparrows. *32*"Therefore everyone who confesses Me before men, I will also confess him before My Father who is in heaven. *33*"But whoever denies Me before men, I will also deny him before My Father who is in heaven. (Matthew 10:24-33)

Jesus says that if we confess Him, He will confess us. What a great promise that is!

9that if you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved; **10**for with the heart a person believes, resulting in righteousness, and with the mouth he confesses, resulting in salvation. (Romans 10:9-10)

However, He also states that those who deny Him will not be saved. Does this, then, mean that one can lose his salvation? Not at all—we've already read the promise of eternal security today:

37"All that the Father gives Me will come to Me, and the one who comes to Me I will certainly not cast out. (John 6:37)

But, I would like to reiterate one verse from the previous section:

22"You will be hated by all because of My name, but it is the one who has endured to the end who will be saved. (Matthew 10:22)

Those that are truly saved cannot become unsaved, but not every professor is a true believer. Consider once again the Parable of the Sower, in which three groups of people confessed Christ, but only one of those groups of people was ultimately saved.

14"The sower sows the word. **15**"These are the ones who are beside the road where the word is sown; and when they hear, immediately Satan comes and takes away the word which has been sown in them. **16**"In a similar way these are the ones on whom seed was sown on the rocky places, who, when they hear the word, immediately receive it with joy; **17**and they have no firm root in themselves, but are only temporary; then, when affliction or persecution arises because of the word, immediately they fall away. **18**"And others are the ones on whom seed was sown among the thorns; these are the ones who have heard the word, **19**but the worries of the world, and the deceitfulness of riches, and the desires for other things enter in and choke the word, and it becomes unfruitful. **20**"And those are the ones on whom seed was sown on the good soil; and they hear the word and accept it and bear fruit, thirty, sixty, and a hundredfold." (Mark 4:14-20)

A true, saving encounter with the Lord Jesus Christ consists of a faith that will not be shaken by any amount of persecution—true believers will *never* deny Him. We are told to fear only Him that can *destroy both soul and body in Hell*. Mere men can kill the body only—why should we fear this? As believers, we have only eternity in Heaven with the Lord to expect if we are killed! Paul, in fact, noted that believers are in His presence immediately upon physical death.

6Therefore, being always of good courage, and knowing that while we are at home in the body we are absent from the Lord-- 7for we walk by faith, not by sight-- 8we are of good courage, I say, and prefer rather to be absent from the body and to be at home with the Lord. (2 Corinthians 5:6-8)

We are to fear God only, as He can and will punish unbelievers, body and soul, forever in the lake of fire.

11Then I saw a great white throne and Him who sat upon it, from whose presence earth and heaven fled away, and no place was found for them. 12And I saw the dead, the great and the small, standing before the throne, and books were opened; and another book was opened, which is the book of life; and the dead were judged from the things which were written in the books, according to their deeds. 13And the sea gave up the dead which were in it, and death and Hades gave up the dead which were in them; and they were judged, every one of them according to their deeds. 14Then death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire This is the second death, the lake of fire. 15And if anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire. (Revelation 20:11-15)

Ultimately, we must trust God's wisdom, love, and provision, knowing that everything will work out in the end for our good, and His glory.

28And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose. (Romans 8:28)

Section 10

34"Do not think that I came to bring peace on the earth; I did not come to bring peace, but a sword. 35"For I came 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 MAN'S ENEMIES WILL BE THE MEMBERS OF HIS 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 has found his life will lose it, and he who has lost his life for My sake will find it. (Matthew 10:34-39)

Jesus Christ, the Prince of Peace, claims to have brought not peace, but a sword to the earth. What does He mean? The sword He has brought is the Sword of the Spirit, the Word of God.

12For the word of God is living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing as far as the division of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart. (Hebrews 4:12)

This Sword reveals the inner nature of man, the sin and filth that so permeates each of us apart from His grace and forgiveness. People do *not* like this, and the unregenerate will turn on anyone that preaches the true Gospel.

19"This is the judgment, that the Light has come into the world, and men loved the darkness rather than the Light, for their deeds were evil. 20"For everyone who does evil hates the Light, and does not come to the Light for fear that his deeds will be exposed. 21"But he who practices the truth comes to the Light, so that his deeds may be manifested as having been wrought in God." (John 3:19-21)

If we must choose between family and Christ, we must choose Christ. If we must choose between property, career, reputation, *life*, and Christ, we must choose Christ. If we must sacrifice everything we have and are for the sake of Christ, we must do so. The reward for doing so is worth it!

28Peter began to say to Him, "Behold, we have left everything and followed You." 29Jesus said, "Truly I say to you, there is no one who has left house or brothers or sisters or mother or father or children or farms, for My sake and for the gospel's sake, 30but that he will receive a hundred times as much now in the present age, houses and brothers and sisters and mothers and children and farms, along with persecutions; and in the age to come, eternal life. (Mark 10:28-30)

1Therefore I urge you, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship. 2And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect. (Romans 12:1-2)

As Christ's disciples, we are to look to Him as our Example. He asks us to give nothing for Him that He did not give for us!

1Therefore, since we have so great a cloud of witnesses surrounding us, let us also lay aside every encumbrance and the sin which so easily entangles us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, 2fixing our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of faith, who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right

hand of the throne of God. 3For consider Him who has endured such hostility by sinners against Himself, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart. (Hebrews 12:1-3)

Section 11

40"He who receives you receives Me, and he who receives Me receives Him who sent Me. 41"He who receives a prophet in the name of a prophet shall receive a prophet's reward; and he who receives a righteous man in the name of a righteous man shall receive a righteous man's reward. 42"And whoever in the name of a disciple gives to one of these little ones even a cup of cold water to drink, truly I say to you, he shall not lose his reward." (Matthew 10:40-42)

In even the smallest things, we are to be servants of Christ. Don't seek "greatness" as the world understands greatness—even the most mundane tasks, when undertaken seeking His will and His glory, are deemed worthy of reward.

17Whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks through Him to God the Father. (Colossians 3:17)