

Day One – Recap of Matthew 10:26-31

I am told that when people are deciding how to assemble their retirement portfolio, they are often given a test to determine how much risk they can handle. I say I am told because, well, this doesn't concern poor people....but I digress. If I can extend the investment metaphor a bit further, think about how the average Christian in America would build a faith "portfolio". How much risk is he able to handle? Not much, I think. If most Christians were as cautious with their money as they are with their faith, you would probably discover their retirement buried out in their backyard. American Christianity is very resistant to risk.

On the other hand, perhaps Christianity-lite is the riskiest move of all. It does seem the safest and most predictable upon first glance, or until "that which is covered" is "revealed." But we know from the remainder of these verses that when all *is* revealed in the end, it will be the risk-takers, those who boldly stood for Christ and stood against the world, whose destiny has already been set. As it turns out, risking our lives for the sake of Christ is really very little risk at all.

Day Two – Read 10:32-42

Read verses 32 and 33 in different translations if you have some available.

Do these verses relate to what Jesus has been teaching in the previous verses? Explain.

How would you explain *so everyone who acknowledges me before men* (ESV) to an unbeliever, or an immature believer? (Or, how do you apply this to yourself?)

Now, how would you explain Jesus' statement *I also will acknowledge before my Father who is in heaven?*

From The New Testament: Expanded Translation by Kenneth Wuest:

Vv. 32-33 Everyone therefore who is of such a character that he will confess me before men in the realization of and in testimony to his oneness with me, I also will confess him before my Father who is in heaven in the realization of and testimony to my oneness with him. But whoever is of such a nature that he will deny me before men, I also will deny him before my Father who is in heaven.

Day Three

Today consider verse 33 and explain the contrast between the verbs **denies/deny** and **acknowledges/acknowledge** in verse 32.

How do you think those to whom Jesus was talking acknowledged or denied Him?

How do you apply these words of our Lord to your life?

In what ways can someone acknowledge or deny Jesus today?

How do you deal with your guilt because you have denied Him? Do you have any hope left when you read the statement **but whoever denies me before men, I also will deny before my Father who is in heaven?**

Day Four

Why did Jesus have to tell them He did not come to bring peace to the earth?

How would you define peace?

Did you think Jesus came to bring peace to the earth? Why?

Now what do you think? Explain.

Have you known anyone who has (or have you) experienced division in their family over their faith in Jesus Christ?

How do they (or you) deal with this?

Day Five

Have you ever heard the statement; “_____ is my cross to bear”? Do you think that is what Jesus meant? (fill in the blank with any problem they might have had)

What do you think those who heard Him say this (v. 38) thought He meant?

What does verse 38 say to us in the 21st century? How would you explain this to someone; maybe your child, best friend, close family member?

How would someone in Jesus’ culture find his/her life?

How does one find his/her life in today’s culture?

Explain losing your life for Jesus’ sake so that you might find your life.

Have you found real life? Do those that you are around daily know that you have found it?

Or, by your words and deeds do they think you are still looking for life?

Day Six

If you are looking to go a little bit deeper in your understanding of the text for this week, try one of these resources:

<http://www.biblegateway.com/resources/commentaries/index.php?action=getBookSections&cid=1&source=1>

<http://www.evangelibrary.org.uk/members/com/nt/jcr/mt/mat-Index.html>

Sermons Transcripts:

Ligon Duncan - http://www.fpcjackson.org/resources/sermons/matthew/matthew_vol_1-2/matthew_vol_1-2/index_Matthew_vol_1-2.html

Audio:

John Piper - <http://www.desiringgod.org/ResourceLibrary/Sermons/ByScripture/14/>

S. Lewis Johnson - http://sljinstitute.net/sermons/new%20testament/gospels/matthew/matthew_master.html